

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received **MAR 14 1984**  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Melbourne Beach Pier

and/or common same

**2. Location**

street & number N/A Ocean Ave. + Riverside Dr. N/A not for publication

city, town Melbourne Beach  vicinity of Western terminus of Ocean Avenue

state Florida code 012 county Brevard code 009

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Recreational

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Melbourne Beach

street & number 507 Ocean Avenue (Post Office Box 113)

city, town Melbourne Beach N/A vicinity of state Florida

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Brevard County Courthouse

street & number 400 South Street

city, town Titusville state Florida

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The appearance of the Melbourne Beach pier today is similar to that of the pier when first constructed in 1888-1889. The main portion of the pier is twelve feet wide, 650 feet long, and is constructed of wood planks supported by wooden stringers and a combination of wood and steel-reinforced concrete pilings, the latter having been installed in 1918 when the pier underwent extensive repairs. At the outer end there is a hip-roofed shelter, approximately 33 by 58 feet. This structure, built in 1908, replaced a smaller boathouse which was either part of the original pier or added during 1980 renovations. From 1889 to about 1923 a wide railroad ran the length of the pier from its outer end to the shore and thence to the ocean. Even in its present delapidated appearance, the pier is a picturesque reminder of the days of the early settlers of Melbourne Beach.

The Melbourne Beach Pier, originally constructed by the Melbourne and Atlantic Railroad Company during the winter of 1888-1889<sup>1</sup>, extends approximately 650 feet westward into the Indian River from the barrier island on which Melbourne Beach is located. The main portion of the pier is twelve feet wide and is constructed of wood planks supported by wooden stringers and a combination of wood and steel-reinforced concrete pilings. At the outer end there is a hip-roofed shelter (pavilion), the dimensions of which are approximately 33½ feet by 58½ feet. One hundred-five feet shoreward from this shelter are the remains of an 8-foot wide finger pier (spur dock), jutting 30 feet southward and then right-angling 39 feet westward. Only a few submerged pilings remain of a matching finger pier constructed on the north side of the pier.

The overall appearance of the pier is not strikingly different from when it was first constructed in 1888-1889. No records can be found that show the original dimensions of the pier. Although it has been reported that it originally extended one-quarter of a mile into the Indian River, there is no evidence to support this statement. It is extremely unlikely that the pier extended beyond its present length, since the water at its outer end is and was sufficiently deep to accommodate drafts of ferries and freight carriers traversing the Indian River at that time. Most probably, dimensions of the pier were substantially the same as its present day configuration. The pier was of wood plank construction, supported by wooden stringers and heavy pilings. A wide gauge railroad track ran the length of the pier from its outer end to the shore, where it continued east for 5/10 of a mile across the peninsula to the ocean.<sup>2</sup>

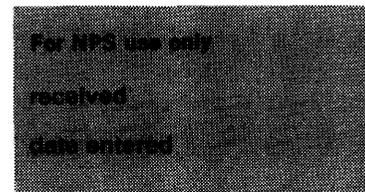
During the winter of 1908-1909, the pier and railroad track were repaired by the newly formed Melbourne Beach Improvement Company, Inc., a stock company chartered in the State of New York that had assumed ownership of the pier and railroad and its surrounding properties.<sup>3</sup> Photographs of the era show a small boathouse located at the northern one-third of the present-day shelter at the western end of the pier and the two finger piers (spur docks) extending northward and southward from the main pier. A new Buda Motor Car with trailer was installed at this time to carry passengers and supplies on the track from the landing dock to the shore and along Ocean Avenue, replacing the pushcar originally used for this purpose.

No further alterations were made until 1918, when extensive repairs occurred. One hundred-four steel-reinforced concrete pilings were installed to replace and/or supplement the original wood pilings. At this time, also, the present-day shelter was built at the outer end of the pier, replacing the smaller boat-house.<sup>4</sup> The northern half of this shelter was enclosed for the storage of freight transported by boat to Melbourne Beach

(See Continuation Sheet)

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Continuation sheet One

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from the mainland. This enclosure was subsequently removed in the late 1950s.

Since 1918, no alterations or modifications have been made to the pier, other than routine maintenance and removal of the railroad tracks. The tracks were removed in 1921 following completion of a bridge from the mainland to Indialantic-By-the-Sea, one and one-half miles to the north. Numerous wooden pilings now replace or reinforce the concrete pilings, forty-nine of which remain upright and useful.

The pier today represents a dilapidated appearance. In May of 1983, it was determined to be unsafe for unrestricted public useage and is now closed to the public pending rehabilitation.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Melbourne Beach Advertising Flyer, printed and issued by Incorporators of the Melbourne and Atlantic Railroad Company, 1889.

