

CAPE FLORIDA LIGHTHOUSE
(CAPE FLORIDA STATE PARK)
Miami, off U.S. 1 on Key Biscayne
Dade County



As Cape Florida is the closest point of land to the world's mightiest current - the Gulf Stream - this sandy spit was the natural setting for many dramatic incidents of the past.

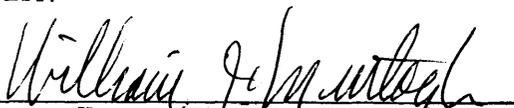
In June of 1497, on his fourth Atlantic crossing, the intrepid John Cabot first saw land on the new continent at Long Island Sound, then closely followed the coast southward to Key Biscayne. When he reached this lovely spot, he rounded Cape Florida and put ashore on the Key. This discovery eventually became the basis of Great Britain's claim to America.

Beginning in the late 1600's, pirates, who used the Key as their base, began taking advantage of the Gulf Stream traffic to make their fortunes. "Wreckers," who were as colorful as the pirates, followed and salvaged treasure from ships unfortunate enough to get too close to the rocks along the coast.

The focal point of the park is the historic Cape Florida lighthouse, one of South Florida's oldest structures. After the Dade Massacre in 1835, marauding Indians set fire to the lighthouse while the keeper of the light and his helper were trapped inside. Ships 12 miles out could see the flames, but the lightkeeper lived to tell the gory tale of the night of terror atop a pillar of flame.

The lighthouse was established in 1825, rebuilt in 1864 after the burning, and the tower was elevated from 65 to 95 feet above sea level in 1855. The light was mutilated by "a band of lawless persons" (presumably Confederates) during the Civil War, and refitted in 1866. **Finally in 1878, the beacon was extinguished forever when a newer lighthouse was put into use a few miles to the south.**

ATTEST:


Keeper of The National Register
JUL 1970

Date _____

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


Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

SEP 29 1970

Date _____

PH0022195

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Florida
COUNTY:	Dade
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.9.09.0014	9/29/70

H3
Mc
May

1. NAME

COMMON:
Cape Florida Lighthouse

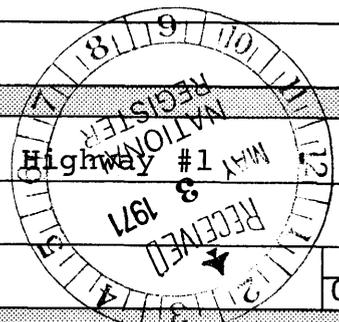
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Old Lighthouse Tower

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Southeastern tip of Key Biscayne off U.S. Highway #1

CITY OR TOWN:
Cape Florida

STATE: Florida CODE: 12 COUNTY: Dade CODE: 025



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Historic structure</u>

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Division of Recreation and Parks
Department of Natural Resources

STREET AND NUMBER:
Larson Building

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee STATE: Florida CODE: 12

STATE: Florida
COUNTY: Dade

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund

STREET AND NUMBER:
Elliot Building

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee STATE: Florida CODE: 12

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Florida Historic Sites Survey 1940

DATE OF SURVEY: 1940 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Archives, History and Records Management

STREET AND NUMBER:
401 East Gaines Street

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee STATE: Florida CODE: 12

FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: 70.9.09.0014
DATE: 9/29/70

7. DESCRIPTION

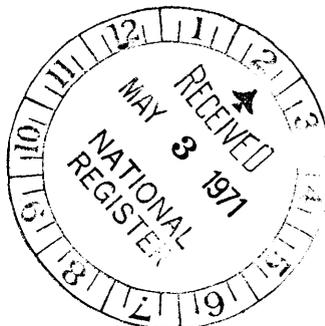
CONDITION

(Check One)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

As originally constructed, Cape Florida Lighthouse was 65 feet high, supposedly of solid walls of brick surrounding a central shaft five feet thick at the base and graduated to two feet at the top. In 1837, the year after it was destroyed by marauding Seminoles, rebuilding of the Cape Florida Light was authorized, but this was not completed until 1846 because hostile Indians remained nearby in the Everglades.

