

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 97000795

**Date Listed:** 8/1/97


Boca Chita Key Historic District  
**Property Name**

Dade  
**County**

FLORIDA  
**State**

N/A  
**Multiple Name**

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

8/1/97  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Section No. 8

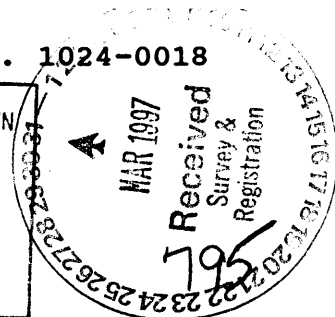
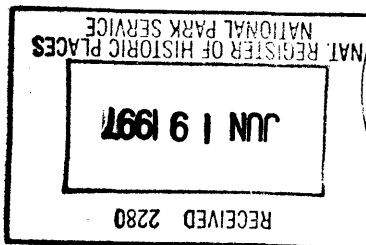
This nomination is amended to delete Criterion B and Mark C. Honeywell as a significant person. Since the main house is no longer standing and there is no information about other properties associated with Honeywell that may still be standing, the property can no longer claim significance for association with him.

This change has been discussed with the Southeast Support Office, NPS.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See 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 Boca Chita Key Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number The northwest portion of Boca Chita Key, bounded by Biscayne Bay on the north and west, the remnants of a stone wall on the south, and an imaginary line on the east that arcs behind the developed area from the stone wall to the north shore

not for publication \_\_\_\_\_

city or town vicinity of Miami \_\_\_\_\_

vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state Florida code FL county Dade

code 025

zip code \_\_\_\_\_

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

*Ronald M. Greenberg*

Signature of certifying official

6/16/97  
Date

National Park Service

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.)

*Judith Pottig, DSHPO*

Signature of commenting or other official

5-28-97  
Date

Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Dept. of State  
State or Federal agency and bureau

Boca Chita Key Historic District  
Biscayne National Park, Florida

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this 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
- \_\_\_ removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Ma J M. Vay      8/1/97

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper      Date of Action

**5. Classification**

*Ownership of Property*  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

*Category of Property*  
(Check only one box)

- \_\_\_ private
- \_\_\_ public-local
- \_\_\_ public-State
- public-Federal

- \_\_\_ building(s)
- district
- \_\_\_ site
- \_\_\_ structure
- \_\_\_ object

*Number of Resources within Property*  
(Do not include previously listed properties in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>  3  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	sites
<u>  8  </u>	<u>  4  </u>	structures
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	objects
<u> 12  </u>	<u>  4  </u>	Total

*Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register* N/A

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

**6. Function or Use**

*Historic Functions*

*(Enter categories from instructions)*

DOMESTIC/secondary structure  
TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related

*Current Functions*

*(Enter categories from instructions)*

LANDSCAPE/park

**7. Description**

*Architectural Classification*

*(Enter categories from instructions)*

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

*Materials*

*(Enter categories from instructions)*

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: STONE/Limestone

roof: ASPHALT

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

*Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)*

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

*Areas of Significance*  
*(Enter categories from instructions)*

ARCHITECTURE  
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Period of Significance*

1937-1945  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Significant Dates*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Significant Person*

*(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)*

Mark C. Honeywell  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Cultural Affiliation*

N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Architect/Builder*

August Geiger Firm  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)*

Boca Chita Key Historic District  
Biscayne National Park, Florida

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: National Park Service, Southeast Support Office, Atlanta Federal Center, 1924 Building, 100 Alabama Street, SW, Atlanta, GA 30303

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	582740	2822940	D	17	582980 2823000
B	17	583100	2822960	E	17	582920 2823180
C	17	583070	2823010	F	17	582750 2823110
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.)

Boca Chita Key Historic District  
Biscayne National Park, Florida

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title David Cullison, Historian, and Jennifer Brown Leynes,  
Historian

organization National Park Service, Southeast Support Office

date May 30, 1997

street & number Atlanta Federal Center, 1924 Building, 100 Alabama Street, SW

telephone (404)562-3117

city or town Atlanta state GA zip code 30303

**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 the SHPO or FPO.)**

name National Park Service

street & number P.O. Box 37127 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20013-7127

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### **Narrative Description**

Biscayne National Park comprises approximately 180,000 acres in Dade County, Florida, just south of Miami. The park is about 22 miles long, with its northern boundary near Key Biscayne and its southern boundary near Key Largo. The red mangrove forest of the western shore of Biscayne Bay delineates the western boundary of the park, while the eastern boundary follows the 60-foot-depth contour, for an approximate width of 14 miles. Biscayne is primarily a marine park, with 95 percent of its area submerged within either the shallow Biscayne Bay or the more turbulent waters of the Hawk Channel and the Florida Straits. The park's land area includes 4,825 acres of largely undeveloped mangrove shoreline and 4,250 acres scattered across forty-two keys.

