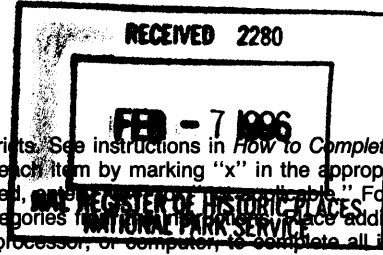


447-

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 an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "n/a". 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 GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION

other names/site number Site File # 8LL0833

2. Location

street & number 833 Belcher Road n/a not for publication

city or town Boca Grande n/a vicinity

state Florida code FL county Lee code 071 zip code 33921

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.)

Suzanne P. Walker / Deputy SHPO 1/31/96
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
 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.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper Gay M. Rapsley Entered in the National Register 3/22/96 Date of Action

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)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

Historic Resources of Lee County, 1881-1945

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/ Government Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick Pier

walls WOOD/ wetherboard

roof METAL/ tin

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.)

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 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH/MEDICINE

MARITIME HISTORY

Period of Significance

ca. 1892-1946

Significant Dates

ca. 1892

late 1920s

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown/unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Boca Grande Quarantine Station
Name of Property

Lee County, Fl.
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	3 7 4 5 0 0	2 9 5 5 8 1 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 boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sherry Piland, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date January 1996

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough telephone (904) 487-2333

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 _____

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 to amend existing 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**

BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number 7 Page 1

The Boca Grande Quarantine Station, is located at 833 Belcher Road, Boca Grande. The one-story, frame, vernacular building was constructed between 1892 and 1895. It rests approximately three feet off the ground on a brick pier foundation. The exterior walls are sheathed with heart pine drop siding, set off by cornerboards. The truncated pyramidal roof is tin. A railed observation deck is located in the center of the roof. This building contributes to the Historic Resources of Lee County, Florida, multiple property group under property type F.4, Government and Public Resources.

SETTING

The Quarantine Station is at the south end of Gasparilla Island. Gasparilla Island, on the southwest coast of Florida, is approximately forty miles northwest of Fort Myers. The island is approximately seven miles long, and less than one mile wide. The deep inlet of Boca Grande Pass, between Gasparilla Island and Cayo Costa Island to the south, provides access to the deep lower portion of Charlotte Harbor. The natural deep water port on the southeast tip of the island was an ideal anchorage for ships transporting phosphate.

There were few structures on the south end of Gasparilla Island when the Quarantine Station was constructed. A lighthouse and assistant keeper's quarters were constructed at the south end of the island in 1890. The Quarantine House is approximately 300 yards north of the Boca Grande Lighthouse (NR 1980), and diagonally across the street from the state park property where the lighthouse is located.

In the late 1920s, the Quarantine Station was moved approximately two hundred yards to the northwest, without a change in its orientation or type of setting. Currently a vacant lot is west of this property. To the east is another residential structure. The property to the north, formerly part of the Phosphate Port property, is being developed for luxury homes. Across Belcher Road, to the south, are oil storage tanks. Belcher Road, approximately 1/4 mile long, runs from the Gulf of Mexico to Charlotte Harbor.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.**

Section number 7 Page 2

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The main facade of the Quarantine Station faces south (Photo 1). A hipped roof, screened porch extends across the facade. The entrance is centrally located and sheltered by the porch. The multi-light entrance door has a hinged transom. The entry is flanked by rectangular, 6/6, wood, double hung sash windows.

The east (Photo 2) and west (Photo 3) elevations of the building are identical. Each elevation has two, 6/6 wood, double hung sash windows.

