

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



298

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 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 CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number Camp Helen State Park; FMSF# BY941

2. Location

street & number 23937 Panama City Beach Parkway N/A  not for publication

city or town Panama City Beach  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Bay code 05 zip code 32408

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 4/2/2012  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
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) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 5-24-12  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**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	
17	3	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
18	3	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)

RECREATION & CULTURE: outdoor recreation

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: outdoor recreation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Frame Vernacular (Rustic)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD

walls WOOD

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other STONE

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **CAMP HELEN, BAY COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SUMMARY**

Camp Helen Historic District is a part of the Camp Helen State Park located at 23937 Panama City Beach Parkway, Panama City Beach, Bay County, Florida. The area of the county is known as Seminole Hills. The state park includes 183.5 acres, of which approximately 15 acres are within the National Register boundary. The district includes a complex of eighteen vernacular buildings, one non-contributing building, one non-contributing structure, and paved and unpaved historic roads and pathways. Five of the most prominent buildings are of timber construction with log-cabin siding. Three buildings are of frame construction with horizontal siding. Seven buildings are of concrete block construction. One building is of stone block construction. Camp Helen State Park contains prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, which include several middens and a mound. Diagnostic material indicates habitation that dates from the Deptford Period (2500 B.P.). Due to the incomplete understanding of the sites, significance is not being claimed in this nomination.

**SETTING**

The camp complex is located south of State Highway 98 that runs east/west through the park property. A new public access road, parking area, and visitor center are between the camp complex and Highway 98. The property is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico to the south, Philips Inlet to the east, Powell Lake to the north, and the Bay County/Washington County line to the west. The rolling landscape is of sandy soil, covered with mature oak and palm trees. A high, broad bluff rises steeply along Powells Lake, and slopes to the west. A water slough and marsh are south of the bluff and camp complex. A large Duck Pond is west of the complex. The unspoiled coastal landscape is distinctive from the adjacent recent condominium construction and commercial strips. The natural setting is crucial to understanding Camp Helen as a historic vacation spot. The foot paths and dirt roads that cross the property are almost entirely historic and indicative of the circulation patterns of the district's history under the McCaskell Company, Hicks family, and Avondale Mills ownerships. The north/south entry road has been altered, bending it to the west. A visitor parking lot and reception area has recently been built north of the camp complex.

The Camp Helen district is located on top of a bluff overlooking the Philips Inlet. The bluff is a Native-American midden identified in the Florida Master Site File as BY13. Artifacts indicate human habitation at sites within the park date from the Early Depford Period, to the Fort Walton Period (2500 B.C. – 1000). The site contains human burials, and the integrity of the midden is very high. The site has received various brief investigations, and is worthy of further archaeological investigation.

Two piers that historically existed for Camp Helen's use have been destroyed by hurricanes. A fishing pier directly south of the complex extended into the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricane Eloise in 1975 destroyed much of it.

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A boat dock and a boardwalk that extended east from the Gazebo, was largely destroyed by Hurricane Opal in 1995.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Buildings**

The **Kitchen** is a frame, rectangular building with a gable roof, built ca.1924 (Photo #1). The building encompasses approximately 500 square feet that includes a one-room (340 square feet) and screened front porch (160 square feet). The building has 9" to 12" diameter wooden "log" piers, and horizontal drop siding exterior. The end-gable roof has asphalt shingles, and a small belfry and a bell that signaled meal time. The screened porch on the north elevation was a dining area, and has an asphalt-shingled hipped roof.

The building has undergone several alterations. It was converted into a Kitchen/Dining Hall ca.1950, with a new building parallel to the kitchen, and an enclosed walkway joining the two. The conversion was to serve the expanding needs of the Avondale guests. When first acquired by the State of Florida, the dining hall, that was located west of the kitchen, and an enclosed hallway were removed due to their deteriorated, unsafe condition. The east elevation has been altered at the south end, where a window was installed in a former doorway. To the north of the new window, another new window replaces a large window. During the Hicks family occupation, if not earlier, the kitchen was used as a general store and had a gasoline pump.

The **Cat House** was also built ca.1924, and encompasses 350 square feet (Photo #2). Built on log piers, the perimeter beams are notched to engage the top of the piers. The frame building has drop siding like the kitchen, and an asphalt shingled hip roof. A small rectangular bathroom with a shed roof was added during the 1930's on the north elevation. The paneled, wooden, main (west) door has a mail-drop slot. The interior has wooden floors, walls, and ceilings. There is a bedroom, kitchen/living area, bathroom, and screened east porch. The bathroom floor is tiled and contains a shower, toilet, and sink. Interior doors are wooden paneled, and wooden 4/4 and 1/1 casement sash windows. Fixed windows are also present.

The Hick's family caretaker lived in the building. When Avondale Mills acquired the property, a sign "Cat House," was attached to the building. The understanding of its meaning is not known. During the Avondale Mills years, the Cat House was occupied by camp staff. From the 1960s through the 1980s, a vending machine and the only public telephone were located at the northeast corner of the house.

The **Cook's House**, also built ca.1924, has a rectangular footprint and contains 260 square feet (Photo #3). The building rests on piers of wooden logs and concrete blocks. The exterior is of drop siding, and has two five-panel doors on the north elevation, and 4/4 double-hung sash windows. A 6/6 double-hung sash window is in the east elevation. The gable-end roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. The Cook's House has two rooms accessed by the two doors. The floor and ceiling are wooden, and the perimeter walls have no sheathing.

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When first purchased by the State of Florida, a screened front porch and adjacent toilet room existed. Due to their condition, these two elements were removed.

The **Lodge**, built in 1932-1933, is the most prominent building at Camp Helen for its size, architectural features, and its visible location on the bluff overlooking Phillip's Inlet to the east (Photo #4). It is surrounded by a grove of live oak trees. At the southwest corner of the house is a tiled patio in a checkerboard pattern that contains a planter, fishpond. Equally spaced around the perimeter of this patio are concrete sleeves set into the ground that held tall fence posts. Between these posts had been bamboo fencing, and a trellis that provided privacy for the patio.

The building has an L-shaped footprint and encloses 3800 square feet. The lodge, as well as the Carriage House, Maid's House, Pump House, and Gazebo appear to be of log construction, but are of a wooden frame covered on the exterior and interior with cabin-log siding. The lodge is built off-grade with a crawl space and metal vents around the ground level. A partial basement is under the western portion of the building. At the building corners the log siding terminates into 6"x6" square posts. The side-gable roof has asphalt shingles, but was originally wooden shingles. All of the windows and doors are wooden. All of the windows with several exceptions are casement sashes with 2 and 4 lights. With one exception, all exterior doors swing inward and have screen doors that swing outward.

The east façade has a first story verandah that spans the elevation and wraps both the south and north corners for 9 feet (Photo #4). A central entrance of double French doors is entered off the one-story porch that is accessed by nine concrete steps. The porch roof is supported by tree trunk columns approximately 10" diameter, and round braces. Braces support round beams beneath the porch roof. Round tree branches compose the handrail and balusters across the porch. Flanking the central doors are additional pairs of French doors opening on to the porch. The French doors have 15 lights. The second story has three groupings of windows. One grouping of 6 sashes is centered in the wall, and flanking them are groupings of 4 casement sashes.