The historic resources of Biscayne National Park include a complex of stone and concrete structures built between 1937 and 1940 on Boca Chita Key. Mark Honeywell, founder of Honeywell Industries, built this complex of buildings as a private resort. Although the Park contains a vast array of archeological sites, the only other historic structure within the boundaries of the park is the Fowey Rocks Lighthouse, which is owned by the United States Coast Guard.

The buildings and structures built by Mark and Olive Honeywell on Boca Chita Key between 1937 and 1940 form a locally significant historic district on the north end of the island. All of the structures have exterior surfaces of quarry-faced Miami oolite limestone. The use of this limestone throughout the area visually unifies the structures and the district.

### **Contributing Properties**

#### *Lighthouse*

The lighthouse rises 65 feet from its position north of the harbor entrance. The tower is a tapering cylinder constructed of concrete bricks laid in common bond, with the exterior clad in uncoursed limestone. The base of the tower is approximately 21 feet in diameter and sits on a terrace-like base 28 feet square. An observation deck with painted steel railings projects outward near the top of the tower; the lantern rises from the reinforced concrete deck. The lantern is a dome-shaped steel frame, originally set with glass lights, topped by a small metal finial. Small, deeply inset, rectangular window openings pierce the column of the tower; the doorway has a smooth stone surround that projects slightly from the walls. The interior of the tower houses a circular staircase cantilevered from the walls. (*structure; IDLCS 90190*)



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### *Chapel*

The chapel is a 12- by 20-foot concrete block building covered with rock-faced, uncoursed oolitic limestone. The chapel has a steeply pitched concave roof with asphalt shingles. The building has two symmetrically arranged openings in each wall; doorways are on the north and east walls. A low wall curves out from the southeast corner of the building to flank the south door. (*building; IDLCS 90191*)

### *Picnic Pavilion*

Across the harbor entrance from the lighthouse stands the picnic pavilion. The pavilion rests on a concrete slab measuring 15 feet by 52 feet. Ten squared limestone piers rise from the slab foundation along the long sides of the pavilion; the piers support a simple classical cornice and frieze, above which rises the hipped, asphalt shingle roof. The roof framing and two metal tie-bars that extend the width of the structure are visible from the interior of the pavilion. (*structure; IDLCS 90192*)

### *Garage*

The garage (or barn) is a 71-foot by 31-foot concrete block building with a reinforced concrete frame. The gabled asphalt shingle roof shelters limestone exterior walls. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation and has low chimneys at either end. The north facade features one standard-size door and four large garage door openings with transom windows; the south or rear facade has five windows, also with transoms. (*building; IDLCS 90193*)

### *Engine House and Cistern*

The engine house or generator building has concrete block walls with limestone facing rising from a concrete slab foundation. The building measures 15½ feet wide by 23½ feet long and has an asphalt shingle, front gable roof. The front facade has a door and window, and the north and south sides have three windows each. The rear (east) wall has no openings; an octagonal concrete cistern with sides of 15 feet each is attached to this facade. (*building; IDLCS 90194*)

### *Bridge*

A simple arched concrete bridge spans the canal near the harbor. The bridge is 14 feet long and 6 feet wide; 3-foot-high walls of uncoursed Miami oolitic limestone rise from the concrete deck. The walls originally flared out into low scroll forms at each end. Hurricane Andrew removed about two-thirds of the south wall of the bridge in 1992. (*structure; IDLCS 90195*)

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#### *Canal*

A small, bulkheaded canal extends approximately 45 feet south beyond the bridge. The east, south, and west sides of the canal have walls of uncoursed oolitic limestone topped with a concrete coping. A natural drainage channel that extended from the mangrove swamp to the bay was altered to create the canal between 1930 and 1940. Construction of a new metal bulkhead in the harbor in 1995 blocked the north end of the canal, leaving it dry. (*structure; IDLCS 91570*)

