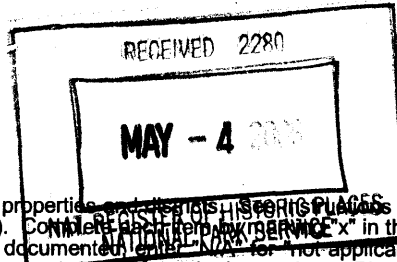


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See 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 Tres Puentes Shipwreck Site

other names/site number Nuestra Senora de los Dolores y Santa Isabel, El Nuevo Londres/MO00177

2. Location

street & number seaward edge of Hawk Channel off Islamorada n/a  not for publication

city or town Islamorada  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Monroe code 087 zip code n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara C. Mattick, DSHPO 5-2-06  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

for Erik K. Martin Subot 6/15/06  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Tres Puentes Shipwreck Site  
Name of Property

Monroe Co., FL  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

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

1733 Spanish Plate Fleet

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: Water-related (ship)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: i Water-related (shipwreck)  
Landscape: Underwater (underwater site)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

18<sup>th</sup> - Century Nao  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation (hull) wood  
walls \_\_\_\_\_  
roof \_\_\_\_\_  
other wood \_\_\_\_\_

**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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Archeology: Historic -- Non-aboriginal  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1733  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1733  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

First Spanish Period (1513-1763)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository  
\_\_\_\_\_  
# \_\_\_\_\_

Tres Puentes Shipwreck Site  
Name of Property

Monroe Co., FL  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundarles were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Della Scott-Ireton, Archaeologist III & Barbara E. Mattick, DSHPO

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2006

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name State of Florida

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **TRES PUENTES SHIPWRECK SITE  
Monroe County, Florida**

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**SUMMARY**

*Tres Puentes* (8MO00177) is the site of a wooden-hulled sailing ship that was part of the Spanish Plate Fleet destroyed in a hurricane on 15 July 1733. The wrecksite is in 15 feet of water on the seaward edge of Hawk Channel off Upper Matecumbe Key in Monroe County, Florida. The wreck, located within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, lies on submerged lands belonging to the State of Florida. The site includes a ballast mound approximately 8 meters long by 2 meters wide and hull timbers that generally are covered with sand and marine vegetation.

**SETTING**

The site of *Tres Puentes* is on hard bottom at the seaward edge of Hawk Channel. Water depth is 15 feet over the wrecksite and water clarity varies with weather and tidal conditions. The bottom is hardpan with a thin veneer of coarse quartz sand. While not extensive, the wrecksite supports a habitat for a variety of marine life.

**DESCRIPTION**

The small ballast mound that marks the site of *Tres Puentes* is approximately 8 meters long by 2 meters wide; the long axis of the shipwreck is oriented northwest to southeast. A scatter of ballast stones extends beyond the edge of the compacted mound; the scrambled appearance of portions of the ballast is evidence of modern salvage activities. A one small piece of burned wood and a small section of timber are exposed. No non-contributing resources are associated with the site.

Elements of the ship's hull are buried under the ballast and the natural reef structure adhering to the ballast stones. Remaining hull timbers likely consist of the keel, frames, keelson, ceiling planking, and exterior planking as well as fasteners. The protective layer of ballast stones, sand, and reef structure conceals the ship's architecture and, possibly, rigging elements which may include deadeyes, chainplates, blocks, etc. Based on past recoveries from other 1733 shipwrecks, ship-related artifacts such as fasteners and ceramic sherds may also be present. Over the intervening years, some shipwreck material has been dispersed by wave and current action away from the primary area of timbers and ballast. This material forms the "wreck scatter" common to sites in a high-energy environment in shallow water near shore; the site boundaries are intended to encompass the area of wreck scatter. While displaced from their original context, scattered artifacts may still be linked to the shipwreck and can provide important information about site formation processes.