<sup>2</sup>Grace Cummings, "Brief History of Melbourne Beach." 5 February 1920. (Report delivered to Women's Club of Melbourne Beach; printed in "Melbourne Beach, The First 100 Years," Frank J. Thomas, 1983.)

<sup>3</sup>Interview: Don R. Beaujean by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 12 December 1966. (Taped recording)

<sup>4</sup>"Melbourne Beach Improvements," Melbourne Times, Melbourne, Florida, 11 December 1918, p. 1.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1888-1889, 1908, 1918 **Builder/Architect** Melbourne and Atlantic Railroad Co. (builder)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Melbourne Beach Pier fulfills criteria A, B and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It derives its significance, in part, from its association with an important local event--the founding of the Town of Melbourne Beach, the oldest beach community in Brevard County. Second, it is associated with the Beaujean family who were prominent in the early development of the town. And, finally, it is further significant as the oldest and perhaps only surviving structure of its period and type along the Indian River. Erected during the winter of 1888-1889, using construction methods typical of the time for docking facilities along the Indian River, it was the first step in building the Town of Melbourne Beach. For many years it provided the only practicable access to the barrier island for freight, passengers, and mail transported from the mainland, and thus was a prime factor in facilitating settlement of the area. From 1889 until the early 1920s the pier served as a docking facility for regular ferry service to and from the mainland and for excursion boats bringing tourists to the beach. In 1908 and again in 1918, it was altered when repairs were undertaken to ensure its structural integrity and to adapt it to the changing needs of the small community which it served. From the mid-1920s until the present, the pier has been utilized primarily for recreational purposes. Despite the harsh conditions to which it has been exposed, it generally maintains its historic design and materials, particularly those dating from 1918.

The Melbourne Beach Pier was built during the winter of 1888-1889 by a group of western New York State investors who formed the Melbourne and Atlantic Railroad Company and founded the settlement known as Melbourne Beach, the oldest beach community in Brevard County.<sup>1</sup> Composed of wood planks, wooden stringers, and wooden pilings, its construction was representative of the methods used in the late nineteenth century for commercial docking facilities on the Indian River. Furthermore, it is the oldest known, and perhaps the only, example of such piers remaining on the Indian River. Following completion of the pier itself, a wide swath was cut across the barrier island from the Indian River to the Atlantic Ocean and a wide gauge railroad track was laid from the outer end of the pier to the ocean where a bathhouse was built in the same year.<sup>2</sup> A single pushcar, later replaced by a motorized car in 1908-1909, carried passengers and supplies from the pier to their destination on the island.<sup>3,4</sup>

The pier, extending westward from the island approximately 650 feet into the Indian River, is located halfway between Fisherman's Point 1/2 mile to the north and Crab Point 1/2 mile to the south. This cove affords modest protection for the pier and boats moored there, but most importantly, the pier was situated where the island has its narrowest width (5/10 of a mile) for many miles north or south. Thus, the pier with its railroad was the most popular and only practicable access to the island for many miles in either direction. Excursion boats from the early settlements of Titusville (40 miles north) and Rockledge (18 miles north), as well as other mainland communities, brought winter tourists downriver to dock at this pier to enjoy a day's outing at the beach.<sup>5</sup>

Beginning with the sailboat Adelaide, followed by the motorboats Jessie B., Ida Mae, and the Atlantic, the Beaujean family owned and operated a series of ferries from the pier

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1.37 acres

Quadrangle name Melbourne East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The pier is located centrally within the Town of Melbourne Beach at the western terminus of Ocean Avenue, the main east-west street, and the southern terminus of Riverside Drive. Twelve feet wide, it extends approximately 650 feet westward from Ocean Avenue into the Indian River.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Louis W. Conroy/Paul L. Weaver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Division of Archives date February 29, 1984

street & number The Capitol telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *George W. Percy*

title George W. Percy, State Historic Preservation Officer date 2/29/84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Entered in the  
National Register

*John Melrose Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

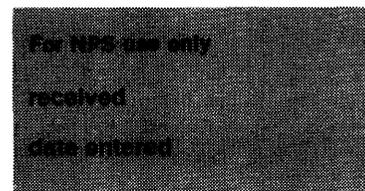
date 4/12/84

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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across the river to the settlement of Melbourne. Regular ferry service of five round-trips daily provided the community's only link to the mainland.<sup>6</sup> Grocery orders sent across on the morning ferry would be left at one of Melbourne's grocery stores and then picked up on a later trip to be placed on the railroad pushcar and delivered house to house down Ocean Avenue.<sup>7</sup> Ferry service continued until 1923, carrying passengers, supplies, and mail to and from the Melbourne Beach pier.

