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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pigeon Key Historic District  
other names/site number Pigeon Key, 8MO 1260

2. Location

street & number (no addresses on island) N/A not for publication  
city, town Pigeon Key N/A vicinity  
state Florida code FL county Monroe code FL 087 zip code 33040

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>11</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>4</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>15</u>	_____ objects
			<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.  
[Signature] Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer Date 2/6/90  
Florida Department of State - 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.  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. Mark J. Baker Entered in the National Register 16 March 1990  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/institutional housing  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/camp  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/frame vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD  
walls WOOD/clapboard  
CONCRETE  
roof COMPOSITION  
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION/bridge & highway maintenance  
camp

Period of Significance

1912-1940

Significant Dates

1912, 1939, 1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Bureau of Historic Preservation

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property approximately five acres

UTM References

A 17 484300 2732000  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1 of Section 13 of Township 66, south of Range 31 East, containing 5 31/100 Acres as recorded in OR 15, page 374. Actual acreage will vary as mean high water mark is re-evaluated every twenty years.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary follows the legal description historically associated with the key. Boundary is drawn on the legally recorded description at the time of nomination. Due to natural variances in island size due to natural tidal flow, the actual acreage will vary, while the legal description will remain as is, therefore being the most accurate boundary delineage.  See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Vicki L. Welcher - Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date February 5, 1990

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Pigeon Key Historic District

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SUMMARY

Pigeon Key, a five-acre island located at Mile Marker 45 along U.S. Route 1 in the Florida Keys, is composed of a limestone and coral substrata. The island lies between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean and is located at the Moser Channel portion of the Old Seven Mile Bridge (listed in the National Register of Historic Places as Overseas Highway and Railroad Bridges, August 13, 1979). Bridge trestles are extant. The island houses ten contributing wood framed buildings, four contributing structures, and one contributing concrete block building. Non-contributing resources are limited to one concrete block storage shed and one concrete block garage for a total of seventeen resources located on the island.

ORIGINAL AND PRESENT SETTING

The site is accessed by a wooden vehicular ramp descending from the old Overseas Highway, opened in 1938. Native and exotic tropical vegetation landscaping the island contain the following: Australian pines, coconut and date palms, key lime trees, sea grapes, mahoe and banana bushes, brazilian peppers, norfolk pines, umbrella trees, tropical almond trees, gumbo lumbo trees, cork trees, bird of paradise, orchids, oleander and scrub bushes. Walkways between the buildings and several concrete cisterns are evident and date from the historic period. A wooden dock exists at the north end of Pigeon Key and, at the south end of the key is a saltwater pool dating from 1940.

A limited archeological survey conducted in 1988 indicated "potentially significant historic refuse that could provide information on railroad camp substance during the building of the railroad." Additionally, "some marine shell refuse and faunal bone elements suggests the remnants of a prehistoric camp."

PRESENT APPEARANCE

The physical condition and architectural integrity of all historic buildings is good. Alterations, or small additions to the historic buildings are compatible in terms of size, scale, and materials. Pigeon Key is an extraordinary and unique site that retains a significant historic cohesiveness.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Pigeon Key Historic District

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1. Building #919, Section Gang's Quarters

The c. 1912 structure is a one story wood frame building set on concrete piers with board and batten siding. The building retains the original sheathing with some replacement clapboard siding. The building is basically rectangular in plan, featuring a screened front porch (facing south), an enclosed entry porch (facing north), square window openings with original horizontal wood louvered windows, and a gable roof with tin shingles. The interior contains one large room with a kitchen to the rear. The extant wood floors have been covered with tile, and wood walls are exposed. It is believed that the building was enlarged using the outbuildings located on the island in 1940. (See Photos 2, 3, 4)

2. Negro Workers' Cottage

This c. 1912 one story, wood framed board and batten cottage, originally used to house black railroad workers, rests on concrete piers. A shed roofed front porch covers the entrance which contains a small louvered transom. Interior wood walls and floors are extant and covered by panelling and linoleum. A small addition at the rear of building is of a compatible design, exhibiting novelty siding. The building was moved from its original location next to #918 in 1940, and is listed on the 1915 plat of Pigeon Key as "Private Cottage."  
(See Photo 2 )

3. Building #1178, Paint Foreman's House

Plans dated May 4, 1916, depict this structure as a wood framed rectangular building with a gable roof covered with tin. The present appearance concurs with the original floor plans which show front and rear porches and 5 interior rooms: living room, 2 bedrooms, hallway and dining/kitchen area. Fenestration is regular, with 2/2 double hung sash windows on the main facade, and original wood louvered windows at all elevations, and a central entrance. The building sits on 5-foot concrete piers and features board and batten exterior sheathing. The wood front porch is distinguished by 4x4 columns, entry stairs, 1x8 flooring. A wooden balustrade with square-cut balusters has been added. A small rectangular addition with screen windows was been added on the south elevation during the historic period. The wood floors and walls have been retained, although covered with linoleum tile and panelling. (See Photos 5, 6, 14)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Pigeon Key Historic District

## 4. Building #918, Assistant Bridge Tender's House

This c. 1912 wood frame house exhibits materials and simple details that characterize the various Pigeon Key residences: clapboard siding; 5-foot concrete piers; central wood steps to the screened wood front porch; a central entry to the living room; and rectangular fenestration with 2/2 double hung sash or square wood sliding doors. There is a gable roof, originally covered with flintkote, and recovered with tin shingles in 1939-40. The building was expanded in 1939-40 to accommodate the families of bridge workers.

The plans for Building #918, dated May 2, 1916, reflect an L-shaped floor plan that includes a front porch, living room, one bedroom, a kitchen/dining room and a rear porch. 1939 Alterations include enclosing the front porch and adding a small addition. The interior spaces are unaltered with the original wood walls and floors intact and covered with panelling or linoleum, respectively. (See Photos 8, 10, 14, 18)

## 5. Building #917, Bridge Tender's House

Constructed prior to 1915, the wood framed building with a square plan, steep pitched tinned gable roof and a small shed roofed front roof dormer rests on original five foot concrete piers. The 5-bay facade is distinguished by square wood columns and a wood balustraded porch. Exterior sheathing is clapboard. "Bahama-style" shutters, covered with tin, have been added. Fenestration is regular with 6/6 double hung sash windows. (See Photos 9, 10, 14)

## 6. Building #1335, Bridge Foreman's House

The c. 1912 two story wood framed bridge foreman's house is located at the edge of the Bay of Florida on the west side of the key. It has a rectangular plan with a hipped roof covered with tin shingles, shed roofed front and rear porches and gabled, front and rear roof dormers. Exterior sheathing is clapboard. The rear porch has three bays, and square 6x6 wooden columns with supports to the secondary roof and a wood balustrade. Windows are double hung sash, awning and covered. Concrete foundation piers are one or two feet in height. (See Photos 11, 12)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

Pigeon Key Historic District

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7. Building #1580, Railroad Worker's House

This c. 1912 wood framed board and batten residential building is one story with a shed roofed addition at the rear elevation, which faces the bay waters. The building is evident on the 1915 Map of Pigeon Key. The wood braces rest on two foot concrete piers, painted white. The double hung sash window on the east elevation has been altered with glass louvers. Wooden top-latched shutters for hurricane protection are extant. A small front porch, or stoop, exists. The gable roof has two auxiliary shed roofs. (See Photos 15, 16)

8. Cottage

The cottage is a small wood framed building with a tin shingled gable roof, clapboard siding, a front porch with square posts, central door with screen door, and rectangular windows. Erected in 1940 for residential housing, the structure is compatible architecturally with the simple plain vernacular style evident on Pigeon Key during the earlier period of construction. (See Photo 13)

9. Dock

The dock, constructed prior to 1938, is constructed of rough cut pine boards on wood pilings. Decking was replaced several times but has retained its original piers and configuration. An earlier c.1912 dock was located to the left, south, side of the Bridge Foreman's House.