After grounding in shallow water, *Tres Puentes* remained relatively intact until salvaged by the Spanish soon after the disaster. Most of her valuable cargo was salvaged and all of the people were saved. Over the centuries the remains of her hull not covered with ballast and sand were carried away by waves and storms; shipworms (*Teredo navalis*) that thrive in the warm water ate any exposed wood. The shipwreck seen today, if left undisturbed, has reached a state of equilibrium with the marine environment and has stabilized.

United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2 **TRES PUENTES SHIPWRECK SITE**  
**Monroe County, Florida**

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**SITE INVESTIGATIONS**

The Spanish began salvage activities soon after the fleet disaster. *Tres Puentes* was flooded but relatively intact, allowing all of the people aboard to be saved, and most of the valuable cargo recovered. The ship was burned to the waterline to allow divers access to the flooded hold, and to hide the wreck's location from pirates.

The site of *Tres Puentes* was re-discovered in 1962 by local fisherman Don Gurgiolo while searching in his seaplane with Art Sapp, Martin Meylach, and Don Thomas during an aerial survey midway between Crocker and Alligator Reefs. Gurgiolo and Sapp were the first to explore the long ballast mound partially obscured by deep sand and dense eel grass. Opening up the shipwreck with airlifts, they found a few artifacts, pottery sherds, and cannonballs. On subsequent visits they recovered a flintlock pistol, a boarding cutlass, and a few silver coins. The discoverers had hoped to keep this new shipwreck a secret, but the word spread throughout the Keys and the site was attacked by several other treasure hunters, notably Buddy Crane and Keith Johnston, who had worked on other 1733 sites. Most of the sand was cleared from the site, ballast stones were displaced, and ship's timbers pulled apart. Finds included buttons, pistols, pewter plates, honing stones, a grinding wheel, and a few silver coins. However, the area of tightly packed grass on the shoreward side of the site remained intact. Eventually, Martin Meylach and Don Thomas returned to *Tres Puentes* and dug beneath the grass roots to discover a conglomerate of silver wedges, coins, and other artifacts cemented to a small portion of the wreck that had become disarticulated from the lower hull and overlooked by Spanish divers.

In 1977, the State of Florida's Underwater Archaeological Research Section conducted a survey of the wrecks of the 1733 fleet, including *Tres Puentes*. The discovery of isolated and partially buried ship's timbers and fragments of coarse earthenware lead to the main ballast area. Three long mounds of algae and fire coral-coated ballast stones were so camouflaged that they initially appeared from the surface of the water to be grass streaks. The worm-eaten surface of the ship's keel lay partially buried in a sand plateau between the two larger mounds. Nearby, other disarticulated timbers, including a hull plank were encountered. A primary and secondary wreckage trail was noted. The main portion of the site appeared to rest in a sandy depression in the limestone bedrock at a depth of 18 feet of water. The site was not excavated during this survey, but visible ballast was recorded and mapped to create a site plan. This was accomplished by using a protractor mounted on a rod that was inserted into the middle of the ballast mound; measurements were taken every 10 degrees for 360°. A report was prepared of survey efforts, including a description and site map of each wreck site (Smith and Dunbar 1977).

In 1988 a second survey of *Tres Puentes* was conducted by the Florida Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Archaeological Research with participation from Florida State University and Indiana University during an underwater archaeology field school. The purpose of the survey was to locate a candidate for Florida's second Underwater Archaeological Preserve from among the known sites of the 1733 fleet. Eleven wrecks of the 1733 fleet were surveyed and a system was developed to rank sites for various criteria, including accessibility, archaeological integrity, biological features, and research and park potential.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3 **TRES PUENTES SHIPWRECK SITE**  
**Monroe County, Florida**

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In 2001, nautical archaeologist Robert Westick was issued a Survey and Inventory Permit (2001-079) by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to document the remains of the 1733 sites of *Infante* and *Tres Puentes*.

