

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Sponge Hooking Boat Duchess
other names/site number N/A / SPI 1704

2. Location

street & number Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd. N/A not for publication
city, town Tarpon Springs N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Pinellas code 103 zip code 34684

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
<u>1</u>	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Tarpon Springs Sponge Boats

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 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): _____

Rory Feldman

8/2/90 APF
7/31/90

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Sponge Fishing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Pleasure Craft

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

N/A

roof N/A

other Wood: Hull

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture (Naval)
Maritime History
Industry (Sponge Fishing)

Period of Significance

1940

Significant Dates

1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Paskalakis, Leonidas

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

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

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Description

Summary

The sponge hooking Duchess was built in 1940 to gather sponges in the Gulf of Mexico. The design of this small sloop (really a variation of a cat boat) is based on a Mediterranean prototype that predates the beginning of the Christian era and is one of only five remaining boats of the many constructed in Tarpon Springs between ca. 1907 and ca. 1940 to serve the sponging industry. The Duchess retains all of the major features it had when it was a sponger, but today it is used primarily as a pleasure craft. It is a deep draft vessel with a squared stern and wide hull that tapers to a sharp, pointed bow. It carries a single mast rigged with a triangular sail. The bulwarks near the bow have been cut away to provide the hooker with more freedom of movement. The keel, ribs and planking are constructed of heart pine. The ship also has a gasoline engine for auxiliary power. It is controlled by a tiller attached to a wooden rudder at the stern of the craft.

Setting

Home port for the Duchess is the sponge docks of Tarpon Springs, Florida, located along the Anclote River in the northern part of town just west of U.S. Alternate Highway 19. The boat is moored on Dodecanese Boulevard in the vicinity of the former Tarpon Springs Sponge Exchange. The side of Dodecanese Boulevard opposite the docks is lined primarily with retail shops dealing in novelty items related to Greek culture and the sponging industry. Some restaurants, tourist excursion offices, and commercial maritime offices stand immediately along the wharf.

Present and Original Appearance

While sharing the overall design and many of the individual features of the larger diving boats, the Duchess is distinct. As a hooking boat it is considerable shorter than its larger cousins, having a total deck length of only 26 feet, 9 inches. The height of the single mast is approximately 25 feet. At the stern of the boat are the rudder and tiller (stored on deck when the photographs were made), the stern samson posts for tying lines and holding the tiller, the engine controls, and the helmsman's cockpit. Amidships are the rear and forward companionways, scuppers, and the bridge pipe and center boom for hanging sponges. The mainmast is found forward of the crews' companionway, rising almost from the bow. At or in the bow there

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Description

are the, square storage hatch, samson post, anchor hoist, and bowsprit.

Sponge hooking boats were designed to operate in shallower water than the diving boats, usually two to five fathoms. The hooking boats depended mainly on sail power and carried--or trailed--one or more dinghies from which the spongers grappled for sponges on the sea bottom with tri-pronged hooks attached to long poles. The dinghies were usually about 12 feet long with a beam of approximately four feet. However, it is clear from the cutaway bulwarks of the Duchess, that the sailboat was itself used as a hooking platform. Probably the installation of the gasoline engine made possible for the craft to more easily maintain its position over a sponge harvesting area than if it had been powered by sail alone. The "hooker" leaned over the rail and looked for sponges on the bottom using a glass-bottom bucket lowered with one hand just below the rippled surface of the water. With the other hand he grappled for sponges with the hooking pole.

Much of the auxiliary equipment associated with diving boats was either unnecessary or too space consuming to carry aboard hooking boats like the Duchess. These boats worked alone closer inshore or in cooperation with the larger craft. The hooking boats, however, would carry tools, benches, and work tables for the cleaning of sponges, and lines for stringing them. The Duchess is in good condition, but needs some repairs. It is perhaps the least altered of all of the surviving sponge boats in Tarpon Springs. The boat remains largely as it was constructed in 1941.