The south elevation has an external granite chimney that pierces the second story gable extension at the roofs' peak. The porch that extends from the east elevation ends part way across the chimney and displays its broad gable end, one-story roof and timber construction. Pairs of casement sashes fill windows that flank the chimney at the second story of the extension. To the west is the elevation of the main block that has on the first story a French door at the west corner, a window with a pair of casement sashes, and a small double hung window. The second story has a window with a pair of casement sashes.

The west elevation is the rear of the lodge and visible is the broad slope of the main block roof, as well as the slopes of porch roofs to the south and north (Photo #5). The two stone chimneys at the gable ends, south and north, are visible. A stucco finished exterior chimney is against the west wall, and pierces the roof eaves. At

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the north corner is a screened door sheltered by a shed roof supported with brackets. Adjacent to the door is a 4/4 double-hung sash window. Another screened door is to the south of the chimney without a roofed shelter. This door is flanked by small 1/1 sash windows. The second story has banks of four small fixed windows just under the eaves, and on either side of the chimney. Visible on the short north extension, first story, is a recent air vent, pair of small 1/1 double hung sashes, and a small shed roof above the windows.

The north elevation has a main roof gable end, and the short extension's western slope is lower than the main roof line. The external stone chimney is centered in the extension. The first story of the extension has a window on either side of the chimney. At the second story there is one window to the east, and two to the west of the chimney. The main block's elevation to the west has four windows on the first story. Two pairs of casements fill a window at the second story.

The interior has walls constructed with log cabin siding, floors of tongue-and-groove boards, and wooden ceilings. The interior wooden doors are paneled and have metal doorknobs. Upon entering the main doors to the east one enters a great room with built-in shelves and a stairway against the west wall, and a granite fireplace against the south wall. The north side of the room does not have a ceiling, but is open to the second story (Photo #6). The stairwell has curved treads on the first three steps, and a round handrail and balusters (Photo #7). A door in the south wall exits onto the side porch, and a door in the west wall exits onto the patio. At the north side of the shelving is a door into a bedroom. A large opening to the north enters the dining room with a fireplace against the north wall, and built-in seating on either side of the hearth (Photo #8). The broad opening into the room has an open transom composed of 3" round balusters. Built-in cabinets are canted into the southeast and southwest corners (Photo #9). A door in the west wall enters the kitchen. The bedroom is at the southwest corner of the house. It was used by Mrs. Hicks and is considered the master bedroom. In the southeast corner of the bedroom is a bathroom, and in the northeast corner is a large closet. A fireplace is canted into the northwest corner of the bedroom, and has three niches carved above the mantel. The kitchen in the northwest corner of the first floor has counters and appliances along the north and south walls and an open walkthrough to a door in the west wall.

The second floor has wooden floors, ceiling, and exposed roof rafters over the living room/mezzanine area. The mezzanine area is surrounded with rounded balustrades and hand rails. The floor contains three bedrooms at the north, south, and west, and each has adjoining bathrooms. The south bedroom was called "Margaret's Room" after Mrs. Hicks daughter Margaret Hicks. At the center of the south wall is a granite fireplace and chimney with a wood mantel. A closet is in the southwest corner, and a bathroom is in the northwest corner. French doors in the north wall open onto a balcony with handrail that juts over the opening of the great room low. The west bedroom was called the "dormitory," and it is the biggest bedroom. A built-in desk is in the northeast corner, a bath in the southeast corner, and a closet is in the northern portion of the east wall. The north bedroom was also used as a library. A fireplace and chimney is in the north wall, and a bathroom and closet are in the west wall.

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**ALTERATIONS**

**The Lodge**

The dates of the earliest alterations are not known. One was the infilling of a door onto the south porch from the first floor great room. A second alteration was the addition of a small window in the kitchen at the west corner of the north wall. The kitchen was remodeled most recently in 1985. Since acquisition by the state, recent alterations include the replacement of some of the first story porch columns due to decay. The newer columns have a smoother surface. The bathrooms on the first floor, and second floor north and south rooms have been redone. An inclined walk has been added onto the north porch, and a short concrete ramp was added outside the first-floor bedroom door and the patio. Some porch decking and roof eaves have been repaired and replaced. An exterior wooden stairway that rose from the northwest corner to a second story door in the north wall of the west bedroom was removed. New mechanical and heating/air conditioning units have been installed in the basement, and metal vents are at the northwest corner of the house.

The **Carriage House** or **Guest Quarters** was constructed in 1933. The building encloses 720 square feet equally distributed as 360 square feet on each of two floors. The rectangular frame building has log-cabin siding exterior, and an asphalt hip roof (Photo #10). A small shed roof covers the entry located at the east elevation, and a square brick chimney is located at the north elevation. Large jalousie windows are in the west elevation. Access to the second floor is via an exterior stair located at the south elevation. The stair is constructed of round wooden posts, balusters and handrails. The interior arrangement of the first floor is a two-room plan with a single open room and bath. There is also a storage closet that houses the water heater. The second floor is a three-room layout with a combination living/bedroom, kitchenette and a small bathroom with shower.

The first floor functioned as a two-car garage with living space above. Mrs. Hicks hired a teacher from Havana, Cuba, to tutor her daughter in Spanish. The teacher, his wife and daughter lived on the second floor. Soon after Avondale Mills acquired the property, Hugh Comer had the two car first floor garage converted into a nursery for his two children. Comer lived on the second floor. The children's access to the second floor is via an opening in the ceiling and a ships ladder.

The **Maid's Cabin** 1933, is built on a concrete slab foundation and encloses 220 square feet. The exterior is of log-cabin siding (Photo #11). It has an asphalt gabled roof and a hipped roof over a porch/restroom on the south elevation. A prominent brick chimney is centered at the north elevation gable. A pair of 3-light wooden casements fills a window on the west elevation, and a window in the hipped roof extension. On the east elevation is a door and a 2/2 single hung window. The interior has a single room with two collar beams across a cathedral ceiling finished in plasterboard. The porch is screen enclosed and the restroom has a shower, toilet, and sink.

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During the time that the Hicks family occupied the property, the maid and her husband the gardener, lived in this building. Margaret Hicks kept pet goats in a fenced area to the east of the cabin. After Avondale Mills purchased the property, the cottage was a part-time director's residence and a manager's office.

The **Gazebo** was constructed in 1933, has a rectangular footprint enclosing 205 square feet, and is located between the lodge, and Lake Powell (Photo #12). A 5'-0" wide concrete walkway leads westward from the gazebo to the lodge, and concrete steps descend eastward from the gazebo to the banks of Lake Powell. The open-air building contains wood columns, balusters, and handrail. The only log-cabin siding on the gazebo is in the triangular pediment in the gabled ends. The exposed rafter tails are 2x4's. Benches are located around the perimeter inside the handrail. The building has an asphalt roof. The gazebo was a popular gathering spot that frequently squeezed twenty people onto the benches.

The **Pump House and Water tank** was built in 1933, and has a square footprint, enclosing 165 square feet (Photo #13). It has log siding and its original wood shingle hip roof with a water pipe extending out of the roof's pyramidal peak. The 2 1/4" pipe connected to the water tank positioned 40 feet above on the wooden tower. The interior contains a pump. A bathroom with a shower, toilet, and wooden bench was added during the historic period, and a pump motor has been removed. Two of the tower's vertical legs are original, and the tower has been faithfully reconstructed guided by historic photographs.