In 2004, the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research resurveyed the wrecks of the 1733 fleet as part of a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coastal Management Program. The purpose of the grant was to obtain archaeological and historical information about the 1733 fleet disaster in order to create a maritime heritage attraction for historical, recreational, and educational tourism. All of the sites of the 1733 shipwrecks, including *Tres Puentes*, were surveyed using an azimuth and measuring tape to record the ballast mounds using distance and bearing. Ballast, timbers, areas of disturbance, and large biological features such as coral heads were recorded on individual site plans for each shipwreck. The sites also were recorded with video and photography.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1 **TRES PUENTES SHIPWRECK SITE**  
**Monroe County, Florida**

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**SUMMARY**

*Tres Puentes* is significant at the national level under **Criterion D** in the area of **Archaeology: Historic-Non-Aboriginal** as one of the shipwrecks of the 1733 Spanish Plate Fleet disaster. *Tres Puentes* is one of very few positively identified examples of the *nao* ship type that was heavily used for commerce in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and that transported treasure and goods between Spain and the Americas in the *Carrera de Indias*. As a part of Florida's and the nation's history, *Tres Puentes* represents an element of the early maritime commerce that skirted, and occasionally wrecked upon, the shores of today's state and that was the impetus for the Spanish colonization and occupation of what is today the state of Florida. The shipwreck has stabilized in the marine environment and can, through future archaeological investigation, provide additional information about 18<sup>th</sup>-century merchant vessels, the *nao* ship type in particular, the Spanish *flota* system, and trans-Atlantic maritime culture.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: *Tres Puentes***

This ship, referred to in documents and shown on salvage maps as *Tres Puentes* (Three Decks), is the English-built, 296-ton *nao Nuestra Señora de los Dolores Y Santa Isabel* (also called *El Nuevo Londres* or the *New London*) owned by Nicolas de Castillo and captained by Antonio de Loaysa.

At Vera Cruz, 20,000 *pesos* in registered treasure were loaded on *Tres Puentes* as well as local cargos including brazilwood, cochineal, indigo, sugar, tobacco, hides, and some citrus. Sailing from Havana in the main body of the fleet when the hurricane struck, *Tres Puentes* was carried through the offshore reefs and struck bottom in 19 feet of water on the seaward edge of Hawk Channel with decks awash and hull flooding. Spanish documents relate that both *Tres Puentes* and *Herrera* were grounded close together at *Matecumbe El Grande* (Upper Matecumbe Key) and totally flooded. All of the people aboard were saved, and most of the valuable cargo was recovered, including from *Tres Puentes* 13,098 *pesos*, 5½ *reales* of registered cargo.



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Section number 9 Page 1 **TRES PUENTES SHIPWRECK SITE**  
**Monroe County, Florida**

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**Monroe County, Florida**

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Section number 10 Page 1 **TRES PUENTES SHIPWRECK SITE  
Monroe County, Florida**