#### *Stone Wall*

The Honeywells constructed a stone wall around the primary structures in the original complex on Boca Chita. This wall, constructed of limestone on a concrete foundation with vertical steel reinforcing rods, originally ran southeast from the Biscayne Bay shore south of the picnic pavilion about 400 feet, curved tightly east for 35 feet, extended to the west for another 309 feet, then turned north for 155 feet, terminating near the engine house. Seven gateways passed through the original wall, although only three remain. Two of these have 10-foot-wide openings flanked by tall gateposts; the third has a 4-foot-wide opening topped with an arch rising from the wall. Hurricane Andrew destroyed the eastern two-thirds of the wall, including a small, one-room stone gatehouse. (*structure; IDLCS 90196*)

#### *Retaining Walls*

Dry-laid limestone retaining walls exist on the north side of the island. The wall extends along the side of the fill; some of the stone has fallen away, and all has deteriorated. (*structure; IDLCS 91571*)

#### *Cannon*

A cannon resting in a stone base sits on the northwest tip of Boca Chita Key near the lighthouse. The sloped base has small depressions at the top on either side of the cannon to hold the gun's trunnions. The metal of the cannon is severely corroded. The cannon is classified as an object for National Register purposes.

#### *Concrete walkway*

A concrete slab walkway extends from Boca Chita Harbor east to the main house site, then proceeds south to the engine house. A short walkway also extends northeast from the intersection with the modern boardwalk around to the rear of the house site. The walkway is continuous, except where it crosses the boardwalk at two separate points. (*structure; IDLCS 91616*)

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### **Noncontributing Properties**

#### *Foundations of Main House*

The concrete foundations of the main house exist within the historic district. Although the foundations mark the location of the house in relation to the existing structures on the island, they have no structural integrity. The house predates the other structures in the complex; it was built between 1926 and 1937 and burned in the 1960s.

#### *Bulkhead*

The steel bulkhead predates the other structures on Boca Chita Key; it was built in 1934 by Milton Harrison. The bulkhead is a functional landscape feature that was recently altered by the addition of a second bulkhead by the National Park Service. The structure lacks significance and integrity and is not eligible for the National Register.

#### *Shower house foundation*

A concrete block and cement slab foundation measuring 12 feet by 6 feet marks the location of a shower house at the site of Grandma's Hut. The structure is not related to the period or areas of significance for the district, nor does it possess structural integrity. As a result, it is ineligible for the National Register.

#### *Boardwalk*

The National Park Service constructed a wooden boardwalk on Boca Chita Key after Hurricane Andrew devastated the island in 1992. The boardwalk extends east from Boca Chita Harbor at two separate points, merging just south of the main house foundation ruins.

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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

#### *I. Recreational Development of Miami and Biscayne Bay, 1896-1945*

##### *The Development of Miami as a Vacation Resort*

The completion of Henry M. Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway in 1896 opened southeastern Florida to overland commerce and travel for the first time. The railroad, which connected older cities in northern Florida, like Jacksonville and St. Augustine, with the largely undeveloped lower half of the state, permitted the development of new resort communities for the rich in Palm Beach and Miami. The tropical climate of South Florida quickly became popular with vacationers from the Northeast and Midwest, particularly during the winter months. In 1912, Flagler realized his dream of connecting Jacksonville to Key West with the completion of the Overseas Railroad, which traversed a number of long bridges across the keys; this new railway effectively opened the keys to recreational development.<sup>1</sup>

Miami developed quickly after the arrival of the railroad in the late nineteenth century. The city incorporated in July 1896 with a population of 502 voters;<sup>2</sup> by 1915, the total population had grown to 15,000. The boom following World War I more than doubled the population in five years, from fewer than 30,000 in 1920 to 71,000 in 1925.<sup>3</sup>

A number of factors contributed to the phenomenal growth of Miami and South Florida. The subtropical climate of the region attracted many visitors and new residents after the completion of the railroad, which provided cheap and easy access to an area previously accessible only by water. The outbreak of war in Europe also increased travel to the area, as many wealthy Americans accustomed to vacationing in the Mediterranean sought new playgrounds closer to home. South Florida became the destination of choice for many of these people.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gloria Jahoda, *Florida: A Bicentennial History*, The States and the Nation Series (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1976), 119.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna, *Florida's Golden Sands* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1950), 370.

<sup>3</sup>Frank Parker Stockbridge and John Holliday Perry, *Florida in the Making* (New York: de Bower Publishing, 1926), 193.

<sup>4</sup>Gene M. Burnett, *Florida's Past: People and Events That Shaped the State* (Sarasota, Fla.: Pineapple Press, 1986), 233.

