

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

For NPS use only
received MAR 11 1985
date entered APR 11 1985

1. Name

historic Freedman-Raulerson House

and/or common Old Raulerson House

2. Location

street & number 600 South Parrott Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Okeechobee N/A vicinity of

state Florida code 012 county Okeechobee code 093

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Christina P. Hooker

street & number 1902 S.W. 3rd Avenue

city, town Okeechobee N/A vicinity of state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Okeechobee County Courthouse

street & number 304 N.W. 2nd Street

city, town Okeechobee 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

7. Description

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	date <u>June 1983</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Freedman-Raulerson House is a two-story, concrete block and stucco building located in Okeechobee, Florida. The two-story portion of the building was constructed in 1925 by the Okeechobee builder Lou Hough and represents an early use of concrete block construction in the community. In 1926, a single-story, Mission style addition was made to the southeast corner of the original building. Faced with demolition, the building was relocated in 1983 to a historically and physically complementary site five blocks south of its original location. The architectural and historic integrity of the building does not suffer from the fact that the structure has been moved.

As built in 1923, the Freedman-Raulerson House was a two-story, concrete block structure. The building has a front facing gable roof with exposed rafter ends on its side elevations. The roof overhang on the south (main) elevation is supported by five triangular brackets. The exterior walls are finished with a rough stucco treatment. Windows are grouped in sets of three with a broad, double-hung central section and narrow side lights. There are four window groupings symmetrically arranged on the main facade. A small single sash window with multiple diamond lights is centered between the windows on the second floor. Immediately beneath this window is the main entrance, a wood panel door with a fixed glazed top panel.

Sheltering the first floor of the main facade is a shed roof porch. The porch is supported by four rectangular columns which are covered with stucco. The span between the columns is enclosed by a stucco railing. The porch spans the front of both the original building and the addition to the south.

The most prominent features of the south elevation are incorporated in the 1925 single-story, Mission style addition. These features include a shed roof covered with clay barrel tile, banded multi-light windows and a pair of french doors with a shed roof canopy. The addition also has several one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows.

The west (rear) elevation includes two sets of one-over-one double-hung windows in groups of three on the first floor. The first floor also has a doorway allowing access. The second floor contains two one-over-one, double-hung windows and one single sash window with diamond shaped lights.

On the north elevation windows are one-over-one, single and double-hung sash irregularly placed. French doors in the 1925 addition open onto a raised exterior deck. A brick chimney is also located on this elevation.

The interior of the building is, like the exterior, notable for its simplicity. Significant interior features include the pine flooring found throughout the house, a pair of french doors which connect the living room and the solarium space in the 1925 addition, a 1925 mantle piece, five-panel oak doors and a stairway. The stair is open on its lower run but is enclosed for much of its length. Beaded ceiling boards and original ceiling mounted light fixtures also remain.

In 1982, the Freedman-Raulerson House was purchased by the Flagship Bank of Okeechobee from Mrs. Raulerson. By March of 1983, the Bank planned to demolish the building in preparation for site redevelopment. As the only alternative to demolition, the building was moved five blocks south from its original site on the northeast corner of Lot one, Block 156 to the northeast corner of Lot one, Block 230. Both lots are located in the commercial area of Okeechobee. At its original location the building faced north onto Second Avenue, now a commercial artery. At its present location, the building faces east onto Parrott Avenue, Okeechobee's main street.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1923, 1925

Builder/Architect Lon Hough - 1923 (Builder)
E.W. Zander - 1925 (Builder)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Freedman-Raulerson House derives its primary significance through its association with individuals significant in the history of Okeechobee. These persons include Abraham Freedman, an early merchant in the community, Peter Tomasello, a state representative from Okeechobee County and Hiram H. Raulerson, Mayor of Okeechobee and member of the Okeechobee County Commission. The building is also noteworthy architecturally through its early use of cement block, a method of construction not commonly associated with early twentieth century building in the Okeechobee area.

The City of Okeechobee, a pioneer settlement once called Tantie, was incorporated in 1915. Okeechobee County was created in 1917 from lands taken from Osceola, St. Lucie, and Palm Beach Counties.¹ The County did not have an operational Circuit Court and, therefore, utilized county offices in adjacent counties.