10. Ramp

Constructed in 1938 out of wooden railroad ties from the defunct Overseas Railroad, the ramp is located at the southern end of the island. The ramp connects the island to the Old Seven Mile Bridge and is the only remaining section of the Overseas Railroad retaining the original fourteen foot length. A wooden guardrail with kneeboard flanks the ramp.

11. Bridge

The portion of the Old Seven Mile Bridge that extends over Pigeon Key contains the original splayed trestles from the Overseas Railroad which are topped by the twenty foot wide road



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Pigeon Key Historic District

---

bed of the original Seven Mile Bridge. This is the only section of both these projects remaining on land in the Florida Keys and is part of the National Register listing for the Overseas Highway and Railroad Bridges.

12. Generator Shed

The shed c. 1938 is a small, square wood framed building which serves as a storage shed for generators that supply power to the island. The shed sits at the edge of the key. (See Photo 17)

13. Saltwater Pool

Constructed c. 1939-40 as part of the renovations of the island at the completion of the Overseas Highway, the saltwater pool today is approximately twenty five yards long, ten yards wide, and eight feet deep with a small opening at the northeast corner. A foot wide concrete walkway surrounds the pool and acts as decking. The pool contains two cast iron steps leading down to the natural strata bottom at the southwest and northeast corners, respectively.

14. Public Washrooms

Also constructed in 1939-40, the one story concrete block structure contains two small rooms with toilet facilities for men and women.

15. Pool Shed

This one story wood framed shed first appears adjacent to the saltwater pool area in 1938. However, its simplistic utilitarian design indicates it could date from the earlier period, possibly as an outhouse located in the general area in the plat map of 1915.

Non-Contributing Resources

16. CBS Garage Building

Constructed c. 1976, this one story concrete block structure houses three cars and has overhead retractable aluminum bay doors at the east elevation.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 6

Pigeon Key Historic District

---

17. CBS Shed

Constructed adjacent to the wood framed shed at the northwest end of the island, this one story concrete block structure houses electrical and gardening equipment for the island. It is believed the building dates from the mid-1970s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 7

Pigeon Key Historic District

1. #919-Section Gang's Quarters	c.1912	WOOD
2. Negro Workers' Cottage	c.1912	WOOD
3. #1178-Paint Foreman's House	c.1912	WOOD
4. #918-Assistant Bridge Tender's House	c.1912	WOOD
5. #917-Bridge Tender's House	c.1912	WOOD
6. #1335-Bridge Foreman's House	c.1912	WOOD
7. #1580-Railroad Worker's House	c.1912	WOOD
8. Private Cottage	c.1940	WOOD
9. Bridge	1908, 1938	CONCRETE
10. Ramp	c.1939	WOOD
11. Dock	c.1938	WOOD
12. Shed	c.1940	WOOD
13. Pool	c.1938	CONCRETE
14. Public Restrooms	c.1940	CONCRETE
15. Pool Shed	c.1938	WOOD
16. Garage	c.1976	CONCRETE
17. Shed	c.1976	CONCRETE

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES	15
NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES	2
TOTAL	17

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Pigeon Key Historic District

## SUMMARY

Pigeon Key Historic District, situated at Mile Marker 45 on U. S. Route 1 in the Florida Keys, is significant at the state level under Criterion A for its association with the Florida East Coast Railway and the Overseas Highway as a workers' camp from 1912-1938 and as the only collection of this type of vernacular architecture remaining intact in the state. The eleven contributing buildings and four contributing structures on Pigeon Key are significant at the state level under Criterion C as the only remaining complex directly related to the construction of the both the Overseas Railroad and Overseas Highway. The utilitarian buildings are all that remain of the workers' camps which dotted the Florida Keys from 1912 to 1938. The district has historic significance dating from 1912 when the buildings were first constructed, through 1940, when the island was renovated to accommodate the bridge workers for the nearby bascule of the Seven Mile Bridge. The district is isolated, reached only by the vehicular wooden ramp that descends from the old Overseas Highway.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF FLAGLER'S RAILROAD

The notion of a railroad traversing the Florida mainland over one-hundred and fifty six miles to Key West was conceived long before Henry Morrison Flagler planned the Key West Extension of the Florida East Coast Railroad at the beginning of the twentieth century. As early as 1831, the Key West Gazette advocated construction of such a route and, in 1835, a second Key West editor echoed the same sentiment. Since no railroad had been built in the peninsula of Florida at that time, the proposals were likely attributed to the "railroad fever" that had gripped territorial and state governments in the 1830s. In later years, southern spokesmen championed the notion of constructing a railway to Key West. In the 1850s, Senator Stephen Mallory, a Key West resident and chairman of the Senate's Rivers and Harbors Committee in Washington, set forth a report in Congress describing the advantage to the United States of a railway to Key West. He thought the road was necessary to bring needed supplies to Key West, which he called the "American Gibraltar." In 1894, Jefferson B. Browne, Collector of Customs for the Port of Key

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Pigeon Key Historic District

West, published an article in National Geographic Magazine outlining the advantages of a direct rail route to the mainland from Key West. He appealed to Henry M. Flagler to extend his railroad line all the way down Florida's East Coast to Key West.

Henry Morrison Flagler constructed the Florida East Coast Railroad (FEC); an all Florida enterprise, he was sole owner and architect of its design and fortunes. Flagler rose from comparative obscurity in a Connecticut family to amass a fortune as a John D. Rockefeller's partner in the Standard Oil Company. His Florida ventures constituted a second major business enterprise at a time which, due to advanced age of 72, he might reasonably have been expected to retire.

So inseparably linked were hotels and railroads in Flagler's plan that it is impossible to determine which was the more significant. In 1885, he began to improve railroad service to St. Augustine by purchasing the thirty-six mile Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Halifax River Railroad and rebuilding it. In 1888, he added the St. Augustine and Palatka and the St. Johns and Halifax, making possible continuous service from south Jacksonville to Daytona.

In 1893, Flagler built his own railway lines along the previously untouched lower east coast. The mammoth transportation venture, which took over two decades to accomplish, speeded the process of settlement in Florida through the land promotion activities of the railroad system. It was not until 1895, when the official name for the Flagler railway was changed from the Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Indian River Railway ( changed from Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Halifax River Railroad) to the Florida East Coast Railway, that Flagler gave any indication that Key West might possibly be his intended destination.

