

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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." 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 TARPON SPRINGS GREEKTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Bounded by Dodecanese Blvd/Roosevelt Blvd/W. Tarpon Av/N. Pinellas Av N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Tarpon Springs N/A ☐ vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Pinellas code 103 zip code 34689

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.)

Alissa Sae Lotane 5/2/14  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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  
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Joe Salter

6-2-2014

**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)

- ☐ buildings  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

## Contributing

## Noncontributing

282	82	buildings
1	0	sites
13	0	structures
0	0	objects
296	82	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

5

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/water-related (Boat, Ship, Wharf)

DOMESTIC/Single Family Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/Restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE/Warehouse

RELIGION/Religious Facility

RELIGION/Church School

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

See Continuation Sheet

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Family Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

COMMERCE/TRADE/Restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE/Warehouse

RELIGION/Religious Facility

RELIGION/Church School

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

See Continuation Sheet

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Greek sponge boat

LATE 19th &amp; Early 20th Century/Vernacular

See Continuation Sheet

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood

Stucco

roof Asphalt Shingle

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 36) 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)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: European (Greek)

MARITIME HISTORY

### Period of Significance

1905-Present

### Significant Dates

1905

### Significant Person

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Unknown

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

TARPON SPRINGS GREEKTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Name of Property

Pinellas Co., FL  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 140 apprx.

### UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	2	6	7	4	4	3	1	1	5	7	7	8
Zone			Easting						Northing						
2	1	7	3	2	7	6	2	0	3	1	1	5	8	2	9

3	1	7	3	2	7	5	6	7	3	1	1	4	5	3	2
Zone			Easting						Northing						
4	1	7	3	2	7	1	4	3	3	1	1	4	5	3	2

☒ 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 Tina Bucuvalas/Curator of Arts & Historical Resources/City of Tarpon Springs/Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date May 2014

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

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 amend 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503



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TARPON SPRINGS GREEKTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT  
TARPON SPRINGS, PINELLAS COUNTY  
LIST OF RESOURCES

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**SUMMARY**

Located in north Pinellas County, Florida, approximately thirty miles northwest of Tampa, Tarpon Springs' Greektown District is a traditional cultural property that preserves a strong ethnic and maritime character. The Greektown District measures about 140 acres. The primary area is bounded by the Anclote River on the north, Tarpon Avenue and Spring Bayou on the south, Hibiscus and Pinellas Streets on the east; and Roosevelt and Grand Boulevards to Spring Bayou on the west—see the maps and inventory for details. The architectural resources have historic integrity. They convey a distinctive sense of place and ethnic heritage, with commercial, industrial, residential, and religion-based buildings as well as boats, generally developed without the benefit of architectural plans.

**SETTING**

The City of Tarpon Springs is located in north Pinellas County approximately thirty miles northwest of Tampa. The City of Clearwater, the seat of government for Pinellas County, lies fifteen miles to the south. The city limits of Tarpon Springs measure approximately twelve square miles. A dominant feature of Tarpon Springs is the Anclote River and its corollary bayous, which have greatly influenced the historical development of the city. The terrain is relatively flat, although the topography in some neighborhoods close to the river displays slight undulations. The Anclote River widens at Tarpon Springs with numerous bayous extending into the city, leaving few points more than several blocks from the water. In order to determine the Greektown Historic District boundaries, the City formed a working group consisting of residents who had grown up in the area, or who currently own businesses or homes there.

In terms of the district's general layout, on the north side the Sponge Docks are surrounded with commercial/ industrial facilities along Dodecanese Boulevard, along the adjacent northern two blocks of Athens Street and Roosevelt Boulevard. On the eastern boundary, Pinellas Avenue also is lined with commercial establishments. St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral and its auxiliary spaces mark the southeast corner of the district before it transitions into Tarpon Springs' main commercial downtown. A few divers' cottages remain just south of the Docks, particularly along the alley between Cross and Maragos streets. The remainder of Greektown is infilled with residential areas. While the dominant residential building period seems to have been the 1920s, the area is very mixed, with structures from all decades—though most of the newer buildings tend to be commercial. Some of the oldest buildings are along Tarpon Avenue, Orange Street, and Spring Boulevard, which were originally settled by wealthy

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snowbirds in the late nineteenth century. Street patterns in the northern residential area are somewhat more dense and irregular than the southern area, which align more with the City grid.

### Context for the Commercial, Industrial, Maritime, and Religion-Related Buildings in the Greektown Historic District

Henry Glassie's seminal study *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*<sup>1</sup> suggests that vernacular architecture extends beyond dwelling types. For instance, he devoted some of his work to understanding boats as an expression of culture and an important type of architecture. His work, as well as that by Howard Chapelle<sup>2</sup> in diffusion of American boat types, underlines the importance of ship building traditions of Tarpon Springs.