In 1891, Rufus Beaujean, one of the original founders of Melbourne Beach, applied for establishment of a Melbourne Beach Post Office, listing the population as 28.<sup>9</sup> The application was approved and trice-weekly mail service began in 1892 with Rufus Beaujean serving as the first Postmaster in his house located at the east end of the pier.<sup>10</sup> Daily mail service began in 1894.<sup>11</sup>

The pier also provided the means whereby lumber and other building materials could be transported from the mainland to Melbourne Beach for construction of the early dwellings of the settlers, as well as the oceanfront bathhouse built in 1889, the Community Chapel built in 1892, and the Villa Marine Hotel built in 1912.<sup>12</sup> Extensive repairs in 1908-1909 and again in 1918 enabled the pier to continue serving the community as its docking facility throughout the years.<sup>13</sup>

Construction in 1921 of a toll bridge between Melbourne and Indialantic-By-The-Sea one and one-half miles to the north and the coming of the motor car to Melbourne Beach ended the pier's importance as a vital link to the mainland. The railroad tracks were removed and ferry service was discontinued in 1923. Since then, the pier has been used primarily for recreational purposes, for fishing and the docking of pleasure craft, serving not only Melbourne Beach residents but residents from neighboring communities throughout the area. Located within one block of the Community Chapel and four other turn-of-the-century buildings, it stands today as a dominant feature of Melbourne Beach and is a cultural reminder of the early days of Melbourne Beach and its way of life.

FOOTNOTES:

<sup>1</sup>Melbourne Beach Advertising Flyer, printed and issued by Incorporators of the Melbourne and Atlantic Railroad Company, 1889.

<sup>2</sup>Grace Cummings, "Brief History of Melbourne Beach." 5 February 1920. (Report delivered to Women's Club of Melbourne Beach; printed in "Melbourne Beach, The First 100 Years," Frank J. Thomas, 1983.)

<sup>3</sup>Interview: Don R. Beaujean by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 12 December 1966. (Taped recording)

<sup>4</sup>Interview: Lida Lawrence by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 10 January 1967. (Taped recording)

<sup>5</sup>Interview: Lida Lawrence by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 10 January 1967. (Taped recording)

<sup>6</sup>Interview: Don R. Beaujean by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 12 December 1966. (Taped recording)

<sup>7</sup>Interview: Ruth Ryckman by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 10 January 1967. (Taped recording)

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<sup>8</sup> Interview: Don R. Beaujean by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 12 December 1966. (Taped recording)

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Post Office Department Application, 11 October 1891, reproduced as Frontispiece in "Melbourne Beach, The First 100 Years," edited by Frank J. Thomas, 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Interview: Lida Lawrence by Frank J. Thomas, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 15 December 1966. (Taped recording)

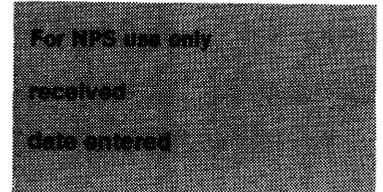
<sup>11</sup> Grace Cummings, "Brief History of Melbourne Beach." 5 February 1920. (Report delivered to Women's Club of Melbourne Beach; printed in "Melbourne Beach, The First 100 Years," Frank J. Thomas 1983.)

<sup>12</sup> Grace Cummings, "Brief History of Melbourne Beach." 5 February 1920. (Report delivered to Women's Club of Melbourne Beach; printed in "Melbourne Beach, The First 100 Years," Frank J. Thomas 1983.)

<sup>13</sup> "Melbourne Beach Improvements." Melbourne Times, Melbourne, Florida, 11 December 1918, p. 1.