## OVERSEAS RAILWAY

With the exception of the Key West Extension of the Florida East Coast Railroad, major railway construction in Florida had ended by 1900. After extensive surveys to select the most feasible route, construction following the line of the Florida Keys began in 1905. The one hundred and fifty six mile Key West Extension of the FEC, also known as the Overseas Railway, was often referred to during its construction as "Flagler's Folly", by foes and "The Eighth Wonder of the World" by advocates.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

Pigeon Key Historic District

In April, 1905, the extension began in Homestead, Florida, a small town that served as the current terminus of the FEC. The project was unique with over thirty six bridges connecting fifteen keys. The three main viaducts spanning the ocean waters along the Florida Keys, known as Long Key Bridge, Knights Key Bridge and Bahia Honda Bridge, were representative of the extraordinary engineering involved in the project. Long Key Bridge was two and one quarter miles in length, built on arched spans of reinforced concrete rock; Knights Key Bridge (Seven Mile Bridge), more than seven miles in length, had a draw over Moser Channel, a direct passage between the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico; and Bahia Honda Bridge, a truss structure, was nearly one mile in length.

Equipment employed during the course of construction included 27 launches, 8 stern-wheel steamers brought from the Mississippi, 3 tugs, 12 dredges, 8 concrete mixers, 12 steam pile drivers, 10 power excavators, 8 derrick barges, 150 lighters, two steel barges, six locomotive cranes and two sea-going steamers for handling concrete in bulk. The company maintained an extensive plant for repairing its own machinery at Boot Key harbor. There was a marine railway for repairing vessels and floating equipment, boiler and machine shops, saw mill and an electric welding plant. Flagler established an important terminus at Knights Key where German ships carrying special concrete could dock.

The work force of laborers was composed primarily of immigrant workers from New York, Philadelphia, or natives of the Caribbean Islands. The housing conditions were harsh and isolated. Workers' camps of long frame buildings for mess halls and dormitories were established on the various islands, including Pigeon Key, from 1906 until completion of the railway in 1912. The camps where the men lived were located at various places along the keys, depending upon the location of the work at any given time. Each camp was under the entire supervision of the engineer where workers got their board and lodging in addition to an average salary of \$1.00 a week.

The Key West Extension was completed in eight years at a cost of \$20,000,000. It employed thousands of skilled and unskilled laborers as well as some of the best engineers, divers and specialized personnel of the time. Once the railroad

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Pigeon Key Historic District

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was completed, the FEC constructed workers camps for the bridge tenders, civil engineers and maintenance personnel necessary to maintain the four bridges and seemingly endless miles of track.

The Overseas Railroad was never a profitable enterprise for Flagler. Although the railroad provided Key West with continuing service to the mainland, the population of Key West remained constant as the rest of Florida surged into the 1920s Land Boom. The railroad did, however, provided Key West with such commodities as fresh water, a consistent supply of food and housing materials, and tourists. The route continued to operate for twenty-three years, until a disastrous hurricane on Labor Day, 1935, destroyed the FEC route and killed over 400 people.

### OVERSEAS HIGHWAY

The Florida Land Boom of the 1920s created the demand for an overseas highway that would run parallel to Flagler's Overseas Railroad. In 1923, the Dixie Highway was extended to the east coast from Florida City. By 1928, with the exception of a 40-mile gap over water, a highway had extended to Key West. The gap was traversed by ferry, but the situation was less than satisfactory.

In 1933, the Florida Legislature established the Overseas Road and Toll Bridge District to bridge the water gap of the Florida Keys Dixie Highway. The following year, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration began employing World War I veterans to aid in the construction of the project. By 1935, the project had been taken over by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). On September 2, 1935, over 400 WPA workers and 41 miles of the FEC tracks and trestles were swept away in a major hurricane that hit the Florida Keys. Already deep in debt, the FEC abandoned the Overseas Railroad and sold its bridges and right of ways to the State of Florida for \$640,000.

The Public Works Administration and the State combined their resources in 1936 and began work converting the railroad tracks and bridges into highway spans and roads. That same year, authority was transferred from the State of Florida to the Monroe County Toll Bridge Commission. The first section was opened in January, 1938 with the entire road opened six months later. In 1958, the Toll Bridge Commission was disbanded and maintenance taken over by the Florida Department of Transportation.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5

Pigeon Key Historic District

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE  
RAILROAD-CRITERION A

The work force for the Overseas Railroad averaged 3,000 men and during periods of peak activity, reached as high as 4,000. To house these workers, workers camps were established on major keys at the most strategic locations possible. One of the most strategic of these camps was Pigeon Key. Located immediately south of Knights Key, Pigeon Key lies directly in the path of the Seven Mile Bridge.

Historically, the Pigeon Key Camp served as an integral residential site for the Florida East Coast Railway, Flagler's railroad system which provided the impetus for the development of the east coast of Florida and, in particular, the Florida Keys. The earliest railroad camp on Pigeon Key was little more than a collection of tents erected in 1906 to house the Flagler surveyors. A more "permanent" camp, which included unpainted wooden dormitories, mess halls and tent sites for hundreds of railroad workers was established in 1908, after the completion of the Knight's Key Dock, the key immediately north of Pigeon Key. Major Hurricanes in 1909 and 1910 demolished all of those precarious frame buildings.

Beginning in 1912, more substantial frame buildings were erected by the East Coast Railway. An August 30, 1915, plat of Pigeon Key shows twelve buildings, a platform, water towers and a dock. Seven of those structures are extant: the Section Gang's Quarters, the Paint Foremen's House, the Bridge Tender's House #918 (later called the Assistant Bridge Tender's House), the Bridge Tender's House #917, the Bridge Foreman's House, a Private Cottage, and a worker's cottage. Each of these seven buildings are compatible resources, significant to the historic and architectural development of the District, that possess compatible design elements and maintain the scale, use and texture of the district.

This camp for Florida East Coast workers was manned continuously during the next twenty-three years. It became one of two base camps for the FEC, the other being located on Marathon. The only other known permanent housing for the railroad workers was located within the Town of Key West.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6

Pigeon Key Historic District

During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps, in conjunction with the Works Progress Administration, employed 684 World War I veterans and established workers housing at three locations in the Keys. During the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935, the other two CCC camps were completely destroyed, with a substantial loss of life. The camp at Pigeon Key (at that time still a parcel of the FEC) not only survived intact, but became a center for relief personnel. The hurricane completely destroyed the Overseas Railroad, and the Florida East Coast Railroad turned over Pigeon Key to the State of Florida.

## OVERSEAS HIGHWAY

Pigeon Key, unlike the CCC camps located at Islamorada and Marathon, sustained little damage in the hurricane. Various reports and accounts of the devastation record Pigeon Key as the only settlement within 40 miles that had not been destroyed. Because of this, the key became the base for the relief and evacuation efforts.

The Florida State Road Department assumed management of the Key after the 1935 hurricane. Already established at the very center of the devastated area, Pigeon Key was a natural base for the reconstruction of the bridges and trestles for the new Overseas Highway. Workers were housed at the Key until the completion of the highway in 1938.

In 1939 and 1940, the island and the overseas highway were renovated to fulfill the needs of the new bridge tenders and road workers for the Seven Mile Bridge and bascule. Located immediately north of the Pigeon Key, the island was a natural location to house these workers. Using old railroad ties for the Overseas Railroad, a ramp leading down to the island was constructed on the southern side of the island. Public restroom facilities were constructed at the base of the ramp. In addition, a saltwater pool was constructed on the east end of the island and buildings # 919 and #918 were modified to accommodate a larger number of permanent residents.

Pigeon Key was run from 1941 to 1945 by J. Frank Gough, a well known hosteler, who often housed some of his tenants at the island also. Pigeon Key subsequently became a retreat and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7

Pigeon Key Historic District

playground for officials of the Overseas Road and Toll Bridge District until the district was dissolved in 1958. In the 1970s, Pigeon Key was leased to the University of Miami to serve as a research facility for marine research.