The Hicks' family constructed the pump house to supplement the water requirements when they built the Rainbow Cottages. Water was pumped from an artesian well, and electricity was produced on site by two "DELCO" batteries. The water contained sulfur and had an odor, so guests and employees boiled the water prior to consumption.

The **Tower** built straddling the pump house was built in c.1935, at the same time as the pump house. It was built to support the water tank. The tower has four corner 10" diameter timber poles encased in concrete footings. The poles slope from the base inward to the top to a height of 40 feet. The corner poles are joined by horizontal and diagonal wooden bracing. Situated directly above the pump house and projecting above treetops, the tower has served as a landmark for the camp.

The **Stable**, built in ca1940, is a 1 and a half story rectangular masonry building that encloses 550 square feet (Photo #14). It has an asphalt shingle roof with gable ends on the north and south. Unlike other Camp Helen buildings, the walls of the stable are of cut limestone blocks 8"x16". Large barn door entries were at both the north and south ends, but the south door has been enclosed. The north elevation has the central barn door, east side window, and loft opening above the door. All three openings have vertical boards with strap hinges. A louvered vent with triangular arched top is in the peak of the north and south gables. The east and west elevations have six windows each with three windows on the first story, and three on the second story. The



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south end has a single door in the east corner. Two windows are on the second story with a louvered vent in the gable. In the interior, a wooden staircase rises from the northwest corner giving access to the upper half-story. The upper story served as a hay loft.

The stable was originally built to shelter two horses of young Margaret Hicks. The caretaker purchased the horses in Georgia and rode one and led the other to Camp Helen. Avondale Mills used the stable for livestock, but then modified the interior to serve as the property manager's office and for linen storage after 1947. The enclosure of the south barn door and addition of a single corner door was in association with this office and storage. Avondale Mills removed the belfry from the stable and installed it on the kitchen roof where it remains.

The **Rainbow Cottages** are four buildings constructed in 1933, and received their names for the different colors each cottage was painted (Photo #15). Octagonal pavers with multiple colors compose their front walks. All of the buildings are constructed of concrete blocks. Each cottage had a screened front, east porch that also served as a sleeping porch. All the cottages and their roofs, windows and doors are structurally sound, and the east porches have recently been reroofed. Each cottage has a different configuration, but each has a rear, west entrance with a shed roof shelter.

The northern most cottage (historic color pink) is the smallest with one living/sleeping room, a kitchen and bathroom. It has a side gable roof with asphalt shingles. The next cottage to the south (historic color blue) has a living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. It has a side gable roof with asphalt shingles. The next cottage to the south (historic color yellow) has an "L" footprint, and has a living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. It has a cross-gable roof with asphalt shingles. The southern-most cottage (historic color green) has five rooms; a living room, two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. It has a hip roof with asphalt shingles.

The cottages face eastward to Philip's Inlet, and were the most desirable accommodations for vacationers. Two other cottages of similar arrangement were constructed south and southwest of the Rainbow Cottages. Most were of frame construction, and due to their deteriorated condition, they were removed under state park management.

The **Recreation Hall**, 1955, covers 2500 square feet. It has a rectangular foot print, is constructed of concrete block on a slab foundation, and has a steel truss roof system (Photo #16). The building has an open plan to accommodate assemblies, with restrooms and a storage room in the northwest corner. It is the only building with a built-up flat roof. The steel trusses provide long spans bearing on the exterior walls with no supporting columns, and provided cantilevered overhangs around the building perimeter. Large windows are in all exterior walls, providing a well lit interior. The main entrance on the east side is recessed with a glass block screen. The building has recently undergone repairs.

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The Recreation Hall provided the largest covered gathering space for vacationers. It was a meeting place and the primary indoor play area for activities including billiards, table tennis, and bingo.

Two duplex **Cottages** were built directly south of the Cat House ca1954, using the same materials as the recreational hall (Photo #17). Built on concrete slabs, with block walls, steel roof trusses reinforce the flat concrete slab roofs. The front doors and windows are in the east elevations. They and eight others were built by Avondale Mills to accommodate the vacationers, but the others have been taken down.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE**

A **Picnic Pavilion** south of the Rainbow Cottages with pole corners and hip roof, was built on a concrete slab. Two wooden picnic tables are positioned here. It was built in 2003. Two maintenance buildings north of the Cooks House are not historic.

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.)

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

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
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)

- SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1932-1962

Significant Dates

1932
1945

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

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COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SUMMARY**

Camp Helen Historic District is nominated to the National Register under Criteria A and C for local significance in the areas of Social History, Entertainment/Recreation, and Architecture. Camp Helen is associated with three periods of recreational use. Three of the camp buildings date to 1924, when the property was owned by the McCaskill Investment Company. The property was occupied by a hotel and promoted as a retirement area. These uses ended with the Great Depression and when the hotel burned in 1931. The current lodge was begun in 1932, and during construction, the McCaskill interests were sold to Margaret Hicks, one of the primary investors. Hicks used the large lodge as a private residence for her family. Hicks built four "Rainbow" guest cottages to provide a source of income. In 1945, Avondale Mills purchased the complex from Hicks and used the complex as a workers vacation retreat until the 1980s. The main lodge building is an outstanding example of a vernacular, rustic vacation lodge. With its undeveloped shoreline and pristine setting, Camp Helen remains one of the Florida Gulf Coast's best historic recreation properties. Because of this attribute, it was acquired by the State of Florida in 1996, for conservation purposes and use as a state park. The property has had preliminary investigations by archaeologists that have identified sites and diagnostic material that date prehistoric habitation to the Archaic Period. Because of the preliminary nature of the archaeological surveys, significance under Criterion D is not claimed in this nomination.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

During the Civil War, Powell Lake and its surrounding area was known as Lake Ocala. Because of its ocean harbor and secluded location, the Confederate cause created the Kent Salt Works on the north side of the lake, and numerous other salt makers established operations as well. Following the Civil War, only a few families settled the area, working primarily in the turpentine industry and as fishermen.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1920s, two hotels were in operation adjacent to Powell Lake. The Laird family hotel was on the north shore, and a second hotel was located where Camp Helen is located. The hotel at the Camp Helen site was known as the Inlet Hotel, and it was owned by the McCaskill Investment Company from DeFuniak Springs, a Florida city located thirty miles to the north. The wooden frame hotel was associated with the district's Kitchen, Cat House, and Cook's House. Advertisements for the McCaskill Company promoted "Inlet Beach" as a tourist attraction that included cottages, a lighting plant, waterworks, bathhouses and boardwalks.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Edwin Johns, *Florida During the Civil War*, Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, p.133.

<sup>2</sup> Marlena Wormack, *Along the Bay*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, p.146.

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In 1928, J.J. McCaskill joined efforts with Indiana businessman Robert Hicks, with the intention of developing the Inlet Hotel property as a retirement destination. In 1931, the hotel burned down and the McCaskill Company began making plans for new construction.