The Freedman-Raulerson House was built for Abraham Freedman and his wife, Maud Freedman, by the Okeechobee Construction Company owned by Lon A. Hough. The contract, signed on August 16, 1923, contained the specifications for a two-story, eight-room cement block and reinforced concrete house, for which the Freedmans agreed to pay \$3,795. The building was to be built on "Lot one, Block 156 at the town of Okeechobee according to the plat made of said town and filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for St. Lucie County."²

The use of cement block in the Freedman-Raulerson House was unusual for the area in the 1920s. Although concrete block had been used in residential construction for many years in other parts of the country, it was unusual in Okeechobee. The use of cement block and reinforced concrete in residential construction was considered "unhealthy" due to problems with dampness. Dampness is a particular concern in Florida given the heavy rainfall and high water table. It can only be assumed that Freedman, a native of Brooklyn, New York, requested the use of this "unusual" building material.

Upon his arrival in Okeechobee, Freedman opened a clothing store and started a uniform factory in the Freedman Building on Park Street, today known as the Markham Building.³ Subsequently, he went into partnership with Ellis Meserve, husband of Faith Raulerson Meserve. Mrs. Meserve was the youngest daughter of Peter Raulerson, the original settler of Okeechobee. In the late 1920s, the Freedmans moved, locating their growing factory in Jacksonville. The uniform factory is still in operation and is still owned by Faith Raulerson Meserve.⁴

In July 1925 the building was sold to Dr. C.A. O'Quinn and his wife, Mae Belle.⁵ O'Quinn was a country doctor who grew up on Homerville, Georgia.⁶ Dr. O'Quinn had two brothers, a dentist and a pharmacist, who also moved to and practiced in Okeechobee.⁷ The O'Quinn family was attracted to Okeechobee by the Land Boom of the 1920s and moved south after Evelyn O'Quinn, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. O'Quinn, graduated with a degree in pharmacy from the University of Georgia.⁸ Shortly after his arrival in town, Dr. O'Quinn commissioned Frank W. Zander to construct the L-shaped addition to the house.

(See Continuation Sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than 1

Quadrangle name Okeechobee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	5	1	6	7	8	0	3	0	1	2	5	8	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 Lots 1 and 2 and the north 20' of Lot 3, Block 230, First addition to Okeechobee, Florida, according to the plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 5, Page 6, Public Records of Okeechobee County, Florida. This boundary includes the house and property currently associated with the Freedman-Raulerson House.

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 Deborah Marie Hooker/Michael F. Zimny, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Division of Archives date February 25, 1985

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 2/25/85

For NPS use only

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

for Helene Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4-11-85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

One

Item number 7

Page 1

In spite of its relocation, the Freedman-Raulerson House retains sufficient historic and architectural integrity to convey its significance to the community. The present orientation of the building retains the historic association of the main elevation with a major through street. Further, due to the very slow development of Okeechobee, the present setting and environment of the building are very much the same as its original location. The new site has additional association with the building in that it was once part of Peter Raulerson's homestead and was later owned by Lon A. Hough, President of the Okeechobee Construction Company and builder of the residence.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Two

Item number 8

Page 1

The building experienced no damage from the 1926 and 1928 hurricanes which devastated the Lake Okeechobee region.⁹ On March 18, 1930, the house went up for public auction due to foreclosure. After the foreclosure, the Arnbergs of New York purchased the house and rented it to the Palmer sisters, Bess and Hattie. Hattie was a school teacher, who turned it into a boarding house for lady school teachers. Bess, who was the housekeeper, ran the business before she moved to Ft. Pierce where she ran a similar facility called the Palmer House.

After its use as a boarding house, the Freedman-Raulerson House became the official residence of Peter Tomasello, Jr. and his wife Elizabeth. Tomasello was a developer from Kenansville, Florida¹⁰ and once served as the Chairman of the Board of the Citizens Bank in Okeechobee.¹¹ Tomasello was also involved in politics and represented Okeechobee County in the Florida legislature. He served in the House of Representatives during the 1929, 1931, 1933 and 1939 legislative sessions and as the Speaker of the House in the 1933 session.¹²

The Tomasellos were not the only occupants of the house in the late 1930s. In 1937 J.C. Berry expanded his business, the Everglades Funeral Home, from Pahokee, Florida, into the east wing of the house, making it Okeechobee's first funeral home.¹³ Before the funeral home opened in Okeechobee, the deceased were taken to a mortuary in Ft. Pierce and then brought back to Okeechobee.¹⁴ The funeral home stayed open only for a year, as it became too expensive for Berry and his wife Emma to commute from Pakokee.¹⁵