## CONCLUSION

Pigeon Key Historic District is extremely significant as the only resource directly related to both the Flagler Florida East Coast Railroad's Florida Keys Extension and the Overseas Highway. No other base camps, workers camps, or other structures remain from the FEC era. Although the Seven Mile Bridge and Bahia Honda Bridge structures remain, they both were widened and modified in 1935-38 as the Overseas Highway. The massive concrete trestles on Pigeon Key stand as the last remaining remnants on land of a monumental undertaking that overcame seemingly insurmountable odds. It was the culmination of labor of thousands of workers that completed what even the most valiant supporters of Flagler's Folly dared to believe was possible.

Pigeon Key Historic District is an excellent example of the wood framed structures used to house the workers of the Overseas Railroad and Overseas Highway. The buildings, while plain, were utilitarian while providing as much comfort as possible to the residents. This district, is typical of the type of structure built by a company to provide shelter and sanitary conditions as were possible at that time.

Pigeon Key is one of two districts in Monroe County that contain wood framed structures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the only one relating to the Flagler and Overseas Highway projects. In addition to their significance as representative samples of railroad workers' houses, they are also rare in that, unlike Key West Historic District, which is partially protected from the harsh subtropical weather, Pigeon Key has withstood numerous hurricanes, termite infestations, and adverse weather conditions. Additionally, the structures on Pigeon Key have retained their 1940 configurations to a remarkable extent, having not had the pressure to modernize that Key West experienced. The extant materials, historic fabric and workmanship within the boundaries of an island contribute to a sense of architectural cohesiveness and accurately portray a piece of Florida's past.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   1  

Pigeon Key Historic District

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- Akin, Edward N. Flagler: Rockefeller Partner and Florida Baron.  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number        Photos        Page   1  

Pigeon Key Historic District

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1. Pigeon Key Historic District
2. Pigeon Key, Florida
3. Sharon Wells
4. 1989
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation
6. Seven Mile Bridge facing northeast
7. Photo 1

Items 1-5 are identical for photos 1-9, 11-13, 15, 17-20

6. Building #919, Negro Cottage, 1940s Cottage facing north
7. Photo 2

6. Detail of Building #919 facing west
7. Photo 3

6. Building #919 facing southwest
7. Photo 4

6. Building #1178 facing southeast
7. Photo 5

6. Building #1178 facing southwest
7. Photo 6

6. Negro Worker's Cottage facing east
7. Photo 7

6. Building #919 facing northwest
7. Photo 8

6. Building #917 facing south
7. Photo 9

1. Pigeon Key Historic District
2. Pigeon Key, Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1940
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation
6. Buildings #918 and 917 facing northeast
7. Photo 10

6. Building #1335 facing west
7. Photo 11

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number      Photos      Page   2  

Pigeon Key Historic District

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6. Building #1335 and dock facing east
7. Photo 12
  
6. 1940s Cottage facing north
7. Photo 13
  
1. Pigeon Key Historic District
2. Pigeon Key, Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1940
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation
6. Buildings #918 and 917 and 1178 facing south
7. Photo 14
  
6. Railroad Workers' House facing west
7. Photo 15
  
1. Pigeon Key Historic District
2. Pigeon Key, Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1940
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation
6. Railroad Workers' House facing west
7. Photo 16
  
6. Generator Shed facing northwest
7. Photo 17
  
6. Building #918 facing southeast
7. Photo 18
  
6. Ramp at Pigeon Key facing northwest
7. Photo 19
  
6. Saltwater Pool at Pigeon Key facing east
7. Photo 20
  
1. Pigeon Key Historic District
2. Pigeon Key, Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1938
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation
6. Pigeon Key at opening of Overseas Highway facing west
7. Photo 21

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

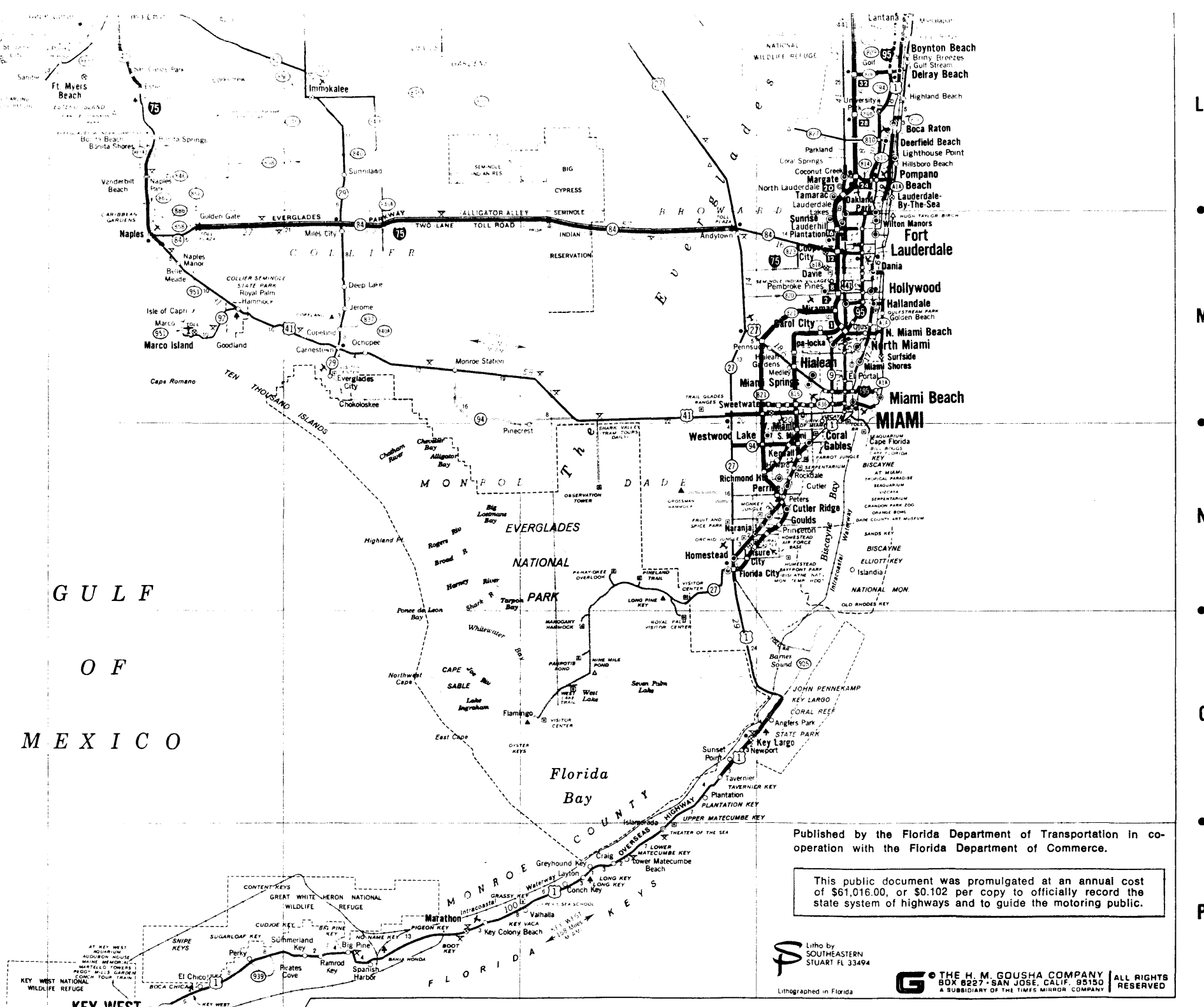
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