Census schedules enumerated in Tarpon Springs in 1910 indicate that eight ship carpenters—three from Greece, three from Turkey and one each from Florida and Georgia—resided in the city. At that time the predominantly Greek Dodecanese Islands were owned by Turkey, so the carpenters from Turkey were most likely ethnic Greeks. The tradesmen from the Mediterranean were recent immigrants. They had learned as apprentices to master craftsmen who taught them age-old ship building techniques. In Tarpon Springs, America's emergent sponge capital, these carpenters were probably engaged full-time in the construction and repair of diving and hooking boats. Early twentieth century vessels based and built in Tarpon Springs were primarily *achtarmas* style sponge boats (a sub-type of the *trechantiri*) common in the Dodecanese islands. This type may originally have been based on a Phoenician design used in the Aegean Sea and Mediterranean basin 2500 years ago. Several boats built and docked in the Sponge Docks area are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and offer good starting places for understanding local maritime heritage.

Most commercial, industrial, and religion-based buildings in the Greektown district, especially those small resources built by the end-user or early in the history of the community, may be classified as vernacular architecture. These buildings are typically modest in size and detailing, but offer a rich resource in documenting the traditional culture of the Greektown community. The following section offers more complete discussion of these structures.

<sup>1</sup> Henry Glassie. *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Howard Irving Chapelle. *The Migrations of an American Boat Type*. Vol. 25, Contributions, Museum of History and Technology. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1961.

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The Greektown community, as enumerated by the 1910 Bureau of the Census, supported eleven house carpenters. According to the census, the carpenter immigrants were unable to speak English, none was naturalized, and all arrived after 1904. Only two owned homes; the others roomed with the heads of households and in rooming houses. For example, Speros Saroukos owned his own dwelling on Grand Bouvelard and provided rooms for nine others, including two carpenters—one was his brother Antones Saroukos—and seven sailors. Most of the ship carpenters, as well as many divers and sailors, were listed as residing on ships. Later, many lived in “divers’ cottages,” which were tiny houses, often without plumbing, built behind larger residences near the Sponge Docks. Few Greek carpenters had been without work since arriving in Tarpon Springs. This context offers a glimpse of Greektown’s construction activity and the craftsmen who contributed to its architecture.

It appears that the majority of buildings in the district were constructed from plans worked out on site by a home owner and carpenter—that is, they were derived from vernacular building traditions to suit the owners’ needs. While some of the architecture was derived or influenced by architectural guidebooks and popular magazines, most was developed by homeowner and builder, an organic process in which the sum knowledge of their collective experiences of buildings translated into a new home based around an old form. Most carpenters employed the balloon framing technique to assemble dwellings, a construction method introduced in the 1830s that replaced the old, time-consuming post-and-beam system of mortise and tenon joinery.

In general, the Greektown district dwellings share a close link with the common vernacular cottage and house forms found elsewhere in Florida. Predicated largely on an economy of scale, most early home builders and home owners eschewed the pretentious for the vernacular. By 1919, at the end of its fourth decade of development, Tarpon Springs included an urban development with a downtown centered along Tarpon Avenue and the railroad, a small suburban neighborhood northeast of downtown, and large estates and homes farther west near the spring. In addition, the Greektown community spread out northwest of downtown to the Anclote River and the Sponge Docks, with a small ethnic commercial district on Dodecanese Avenue and Athens Street. The buildings were visually and culturally linked to various architectural traditions.

One area of Greektown was known as the Fish House, because it was the area in which residents were most engaged in the sponge fishing business. This stretched from the *kafeneia* in the 400 block on West Athens Street to the east, to Grand Boulevard on the south, Roosevelt Boulevard on the west, and Maragos Street on the north. This area includes a number of divers’ cottages and sponge warehouses.

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ARCHITECTURAL TYPES

Residential Buildings

Frame Vernacular

Frame Vernacular resources in the Greektown district are one- or two-stories, constructed of wood structural frames set on pier foundations made of brick, concrete or rusticated concrete block. Gable roofs are most common, followed by hip roofs, and tend to have steep slopes in the early examples. The exterior cladding is most often wood drop siding with corner boards. Metal shingles are the most common original roofing material, but composition shingles are seen on many today. Windows are typically wood double-hung sashes, most often with 1/1 or 2/2 configurations. Nearly all have front porches typically supported by wood posts. Detailing tends to be simple and typically includes decorative shingle patterns in front facing gables or simple ornamental railing designs. Frame Vernacular residences built in the late 1910s and 1920s often exhibit Craftsman influences such as the exposed rafter tails and wide, overhanging roof eaves. The Frame Vernacular residences of the 1930s and 1940s are usually more modest, and display little roof overhangs and even fewer decorative elements. Most of the Frame Vernacular resources are residential.