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At the conclusion of World War I, Americans possessed more disposable income than ever before. The affordability of the Ford Model T resulted in an increasingly mobile population, and new roads like the Dixie Highway, which opened in 1925 from northern Michigan to Miami, made traveling to the vacation resorts of South Florida much easier. These factors, combined with large-scale advertising and promotions by area developers, led to the Florida land boom of 1922 to 1926.<sup>5</sup>

In Miami, the development and promotional activities of Carl Fisher transformed the small coastal town into a tourist mecca. Fisher, founder of the Prest-o-lite Company and the Indianapolis Speedway, purchased a winter home in Miami in 1910. Three years later, Fisher financed the completion of a bridge connecting the city to a barrier reef across Biscayne Bay. He then secured the approval of the State of Florida and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge Biscayne Bay for sand to fill the mangrove swamp on the reef.

Within a short period of time, Fisher had transformed his offshore reef into one of the preeminent resorts of the first half of the century—Miami Beach. Fisher sold the first lots on Miami Beach in 1919, and tycoons and other wealthy visitors soon populated the island on their own private estates and in the lavish new hotels. Fisher advertised his development heavily, employing a number of marketing gimmicks to focus media attention on the area. The popularity of Miami Beach, combined with that of nearby developments like Coral Gables, caused property values to skyrocket in Florida between 1922 and 1926; according to one author, in 1925, at the height of the land boom, the assessed value of beach property "had been boosted 200 times."<sup>6</sup>

The exorbitant prices associated with the land boom extended to the keys in Biscayne Bay as well. Commodore Ralph Middleton Munroe, an early settler in the bay area, related in his memoirs the story of two brothers, Brainerd and Charley Ball, who were approached to sell property they owned on the narrow peninsula at the north end of Sands Key. "While they were debating whether they should ask two hundred or three hundred for it, the buyer lost patience and demanded, 'Well, will you take four thousand for it?'" Munroe considered this "typical of the breathless absurdity" of land speculation at that time.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Burnett, 233.

<sup>6</sup>Burnett, 205.

<sup>7</sup>Ralph Middleton Munroe and Vincent Gilpin, *The Commodore's Story* (1930; reprint, Miami, Fla.: Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1990), 187.

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The Florida land boom of the 1920s crashed in 1926 for several reasons. The realization by some investors that prices had spiralled out of control with no regard to actual value was one reason; another was a government investigation of fraudulent exchanges. Perhaps most important was the breakdown of transportation to the area in 1925 and 1926: the railroad closed temporarily to repair its heavily used lines, and a disabled ship blocked the entry to the harbor for an extended period. The *coup de grace* was the hurricane of September 1926, the first major storm to strike the Florida mainland since 1910. The storm killed nearly 400 people, injured another 6,000, and destroyed thousands of buildings. The Florida economy fell into depression with the collapse of the land boom that had been driving it.

Nevertheless, the Miami area rebuilt. Although applications for building permits almost ceased immediately following the storm, the construction industry began to grow again in the early 1930s. Between 1930 and 1939 the number of hotels on Miami Beach grew from sixty to 250, and hundreds of new apartment and commercial buildings appeared on the Miami skyline. The main emphasis of new construction, however, was single-family homes.<sup>8</sup>

Although most Americans faced financial hardship during the Great Depression of the 1930s, some continued comfortable lives, while others prospered. By the middle of the decade an estimated 600 millionaires spent the winter in Miami Beach. In 1939 the Beach was described as "a world of moneyed industrialists, boulevardiers, and stars of stage and screen, its atmosphere gay, carefree, and expensive."<sup>9</sup> Unlike nearby Palm Beach, Miami Beach tended to attract the new-money millionaires, many of whom were Midwesterners. In 1925 Will Rogers described Carl Fisher as "the man that took Miami away from the Alligators and turned it over to the Indianians."<sup>10</sup> Although the occasional

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<sup>8</sup>Cleveland Amory, *The Last Resorts* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1952), 368; Howard Kleinberg, *Miami Beach: A History* (Miami, Fla.: Centennial Press, 1994), 128; Reinhold Paul Wolff, *Miami: Economic Pattern of a Resort Area* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami, 1945), 101; Polly Redford, *Billion-Dollar Sandbar: A Biography of Miami Beach* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1970), 205.

<sup>9</sup>Works Progress Administration, *The WPA Guide to Florida* (reprint, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 210.

