

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 Diving Boat George N. Cretekos
other names/site number Samarkos Bros., St. Michael, Pastrikos / 8PT 1706

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 N/A not for publication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 32684

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____
		<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 [Signature] Date 6/24/90
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. [Signature] 8/3/90
 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:) _____
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)

Industry/Sponge Fishing

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.

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

1941

Significant Dates

1941

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Samarkos Brothers

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

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

Description

Summary

The sponge diving boat George N. Cretekos was built in 1941 to gather sponges in the Gulf of Mexico. Its design 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 George N. Cretekos is still a fully functional sponger. It is a deep draft vessel with a squared stern and wide hull tapering to a sharp, raised bow. It carries a single mast rigged with a triangular sail. Originally it also featured a stern mast with a spanker sail, but this has been reduced to one-third of its former height and is used to secure a cable attached to the main mast. The keel, ribs and planking are constructed of heart pine. The ship is powered by a diesel engine and controlled by a tiller attached to a wooden rudder at the stern of the craft. The bulwark barely rises above the deck, and there are low housings over the rear engine compartment and the forward crew's quarters.

Setting

Home port for the George N. Cretekos 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

The George N. Cretekos follows the traditional design of sponge boats built at Tarpon Springs. Its deck length is 42 feet, and the height of the mast is approximately 28 feet. At the stern of the boat are the shortened aftermast and the rudder and tiller. Moving forward are the stern samson posts for tying lines and holding the tiller, the engine and air compressor control rods, and the helmsman's cockpit. Amidships are the rear and forward companionways, scuppers, the bridge pipe and center boom for hanging sponges, and the navigation lights. The mainmast is found forward of the crews' companionway, rising

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Description

almost from the bow. At or in the bow there are the round tender's hatch, square storage hatch, diver's ladder, and anchor hoist.

Auxiliary equipment associated with the sponge boats includes buoys for marking the diver's position, a collapsible propeller cage for protecting life lines and air hoses, tools benches and work tables for the cleaning of sponges, and lines for stringing sponges.

The George N. Cretekos is in excellent condition and is well maintained. It continues to work as a sponge diving boat and has maintained its original use of both sail and motor power. Except for the removal of a portion of the stern mast the boat remains largely as it was constructed in 1941.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Photographs

Inventory of Photographs

1. Sponge Diving Boat George N. Cretekos
 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 South
 7. Photo No. 1 of 5
-
1. Sponge Diving Boat George N. Cretekos
 2. Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd., Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), FL
 3. Paul Weaver
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. View of Bow, Looking Northhwest
 7. Photo No. 2 of 5
-
1. Sponge Diving Boat George N. Cretekos
 2. Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd., Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), FL
 3. Paul Weaver
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Detail of Bow, Looking North
 7. Photo No. 3 of 5
-
1. Sponge Diving Boat George N. Cretekos
 2. Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd., Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), FL
 3. Paul Weaver
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. View of Stern, Looking East
 7. Photo No. 4 of 5
-
1. Sponge Diving Boat George N. Cretekos
 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 5

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Key to Illustration

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 items on this list may not be found on the George N. Cretkos.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Significance

Summary

The sponge diving boat George N. Cretekos (originally named the Samarkos Bros.) 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. This ship also has exceptional significance under criteria consideration G, since it was built in 1941 and has therefore achieved significance in less than fifty years. The unusual and functional design of the Tarpon Springs sponge diving 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

NOTE: The boat is being nominated to the National Register under its present operating name rather than its original name or any of the names given to it subsequent to its launching in 1941 for the convenience of identification and location, since it continues to operate out of Tarpon Springs as a commercial vessel. Further, the sponge boat is not associated with any particular historical event that would require the use of any of its former names.

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 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.

With the advent of gasoline engines, the shape of the stern was altered, and the boats using engines were built with a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Significance

transom stern in order to house the bulky power plant and fuel tanks. Eventually, diesel power began to replace the earlier gasoline system. The lateen sail characteristic of the Greek and Turkish prototypes was soon supplanted by the two masted gaff-headed yawl rig, making the 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 George N. Cretekos was built in 1941 and was christened the Samarkos Bros. in honor of its builders. The Samarkos Brothers owned several other sponge boats at Tarpon Springs, including the Eleni (now the N.K. Symi) and the Esmine. The name of the Samarkos Bros. was first changed to the St. Michael and then to the Pastrikos during subsequent ownerships. The name was changed to the George N. Cretekos by its present owner Ali Uzunboylu in the late 1970s.

At the time the George N. Cretekos was constructed there were nearly 100 similar vessels operating out of Tarpon Springs, most of them similar in design. 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 George N. Cretekos, however, has continued to function as a sponger. Today five vessels are all that remain of the great sponge fleet at Tarpon Springs: four diving boats and one hooking boat. Of the diving boats only three--including the George N. Cretekos--remain seaworthy.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

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Olausen, Steve. Interview with George Brillis, June 21, 1988, Tarpon Springs.

Pent, R.F. A History of Tarpon Springs. St. Petersburg, 1964.