Pigeon Key Historic District

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1. Pigeon Key Historic District
2. Pigeon Key, Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1949
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation
6. Pigeon Key facing west
7. Photo 22



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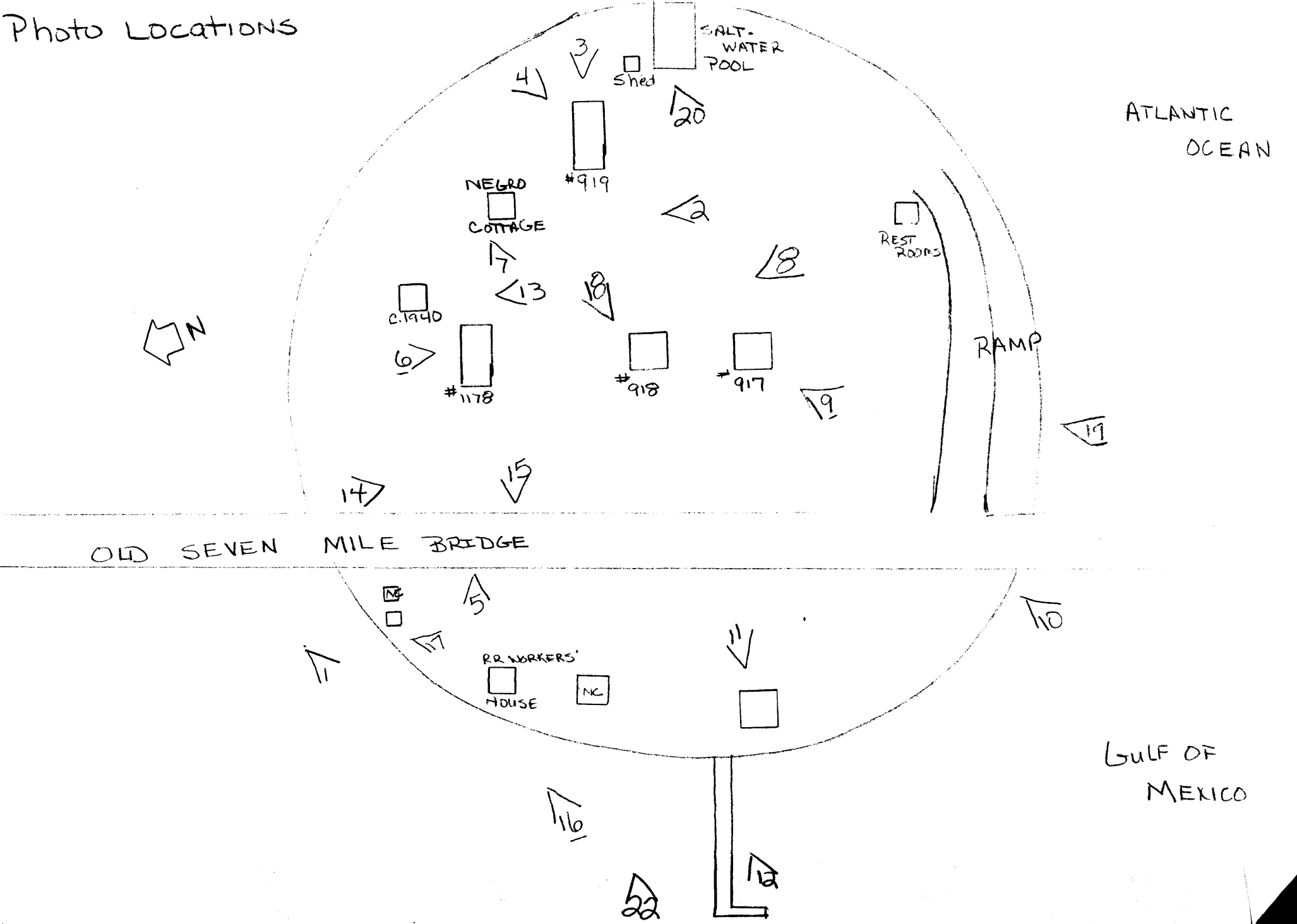
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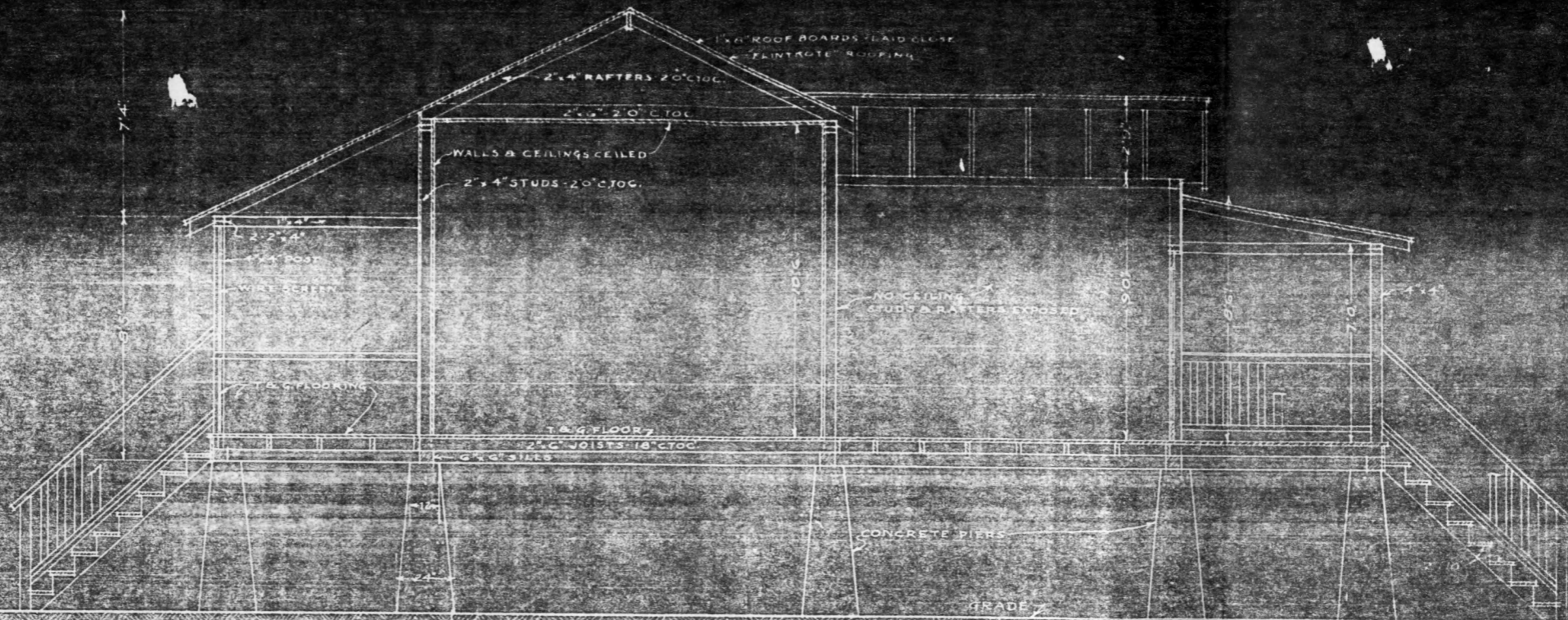
SKETCH MAP