<sup>10</sup>Ann Armbruster, *The Life and Times of Miami Beach* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 59. The Will Rogers quote is found on page 15. Marion Post Walcott, a Farm Security Administration photographer, visited Miami and Miami Beach in 1939 and has left a file of 77 prints from her trip in the Library of Congress. See Carl Fleischhauer and Beverly W. Brannan, eds., *Documenting*

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Vanderbilt or Astor was found in Miami Beach, most of the names—Maytag, Hertz, Florsheim, Firestone, and Honeywell—held different associations.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Development in Biscayne Bay and the Upper Florida Keys*

As Miami Beach grew and prospered in the 1910s and 1920s, Carl Fisher began to plan further development in Biscayne Bay. Encouraged by the success of the dredging operations at Miami Beach, which were relatively inexpensive because of the bay's geological and geographical features, Fisher decided to build artificial islands in the bay using the same method. Star Island was the first of many man-made islands built in Biscayne Bay between 1917 and 1945. The five islands along the Venetian Causeway connecting Miami and the Beach, completed in 1926, are perhaps the most prominent of the man-made islands in the bay.

Developers also planned to build artificial islands and expand shorelines in lower Biscayne Bay. Although most of these projects were never completed, portions of the Coconut Grove and Key Biscayne shorelines were extended, and Boca Chita, Adams, and Elliott Keys were enlarged. More ambitious plans for the construction of artificial islands off Coconut Grove and on the Safety Valve shoals south of Key Biscayne failed.<sup>12</sup> The result of dredging and the creation of artificial islands in Biscayne Bay during the first half of the twentieth century was dramatic: it has been estimated that about 20 percent of what had been open water in the upper bay in 1877 was filled, while another 20 percent had been dredged.<sup>13</sup>

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*America, 1935-1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, in association with the Library of Congress, 1988), 174-187.

<sup>11</sup>"War profits and the Harding-Coolidge 'normalcy' had created a brash new aristocracy, which, since it could not break into Newport and Palm Beach, took over Miami and the Catskills." Cabell Phillips, *From the Crash to the Blitz, 1929-1939* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 361. "The honky-tonk Broadway-Bagdad atmosphere of Miami Beach is entirely lacking at Palm Beach, and Palm Beachers who journey down to bet on the races at Hialeah...could wish for no worse fate than to have to spend even one night in their sister resort." Amory, 368.

<sup>12</sup>R. Munroe, 336, 339-343.

<sup>13</sup>Redford, 236; Roland E. Chardon, "A Geographical History of the Biscayne Bay Area," in *Biscayne Bay—Past/Present/Future: a symposium presented by the University of Miami, April 2-3, 1976*, Anitra Thorhaug, ed. (Coral Gables, Fla.:

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While the popularity of the Miami area as a vacation resort drove development activities in Biscayne Bay, it also fueled change on the existing keys. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many of the Biscayne keys were cultivated in pineapples and limes. Destructive hurricanes and exhausted soils brought the decline of agriculture on the islands by the 1920s, and the rapid development of the Miami area eventually ended their agricultural use. The advent of the motorboat made the keys easily accessible to residents and visitors in the Miami area, and some wealthy individuals began to purchase keys to build weekend retreats. The development of these millionaires' retreats sealed the fate of agriculture on the keys.

In 1904, Henry Flagler opened the first fishing lodge and resort facilities in Biscayne Bay on Soldier Key. The club was an extension of his famed Hotel Royal Palm, located in nearby Miami. The *Louise* made daily steamer runs between the Royal Palm and Soldier Key.<sup>14</sup>

Twelve years later, Carl Fisher and two partners, Charles W. Kotcher and Jim Snowden, established a vacation lodge, the Cocolobo Club,<sup>15</sup> on Adams Key. The lodge was located on Caesar's Creek, reputedly one of the premier fishing spots in the area, as an offshoot to Fisher's Miami Beach development. Fisher brought prospective buyers to the Cocolobo on his fleet of motorboats to take them fishing and acquaint them with the beauty of the Florida Keys, with the hope that they would want to purchase property on nearby Miami Beach. Among Fisher's guests at the Cocolobo Club were President Warren G. Harding and Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall, entertainer Will Rogers, prizefighter Jack Dempsey, and Coleman du Pont. Many wealthy men and captains of industry became members of the club; however, membership began to decline during the Great Depression, and the key was sold to Gar Wood, who eventually disbanded the club and maintained the key as a private retreat.

Resort developments emerged on other keys as well. On Elliott Key, Dr. John C. Gifford subdivided and sold twenty-acre lots stretching across the key, from bay to ocean. Buyers built weekend residences and private fishing camps on the lots. Charles Brookfield operated a fishing camp, the Ledbury Lodge, on

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Information Services, University of Miami, 1976), 240.

<sup>14</sup>Jim Adams and Terence L. Helmers, *History of Soldier Key. A Preliminary Historical Study and Annotated Listing of Historical References*. Biscayne National Park. Unpublished manuscript.