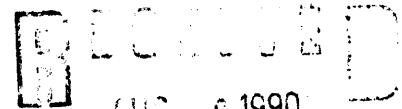
Rozees, Eileen and Lou. Sponge Docks Tarpon Springs, Florida; America's Sponge Diving Birthplace. Tarpon Springs, 1973.

Stoughton, Gertrude. Tarpon Springs, Florida, The Early Years. 1975.

Work Projects Administration. Florida Merchant Marine Survey. (typescript). Tallahassee: Florida State Library Board, 1938.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet



NATIONAL
REGISTER

Section number 10 Page 1

Sponge Diving Boat George N. Cretekos

10. Geographical Data

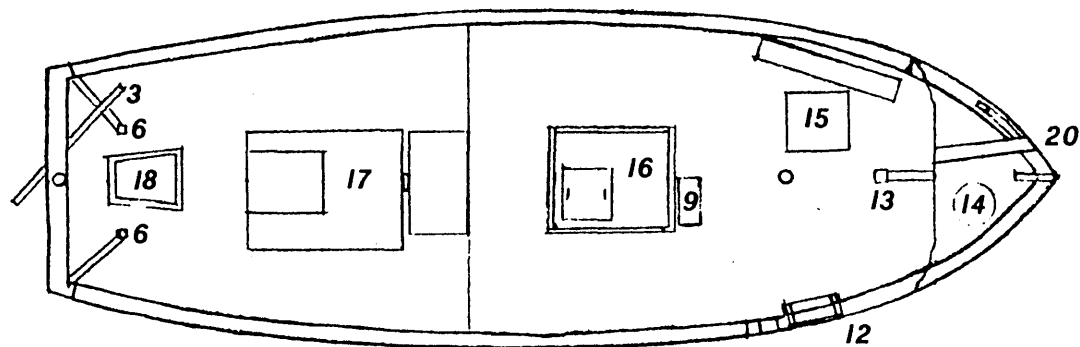
Acreeage of property: Less than one

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.



GOERGE N. CRETEKOS

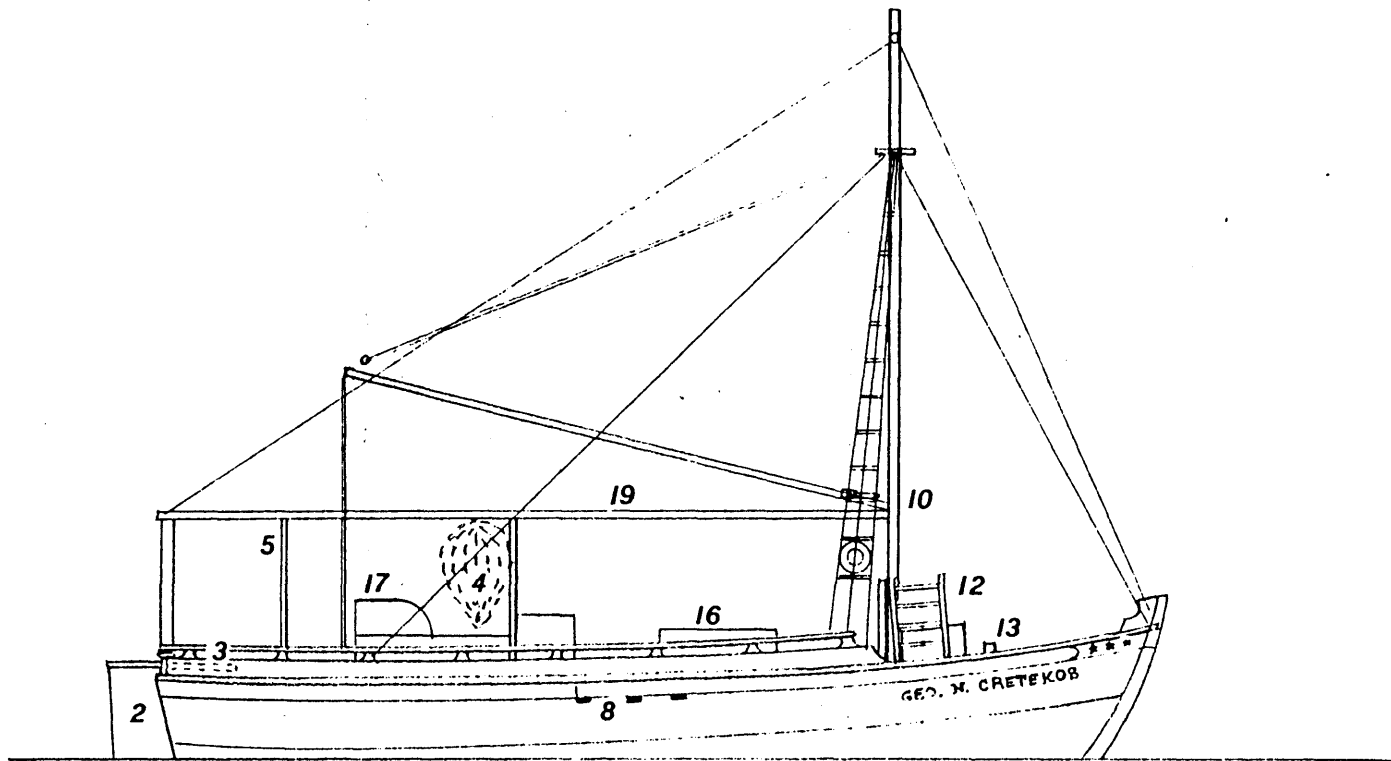
DECK LENGTH: 42'

