Form 10-300 (July 1909)

UNITED STATES DE ARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The best description of the present Aysical situation of Little Salt Springs is given by Clausen (1971), and is as follows.

Little Salt Springs is located in the south central portion of Sarasota County, Florida, at latitude 27° 04° 29" North and longitude 82° 14° 00" West. Geologically the site is a type of solution feature typically known as a "sink" or "spring" penetrating the limestone plain underlying the area. Physically it consists at the surface of a circular pond approximately 76 meters in diameter surrounded by a fringe of dense subtropical vegetation situated in what might be generally described as "south Florida ranch land", open flat Savanna type country with scrub oaks, range grass and palmetto predominating.

In the center of the pond at a depth of approximately 12 meters below the surface is located an oval orifice some 24 to 30 meters in diameter. The walls of the sink below the orifice, or mouth, taper down and out forming a large, inverted funnel shaped cavern. Ringing this cavern are at least two known ledges located at depths of approximately 21 and 27 meters below the present water surface. These ledges vary considerably in width, ranging from 40 to 70 centimeters to 7 to 8 meters. Other ledges may exist between the 27 meter ledge and the bottom of the sink, which below the center of the pond lies at a depth of 65 meters. (Clausen, 1971:1)

The physical characteristics of the water from Little Salt Springs gives some indication why the artifactual preservation is so remarkable. A chemical analysis of the spring water indicates that dissolved solids compose 3,590 parts per million; producing a favorable situation for rapid mineralization (Wells, 10-30-59). In addition, dissolved oxygen in the water is virtually non-existent beyond the first few feet nearest the surface (Clausen, Ms. log: 2-3). The temperature of the spring is extremely constant, varying less than 1.0 degree F. from the surface down to 210 feet (Ibid-notes: 4). These last two factors would tend to retard bacteria, and enhance the environment conducive to preservation.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first reported investigation of Little Salt Springs was conducted in 1959 by Colonel William Royal of Venice, Florida. His observation of human skeletal material on the various ledges within the sink, prompted a second investigation. Later that same year, Royal, accompanied by a marine biologist geologist, and archaeologist, again investigated Little Salt The occurrence of human skeletons within the recesses on the sink was confirmed, and enough skeletal material was recovered to account for at least 50 individuals (Goggin, 1962) Clausen, 1972: 1-2). Although much professional interest was generated by this discovery (Goggin, 1962), no further research was conducted until 1970. At this time, General Development Corporation, the owners of the site, permitted several teams of sport divers to explore the springs. They subsequently reported the existence of skeletal material on the ledges, emphasizing the occurrence of this material on the 27 meter ledge (Clausen, 1971: 2).

In 1971, the Division of Archives, History, and Records Management was contacted by the General Development Corporation, concerning research at Little Salt Springs. A cooperative research program between the General Development Corporation and the Division of Archives, History, and Records Management was formulated, and was initiated in May, 1971. A multi-discipline research design was set up, and included geologists, limnologists, archaeologists, and physical anthropologists. the research was Carl Clausen, State Marine Archaeologist, who conducted preliminary investigation in May and November, 1971. The first phase of the research was designed to collect human skeletal material for C-14 dating, and to familiarize the researchers with the environment of Little Salt Springs. November, 1971, Phase II of the project was undertaken. phase included a detailed environmental evaluation, utilizing both the geologist and limnologist, as well as the archaeologist-in-charge. Core samples, fathometer readings, and chemical analysis of the water were taken in preparation for the major archaeological investigation scheduled for Phase III.

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Form 10-300a (July 1989)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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7. DESCRIPTION

Both geological and archaeological evidence indicates that the water level of Little Salt Springs was substantially lower in the past, than at present. The occurrence of both human and animal skeletal material on the 21 and 27 meter ledges suggests this type of situation, as well as the presence of stalactites and stalagmites on these ledges. This type of geological formation could not have formed unless the water level was lower than the ledges.

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

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Phase III was initiated in December, 1971, and concluded in January, 1972. This phase dealt with the intensive archaeological testing of the site, and included underwater excavation of several stratified areas. These tests produced quite a large sample of human skeletal material, as well as some artifacts and organic remains such as leaves, nuthulls, coprolites, and charred wood.

The accumulated data from the three phases of research conducted at Little Salt Springs is presently being assimilated by Clausen. Publication of this data is anticipated in the near future, and should offer a rare insight into the physical environment and human population of Florida during the Late Archaic (2000 - 4000 B.C.)

The Little Salt Springs site possesses a number of physical characteristics which have enhanced the preservation of information relating to early man in Florida. The constant water temperature, the virtual absence of dissolved oxygen, and the high percentage of dissolved minerals in the waters of Little Salt Springs have all played a role in preserving the physical and artifactual remains of the Late Archaic occupants of the site. Data recovered from the Little Salt Springs site provides good documentation of the environment and cultural activities of some of Floridas early inhabitants. Many normally perishable materials have been found in the Springs, and these help embellish the artifactual assemblage known for this phase of the Archaic tradition. In addition, the superb preservation of the human skeletal material greatly aids our understanding of the base human population of this part of Florida.