The original portion of the station is thirty-six feet wide and twenty-four feet deep. Sometime after its move in the 1920s, a detached kitchen was added and connected to the rear (north) elevation by a breezeway. Later the breezeway was enclosed, and still later a bathroom was added alongside the enclosed breezeway. This addition deteriorated and in 1995 was removed and replaced with a new addition similar in size and appearance (Photo 4). The rear addition is twenty-eight feet deep and twenty-four feet wide. It incorporates a kitchen, bedroom, utility room, two bathrooms, and a porch along its western elevation. The roof of the addition is a truncated gable, pitched so it does not extend above the eave of the original portion of the house.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Boca Grande Quarantine Station was designed as a four room structure, arranged around an eight-foot wide center hall (Photo 5). The four rooms are identical in size and shape. The ceilings of the hallway and rooms are 13.5 feet in height. The solid wood interior doors have a four-panel design (Photo 6). The interior walls are covered with beaded heart pine, placed diagonally in some places (Photo 7).

Originally, a metal stairway led from the hallway up to the attic and observation deck. That stairway eventually rusted out. Some time in the 1920s, to gain additional space, a loft area was constructed in the hallway and the metal stairs were replaced with wood stairs. In the recent renovation of the property, the loft and the wood stairs were removed. The stairs were replaced

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.**

Section number 7 Page 3

with a spiral, metal staircase (Photo 5). It is not known if the original metal stairs were spiral, but they well could have been.

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS

The main body of the house retains its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The recent addition at the rear of the property replaces an addition of the late 1920s. The spiral staircase is also a recent addition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetBOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.Section number 8 Page 1

The Boca Grande Quarantine Station on Gasparilla Island is significant under Criterion A in the areas of health/medicine and maritime history. It contributes to the Historic Resources of Lee County, Florida, multiple property group under property type F.4, Government and Public Resources and historic context I, Early Development of Lee County, 1881-1895.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

One of the early concerns of the federal government was how to protect the nation's health through preventing the importation of infectious diseases from incoming ships. In an effort to prevent epidemics, the Fourth United States Congress enacted "An Act Respecting Quarantines and Health Laws" in 1799.

The prevention of epidemics was especially important to Florida, with its hundreds of miles of coastline and active maritime activity. Florida's port cities were in direct communication with communities in tropical countries that harbored infectious diseases such as cholera and yellow fever. In 1852, the Florida Legislature authorized seaboard cities and counties to establish maritime quarantines against vessels arriving from foreign ports known to be infected with contagious diseases. A quarantine station at Pensacola received considerable financial support from the federal government between 1878 and 1883. As early as 1835, a schooner was blamed for bringing yellow fever to Pensacola. Other yellow fever epidemics followed and included outbreaks of the disease in St. Joseph in 1841, Tampa in the 1850s and Fernandina in the 1870s. Key West was impacted by yellow fever numerous times between 1867 and 1899.

The Florida Constitution of 1885 contained a brief article authorizing a State Board of Health, although the Legislature failed to actually establish such a board. However, some counties established boards of health with the authority to declare a quarantine whenever they deemed it expedient. Finally, a severe yellow fever epidemic that struck Jacksonville in 1888 became the impetus that ensured an active State Board of Health. Governor Fleming called the Legislature into special session and appointed a three-person board. Dr. Joseph Yates Porter was chosen as the State Health Officer, a position he held from 1889 to 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number 8 Page 2

Maritime quarantine and the prevention of yellow fever were the State Board's primary concerns during its early years of activity. Under Dr. Porter's leadership, the Board of Health developed a system of maritime quarantine that involved boarding and inspecting incoming vessels, establishing quarantine stations at all major ports, and the fumigation and sterilization of cargo believed to be carrying infection. Quarantine stations were already in existence at the mouth of Tampa Bay, Fernandina, Pensacola and Key West. The Board financed the construction of quarantine inspections stations at other minor ports of entry: Miami, Boca Grande, Charlotte Harbor, Cedar Keys, Anclote, and at St. Andrews Bay on the west coast.

The rules and regulations of the State Board of Health stipulated that all vessels arriving at any port in the state between April 15th and November 30th of each year were to be anchored at a designated area in each harbor, marked by a buoy and a yellow flag, and remain there until inspected by a sanitary officer appointed by the State or the County Board of Health.