Shortly after the Tomasellos moved out on October 15, 1939, Hiram H. Raulerson, Sr.¹⁶ and his wife Annie M. Raulerson, purchased the house for \$1,500.00 from Bessie Arnberg. The house served as their residence until Raulerson's death. Raulerson and "Miss Annie" raised three children in the house.¹⁷ One of their sons, Hiram H. Raulerson, Jr., became the first native born medical doctor in Okeechobee and the local hospital was named in his honor. H.H. Raulerson, Sr. was a merchant and very active in politics. He served as Mayor of Okeechobee for eight terms, a total of twelve years,¹⁸ and also as a County Commissioner from 1961 until his death in 1980. He was Chairman of the Commissioners for several years with his last year of service as Chairman in 1974.¹⁹ His length of service on the County Commission was the longest in Okeechobee's history. Hiram and Annie Raulerson were also instrumental in the founding of Our Savior Episcopal Church in Okeechobee. Both were active in charity and philanthropic projects. Annie Raulerson's love of history prompted her to help organize and establish the Okeechobee County Historical Society in 1973. In the late 1970s part of the house was leased for a brief period of time to an orthopedist who moved his practice to Okeechobee. It was at this time that the interior of the building was extensively altered to accommodate its use as a medical office.²⁰ Following Raulerson's death in 1980, the house stood vacant and was used by derelicts who were responsible for further damage.

On December 22, 1982, the Flagship Bank of Okeechobee purchased the property from Mrs. Raulerson.²¹ The bank needed to expand its parking facilities, and the house was scheduled for demolition in March, 1983. In order to preserve it, the building was relocated on June 16, 1983, a distance of five blocks, from the northeast corner of Lot one, Block 156 to the northeast corner of Lot 1, Block 230, within the City of Okeechobee. The new location chosen for the residence is both historically and physically complementary to the structure. The site was once part of the Raulerson family homestead and was for a time owned by Lon A. Hough, builder of the residence. The new location of the building is complementary in feeling and association with its previous location and does not diminish the historic and physical integrity of the building.

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National Park Service**

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Three

Item number 8

Page 2

¹ Kyle S. VanLandingham and Alma Hetherington, History of Okeechobee County, Orlando: Daniels Publishers, 1978, pp. 60, 66.

² Original contract dated August 16, 1928, signed by Mrs. Freedman for A. Freedman and L.A. Hough as President of Okeechobee Construction Company.

³ Personal interviews with Clayton White, Faith Raulerson Meserve, Ruth Minehan, and Ethel Joseph, summer of 1984.

⁴ Personal interviews with Faith Raulerson Meserve, Ethel Joseph, and Frankie Goldberg, summer of 1984.

⁵ Official Records, Okeechobee County Public Records, Deed Book 10, p. 397.

⁶ Personal interview with Evelyn O'Quinn Lumpkin, summer of 1984.

⁷ Personal interview with J.O. Pearce (Gertrude), summer of 1984.

⁸ Personal interview with Evelyn O'Quinn Lumpkin, summer of 1984.

⁹ Photograph of the City of Okeechobee, December 1925, owned by R.H. Barber, President of Okeechobee Abstract Company; personal interview with Evelyn O'Quinn Lumpkin, summer of 1984.

¹⁰ Personal interviews with Ruth Minehan, Annie M. Raulerson, summer of 1984.

¹¹ Kyle S. VanLandingham and Alma Hetherington, History of Okeechobee County, Orlando: Daniels Publishers, 1978, p. 84.

¹² Morris Allen, The People of Law Making in Florida 1845-1975, Capital Years, No. 7, Florida House of Representatives, Tallahassee, 1975.

¹³ Personal interviews with Ruth Minehan, Annie Raulerson, Emma Berry, summer of 1984.

¹⁴ Personal interviews with Ruth Minehan, Clayton White, Emma Berry, summer of 1984.

¹⁵ Personal interview with Emma Berry, summer of 1984.

¹⁶ Official Records, Okeechobee County Public Records, Deed Book 36, p. 67.

¹⁷ Personal interview with Annie M. Raulerson, summer of 1984.