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anonymous. "General Development Sponsors Archaeological Research Program." New Vistas, VIII, No. 3. Miami. 1972. (Manuscript proofed by Clausen).
- Clausen, Carl. Field Notes and Field Log of the Little Salt Springs Research, 1971-72. Ms. on file at the Department of State, Division of Archives, History, and Records Management. Tallahassee, Florida
- Justification for Cooperative Scientific

 Investigation of Little Salt Spring. Mimeographed Ms.
 on file at the Department of State, Division of Archives,
 History, and Records Management. Tallahassee, Florida.
 1971.
- Archives and History News, III, No. 2. Tallahassee, Florida. 1972.
- Goggin, John M. "Recent Developments in Underwater Archaeology." Southeastern Archaeological Conference Newsletter, VIII. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1962.
- Wells, Sidney W. Memo to Carl S. Burbridge relating to the physical and chemical properties of the water from Little Salt Springs. Copy on file at the Department of State, Division of Archives, History, and Records Management. 10-30-59. Tallahassee, Florida.

Form No. 10-30007 (Hev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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LITTLE SALT SPRINGS

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

A parcel of land lying in Section 20, Township 39 South, Range 21 East, Sarasota County, Florida, said parcel of land being more specifically described as follows:

From the Northwest corner of said Section 20, bear S.89°16'51"E, a distance of 1440.96 feet to the point of intersection of a curve concave to the Southwest having a radial bearing through said point of N.18°20'01"E, and a radius of 950.00 feet; THENCE, Southeasterly parallel with and 50.00 feet from McCarthy Blvd. according to the record plate of the Thirty Six Addition to Port Charlotte Subdivision as recorded in plat book 16, page 3, of the Public Records of Sarasota County, Florida, along the arc of said curve, through a central angle of 2°08'33", a distance of 35.53 feet to the Point of Beginning;

THENCE, S.20028'35"W, a distance of 394.74 feet;

THENCE, S.43°44'40"E, a distance of 240.00 feet;

THENCE, S.46°15'20"W, a distance of 525.00 feet;

THENCE, $5.43^{\circ}44^{\prime}40^{\prime\prime}E$, a distance of 750.00 feet;

THENCE, $N.46^{\circ}15'20''E$, a distance of 975.00 feet;

THENCE, N.43°44'40"W, a distance of 748.51 feet to the point of curvature of a curve to the left having a radius of 950.00 feet;

THENCE, Northwesterly along the arc of said curve through the central angle of 25°46'45", a distance of 427.44 feet to the Point of Beginning.

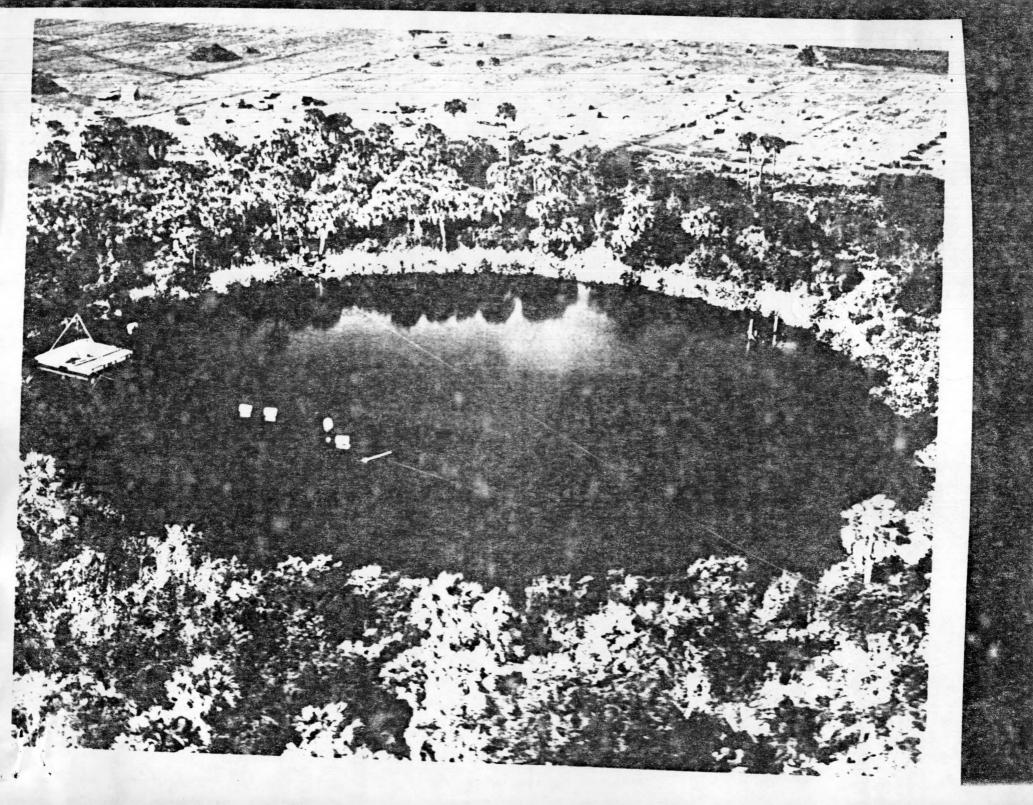
Containing 20.94 acres, more or less.

Bearings as mentioned herein are based on the aforementioned record plat.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES Sarasota PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM FOR MPS USE ONLY: (Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph) 9 I. NAME 0 COMMON: Little Salt Springs AND/OR HISTORICE LOCATION STRUCT AND NUMBERS Circa, two miles North of US 41. CITY OR YOWN: North Port Charlotte Vicinity STATES CODE COUNTY: CODE Florida 12 115 Sarasota 5 PHOTO REFERENCE more encore General Development Corp. DATE OF PHOTO: 12/18/71 ш NEGATIVE FILED AT: 4. IDENTIFICATION DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. Aerial view of Little Salt Springs, looking west. Photo shows the Springs, surrounding hammock, and outlying "prairie."

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	7)	PROPERTY MAP FORM	FOR NPS USE ONLY
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