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

A small version of the current lodge was begun in 1932. Hicks unexpectedly died that year, and his widow Margaret Hicks, remained involved with the McCaskill Company. Margaret worked closely with the contractor to enlarge the house, and guided how it should look. The wood was brought from Blountstown, Calhoun County, in North Florida. Oral histories suggest the chimney and fireplace stone was brought from either St. Andrew's/Panama City, in Bay County, or Mobile, Alabama.<sup>3</sup> During this period of construction Hicks acquired complete ownership from the McCaskill Company. The lodge and four other buildings with log cabin appearances were constructed during this early 1930s period. The siding of the Lodge is not true log construction, but a log cabin siding that surfaces the exterior and interior, and is attached to a timber frame construction. The four buildings associated with this type of construction are the Lodge, the Carriage House, the Maid and Butler's Cabin, and the Pump House. The open-sided Gazebo incorporates a little log cabin siding. Hicks also built the four "Rainbow" guest cottages so the property could continue to generate income.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. Hicks who used the lodge as her private home, lived there for extended periods until 1945. Her young daughter, Margarite, kept two horses at the limestone stable. Names of some of the rooms in the lodge are associated with the Hicks family, and have been known by these names throughout the property's history. For instance "Margaret's Room" indicates the second floor, south bedroom. The second floor, west bedroom they called the "Dormitory," and the second floor, north bedroom they called the "Library." The "Maid's and Butler's Cabin" and the "Carriage House" also retained their names from the Hicks.<sup>5</sup>

Margaret Hicks sold the property in 1945 to Avondale Mills. There were several Avondale-owned mills across the State of Alabama, and during World War II they contracted to supply the American military with tents, uniforms, and related items. Avondale owners first knew of Camp Helen from their founder, Baxton Bragg Comer (1848-1927). Comer had begun the mill operation in 1897, and had served as Governor of Alabama from 1906 – 1910. He liked to hunt, and had purchased vacation property adjoining Camp Helen to the west in 1919. By 1920, Braxton's sons, Donald and Hugh Comer began to assume the management of the mills.

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<sup>3</sup> Howard Padgett and Mary Self Padgett, interview with Lisa A. Keppner, February, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Eric Padgett, interview with Lisa A. Keppner, January 2000, and Henry H. Hanisee in 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2 **CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, BAY  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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In 1928, J.J. McCaskill joined efforts with Indiana businessman Robert Hicks, with the intention of developing the Inlet Hotel property as a retirement destination. In 1931, the hotel burned down and the McCaskill Company began making plans for new construction.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3 **CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, BAY  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Hugh Comer (1892-1962) arranged for the company to establish a vacation camp in Florida for employees. The specific purpose for the vacation facilities was an effort by the company to build employee relations and fend off union organization activities in the mill and its sister organizations in several states.<sup>6</sup> In 1933, Comer visited the Panama City area looking for coastal property. H.C. Padgett, a local man, helped him select coastal property called Hog Island, south of Panama City, and contracted to build a vacation camp for mill employees. By the summer of 1933, the employee camp was active.<sup>7</sup> An article in the Panama City newspaper, The Pilot, May 31, 1934, described the complex as "Lake Helen," and Avondale sponsored over 100 schoolteachers, from all over the State of Alabama. The teachers stayed one week, and school band members followed them the next week. While vacationing, the bands performed concerts for the local citizens in the Panama City area.<sup>8</sup> In 1942, in the early days of World War II, Comer's plans were disrupted when the military bought the land for Tyndall Air Force Base. At the close of the war in 1945, Hugh Comer arranged to purchase Hicks' property at the western edge of the county, and again hired Padgett as a full-time director for the camp. Padgett died the next year, but was succeeded by his son, Howard, who in turn at his retirement in 1983, was succeeded by his son Eric. For the first couple of summers, Howard Padgett set up four large military surplus tents to house the guests. Two tents south of the Rainbow cottages were for the women, and two in the low land south of the recreational hall were for the men. Tents were set up for bathing. Around 1950, he began to construct cottages, and in 1954, the recreation hall. Also in 1954, on Comer's orders, he built himself a concrete block house, north of the stable, and west of the drive.<sup>9</sup>

During the regular summer season the camp hosted groups of mill employees. The camp guests would arrive on a Sunday and depart on a Saturday, for a period of usually one or, occasionally, two weeks. Employees of the various Avondale Mills were scheduled for week long vacations at the camp, with their expenses paid for by the company. Each week, 100 - 120 employees and their families were bussed in. The employees of Avondale worked and lived in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. Thousands of individuals vacationed at the camp as a company benefit for more than forty years. Camp Helen provided lodging, picnicking, fishing, swimming, and beach activities. With several mills, Camp Helen could not accommodate the demand. Each mill had certain weeks in which to send employees, but only a limited number could attend. Therefore, a lottery system was implemented. If an employ's schedule did not correspond with the week selected during the lottery, it was the employee's responsibility to switch with other employees, or you would forfeit your vacation at Camp Helen that year. African-American employees were brought for vacation toward the end of the summer season in August.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/c/Comer, Braxton\_Bragg (internet, accessed November 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Avondalemille.com/history (internet, accessed November 2004).

<sup>8</sup> "First Avondale Mills Party Arrives Monday," *Pilot* (newspaper), Panama City, Florida (May 31, 1934).

<sup>9</sup> Howard Padgett, and Mary Self Padgett, interview with Lisa A. Keppner, February 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5 **CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, BAY  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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Avondale Incorporated, the successor of Avondale Mills, sold Camp Helen to a developer in 1987, who sold it to the State of Florida in 1996. Florida purchased the land with funds from Florida's Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program, a program to conserve distinctive natural habitats in Florida.

**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Rustic or Adirondack Style is a variation on vernacular forms of residential construction. This distinctive variation was developed and popularized between 1870 and 1930, most notably in the Adirondack region of New York State. Typically, large vacation lodges were built within wooded, rural settings, frequently overlooking bodies of water. Log construction was used most frequently although some stone construction was common, and reflected in the use of locally available materials. The style was characterized by broad eaves on roofs with exposed large timber construction, large porches, simply proportioned windows and doors, and rough lumber building elements used as ornamental features. Developed as rural vacation lodges or camps, various functions were separated into separate buildings such as guest cottages, kitchen, dining, library, and assembly spaces.<sup>14</sup>

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Camp Helen appears to be intentionally fashioned after Adirondack camp developments, with its large lodges, with separate functionally distinct buildings. Like Adirondack camps, the lodge and some guest cottages are oriented to overlook a main water body, the Philips Inlet. The Lodge is of timber construction, and the Carriage House, Maid's House, Gazebo, and Pump House are all of frame construction with log-cabin siding and rustic lumber elements. The Lodge is the most architecturally distinct building with its broad one-story verandah spanning the east elevation and wrapping onto the north and south elevations. The porch's broad gable roof is supported by unfinished log columns, many left rough. The porch roof rafters are of smaller, round, unfinished lumber. The porch railing is also of round unfinished lumber. The exterior chimneys and interior fireplaces are of rubble stone. All the interior surfaces are exposed wood. The atrium opening above the living room accentuates the interior's sense of openness. The second-floor bedroom balcony projecting into the atrium space is built on projecting log joists, and has round handrails and balusters. The lodge is an excellent example of workmanship and styling in the Adirondack Rustic variation on Vernacular construction. The Camp Helen complex is an excellent Florida example of an Adirondack camp. The integrity of the lodge and the camp is very high.

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<sup>14</sup> "The Adirondack Rustic Style," *Old House Journal*, Vol. 11, #1, January/February 1983.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1 **CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, BAY  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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Comer Papers Inventory." University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Padgett, Eric, interview with Lisa A. Keppner, January 2000, and Henry Hanisee, 2003. Padgett managed  
Camp Helen.