PIGEON Key

Photo LOCATIONS

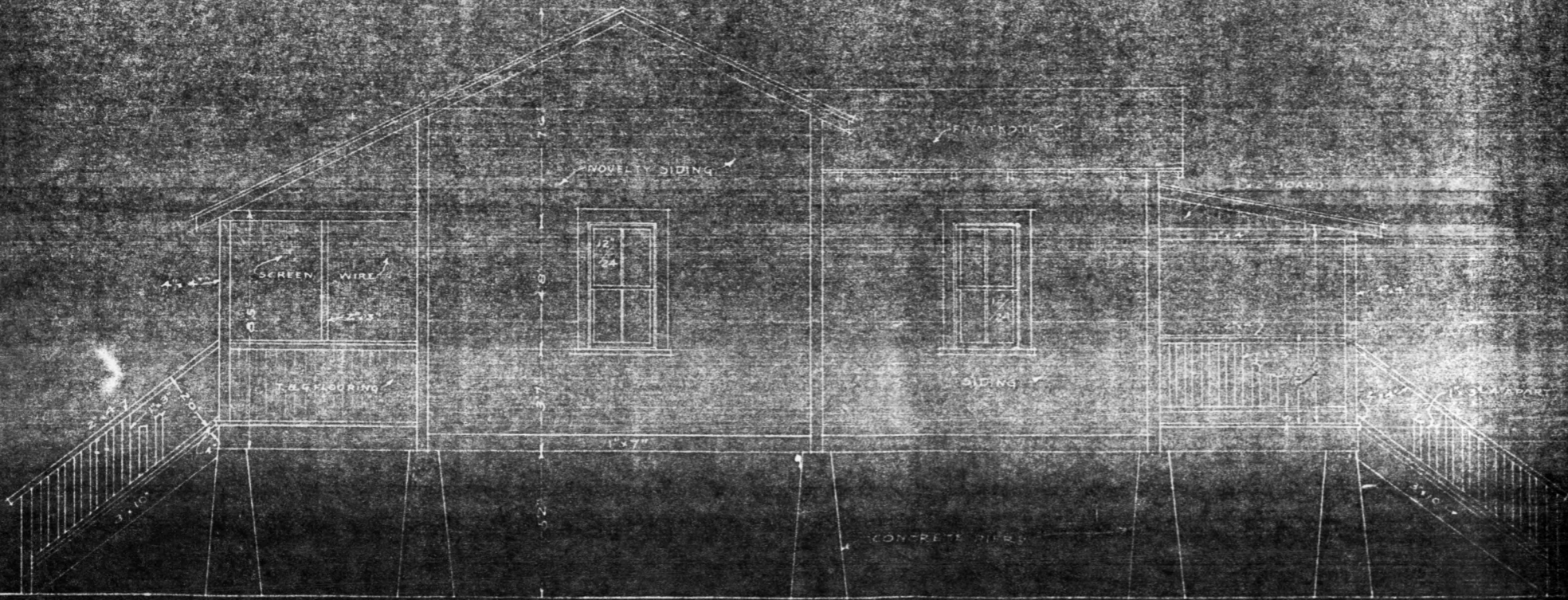




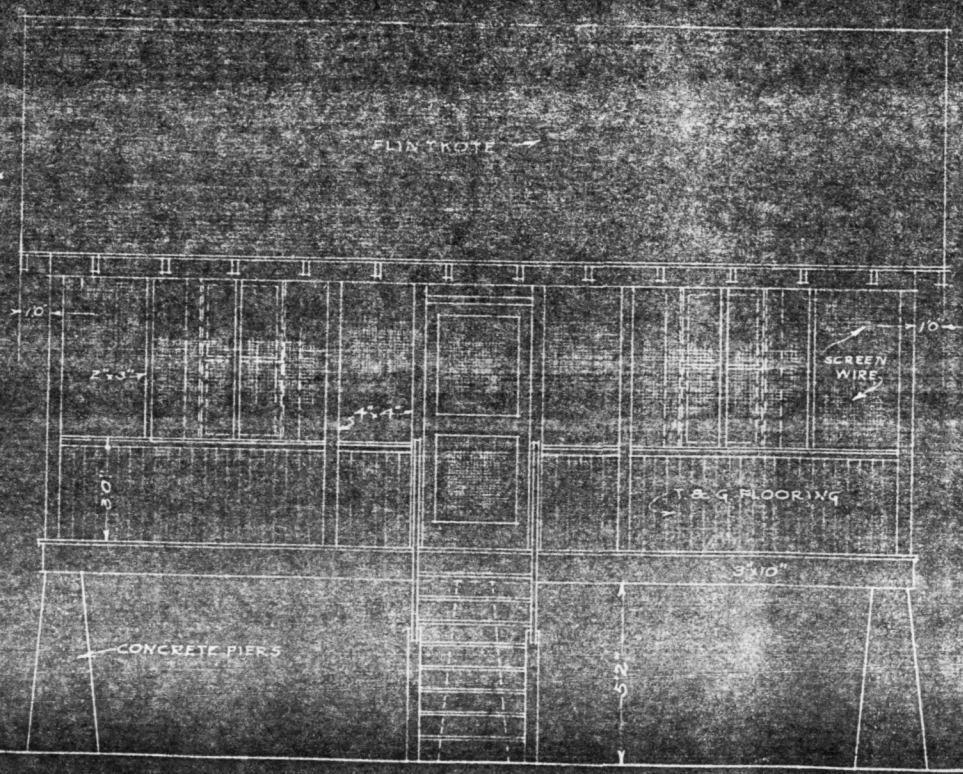


SECTION AT A-B

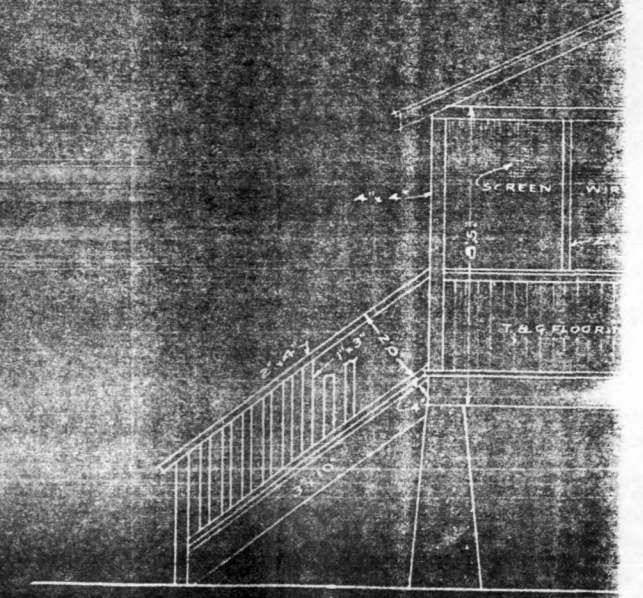
F. E. C. Ry Co.  
 ASST. BRIDGE TENDERS HOUSE  
 PIGEON KEY, FLA.  
 SCALE 1/4" = 1' 0" FAH. MAY 2, 1916