There are several variations of the Frame Vernacular style. A common variation in the Greektown district is a one- and two-story rectangular plan with front gable main roof with steep pitch and a shed-roofed porch located on one, two or three sides. They often have a two-bay symmetrical façade, such as the residence at 44 W. Center Street (**Photo 1**).

Another common Frame Vernacular type is a square or rectangular plan house with a steeply pitched pyramidal or hipped roof and a shed roof or integral porch that runs the full width of the main façade. These typically have a symmetrical two or three bay facade with a center entry. The Frame Vernacular example at 208 Hope Street shows Bungalow features, but with a metal-shingled hipped roof (**Photo 2**).

Greektown residents point out several structures in the area adjacent to the Sponge Docks that were formerly rented to sponge divers, such as the structure behind 624 Cross Street that is facing the alley between Cross and Maragos Streets (**Photo 3**)—one of several divers' cottages that appear along the alley. The divers' cottages were tiny houses, often without plumbing, built behind the main residences. Divers rented the tiny cottages when they were not living on the ships while sponging. They only needed

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the tiny spaces because most of their time on land was occupied with work or spending time at the local *kafeneia* (men's coffeehouses) with their compatriots.

### Bungalow

Numerous frame vernacular dwellings display influences of the Bungalow form. The one-story wood frame residence located at 430 West Athens Street (**Photo 4**) is an example derived from the gable-front double-pile cottage plan wood frame vernacular tradition. It has Bungalow influences, resembling the "southern bungalow" type. The dwelling displays a rectangular plan with a symmetrical facade and a front-facing gable roof surfaced in decorative pressed-metal shingles. A louvered attic vent opens in the gable end and rafter ends remain exposed in the eaves. A porch opens along the front facade with elongated arches supported by wooden columns. Wood drop siding serves as the exterior wall fabric and fenestration consist of 6/1-light double-hung sash windows grouped in pairs. Concrete block piers infilled with lattice support the dwelling.

Several other types of Bungalows were built in Greektown. A Bungalow with cast-concrete features, in a style frequently encountered in the Greektown district, stands at 306 Hope Street (**Photo 5**). There are also several Craftsman style bungalows, such as the one at 46 Read Street (**Photo 6**).

The vernacular bungalow cottages, derived from vernacular nineteenth century traditions, typically rise one or one-and-one-half stories with a shallow-pitched gable roof perpendicular to the street. A porch, generally with a roof of a different pitch than the primary roof, extends across the façade. The interior plan frequently has two rooms aligned three-deep along both sides of the house. The facade is often symmetrical with a central front entrance bracketed by double-hung sash windows, but some display an offset door. This form predominated in the South, but was also built with variations in the Midwest and Chicago, and sometimes is called "Chicago bungalow." It shares some characteristics with the double shotgun cottage.

It is unclear whether these dwellings were assembled with building plans, or simply constructed by area masons and carpenters. Even if they were constructed from formally prepared drawings or assembled from a mail order house kit, they fit the criteria of vernacular architecture—and indeed bear a strong resemblance to ready-to-assemble mail order houses of the early twentieth century. In any case, they are representative of the small Bungalows built for the general populace during the early twentieth century.

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The bungalow was a popular residential building design in Florida during the first third of the twentieth century. It originated as a Bengalese house type adapted by the British in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bungalows are typically one or one and one half stories with a low-pitched gable roof with wide unenclosed eaves overhangs. The roof rafters are usually exposed and eaves brackets or roof purlins commonly appear under the gable ends. The porch typically extends across the facade and often wraps along one elevation, with the roof supported by tapered square columns that either extend to ground level or rest on brick or stone piers. Wood siding or brick typically serves as the exterior wall fabrics. Fenestration is asymmetrical and often includes double-hung sash and encasement windows with multi-pane glazings.

### Irregularly Massed Cross-Plan Cottage

The one story residence at 62 Read Street (**Photo 7**) is an example derived from irregularly massed cross-plan wood frame vernacular traditions. The dwelling has an irregular plan with a side-facing gable roof surfaced in pressed metal shingles. A cross gable projects from the front façade, around which wraps a five-bay veranda with a polygonal-hip roof. Wood shingles and a louvered triangular attic vent appear in the front-facing gable end. Square wood columns support the porch roof. A balloon wood framing system is finished with exterior wood drop siding and corner boards. The original wood double-hung sash windows were replaced with metal sash windows. A corbeled brick chimney pierces the west roof ridge and brick piers support the dwelling.

The irregularly massed cross plan cottage usually was one or one-and-one-half stories high with its long axis perpendicular to the street. In some cases an axial shift resulted in the residence oriented parallel to the street. The shorter cross-axis was not always fully developed. Generally, the irregular interior plan lacked hallways between rooms, and the front door opened into the living room. This dwelling type with roots in rural America was a popular builder's form during the late nineteenth century. It became popular in small town suburbs during the late nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth century.