<sup>15</sup>Named for the *Cocolobo diversifolia*, also known as the pigeon plum, a native tree.



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Elliott Key during the 1930s. Stiltsville began as a private club in the shoal waters south of Key Biscayne in the late 1930s; over the next three decades, between sixteen and twenty residences arose on bay bottom parcels leased from the State of Florida.

*The Honeywell Era on Boca Chita Key, 1937-1945*

Like other islands in Biscayne Bay, Boca Chita Key experienced development and change as a result of the growth of the Miami area in the 1910s and 1920s. Carl Fisher, F. A. Seiberling, and some business associates purchased the key in 1916. Seiberling probably initiated the first recreational development on the island, building a wooden bulkhead and one or more buildings to house visitors; however, the hurricane of 1926 obliterated all of these improvements. Seiberling also oversaw the enlargement of the key, which proved to be a more permanent alteration to the island. Workers added fill material five to thirteen feet deep on top of the existing limestone, bringing the key to something like its current size.

After Milton W. Harrison purchased Boca Chita from Seiberling and his partners in 1926, he made several improvements to the island. Harrison built a two-story frame house on the man-made north end of the key; he also dredged the boat basin and installed steel bulkheads around 1934, replacing the wooden ones destroyed in the hurricane of 1926. However, despite these alterations, the island was relatively undeveloped when Harrison sold the property to Mark C. Honeywell in 1937.

Honeywell and his wife, Olive Lutz Honeywell, purchased Boca Chita Key as a vacation retreat from their winter home in Miami Beach.<sup>16</sup> The Honeywells maintained their primary residence in Wabash, Indiana, where Mark Honeywell was born in 1874. Honeywell entered the heating business in 1902<sup>17</sup> and found success in the 1910s, when his firm began to produce and sell an improved version of the thermostat, or heat regulator.

In 1927, the Mark Honeywell Heating Specialties Company merged with the Minneapolis Heat Regulator Company, owned by W. R. Sweatt. The new public company that emerged, the Minneapolis Honeywell Heat Regulator Company, posted

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<sup>16</sup>The Miami *Social Register* listed the Honeywells' address as 4567 Pine Tree Drive in Miami Beach; their "northern" address as 394 North Wabash Street in Wabash, Indiana; and their summer address at Lake Wawasee, Indiana. *Social Register of Greater Miami* (Miami Beach, Fla.: Blue Book Publishing Co., 1936).

<sup>17</sup>*Who Was Who in America; with World Notables*, Vol. 4 (1961-1968) (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1968), 457.

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annual sales of \$3 million after the merger. Honeywell was the company's first president and later became chairman of the board, a position he held until 1953. Despite initial success, the company suffered during the early years of the Depression, and sales had dropped back to around \$3 million by 1933. Business was so bad at one point that the company produced flour sifters for another Minneapolis firm. Nevertheless, the business recovered by 1935, and sales soon climbed to \$9 million annually.<sup>18</sup>

The Honeywells were prominent in Miami Beach society, associating with other wealthy industrialists. The couple belonged to the most prestigious clubs in the area: Mrs. Honeywell was a member of the Miami Beach Women's Club, and Mr. Honeywell belonged to the Indian Creek Golf Club, the Surf Club, the Cocolobo Club, and the Miami Beach Committee of One Hundred.<sup>19</sup> Honeywell served as president of the Committee of One Hundred from 1936 to 1951.

The Honeywells purchased Boca Chita Key in 1937 and soon after began building a vacation retreat for themselves on the island. The Honeywells retained the frame house built by Harrison as the primary residence, building a number of support structures and landscape features in the vicinity of the house on the north end of the key. The new structures included a lighthouse, chapel, picnic pavilion, and a barn or garage.

Honeywell employed the architectural firm of August Geiger to design and build the lighthouse on Boca Chita. Geiger, a well-known Miami architect, had also designed the Honeywells' Miami Beach home and a studio for their Wabash, Indiana, residence. According to Jim Church, a junior draftsman who worked on the plans for the lighthouse, Leon Angle Camp was the designer of the lighthouse, and Jack Hunt was the contractor.<sup>20</sup>

Camp designed the 65-foot masonry lighthouse to sit at the harbor on the north end of the key, where yachts belonging to Honeywell and his guests moored during their visits. A popular story about the lighthouse claimed that it was

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<sup>18</sup>Edson W. Spencer, *Honeywell After 100 Years* (New York: The Newcomen Society of the United States, 1985), 14-15.