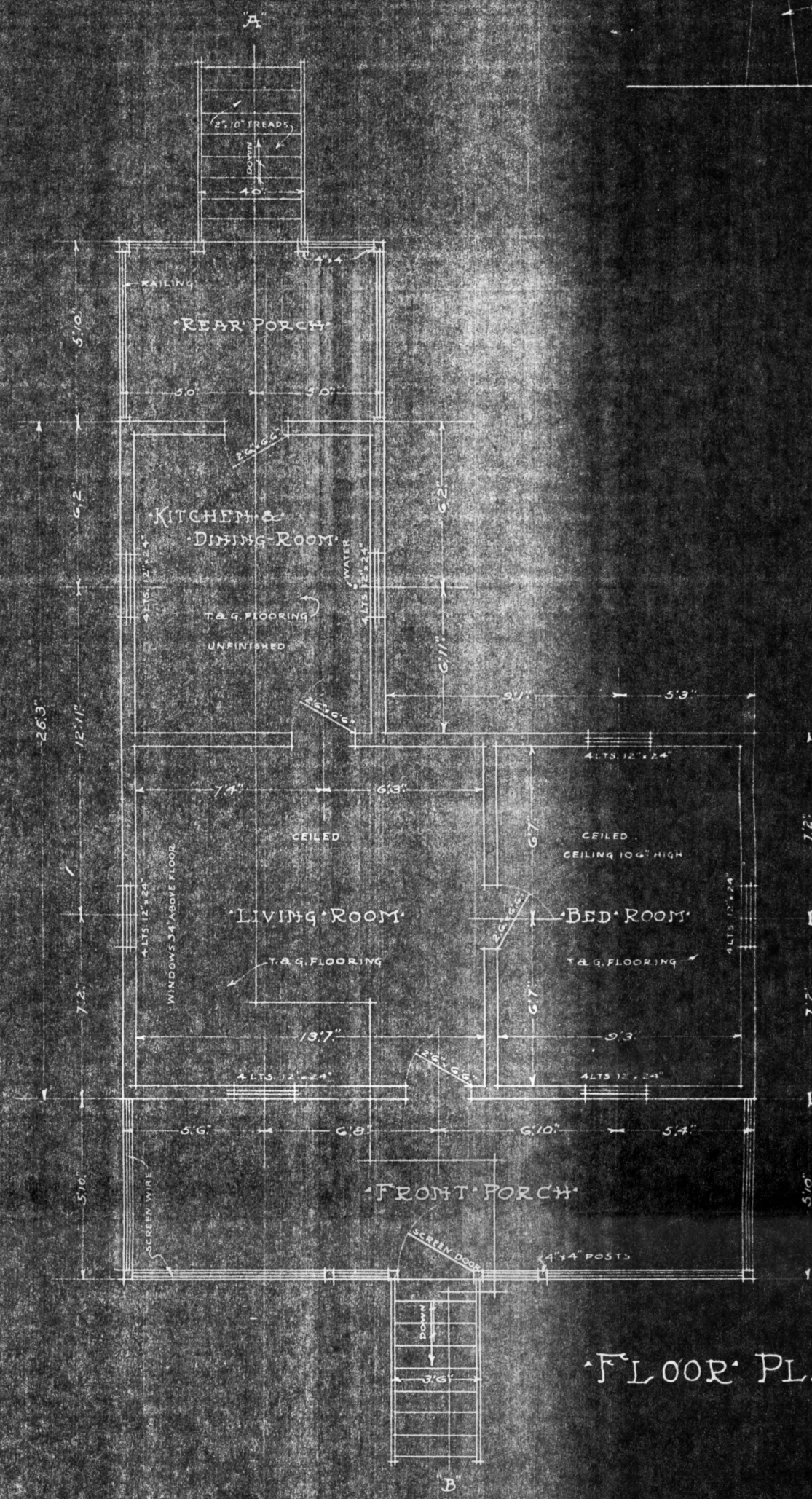


SIDE ELEVATION

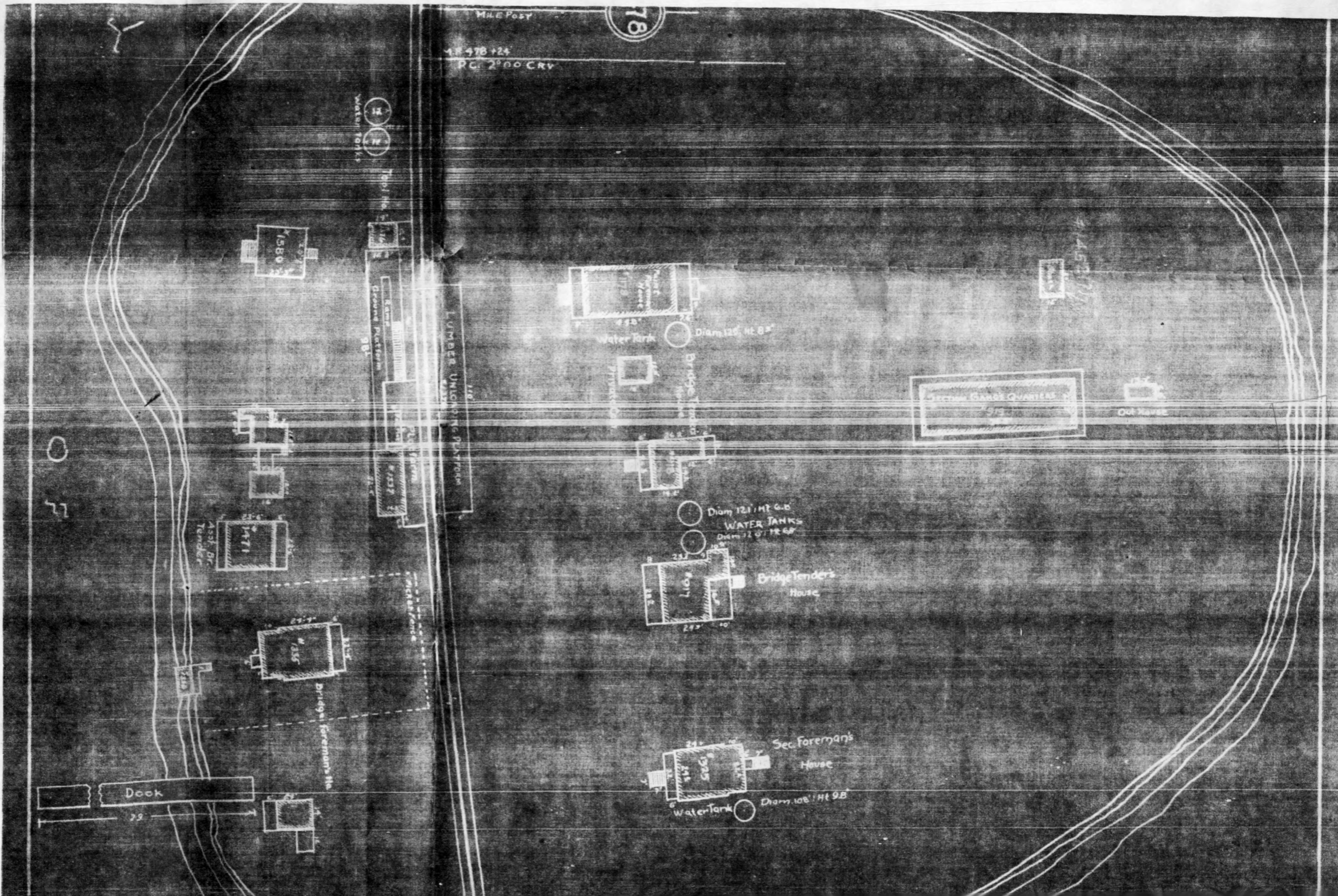


FRONT ELEVATION





FLOOR PLAN



MILE POST 78

1.8 478+25  
PC 2°00' CRV

WATER TOWER

1580

LUMBER UNLOADING PLATFORM

Water Tank

Diam 125' Ht 85'

Bridge Tender

Diam 121' Ht 60'

110

Bridge Tender's House

SECRET GARBAGE QUARTERS

Out House

3rd Br. Tender

135

Bridge Foreman's Hq.