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The site boundary of the *Tres Puentes* is defined as a circle of 1,000 yards radius around the geographical coordinates Latitude 24° 53.612' N, Longitude 80° 35.012' W, lying offshore and below the mean low water mark of the Atlantic Ocean and encompassing the ballast mound and associated hull structure and artifacts.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The *Tres Puentes* site boundary is based on boundaries determined for another 1733 plate fleet wreck, *San Pedro*, that was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. The purpose of the 1,000 yards radius around the site is to encompass the scatter of material culture relating to the shipwreck that has dispersed with wave and current action away from the primary area of timbers and ballast.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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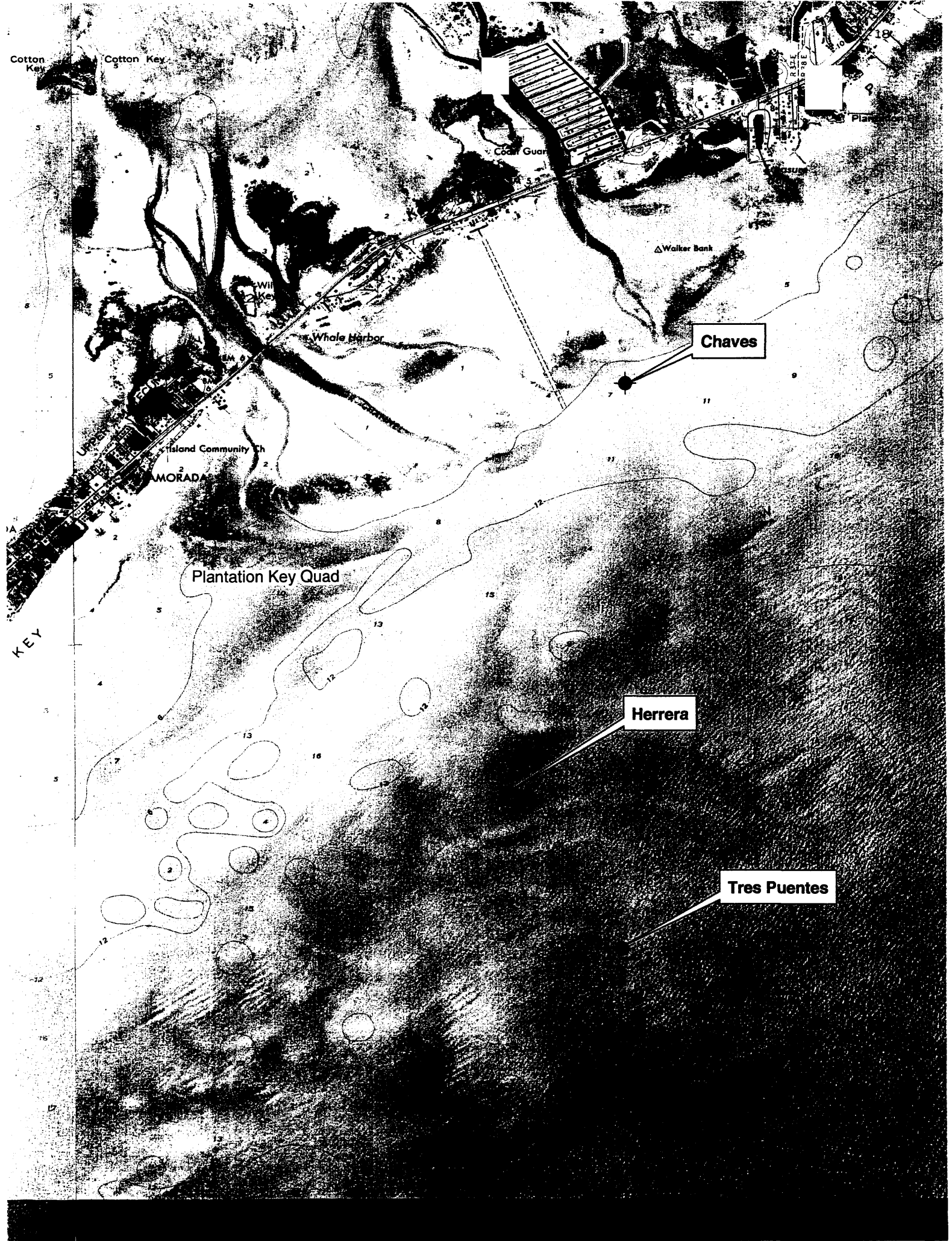
Section number     photos     Page     1    

**TRES PUENTES SHIPWRECK SITE  
Monroe County, Florida**

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

- 1.a) *Tres Puentes*
- b) Monroe County, Florida
- c) Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research
- d) August 2004
- e) Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research
- f) Overview ballast pile looking NNE
- g) 1 of 2
  
- 2.a) *Tres Puentes*
- b) Monroe County, Florida
- c) Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research
- d) August 2004
- e) Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research
- f) Timber looking West
- g) 2 of 2



Cotton Key Cotton Key

Coal Quar

Walker Bank

Will Key

Whole Harbor

Chaves

Island Community Ch

MORADA

Plantation Key Quad

Herrera

Tres Puentes

KEY

Tres Puentes  
4 Jan 2004  
N