¹⁸ City of Okeechobee Minute Books, Office of Mrs. Bonnie Thomas, City Clerk, August, 1984.

¹⁹ Okeechobee County Commission Minute Book 6, Book 12, p. 1, Book 13, p. 1.

²⁰ Personal interview with Annie M. Raulerson, Summer of 1984.

²¹ Abstract of Title No. 17473, p. 50, prepared by Okeechobee Abstract Company, Official Records of Okeechobee County Public Records Deed Book 3, p. 26.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Four

Item number 9

Page 1

Abstract of Title No. 17473, to Certain Lands in Okeechobee County, Florida: Prepared by Okeechobee Abstract Co.

Allen, Morris. The People of Law Making in Florida 1845-1975. Capital Years, No. 7, Florida House of Representatives, Tallahassee, 1975.

Berry, Emma. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Boynton Beach, Florida, Summer 1984.

City of Okeechobee, Florida, Official Records, City Clerk, Council Minute Book 1940-1954.

Goldberg, Frankie. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Jacksonville, Florida, Summer 1984.

Hunt, Ernest. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer 1984.

Hunt, Zetta Durrance. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer 1984.

Joseph, Ethel. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer 1984.

Lumpkin, Evelyn O'Quinn. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Crescent City, Florida, Summer 1984.

Meserve, Faith Raulerson. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Jacksonville, Florida, Summer 1984.

Minehan, Ruth. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer, 1984.

Mixon, Mr. and Mrs. Elvis. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer 1984.

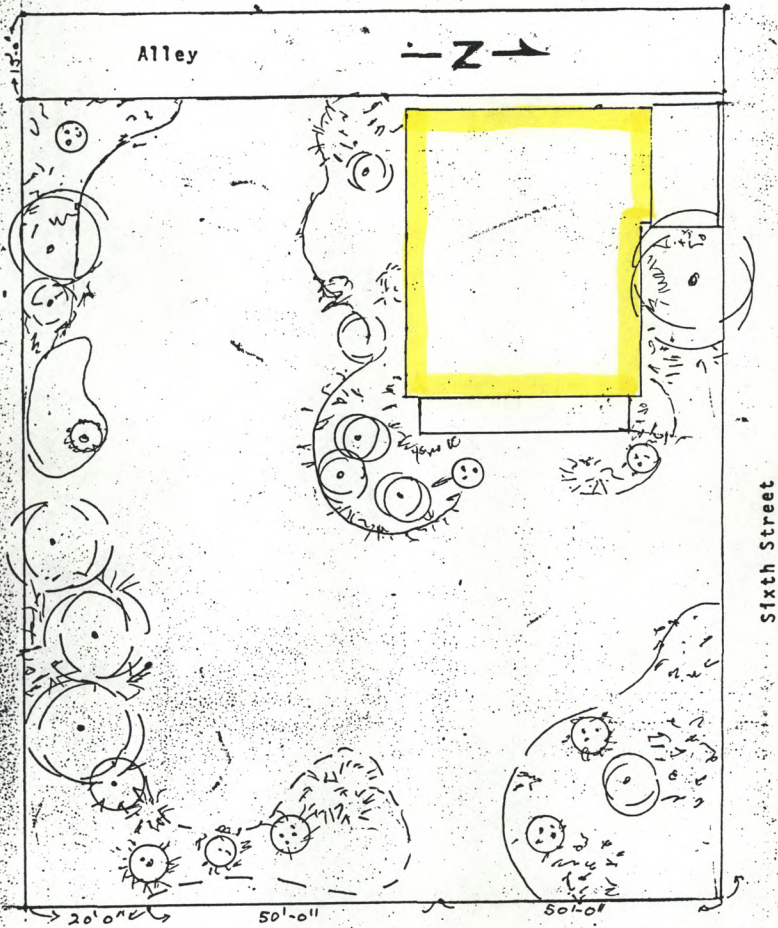
Okeechobee County, Florida, Official Records, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Deed Book 3, 7, 10, 17, 36, Plat Book 1, 2, Minutes County Commissioners Book 6, 12, 13, 18.

Pearce, J.O. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer 1984.