Disputes occasionally arose over administrative responsibility of quarantine matters. Some cities, such as Key West, wanted responsibility for their own port, and resented any state involvement. The Marine Hospital Service (later known as the U.S. Public Health Service), a bureau under the Secretary of the Treasury, also displayed increasing interest in assuming responsibility for maritime quarantine. This federal interest was viewed by many states as an infringement on "states' rights." While the State Board of Health described visits in 1894 to Florida quarantine stations by a Marine Hospital Service inspector as a "system of espionage," they agreed to facilitate the movements of this federal official. In 1901, Dr. Porter was invited to appear before the U.S. Senate Committee on Public Health and National Quarantine to present his views on "federal supremacy in health matters in the several states."

The cost of operating the state's quarantine stations was supported primarily from fees levied for inspection and disinfection. In 1900, the operating funds for the quarantine stations were severely depleted by the cost of dealing with an outbreak of 3,000 cases of smallpox. Pressed by these financial difficulties, the Florida Legislature passed a resolution in May 1901, authorizing the State Board of Health to negotiate with the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number 8 Page 3

federal government to take over operation of the quarantine stations. In August 1901, the operation and management of the state's maritime quarantine system was transferred to the U.S. Marine Hospital Service. The Federal authorities made few changes in the rules and regulations that had been established by the Florida State Board of Health, an indication of the quality of Florida's program. Under an arrangement with the Treasury Department, state quarantine officials were accepted into federal service as civil service employees in the Public Health Service.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Ship traffic in and out of Charlotte Harbor dramatically increased as phosphate mining and processing began developing in the 1880s. Phosphate mined from the bed of the lower Peace River was barged about thirty miles to the lower part of Charlotte Harbor off the south tip of Gasparilla Island. There it was loaded aboard ocean-going vessels for distant ports. Because of this increased traffic, a light house was constructed at the south end of Gasparilla Island in 1890 and a Quarantine Station was established by 1892. Minutes of the State Board of Health indicate that Dr. Porter, the State Health Officer, was urging the appointment of a physician instead of the layman inspector then on duty at the station. In May 1892, the health officer was appropriated \$1,685 to build a cottage, furnish it, and construct a boat for the use of the quarantine boarding officer and a boatman. Lighthouse records, indicate however, that the Quarantine Station was constructed in 1895. The names of a few of the doctors who staffed the Quarantine Station between 1892 and 1904 are known: Dr. Cronin, Dr. L. S. Smith, Dr. Braxton Bragg Blount, and Dr. Barns. After his service as a Quarantine officer, Dr. Blount continued to reside and practice medicine in Boca Grande.

Around 1904, this building ceased to be used as a quarantine station, and a new station was constructed on Cayo Costa. The Boca Grande station was then leased to William H. Johnson, a bar pilot. Brothers, Irdell W. and William H. Johnson, had established a pilot service on Gasparilla Island by 1888. The design and location of the quarantine station made it a perfect location for their pilot service. The early detection of arriving ships, and the ability to reach them as fast as possible to guide them safely through the tricky tides and shoals into the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number 8 Page 4

harbor was vitally important for crews unfamiliar with the harbor. Their piloting service was especially important when ship traffic in the harbor was further increased after the construction of a railroad in 1910, connecting Gasparilla Island with phosphate mines in central Florida. In later years, the Johnson family acquired ownership of the building and three generations of pilots and their families lived in the house between 1904 and 1964.

Captain William H. Johnson retired from piloting in 1920, moved to Punta Gorda, sold real estate, and was instrumental in the creation of Charlotte County in 1921. He later became a member of the Charlotte County Board of Commissioners.

The current owner, Captain Robert W. Johnson, grandson of Captain Irdell Johnson, was the last pilot to live in the house. With advances in communications, after 1964, visual sighting of a ship was no longer necessary and a pilot station was no longer needed.