### **Commercial Buildings**

The one-story masonry and wood frame buildings located from 703 to 715 Dodecanese Boulevard (**Photo 8**) are derived from vernacular commercial traditions. The wood frame building (713-715) was completed about 1909 and the masonry building (703-709) about 1913. The buildings have irregular plans and flat roofs obscured by straight parapets. Decorative corbeling and a simple frieze adorns the parapet of the masonry building, which has a brick structural system and exterior walls. Window and



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door openings along the east elevation are set in arched surrounds and a slender belt course extends across the facade and along the east elevations. The wood frame building has a wood balloon frame structural system finished with wood drop siding. The parapet is finished with metal flashing or coping. Canopies project from the facade to shade patrons. The canopies are finished with 5-V crimp metal panels and secured to the buildings with cables and eyelet. Replacement fixed glass windows fill most of the storefront.

The buildings represent the modest commercial shops constructed along the Sponge Docks (**Photo 9**) during a period when the Greek community experienced significant growth. Both buildings were probably constructed without the benefit of architectural plans by the initial owner or end-user in cooperation with area carpenters and masons. They represent an important part of the historic commercial, cultural, and ethnic heritage of the Greek community. Their relatively early dates of construction and vernacular character suggest they are part of an important vernacular architecture tradition of merchant and shop owners developing small stores to house some of the Greek community's first commercial activities.

The *kafeneia* (men's coffee houses), located at 501, 498, and 455 West Athens Street, are one-story frame and masonry vernacular buildings dating as far back as 1908 and as recently as 1978. Their construction dates alone testify to the long-standing, very conservative tradition of Greek men spending their free time at these establishments. Indeed, residents have said that the tiny divers' cottage could exist without plumbing in part because the men spent all their spare time at the coffee houses. And today dozens of Greek men continue to sit inside and outside the *kafeneia* sipping coffee, watching and commenting on passersby, sharing local information, and solving world problems. At 451 and 520 West Athens Street are local Greek bakeries—patronized largely by locals, and at 602-604 Athens Street the Agora Market provides staple foods imported from Greece.

Wood frame commercial buildings generally were one to two stories in height and displayed gable, hip, or flat roofs, often obscured by a parapet. Constructed with wood balloon or braced frameworks, most buildings had a rectangular plan with the narrow profile facing the street. The facade often comprised little more than plate glass windows with a sizeable wall area between the windows and the parapet or cornice to provide a place for advertising. Wood products in the form of clapboard, drop siding, wood shingles, or weatherboard, or V-crimp and corrugated metal panels served as exterior wall fabrics. Exterior decoration was minimal, although brackets were often counted along the cornice of the parapet, knee braces under the eaves, and purlins often extended out under the gable ends of the roof. Canopies often shaded storefronts, which typically displayed clerestories, plate glass windows divided by mullions,

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and paneled kick boxes. A paneled wood door with a single light provided access into the interior. Fenestration on the other elevations was often irregular and asymmetrical consisting of double-hung sash, casement, pivot, or hopper style windows.

In the early nineteenth century, Masonry Vernacular commercial buildings emerged as a distinct building type, due to the rapid growth of commerce and manufacturing associated with the Industrial Revolution. Some early commercial models were designed and built by the merchants. Trade and architectural journals and popular magazines, which featured standardized and manufactured building components, flooded building and consumer market and helped to make construction trends universal throughout the country. The railroad aided the process by providing cheap and efficient transportation for manufactured building materials.

Masonry Vernacular, commonly associated with commercial buildings, applies to a large range of buildings from relatively small one-story stores to four-story buildings dedicated to a variety of uses, including apartments and public meeting halls in the upper stories. In Florida, most early twentieth century buildings were brick with subdued ornamentation, typically brick corbels embellishing a straight parapet. Most exhibited a symmetrical façade, stylized panels or tiles, slender belt courses, and storefronts with paneled wood doors, wood kick panels, plate glass, and transoms. The Gonatos building, originally owned by a well-known local family in the sponge business and more recently the site of Catherine's Linen Shop—which provided Greek linens, is an example of this type (**Photo 10**). Commercial vernacular designs of the 1920s were often influenced by Spanish or Art Deco designs, and hollow tile was commonly used in structural systems. During the 1930s, the International and Modernistic styles, exemplified in the Philoptochos building at 601 Hope St., (**Photo 11**) influenced vernacular design and reinforced concrete construction techniques were often used to produce a variety of forms. Following World War II, concrete block construction became popular.