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State of Florida, "Camp Helen State Recreation Area Unit Management Plan," Tallahassee, Florida: Florida  
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Ward, Mr. and Mrs. Jim, and Calvin Edmunds, "Padgett Retires from Avondale's Camp Helen," 19 December  
1983, Avondale Sun (newspaper), Sylacauga, Alabama.

Womack, Marlene, Along the Bay: A Pictorial History of Bay County. Panama City, Florida: Junior Service  
League/Pictorial History Publishing Company, 1994.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approx. 27.3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	6	5	9	6	7	6	0	3	3	4	9	5	2	0
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
2	1	6	5	9	7	2	4	0	3	3	4	9	3	8	0

3	1	6	5	9	7	7	2	0	3	3	4	9	0	0	0
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
4	1	6	5	9	6	4	4	0	3	3	4	9	3	0	0

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 Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2012

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

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 Department of Environmental Protection c/o Ms. Mebane Cory-Ogden, Park Manager; Elizabeth Eich

street & number 23973 Panama City Beach Parkway telephone 850-233-5059

city or town Panama City Beach state FL zip code 32408

**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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1 **CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, BAY  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Camp Helen Historic District is an approximately 27.3 acre portion of the larger acreage known as Camp Helen State Park. The park is south of Highway 98, in Bay County, adjacent to the western boundary with Walton County. The parcel number is #35205-000-000. Legal Description, 31 2S 17W - 7 -SC, All of Govt Lots 2,7,8,10 & 11 less Hwy 98 r/w in Sec 31; ORB 1094 P 1910 ORB 1640 P1928. Philip's Inlet is immediately to the east. The National Register boundaries are depicted on the scaled site map.

KMZ data file is attached on the photo disc.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of the nominated property encompasses a portion of the property historically associated with Camp Helen that retains its historic setting, character and integrity.

The character of property north of the lodge, between it and Highway 98 has been modified recently by a new entrance drive, parking area and visitor center. A portion of this area has been omitted. The property to the west of archaeological sites BY13A and BY13B has not been investigated for archaeological evidence and is not included in the National Register boundary. The property north of Highway 98 is omitted because no historical components are there, and only the slightest archaeological material has been located there.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number      Photos      Page      1      **CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT,  
BAY COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST**

1. Camp Helen Historic District, 23937 Panama City Parkway, Panama City
2. Bay County, Florida
3. Henry H. Hanisee, black & whites; Elizabeth Eich
4. April 2003 b&w; January 2012 color
5. Kitchen, looking southwest
6. Photo #1 of 17

Items 1-4 are the same for all of the following items.

5. Cat House, looking northwest
6. Photo #2 of 17
  
5. Cook's House, looking north
6. Photo #3 of 17
  
5. Lodge, looking west
6. Photo #4 of 17
  
5. Lodge, western and northern elevations, looking east
6. Photo #5 of 17
  
5. Lodge interior, second floor mezzanine, looking southeast
6. Photo #6 of 17
  
5. Lodge interior, staircase landing, looking west
6. Photo #7 of 17
  
5. Lodge interior, second floor fireplace, looking south
6. Photo #8 of 17
  
5. Lodge interior, built-in cabinets, looking southwest
6. Photo #9 of 17

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number      Photos      Page      2      **CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT,  
BAY COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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5. Carriage House & Guest Quarters, looking east