In 1855, the tower was raised to 95 feet. Today, Cape Florida Lighthouse looks much as it did in 1855. Recent acquisition of the property on which it stands by the State of Florida, insures preservation of this historic landmark.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

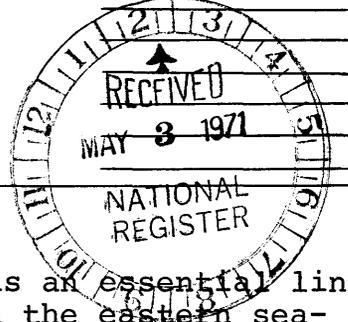
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1825

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>Navigation</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cape Florida Lighthouse served as an essential link in the series of navigation aids built on the eastern seaboard to assist waterborne commerce. With its completion in 1825, the light marked the southeastern tip of Key Biscayne, indicated the location of the dangerous Florida Reef and led mariners to the safe anchorage provided in the lee of the Key.

The lighthouse came to the nation's attention in 1836 during the Second Seminole War. John W. B. Thompson, the Assistant Keeper, and a black helper were forced to barricade themselves in the lighthouse during a Seminole raid on July 23, 1836. His personal account appeared in Niles Register and provided the reader of the day with a suspense story that would match any contrived fictitious adventure. The Indians set fire to the wood door and boarded window which were even with the ground; the fire was fed by 225 gallons of stored oil for the light. Thompson and his helper were forced to the top of the structure, out through the lantern and on to a two feet wide platform. There, they were almost roasted alive and to end their suffering, Thompson threw a keg of gunpowder down the shaft. The resulting explosion did not kill the men, but did throw down the stairs and woodwork within the lighthouse, after which the flames subsided. His helper died from wounds (seven in all), but Thompson survived despite six rifle balls, three in each foot. A Navy schooner, twelve miles offshore, heard the gunpowder explosion and came to Thompson's rescue. In later years Thompson's account of the incident varied.

The destruction of the lighthouse uncovered a fraud perpetuated on the government. Samuel B. Lincoln contracted to build a tower of solid brick, sixty-five feet high and walls five feet thick at the base and tapering to two feet at the top. The walls were found to be actually hollow and the contractor saved the cost of about half the required brick. After letting the contract, Collector Deareborn of Boston had appointed Noah Humphreys to inspect and certify the work. Humphreys submitted his certification on December 17, 1825 attesting to the completeness of the work.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Snow, Edward Rowe. Famous Lighthouses of America. New York; Dodd, Mead and Company, 1955.
 Thompson, John W. B. "Cape Florida Lighthouse," Niles Register (Baltimore), November 19, 1836, pp. 181-182.
 U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses. Compilation of Public Documents and Extracts, 1789-1871. Wash.: Government Printing Office, 1871.
 U.S. Coast Guard. Historically Famous Lighthouses. Washington: Public Information Division, 1952.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		025° 39 ' 59 "	080° 09 ' 22 "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

(C. ONE ACRE)

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: (Structure within 900 acre state park)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Randy F. Nimnicht, Historic Preservationist

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives, History and Records Mgt. DATE: 2/24/71

STREET AND NUMBER:
Department of State, The Capitol

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee STATE: Florida CODE: 12

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *Randy F. Nimnicht*

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: April 29, 1971

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

Ernest A. Casanovi
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 9/29/70

Date: _____

ATTEST:

William M. ...
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

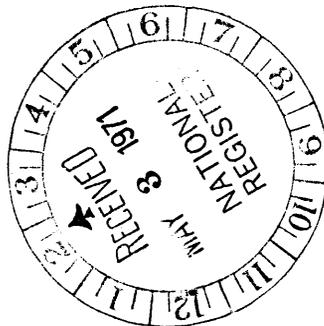
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Florida	
COUNTY Dade	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.9.09.0014	DATE 9/29/69

(Number all entries)

Cape Florida Lighthouse - Significance - page 2

Rebuilding of the light was authorized in 1837, but was not actually accomplished until 1846 because of hostile Indians in the area. In 1855, the tower was raised to 95 feet. In 1861, during the Civil War, the lighting apparatus was destroyed and not put back into operation until 1867. The light went out of active service in 1878 when Fowery Rock Light went into operation.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Florida	
COUNTY Dade	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 110.9.09.0014	DATE 9/29/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Cape Florida Lighthouse
 AND/OR HISTORIC: Old Lighthouse Tower

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Southeastern tip of Key Biscayne off U.S. Highway #1

CITY OR TOWN:
Cape Florida

STATE: Florida	CODE 12	COUNTY: Dade	CODE 025
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3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, Key Biscayne
 Quadrangle, 7 1/2 minute series (topo)

SCALE: 1:24,000

DATE: 1962

4. REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
 2. North arrow.
 3. Latitude and longitude reference.