### Industrial Buildings

The term "Industrial Vernacular" applies to buildings constructed for explicit commercial and industrial applications and which displayed no formal architectural style. No single building type existed in a greater profusion of scales, styles, shapes, materials, and other variables than industrial structures. The most prevalent type of industrial building was the nonspecific factory of one or more stories. Steel and wood framing or poured reinforced concrete were utilized depending on the resources and desired strength. Generally, by the late nineteenth century, steel framing was used in industrial buildings because I-beams could support far more weight than wood beams. Steel framing was not commonly used in

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Florida until the early twentieth century. Industrial buildings were typically designed by factory owners until the mid-nineteenth century, when architect and specialty firms emerged that designed and pre-manufactured industrial buildings.

Constructed about 1905 as a sponge packing plant, the wood frame building located at 106 West Park Street (**Photo 12**) (E.R. Meres Sponge Packing House) is the oldest extant example of a sponge packing plant in Tarpon Springs that was recently in operation. At the height of sponge industry activity in the 1920s there were nearly two dozen such packing houses. This structure was listed in the NRHP in 1991.

This example of a wood frame industrial vernacular building displays a traditional form, simple materials, and was most likely built without benefit of formally prepared plans and assembled by area carpenters. The interior is arranged to serve the various steps involved with processing natural sponges. The structure has a rectangular plan protected by a gable roof. The roof and exterior walls are sheathed in corrugated metal panels. A shed extension projects from the east elevation. Central entrances open along the front and east elevation, and fenestration consist of 8/8-, 4/4-, and 2/2-light double-hung sash windows and fixed and hopper 1-light ones.

The N. G. Arfaras Sponge Packing Plant (8PI1545) located at 23 West Park Street (**Photo 13**) is a one-story wood frame building listed in the NRHP in 1991. It is significant because of its association with the Tarpon Springs sponge industry as well as its embodiment of the sponge packing house—a significant building type in the Greektown district. At the height of sponge industry activity in the 1920s there were nearly two dozen packing houses, but now only four remain in operation. The N. G. Arfaras Sponge Packing Plant was among the last of the sponge packing plants erected in Tarpon Springs before the collapse of the commercial sponge industry. It was until recently in operation, and the interior is arranged to serve the various steps involved with processing natural sponges.

The utilitarian wood framed building has clapboard siding and rests on brick piers. It has a low-pitched front-facing gable roof with exposed rafter ends and a small, one room gable roof extension at the front. Two brick chimneys are located on the east side wall. It has been altered from its original appearance by the removal of a sponge drying platform on the east side and the windows have been shuttered.

Established in 1908, the Sponge Exchange on Dodecanese Boulevard across from the Sponge Docks was an important example of industrial/commercial building in Greektown. It consisted of a large courtyard for cleaning, processing, sorting, and selling sponges, surrounded by *klouves*, or cells in which individual sponge catches were stored until sold (**Photo 14**). Added to the National Register in 1984, it was later

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removed after it was largely demolished. However, an original section of the *klouves* with iron doors remains in the northeast section of 735 Dodecanese Boulevard. In front of the *klouves* are examples of Greek dinghies are now used to hold sponges offered for sale (**Photo 15**).

The Sponge Docks itself, 700-770 Dodecanese Boulevard, is currently used only by active sponge boats. Originally a wooden dock, it was rebuilt in concrete by the 1960s. Today's concrete dock, lined with trees and benches, was updated in the 1980s. Many sponge fishermen find this an easier surface to work on than wood. The Sponge Docks are used for active boat docking and repair; parking trucks when the sponge fishermen are loading and unloading the boats; and sponge sorting, cleaning, and sales. Many sponge fishermen and other locals also socialize on the Sponge Docks, the City and other organizations stage events there, and tourists ramble along the Docks to observe the sponge fishermen at work.

### Religious Buildings

Saint Michael Shrine, a one-story chapel at 113 Hope Street (**Photo 16**), is an example of the masonry vernacular tradition. The building was conceived and developed as a memorial by Maria Tsalickis to honor the Archangel Michael for healing her eleven year old son, Steve. Completed in 1943, it was constructed without the benefit of formally prepared plans and was assembled by area masons and carpenters. Small, private chapels, such as Saint Michael's Shrine, are relatively uncommon in Florida.

The building has a T-shape plan and a front-facing gable roof with shed extensions projecting from the side elevations. A cruciform rises from the roof ridge and another appears on the gable end. Brick serves as the exterior wall fabric and the front facade is embellished with stylized tile panels. A central entrance is adorned with a pointed arch transom and bracketed by fixed stain glass windows, which are also embellished with pointed arch transoms. Fenestration along the elevations consists of fixed leaded stain glass windows. An arched wing wall protects a courtyard at the north elevation of the building. Concrete statuary and a brass bell grace the grounds near the front entrance.