6. Photo #10 of 17

5. Maid's Cabin, looking

6. Photo #11 of 17

5. Gazebo, looking east

6. Photo #12 of 17

5. Pump House & Cistern Tower, looking northeast

6. Photo #13 of 17

5. Stable, looking south

6. Photo #14 of 17

5. Rainbow Cottages row, looking south

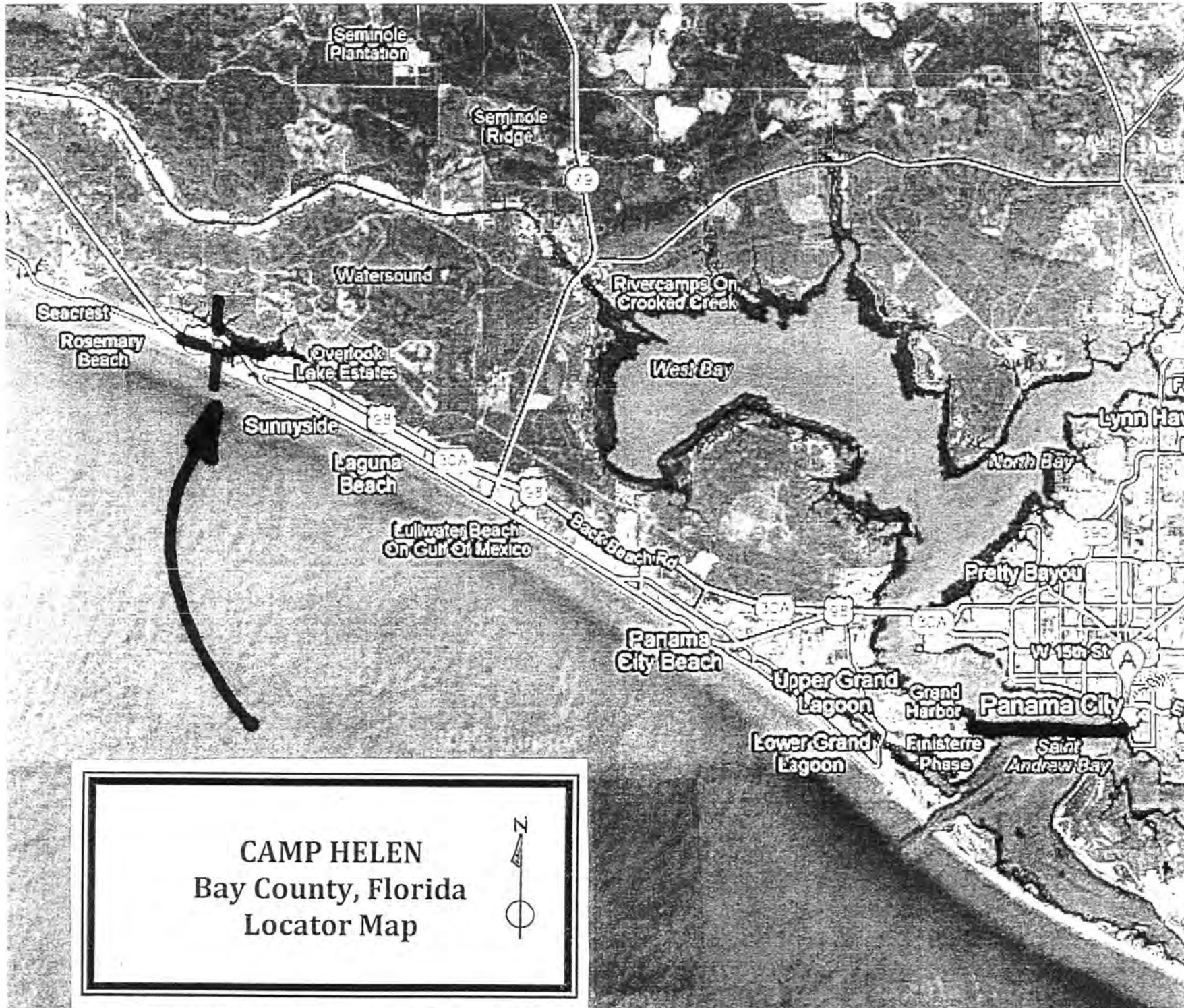
6. Photo #15 of 18

5. Recreation Hall, looking west

6. Photo #16 of 17

5. Cottage, looking northwest

6. Photo #17 of 17



CAMP HELEN  
Bay County, Florida  
Locator Map

U.S. Hwy 98

MEDIAN

CAMP HELEN, Bay County, Florida  
Photo Diagram



PARKING

RANGER HOUSE

VISITOR CENTER

NC MAINTENANCE  
COOKS

STABLE

MAIDS

CARRIAGE  
GUEST CHAMBERS  
LODGE

PUMP HOUSE

GAZEBO

DUCK POND

KITCHEN

RECREATION

CAT HOUSE

RAINBOW COTTAGES

Philips Inlet

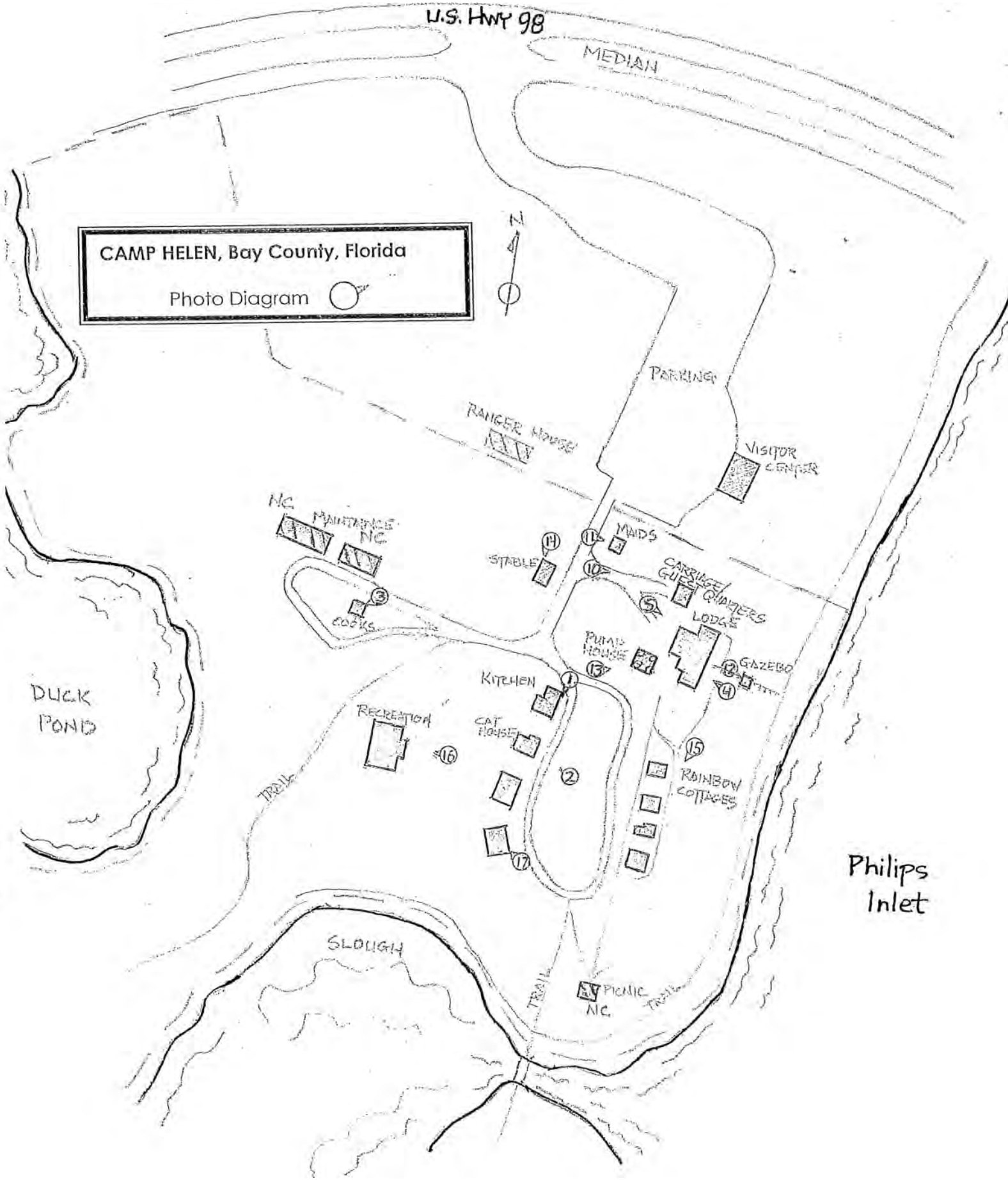
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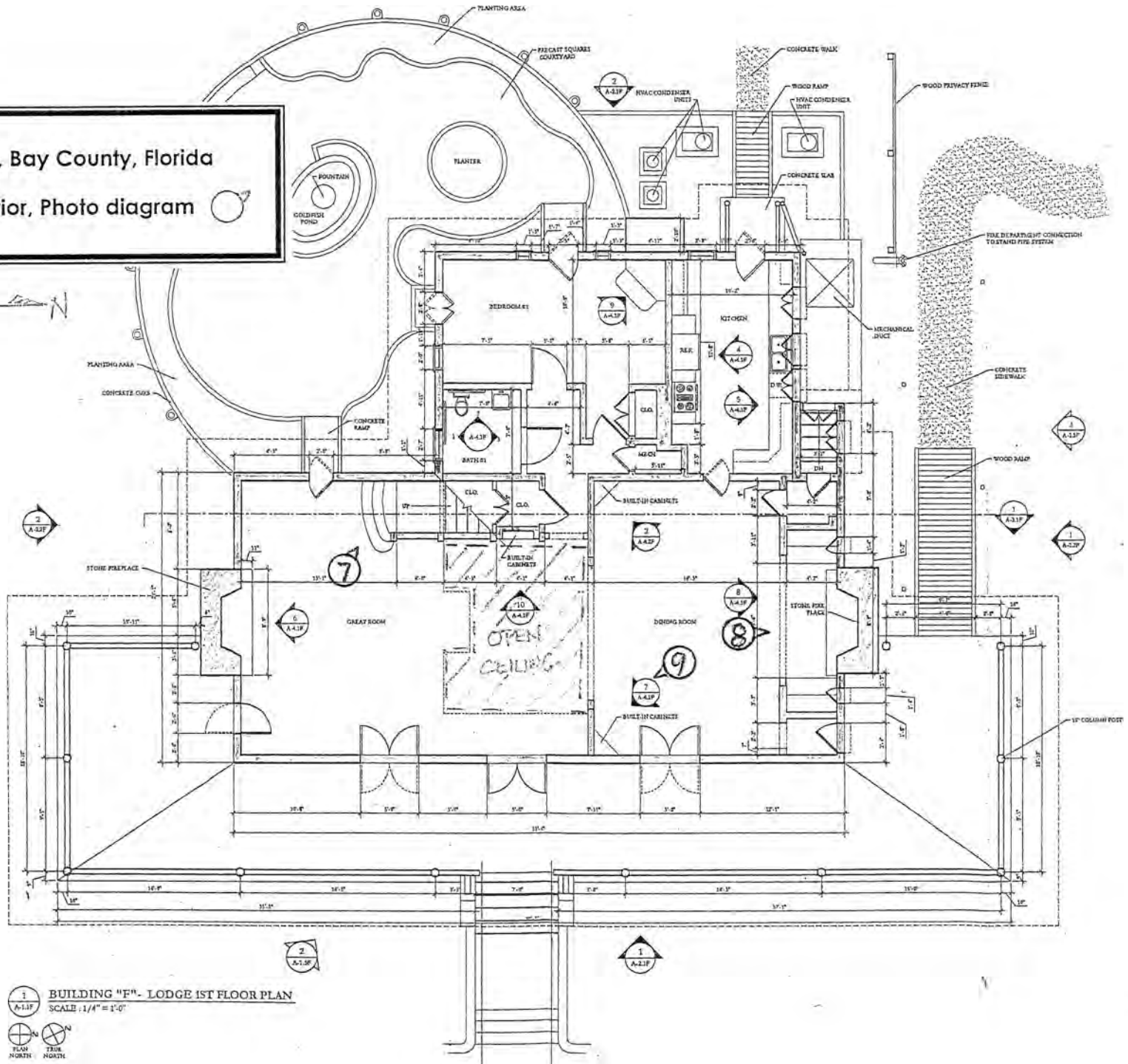
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TRAIL