MAST HEIGHT: ± 28'

SPONGE BOATS - TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA

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

JUNE 1989 R.SPAIN



GEORGE N. CRETEKOS

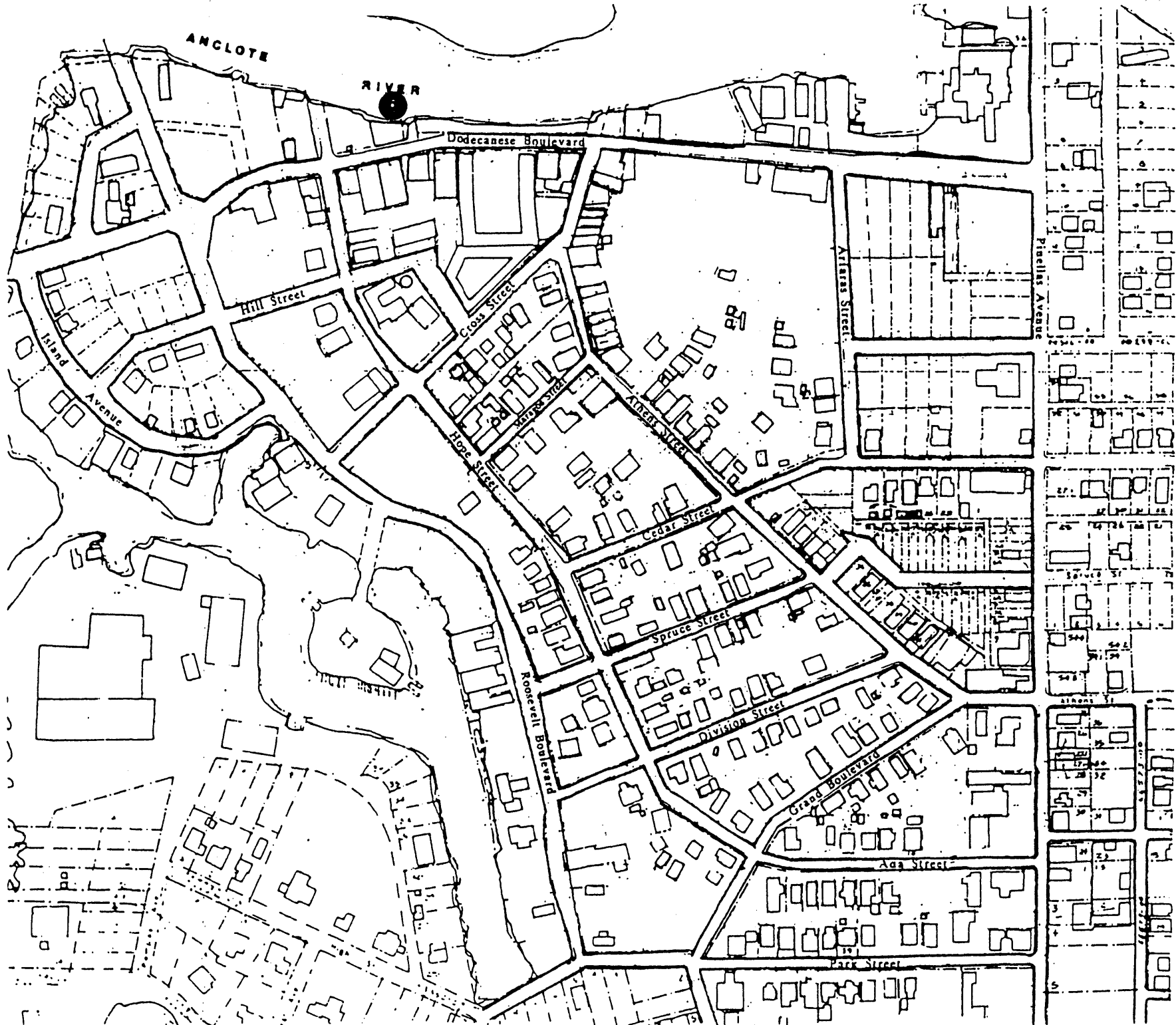
DECK LENGTH: 42'

MAST HEIGHT: ± 28'

SPONGE BOATS - TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA

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

JUNE 1989 R. SPAIN



ANCLOTHE

RIVER

Dodecanese Boulevard

Hill Street

Cross Street

Island Avenue

Hope Street

Artinas Street

Athens Street

Cedar Street

Spruce Street

Roosevelt Boulevard

Division Street

Grand Boulevard

Ada Street

Park Street

Pincellas Avenue