### Neo-Byzantine

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church (8PI1563), located at 44 N. Pinellas Avenue (**Photo 17**), was built in 1943 in the Neo-Byzantine style. The large church was modeled after Agia Sofia, the famed Byzantine church located in Istanbul, Turkey—formerly Constantinople. Neo-Byzantine is an architectural revival style most frequently seen in religious, institutional and public buildings. It incorporates elements of the Byzantine style associated with Eastern and Orthodox Christian architecture from the fifth through

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eleventh centuries, notably that of Constantinople and Ravenna. A renewed interest in the use of Byzantine art and architecture occurred within the Greek Orthodox Church during the period following World War II. Large domes, round arches, elaborate columns, and rich decorative elements, characterize the style.

P. Pipinos, an architect specializing in the Neo-Byzantine style, was originally selected to draw plans. Upon his death the Eugene Brothers of Chicago were contracted to carry on with the plans and undertake construction.<sup>3</sup> St. Nicholas exhibits all of the defining characteristics of Neo-Byzantine style. Among its notable architectural features is its cruciform plan with a three-story domed rotunda on a square base, centered in the cross-gabled roof surrounded by arched stained glass windows. The main entrance features three arched double doorways flanked by a soaring tower with a dome roof on the left and a shorter tower on the right. Crosses are mounted at the top of the main dome and the tower dome. Windows typically are arched with elaborate stained glass photos in sets of three with Corinthian columns between and cast stone surrounds. Gable end walls are parapeted with cast stone caps; large rose windows are located on the north and south gable ends. The church is constructed of buff-colored brick, the domes roofs are clad in copper panels and the gable roofs are covered with standing seam metal roofing.

Built at the height of World War II, St. Nicholas replaced an earlier wood framed church. The Greek dominated sponge industry experienced a boom during World War II as European sponge markets were closed to the U.S. The economic boost contributed greatly to the ability to construct the large cathedral—and much of the money was donated by the spongers. Elaborate materials were used in construction, including sixty tons of marble freighted from New York and twenty-three stained glass windows donated by sponsors. Today the cathedral is one of the best-known Greek Orthodox churches and it plays an important part in the most elaborate Epiphany observances in the U.S. It retains its historical integrity and is significantly associated with the traditional culture of the Greektown community.

Although properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes are not ordinarily eligible for listing in the NRHP, both St. Michael Shrine and St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral meet Criteria Consideration A: they retain historic physical integrity and are integral to the culture of the Greektown community.

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<sup>3</sup> "History of St. Nicholas Church and Epiphany." November 18, 2013. [www.epiphanycity.org/PDF\\_files/History\\_of\\_Epiphany\\_celebration.pdf](http://www.epiphanycity.org/PDF_files/History_of_Epiphany_celebration.pdf). P. 4.

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**Greek Architectural Elements**

A fair number of residential and commercial structures in the Greektown district display elements indicative of Greek cultural practices. For example, a number display faux classical columns, vases, statuary, or are painted in the blue and white colors of the Greek flag—as shown in the residences at 448 West Athens Street, 534 and 530 Grand Boulevard, 316 Grand Boulevard, and 115 West Athens Street (**Photos 18-20, & 25**). These decorative architectural elements represent what Greek folklorist Demetrios Loukatos termed *archaeofolklore*. He noted, “The movement that promoted a neoclassical architecture (...from 1834 onward) influenced the people of the towns and villages, who liked to decorate their humble dwellings with elements...such as the pediments and the columns...”<sup>4</sup>

**Boats**

The Greeks who built hundreds of sponge boats in Tarpon Springs (**Photo 21**) based their plans on the *achtarmas* style sponge boat (a sub-type of the *trechantiri*) common in the Dodecanese islands.<sup>5</sup> This style derived from a Phoenician design used in the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean basin some 2,500 years ago. This full-bodied caravel type of boat generally measures about forty feet long and fourteen feet wide. Around 1920 the type was adapted to new technologies with diesel engines replacing or supplementing sail power. The diesel engines and air compressors used on many early boats in Tarpon Springs were custom built by Curtiss Industries of St. Louis, Missouri. A transom, or squared, type stern replaced a previously pointed stern and the rig was converted to a gaff-headed yawl type. The redesign permitted the installation of engines, shaft, and propellers. The design of the sponge boat and its various adaptations to accommodate technological advances represents the evolution of a boat type some 2,500 years old and the importation of traditional European boat design to the United States in the early twentieth century. St. Nicholas III is among the best preserved examples of a particular maritime heritage in the United States. It is one of four remaining examples in the Greektown district of the traditional *achtermas* style of boat building.