TRAIL



**CAMP HELEN, Bay County, Florida**  
**Lodge interior, Photo diagram**



**1**  
**A-1.1F**  
**BUILDING "F"- LODGE 1ST FLOOR PLAN**  
**SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"**

PLAN NORTH  
 TRUE NORTH



# Camp Helen Historic District

CAMP HELEN STATE PARK BOUNDARY ———

CAMP HELEN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY . . . . .

**CAMP HELEN, Bay County, Florida**

National Register Boundary UTM coordinates

1. Zone 16 Easting 596760 Northing 3349520
2. Zone 16 Easting 597240 Northing 3349380
3. Zone 16 Easting 596720 Northing 3349000
4. Zone 16 Easting 596440 Northing 3349300

**Latitude - Longitude Points**

Top  
30.278623

Bottom  
-86.006107

Left  
-85.975285

Right  
30.266371



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Camp Helen Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Bay

DATE RECEIVED: 4/13/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/04/12  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/24/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/30/12  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000298

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 5-24-12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



01/12/2012

CAMP HELEN H.D., BAY CO., FL

#1

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON



CAMP HELEN H.D., BAY CO., FL

#2

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON

EP



01/12/2012

CAMP HELEN HD., BAY CO., FL

# 3





CAMP HELEN HTD; BOY CO., FL

#4

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON



CAMP HELEN H.D., BAY CO., FL

#5

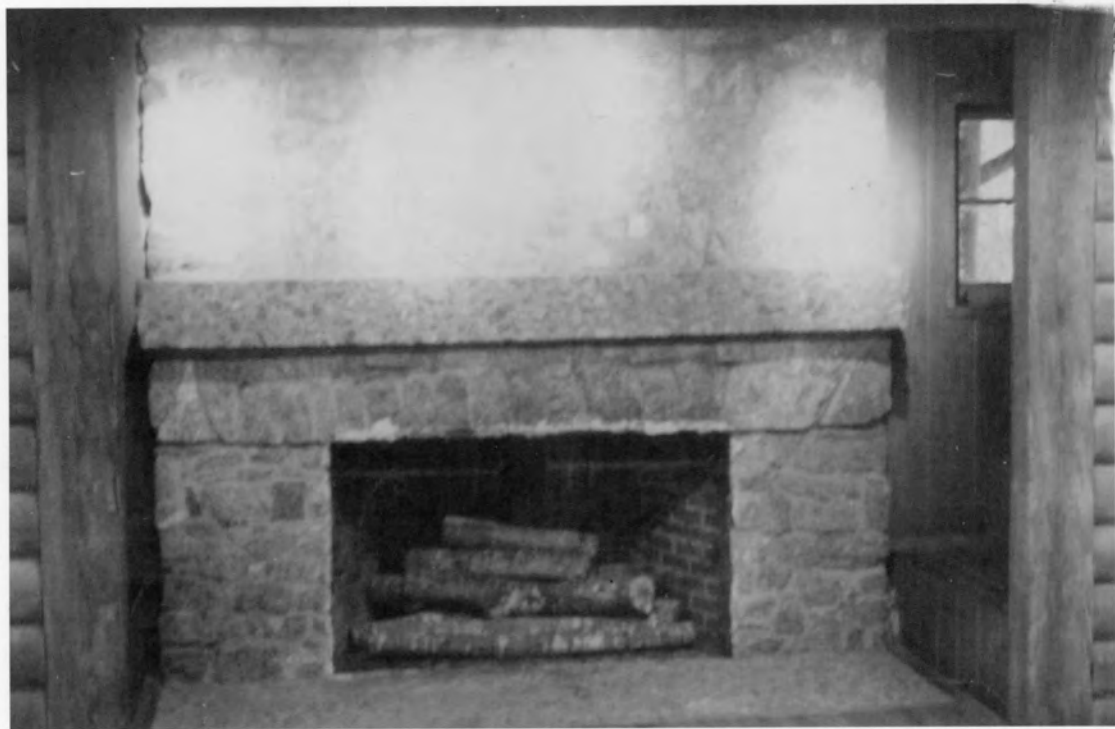


CAMP HELEN MD, BOY CO, FL #6.