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Photographs

Inventory of Photographs

1. Sponge Hooking Boat Duchess
2. Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd., Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), FL
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. View of Port Side, Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 1 of 3

1. Sponge Hooking Boat Duchess
2. Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd., Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), FL
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. View of Port Side, Looking Northhwest
7. Photo No. 2 of 3

1. Sponge Hooking Boat Duchess
2. Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd., Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), FL
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Detail of Deck and Forward Hatch, Looking North
7. Photo No. 3 of 3

1. Sponge Hooking Boat Duchess
2. Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd., Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), FL
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Detail of Stern, Looking West
7. Photo No. of 3

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Key to Illustrations

TARPON SPRINGS SPONGE BOATS

Identification Key for Boat Diagrams

1. STERN SAIL MAST - steadying boat in rough weater
2. RUDDER
3. TILLER
4. PROPELLER CAGE - for protecting lines and air hoses
5. BRIDGE OR PIPE - for hanging sponges
6. STERN SAMSON POSTS - for tying boat lines and holding tiller
7. CONTROL RODS - engine and air compressor controls
8. DECK SCUPPERS - for deck water drainage
9. STOOLS - for sitting and as work tables for cleaning sponges
10. NAVIGATION LIGHTS
11. FRESH WATER BARREL
12. DIVER'S LADDER
13. BOW SAMSON POST - for securing anchor and lines
14. ROUND BOW HATCH - for lifeline tender during rough weather
and to store diving equipment
15. SQUARE BOW HATCH - for sponge storage
16. FORWARD COMPANIONWAY - crew's sleeping quarters
17. REAR COMPANIONWAY - engine room
18. REAR DECK PIT - helmsman's cockpit
19. CENTER BOOM - forward to rear - for hanging sponges and
propeller cage
20. ANCHOR HOIST

NOTE: Some of the items on the list may not be found on the Duchess.

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Significance

Summary

The sponge diving boat Duchess is significant under criteria A and C as one of only five remaining watercraft constructed in Tarpon Springs expressly for the harvesting of sponges in the Gulf of Mexico. The unusual and functional design of the Tarpon Springs sponge hooking boat developed as a result of modifying a traditional Mediterranean prototype to combine the benefits of a highly maneuverable sailing craft with the efficiency of motorized power. The boat was built by Greek craftsmen, and with other similar ships played an important role in the maritime history of Florida. Between 1905 and 1945 Tarpon Springs was internationally important as a commercial sponging center.

Supporting Narrative

In 1907, two small boats of the double-ender type were brought from Greece on the deck of a steamship, and the construction of sponge diving and hooking boats in Tarpon Springs dates from that time. The work was done by Greek craftsmen from models, rather than drawn plans, with full-scale construction proceeding by rule of thumb. The first boats were sail powered "double-enders," a Greek type called a "sacoleve." Broad beamed, with little free board amidships, they had a decided shear fore and aft, rising sharply at the bow to the distinctive stem piece. Forward, their lines were quite convex differing in this way from the northern type of double-ender, by having a hollow waterline entry.

Any small sailing craft capable of navigating in shallow water could be used by "hookers," since the ship's crew usually carried one or more dinghies to use for the actual sponge harvesting. However, some small sloops modeled after the diving boats were modified so that sponge harvesting could be done directly from the sailing craft, making the carrying of dinghies unnecessary.

With the advent of gasoline engines, the shape of the stern was altered, and the boats using engines were built with a transom stern in order to house the bulky power plant and fuel tanks. Eventually, diesel power began to replace the earlier gasoline system in the larger craft. The lateen sail characteristic of the Greek and Turkish prototypes was soon supplanted by the two masted gaff-headed yawl rig, making the

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Significance

handling of the vessel easier and allowing the captain to switch between sail and motor power--or use a combination of the two--depending upon conditions. Nearly all of the diving ships constructed in Tarpon Springs after 1920 combined the use of sail and engine power.

The Duchess was built in 1940 by Leonidas Pasalakis and is the only surviving boat in Tarpon Springs designed for the hooking method of sponge fishing. These small craft began to disappear earlier than the diving boats as the shallow water sponge beds were more quickly depleted. At the time the Duchess was constructed there were nearly 100 sponge boats operating out of Tarpon Springs. The dramatic fall in the demand for Tarpon Springs sponges after 1946 and the microbiotic diseases that devastated the sponging grounds a short time later left the industry in shambles. Little more than a decade later, the sponge boats that had once lined the wharf at Tarpon Springs had largely vanished. The Duchess, however, continued to operate for a number of years after 1947 as a sponger. Today it is used primarily as a pleasure craft. Today five vessels are all that remain of the great sponge fleet at Tarpon Springs: four diving boats and one hooking boat. Only four of the boats--including the Duchess--remain seaworthy.