<sup>4</sup> Demetrios Loukatos. “Tourist Archeofolklore in Greece.” In *Folklore in the Modern World*. Ed. By Richard M. Dorson. The Hague: Mouton, 1978. P. 175

<sup>5</sup> K. A. Damianidis. “Ταρσαναδες και οκαριαστο Αιγαίο τον 20ο Αιώνα/Boatyards and Wooden Vessels in the Aegean in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.” In *Ναυτική Παραδοση στο Αιγαίο: Ταρσαναδες και οκαρια/Maritime Tradition in the Aegean: Boatyards and Wooden Vessels*. Ed. By K. A. Damianidis. Athens: Ministry of the Aegean, 1990. P. 56.



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*St. Nicholas III (Photo 22)* is a sponge diving boat now moored in the 500 block of Dodecanese Blvd, near the Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks. The deep draft vessel displays a square stern and wide hull tapering to a sharp raised bow. It has two masts, the foremast the taller of the two rising some twenty-five feet. The keel and ribs are assembled with heart pine and the planks are cypress. The bulwark rises slightly above the deck and two companionways into the hull are protected by hatches. A wooden rudder extends from the stern and is controlled by a helm in the center of the boat. The forward companionway originally led to sleeping quarters below and a rear companionway into the engine room. Other features include anchor hoist, bow Sampson post, navigation light, and scuppers. The boat is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (1991) and retains much of its original character. Another boat listed on the National Register is the Tarpon Springs (formerly the N.K. Symi), located in the 700 block of Dodecanese Boulevard, across from the Sponge Exchange (Photo 23). Built about 20 years ago by master builder George Saroukos, the *Anastasi* is also an example of this boat type (Photo 50).

**Other Area Features and Characteristics**

Contributing to the character of the Greektown district landscape are the following features:

**Spring Bayou/Craig (Coburn) Park (8PI11907)**

Early settlement in Tarpon Springs is strongly linked to the site of Spring Bayou (Photo 24). As the City was laid out, roads were curved along the water's edge to maximize scenic views. The main thoroughfare, Tarpon Avenue, was aligned to terminate at Spring Bayou, making it the City's focal point. Early wealthy residents built grandiose winter homes surrounding the picturesque water body and elaborate boathouses lined the shores. Eventually, the City bought the land and created a park, utilizing WPA funds.

Craig Park plays an important role in the annual Epiphany events. This daylong Greek Orthodox celebration on January 6 includes a blessing of the waters and the boats that has been an integral part of the life of Greektown residents for a century. The celebration attracts Greek Americans from across the country, and Tarpon Springs' population is known to triple in size for the day. The Epiphany blessings conclude with the ceremonial throwing of a wooden cross into Spring Bayou. Cheered on by tens of thousands, Orthodox boys ages 16–18 dive to retrieve it and whoever recovers the cross is said to be blessed for a full year.

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**Rusticated Block Site Walls**

A common feature in the Greektown area is the use of rusticated concrete block site walls. Although found throughout Tarpon Springs, the large number of such walls in Greektown is because their popularity corresponded to the period in which most structures were built (**Photo 25**). Rusticated concrete block, also called rockfaced concrete block, was made in a mold to create a surface texture that resembles stone. Its popularity as a building material peaked between 1905 and 1930. Rusticated block was made possible by the invention of a hollow concrete block-manufacturing machine coupled with improvements in cement production. With an easy manufacturing method and reliable materials, it became widely popular. Blocks could be made at the construction site by unskilled labor using machines sold through the Sears catalog. Moreover, the blocks were less expensive to lay than brick, they imitated the appearance of a more expensive material (quarried stone), and were fire resistant. In Greektown they were used for commercial buildings, residential buildings, foundations, porch piers as well as the property site walls that are a significant part of the district's character.

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Previously Listed Properties

Five Greektown properties are listed in the National Register.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Site File#</u>	<u>List Date</u>
Arfaras, N. G., Sponge Packing House	26 W. Park Street	PI01545	5/10/1991
Meres, E. R., Sponge Packing House	106 Read Street	PI01594	4/10/1991
N.K. Symi Sponge Diving Boat	Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd	PI01703	8/2/1990
St. Nicholas III Sponge Diving Boat	500 Block Dodecanese Blvd	PI01702	8/3/1990
St. Nicholas IV Sponge Diving Boat	Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Blvd	PI01702	8/3/1990

Contributing Resources

<u>Address</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Site File #</u>
<u>Acacia Street</u>				
15	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
22	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1961	_____
34	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1926	_____
<u>Ada Street</u>				
24-36	Apartments	Frame Vernacular	1923	_____
46	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
50	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1918	PI01350
59	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01351
64	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1930	PI01352
65	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01353
71	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1920	PI01354
75	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01355
<u>Arfaras Boulevard</u>				
118 1/2	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1924	_____

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Arfaras Boulevard (cont.)