<sup>19</sup>The Miami Beach Committee of One Hundred has been described as the richest and most elite club on the Beach. With a few exceptions the members all had their permanent residences outside of Florida. The committee was organized after the 1926 hurricane and met weekly for discussions and lectures. The annual "stag party" was held at the Cocolobo Club on Adams Key. Armbruster, 62.

<sup>20</sup>Beverly Yelen, "Historical Information Relating to Boca Chita Cay" (Biscayne National Park, Homestead, Fla., n.d., photocopy), 1-2.

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shut down by the U.S. Coast Guard after one lighting because it was not an approved navigational aid;<sup>21</sup> however, the absence of hardware for affixing a light in the floor of the lantern suggests that the lighthouse may never have been intended for navigational use.

The lighthouse was constructed of Miami oolitic limestone, as were the other structures built during the Honeywell era. This limestone was a popular building material in South Florida as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Although no documentation exists regarding the design and construction of the picnic pavilion, chapel, and other structures on the island, it appears likely that the Geiger firm built the entire Honeywell estate on Boca Chita. The design and materials employed are similar in character and suggest the work of a single individual or firm.

The Honeywells built their vacation retreat between the time they purchased the key in 1937 and Mrs. Honeywell's death, in 1939 or 1940. During this two- to three-year period, Mark and Olive Honeywell built the lighthouse, chapel, picnic pavilion, engine house, and garage; they also constructed a stone wall around the main complex, retaining walls at the water's edge, concrete sidewalks from the harbor to the house and generator building, and an arched bridge across an existing canal. Other support structures were built on the island as well, but none of these buildings remain.

The Honeywells used the complex at Boca Chita as a rural retreat from their home in Miami Beach. They often entertained friends on the island, ferrying themselves and visitors over on their three yachts, the *Olivette*, *Harpoon*, and *Semego*.<sup>22</sup> Honeywell reportedly fired a cannon, which sat at the opening of the harbor near the lighthouse, to welcome his guests. The Honeywells hosted the annual charity party of the Miami Beach Committee of One Hundred on Boca Chita, a tradition that continued with the next owners of the property, the Emermans. The annual party was an exclusive event, with the guest list limited to members, the media, celebrities, and politicians.<sup>23</sup> It was also an extravagant affair: photographs from one party show a gaily decorated elephant in attendance.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Yelen, 2.

<sup>22</sup>*Social Register*.

<sup>23</sup>Yelen, 3.

<sup>24</sup>The elephant was probably Rosie, the popular pachyderm maintained at Miami Beach by Carl Fisher. Rosie had acted as President-elect Warren G. Harding's golf caddy during his visit to Miami Beach in 1925.

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Although Honeywell continued to host the annual charity party of the Committee of One Hundred on Boca Chita, he lost interest in the property after his wife's death. In 1942 he married Eugenia Hubbard, and three years later he sold the property to Florence Emerman. Mark Honeywell died in 1964 at the age of 89.<sup>25</sup>

## *II. Associated Properties*

The Honeywell complex on Boca Chita Key, which includes the lighthouse, chapel, picnic pavilion, garage, engine house, bridge, canal, cannon, stone walls, retaining walls, and concrete walkways, is associated with the context, "Recreational Development of Miami and the Florida Keys, 1896-1945." The complex illustrates the growth of the Miami area in the early twentieth century and the spread of development onto the keys in Biscayne Bay. It is also typical of the weekend retreats built by the wealthy elite of Miami during this period.

### *Associative Characteristics*

The structures built by Mark Honeywell on Boca Chita Key represent the growth and development of the Miami area during the early- to mid-twentieth century. South Florida, and particularly Miami Beach, grew rapidly during this period because of a combination of factors, including improvements in transportation, increased disposable income, and tireless promotion. The development of Miami Beach spread onto the keys in Biscayne Bay, and the Honeywell complex reflects this development trend.

The complex on Boca Chita is closely associated with the wealthy class of industrialists that emerged between the world wars. These individuals had large disposable incomes, which they often used to entertain themselves and their friends. Thus they made their winter homes in Miami Beach, joined numerous clubs and social organizations, and built weekend retreats on the keys. Mark Honeywell was an influential member of this wealthy class, and the structures he built on Boca Chita illustrate the interests and inclinations of Honeywell and his peers.

The structures also represent typical resort architecture for the Miami area in the 1930s. Popular architectural styles during this period included the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and varying Mediterranean influences. The architectural firm of August Geiger, which designed the lighthouse and probably the rest of the complex as well, often employed the Mediterranean style in its

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<sup>25</sup>*Who Was Who*, 457.