CAMP HELEN H.D., BAY CO., FL #7





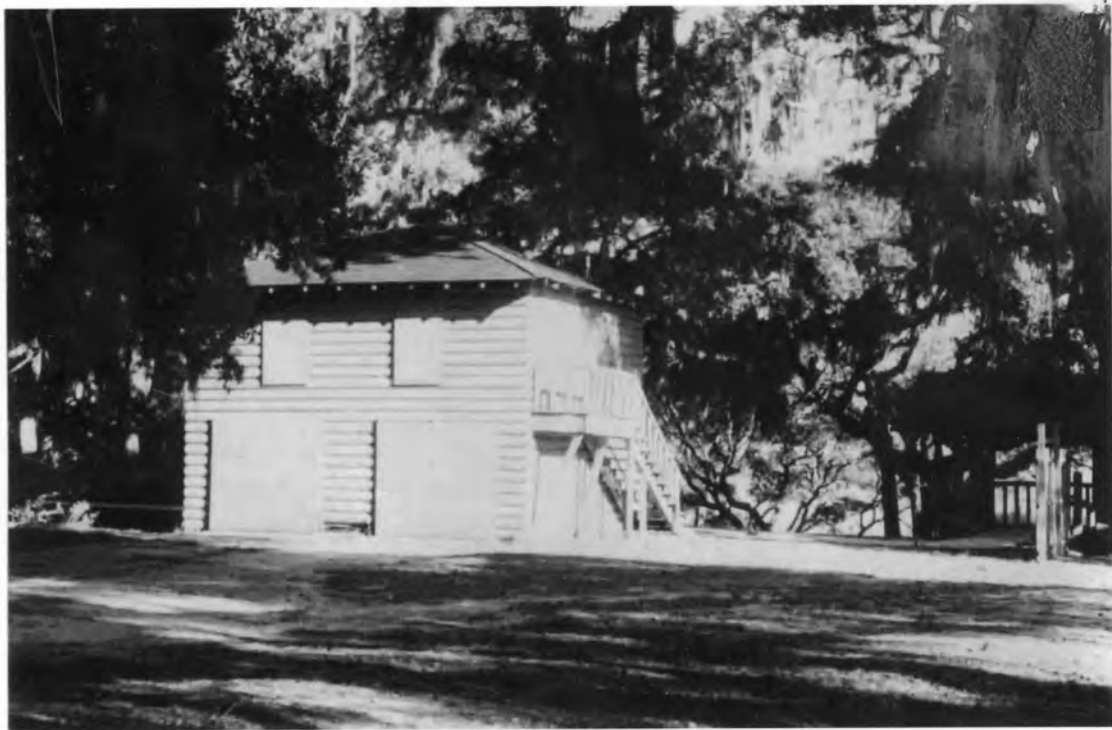
CAMP MELEN HD, BOY CO, FL

#8



CAMP MELEN HTD., BOY CO., FL

#9



CAMP MELEN RD, BAY CO, FL

#10



CAMP MELEN HD., BOY CO., FL

#11





CAMP HELEN HD, BOY CO., FL

#12

01/12/2012



CAMP HELEN HD, BAY CO., FL #13

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON

EPSON



01/12/2012

CAMP HELEN RD., BAY CO., FL

# 14



01/12/2012

CAMP MELEN W D, BOY CO, FL

#15





01/12/2012

CAMP HELEN H.D., BAY CO., FL

#16



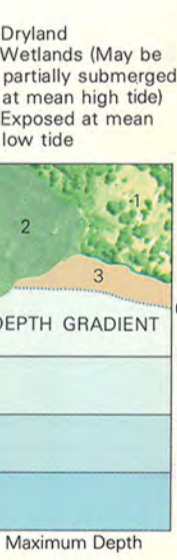
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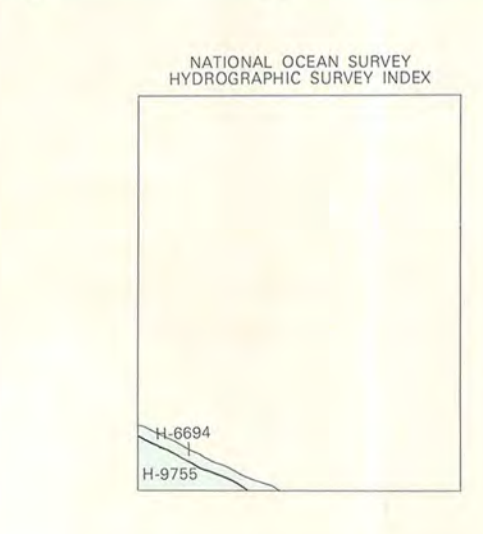
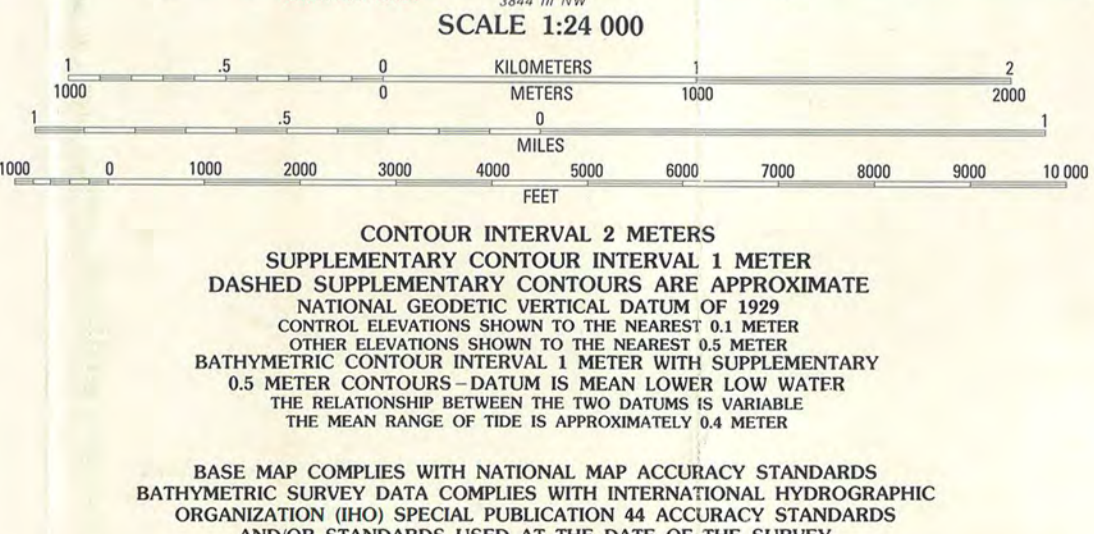
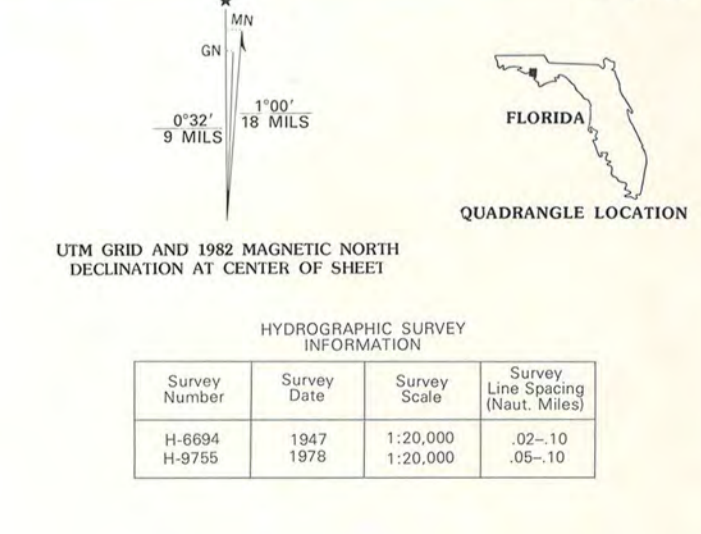


Feet	Meters
1	0.3048
2	0.6096
3	0.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048  
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808



Produced by the United States Geological Survey and National Ocean Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Orthophotomap prepared from aerial photograph taken January 18, 1976. Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken January 1975. Field checked 1977. Map edited 1982. Supersedes topographic map dated 1943.  
Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Survey from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys.  
This information is not intended for navigational purposes.  
Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs.  
Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by photography.  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Florida coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic).  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16 1927 North American Datum.  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 18 meters south and 6 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Trails	

Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route County Route

SEMINOLE HILLS, FLA.  
30085-C8-TB-024  
1982  
DMA 3844 IV SW - SERIES V8470

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 AND NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



RECEIVED 2280

APR 13 2012

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RICK SCOTT  
Governor

KEN DETZNER  
Secretary of State

April 2, 2012

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of Interior  
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed are the nomination and additional materials for the

### **Camp Helen Historic District, Bay County, Florida**

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara E. Mattick".

Barbara E. Mattick, Ph.D.  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
for Survey & Registration

Enclosures

#### DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

R. A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250  
Telephone: 850.245.6300 • Facsimile: 850.245.6436 • [www.flheritage.com](http://www.flheritage.com)  
Commemorating 500 years of Florida history [www.fla500.com](http://www.fla500.com)