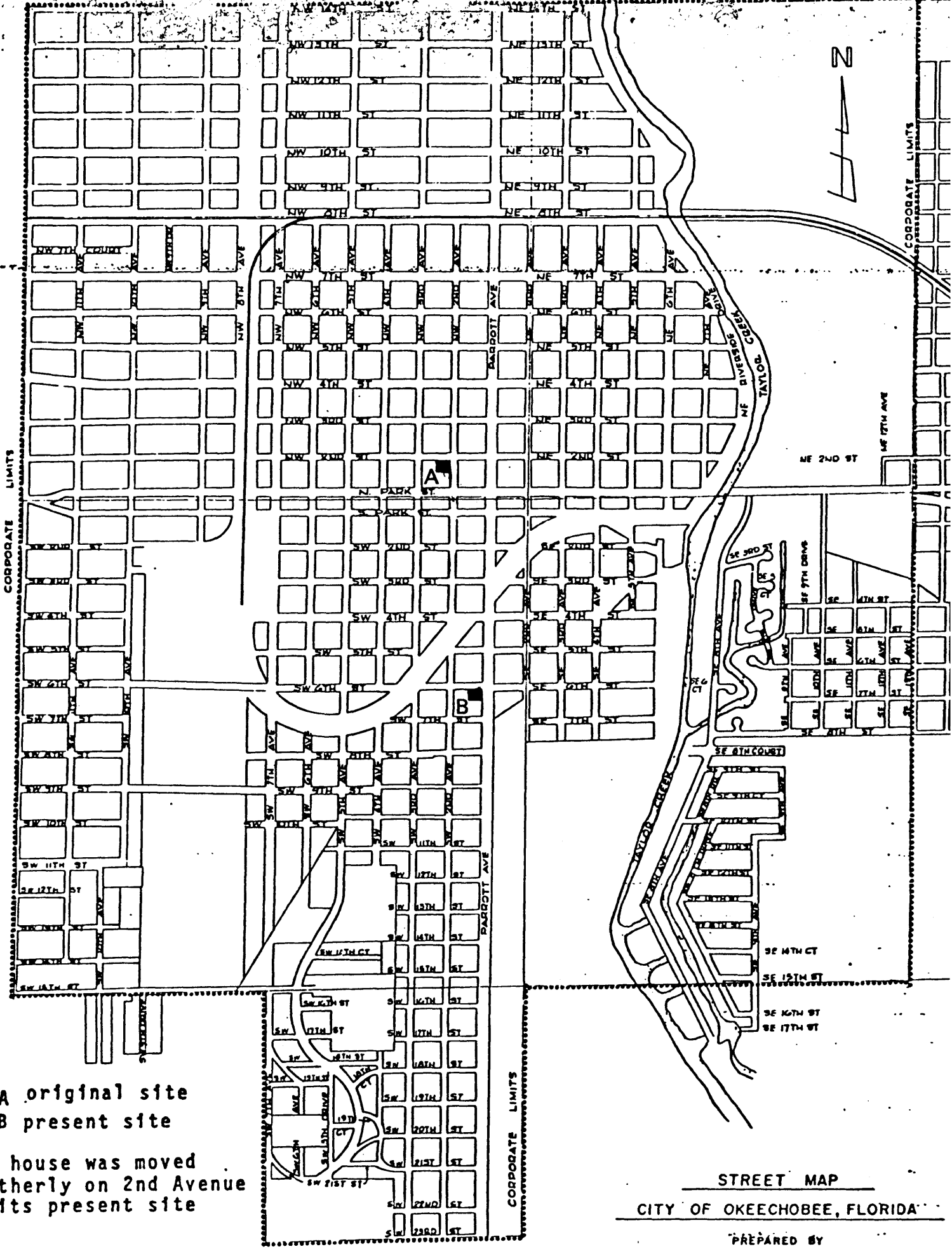
Raulerson, Annie M. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer 1984.

VanLandingham, Kyle S. and Hetherington. History of Okeechobee County. Orlando: Daniels Publishers, 1978.

White, Calyton. Interview by Deborah Marie Hooker, Okeechobee, Florida, Summer 1984.



SHADOW LAWN
FREEDMAN-RAULERSON HOUSE
SITE PLAN



A original site
 B present site

The house was moved southerly on 2nd Avenue to its present site



STREET MAP
 CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA

PREPARED BY
 BROCKWAY, OWEN & ANDERSON
 ENGINEERS INCORPORATED

FEBRUARY 1972