Deck

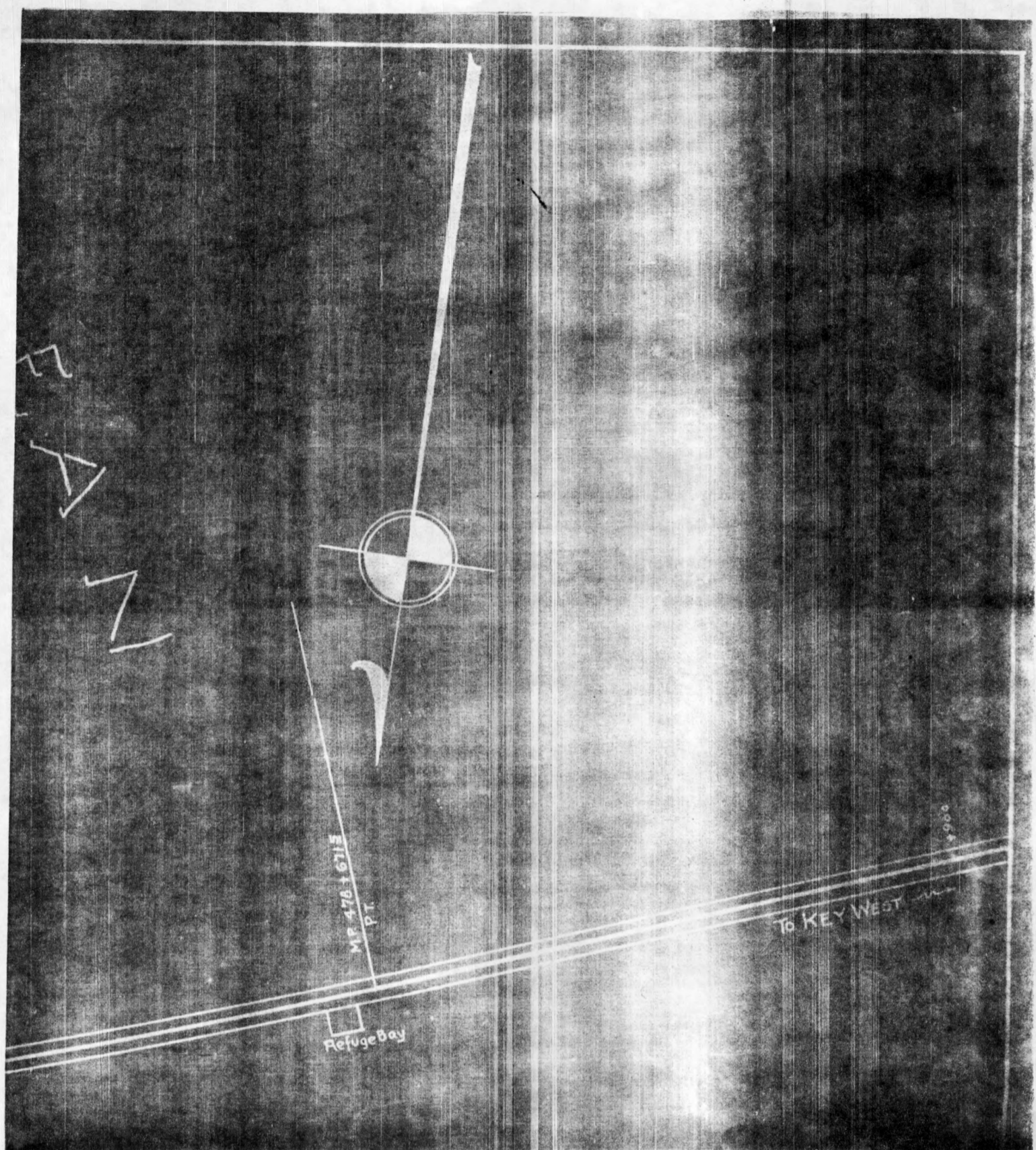
108

Sec Foreman's House

Water Tank

Diam 108' Ht 98'

PLAN

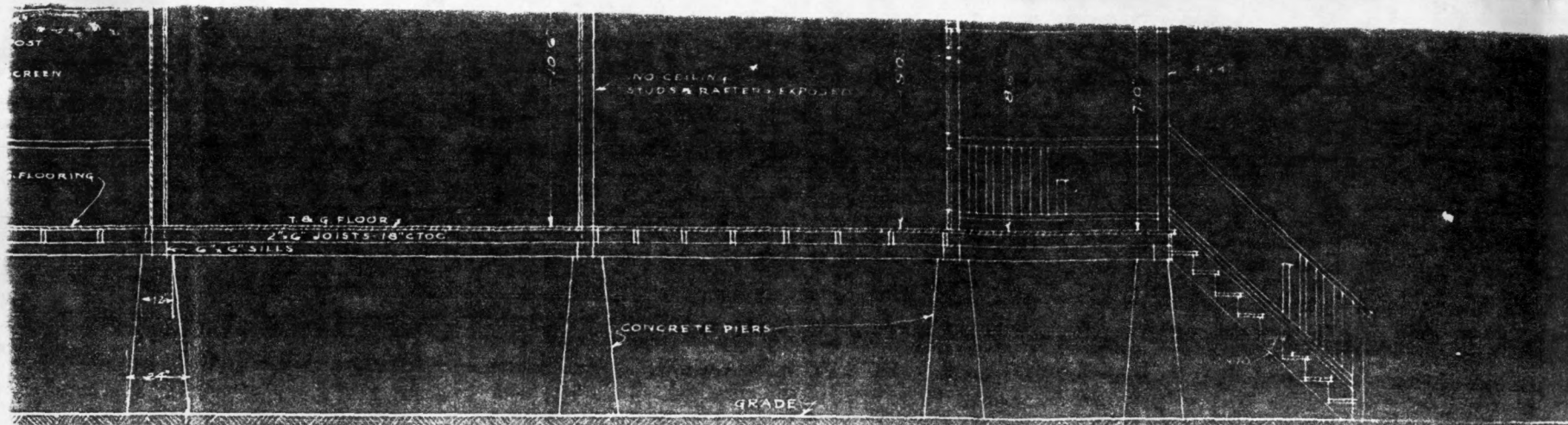


PLAN

F. E. O. P.  
 MAP OF  
**PIGEON KEY**

Scale-1in=50ft  
 AUG 30 1915  
 Office of Engineer Maint. of Ways  
 St Augustine, Fla.  
 G.M.  
 A REVISION OF PLAN A-1-312  
 1826-17 J. G. S.

A-1  
 312



SECTION AT A-B

F. E. C. Ry. Co.  
 ASST. BRIDGE TENDERS HOUSE  
 PIGEON KEY, FLA.  
 SCALE 1/4" = 10' FAH MAY 2, 1916

BUILDING NO. 918

(52)