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- Beaujean, Don R. by Frank J. Thomas. Interview, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 12 December 1966. (Taped recording on file with Town Historian, Town of Melbourne Beach, Florida.)
- Cummings, Grace. "Brief History of Melbourne Beach." (Unpublished report, 5 February 1920, to Melbourne Beach Women's Club.) Copy on file with Town Historian, Town of Melbourne Beach. Printed in book: Thomas, Frank J., editor. "Melbourne Beach, The First 100 Years." Melbourne, Florida: National Printing, Inc., Printers, 1983.
- Incorporators of the Melbourne and Atlantic Railroad Company. "Wilcox Plat of Melbourne Beach, on Indian River and Atlantic Ocean, Brevard County, Florida." (Advertising brochure issued by Incorporators of the Melbourne and Atlantic Railroad Co.) Copy on file with the Town Historian, Town of Melbourne Beach, Florida. 1889.
- Lawrence, Lida by Frank J. Thomas. Interview, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 15 December 1966. (Taped recording on file with Town Historian, Town of Melbourne Beach, Florida.)
- "Melbourne Beach Improvements." Melbourne Times, Melbourne, Florida, 11 December 1918, p. 1.
- Ryckman, Ruth by Frank J. Thomas. Interview, Melbourne Beach, Florida, 10 January 1967. (Taped recording on file with Town Historian, Town of Melbourne Beach, Florida.)
- U.S. Post Office Department, Office of the First Assistant P.M. General. Untitled statement of application for Melbourne Beach Post Office, signed by Rufus W. Beaujean and certified by John M. Minor, Postmaster, Tillman, Florida (now Palm Bay, Florida). 11 October 1891.

TOWN OF  
MELBOURNE BI  
FLOR

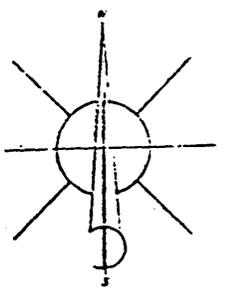
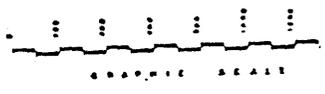


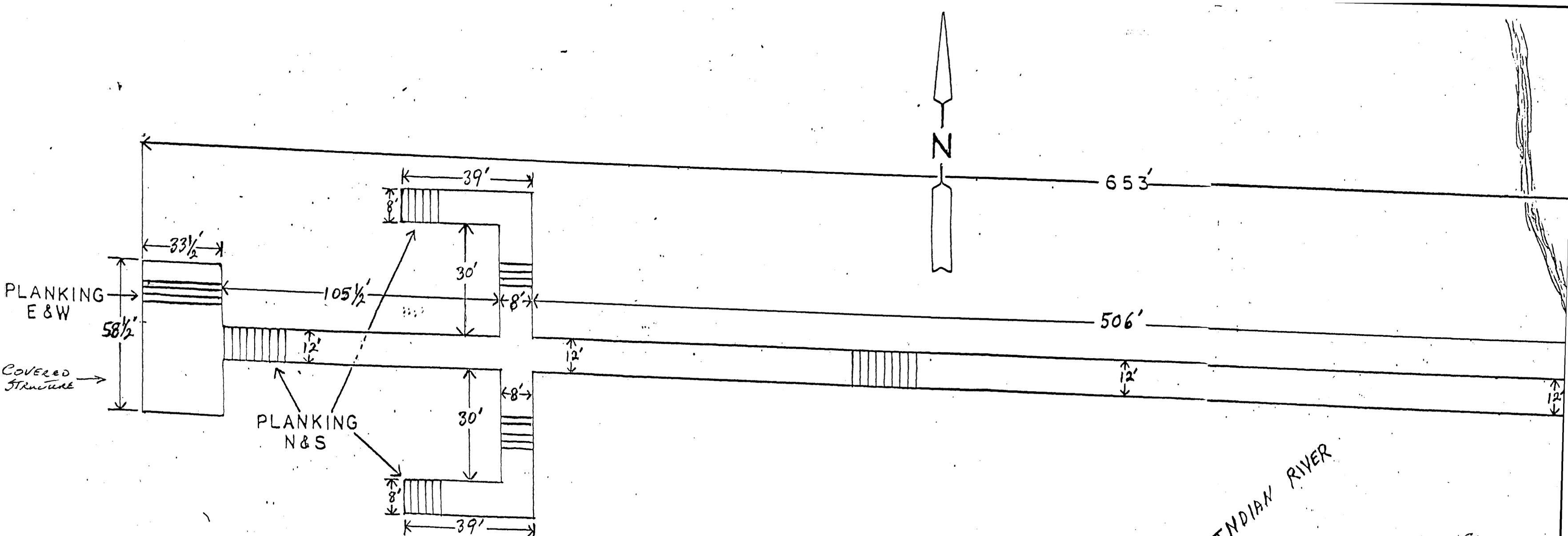
INDIAN RIVER

ATLANTIC OCEAN

ATLANTIC

NOTE: PIER NOT SCALE;  
DRAIN ONLY TO SHOW LOCATION





INDIAN RIVER

NOTE: NOT SCALE;  
DRAWN ONLY TO SHOW  
LOCATION AND TYPE.