The house and those who occupied it played a significant role in the early settlement of the area and in its maritime history. They also played a vital role in the protection of the health of the citizens of the area.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The Boca Grande Quarantine Station represents an unusual vernacular building. Although it was constructed to serve a specific governmental function, it outwardly appears to be a simple residence. The Quarantine Station was built near the harbor shore and had an observation deck on its roof. Ships that were in quarantine were required to fly a yellow flag, identifying them as being from a foreign country. When the quarantine doctor saw this flag at the masthead of a ship, he would row to the vessel in a small craft and inspect the ship for communicable diseases. The Quarantine Station is painted yellow, the symbolic quarantine color.

The building provided sleeping space for quarantine station officials, and provided maximum ventilation and dissipation of heat through its south-facing porch, wide hallway, high ceilings, and tall windows. The high ceilings also gave the station added

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.**

Section number 8 Page 5

elevation for the purpose of extended vision from the roof-top observation deck. The location and design of the building made it ideal for use as a pilot station after it was no longer used as a quarantine station. Even after the building was moved in the 1920s, it continued to provide a good view of the harbor. Because it was closer to the Gulf, it served the needs of the pilots better. The form and design of the building reflects its use, and consideration of the climate and setting. To date, this is the only surviving quarantine building that has been identified in Florida.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number 9 Page 1

Gibson, Charles Dana. Boca Grande. n.p.: Great Outdoors
Publishing Co., 1982.

Hardy, Albert V. Millstones and Milestones, Florida's Public
Health. Jacksonville: Florida State Board of Health, 1964.

"Maritime Quarantine Under Federal Control." Chattanooga News,
11 November 1905.

Peeples, Vernon. Punta Gorda and the Charlotte Harbor Area: A
Pictorial History. Norfolk, Virginia: Donning Company,
1986.

Porter, Joseph Yates. Looking Backward Over Fifty Years of
Health Work in Florida. (reprinted from Journal of Florida
Medical Association, July 1925-January 1926.)

Sowder, Wilson. "Joseph Yates Porter, M.D." Journal of Florida
Medical Association 54 (August 1967):801-808.

Tretter, Ann Dally. Island of the Mind: Gasparilla. Venice:
Ink and Images, 1976.

Williams, Lindsey, and Cleveland, U. S. Our Fascinating Past,
Charlotte Harbor: The Early Years. Punta Gorda: Charlotte
Harbor Area Historical Society, 1993.

FLORIDA STATE ARCHIVES

State Board of Health, Newspaper Clippings. Series S 45, Vols. 3
and 7.

Minutes, State Board of Health. Series 272, Vol. 1, 11 March
1889 to 6 March 1914.

Porter, Dr. Joseph Yates. Letter Books. Series 47, Vol. 1.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

**BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.**

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Parcel number 26-43-20-00004, as recorded in office of Lee County Property Appraiser. The parcel measures approximately 50 feet by 115 feet.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property, indicated on the site plan by a dashed line, consists of the entire parcel historically associated with the Quarantine Station since its move to this site in the late 1920s.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION
LEE COUNTY, FL.**

Section number Photo Page 1

1. Boca Grande Quarantine Station, 833 Belcher Road
2. Boca Grande, Lee County, Florida
3. Robert W. Johnson
4. June 1995
5. 321 Gasparilla Street, Boca Grande, Florida
6. Main (south) facade, view looking northeast
7. Photo 1 of 7

Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs

6. Main (south) facade on left, east elevation on right; view looking northwest
7. Photo 2 of 7

6. West elevation, view looking northeast
7. Photo 3 of 7

6. West elevation, showing 1995 addition, view looking northeast
7. Photo 4 of 7

6. Interior detail, looking down hallway toward front door; view looking south
7. Photo 5 of 7

6. Interior detail, bedroom, showing doorway and diagonal panelling; view looking west
7. Photo 6 of 7

6. Interior detail, bedroom ceiling; view looking northwest
7. Photo 7 of 7

Gasparilla Road

BOCA GRANDE QUARANTINE STATION

Lee County, Fl.

Photo Direction ○ →

Approx. Scale: 0.5" = 10'

Boundary - - - -

Belcher Road