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resort designs. The Honeywell complex on Boca Chita, with its quarry-faced Miami oolitic limestone exteriors, provides an example of this type of resort architecture.

### *Significance*

The Honeywell complex on Boca Chita Key, including the lighthouse, picnic pavilion, garage, engine house, chapel, bridge, canal, cannon, stone wall, retaining walls, and sidewalks, forms a locally significant historic district under National Register Criteria A, B, and C. These structures are significant because they are typical of the architectural styles employed on weekend retreats in the Florida Keys during the 1930s. As such, they suggest the growth and development of the Miami area during the early- to mid-twentieth century. They also represent in a broader sense the activities of the wealthy industrial class that emerged between World Wars I and II. Mark Honeywell was an important and influential member of this class, and the structures that he built on Boca Chita Key comprise a significant example of the retreats built by the wealthy elite of the burgeoning Miami area.

### *Registration Requirements/Integrity*

The complex of structures built by Mark Honeywell on Boca Chita Key forms a locally significant historic district with integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association. The lighthouse, picnic pavilion, chapel, garage, engine house, bridge, canal, cannon, walkways, and walls retain integrity of location, materials, and workmanship. All of the structures are in their original locations, and changes to materials and workmanship have been minimal.

All of the buildings in the Honeywell complex on Boca Chita possess integrity of design. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew partially destroyed the stone wall and bridge on Boca Chita. Although the damage impaired the design integrity of these two structures somewhat, enough structural integrity remains to illustrate the original design, function, and use of each. Likewise, time, weather, and erosion have impacted the retaining walls, but not to such a degree that they have lost design integrity. The canal is perhaps the most altered structure; a new steel bulkhead installed in the harbor in 1995 blocked the flow of water into the canal, leaving it dry. Nevertheless, the original function and use of the canal remains apparent.

The structures built by the Honeywells were laid out on the north end of the island, in the vicinity of the main house built by the previous owner. This house burned in the 1960s, altering the historic setting on the key. The building was not replaced, and only concrete foundations remain. Despite this

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loss, the overall historic setting remains essentially intact; no infill construction exists in the area, and the historic spatial relationships have been maintained. Thus the setting contributes to the integrity of feeling and association retained by the complex.

Four structures within the proposed historic district are not eligible for the National Register and should be considered noncontributing properties. The foundations of the main house lack sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register. While they mark the location of the main house in relation to the existing structures on the island, the foundations do not contribute to the significance of the district. The bulkhead, built in 1934 by Harrison, predates the other resources and lacks significance and integrity. It is a functional landscape feature that was recently altered by the addition of a second bulkhead by the National Park Service. Finally, the shower house foundations near the site of Grandma's Hut and the boardwalk near the main house foundations are less than fifty years old and do not relate to the areas of significance for the site. As a result, they are ineligible for the National Register.

*Contributing Properties*

Lighthouse  
Chapel  
Picnic pavilion  
Garage  
Engine house and cistern  
Bridge  
Canal  
Stone wall  
Retaining walls  
Cannon  
Concrete walkways

*Noncontributing Properties*

Bulkhead  
Foundations of main house  
Shower house foundations  
Boardwalk

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The Boca Chita Key Historic District is bounded by Biscayne Bay on the north and west, by the stone wall and its remnants on the south, and on the east by an irregular line stretching from the remnants of the stone wall eastward to encompass the garage and then northward to the retaining walls on the key's northern shore. See attached map.

### **Boundary Justification**

The proposed boundary encompasses all of the district's contributing features and includes most of the area developed by Mark Honeywell during his tenure on the key. All of the remaining structures are located north of the stone wall; therefore, the wall serves as the southern boundary of the district. Biscayne Bay serves as the western and northern boundary because Honeywell's complex focussed around the man-made harbor facing the bay. The line marking the eastern boundary arcs behind the contributing features to create a compact district on the northwestern section of the island.

### **Photographs**

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David Cullison  
August 1995

Location of negatives: NPS, SESO

1. Lighthouse, view from south
2. Lighthouse, view from east
3. Picnic pavilion, view from southeast
4. Chapel, view from southwest
5. Cannon, view from east
6. Engine house, view from west
7. Engine house and cistern, view from east
8. Garage, view from northwest
9. Bridge, view from southwest
10. Arched gateway in stone wall, view from south
11. Boca Chita Key, west coast, view from top of lighthouse looking north
12. Historic and new steel bulkheads
13. Retaining walls

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**KEY:**

- Proposed National Register
- District boundary
- Structure or ruin