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Sponge Hooking Boat Duchess

10. Geographical Data

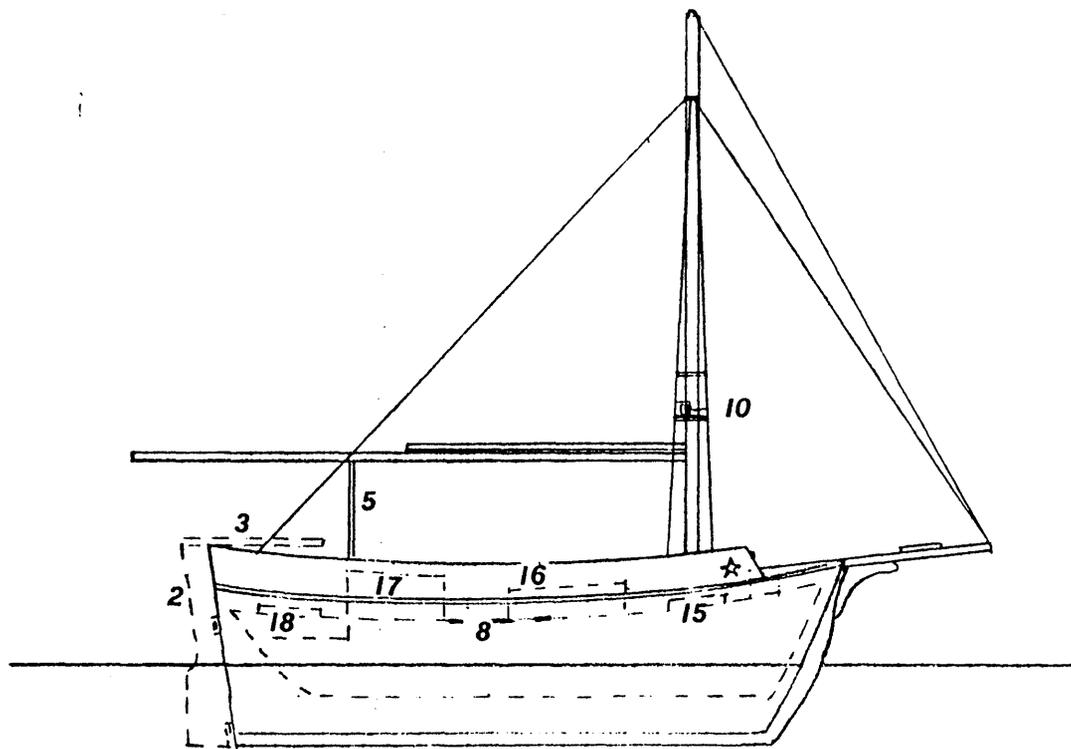
Acreage of property: Less than one

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the historic resource is limited to the extreme dimensions occupied by the vessel only. No other spaces or geographical location shall be considered as contributing or necessary to the significance of the property.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary limits are made sufficient by the physical integrity of the vessel which is maintained in changes of location, since it is a floating vessel and not associated specifically with a constrained physical location such as a museum or unchangeable mooring berth.



DUTCHESS

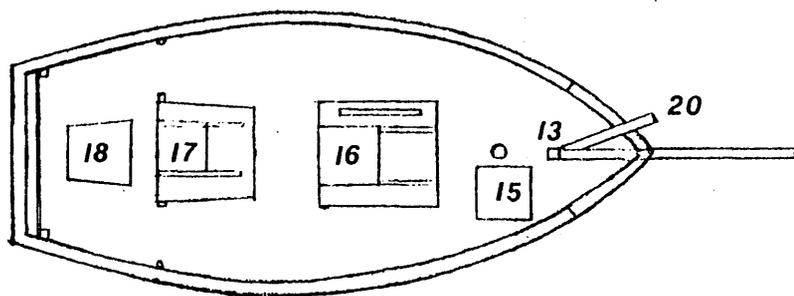
DECK LENGTH: ± 26'-9 PLUS 5'-11" BOWSPRIT

MAST HEIGHT: ± 25'

SPONGE BOATS - TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

JUNE 1989 R. SPAIN



DUTCHESS

DECK LENGTH: $\pm 26'-9"$ PLUS $5'-11"$ BOWSPRIT

MAST HEIGHT: $\pm 25'$

SPONGE BOATS - TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA

SCALE: $1/8" = 1'-0"$

JUNE 1989 R.SPAIN