819	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1908	_____
901	Strip Stores	Masonry Vernacular	1987	_____

West Athens Street

15	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	PI01357
105	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	_____
115	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01358
120	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1926	PI01359
120A	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1926	PI01359
121	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
121A	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1920	_____
124	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1924	_____
132	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1924	_____
217	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
227	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1927	PI01360
227A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1927	_____
306	Duplex	Masonry Vernacular	1947	_____
307	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
307A	Garage	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
310	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1929	_____
312	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1919	_____
314	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1967	_____
315	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1906	_____
315A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1906	_____
315B	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1906	_____
321	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1913	_____
401	Residence	Ranch	1959	_____
430	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01361
432	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
434	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	_____
438	Mixed Use	Masonry Vernacular	1960	_____
444	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1929	_____
448	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
448A	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1980	_____
451-455	Restaurant/Bakery	Masonry Vernacular	1946	_____

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West Athens Street (cont.)

457	Store/Warehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1982	_____
459	Restaurant (Vacant)	Masonry Vernacular	1978	_____
498	Coffeehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1978	_____
501	Coffeehouse	Frame Vernacular	1908	_____
504	Bar	Masonry Vernacular	1915	_____
508	Liquor Store	Masonry Vernacular	1931	_____
520	Bakery	Frame Vernacular	1950	_____
521	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1980	_____
526	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1976	_____
531-533	Store	Frame Vernacular	1911	_____
600	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1965	_____
602-604	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1927	PI01362
610	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1978	_____
614	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1964	_____
620-622	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1973	_____
624	Mixed Use	Masonry Vernacular	1963	_____
628	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1927	_____

West Cedar Street

110	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1947	_____
113	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1986	_____
115	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1944	_____
116	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
117	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1938	_____
118	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1924	_____
119	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1949	_____
121	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1949	_____
509	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1919	_____
516	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1995	_____
538	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____

West Center Street

28	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01385
40	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1985	_____

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West Center Street (cont.)

44	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI01386
48	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI01387
48A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI01387
58	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01388
58A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01388

Cross Street

606	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	_____
614	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	_____
620	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1950	_____
624	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1910	_____
630	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1942	_____
632	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1935	_____
633	Parking	Metal Frame	1970	_____

East Cypress Street

28	club/res	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
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Division Street

515	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01409
517	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1900	_____
520	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1919	_____
537	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
538	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1923	_____
538A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1981	_____
540	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1960	_____
540A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1982	_____
541	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1998	PI01410
542	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01411
543	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
566	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____



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Dodecanese Boulevard

10	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1975	_____
15	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1901	_____
25	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1969	_____
210	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1943	_____
501	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1976	_____
503	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1976	_____
510	Restaurant	Metal Vernacular	1972	_____
514	Restaurant	Metal Vernacular	1972	_____
555	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1940	_____
590	Business	Masonry Vernacular	No Date	_____
600	Tour Boat Rental	Metal Vernacular	No Date	_____
628	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1951	_____
693	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1937	_____
698	Sponge Diving Supply	Masonry Vernacular	1937	_____
703	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1920	PI01415
709	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1920	_____
713-715	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1920	PI01416
735	Shopping Center	Masonry Vernacular	1983	_____
751	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1934	PI01417
759	Mixed Use	Masonry Vernacular	1967	_____
761	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1915	PI01418
763	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1915	PI01419
765	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1915	_____
776	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1946	_____
777	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1915	_____
785	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1920	_____
793	Mixed Use	Masonry Vernacular	1958	_____
801	store	Masonry Vernacular	1950	_____
808	store	Masonry Vernacular	1970	_____
810	Mixed Use	Masonry Vernacular	1964	_____
813	Mixed Use	Masonry Vernacular	1950	_____
927	Mixed Use	Masonry Vernacular	1968	_____
950	Manufacturing	Masonry Vernacular	1970	_____

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Grand Boulevard

100	Condo	Masonry Vernacular	1982	_____
100A	Condo	Masonry Vernacular	1982	_____
100B	Condo	Masonry Vernacular	1982	_____
100C	Condo	Masonry Vernacular	1982	_____
199	Apartments	Masonry Vernacular	1900	PI01422
199A	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1949	PI01422
201	Apartment	Frame Vernacular	1900	PI01424
209	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1900	PI01425
216	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1901	PI01426
305	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI01429
314	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1965	_____
316	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1971	_____
410	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1959	_____
425	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01432
431	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1925	PI01433
515	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1958	_____
517	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01434
529	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01435
530	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
534	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
543	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01436
544	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
545	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01437
545A	Garage	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01437

Hibiscus Street

18	Church School	Masonry Vernacular	1979	_____
24	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1914	PI11771
109	Apartments	Frame Vernacular	1928	PI01456
124	Apartments	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI01457
130	Apartments	Frame Vernacular	1901	PI11772
202	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI01459
202A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI01459
205	Club	Masonry Vernacular	1965	_____
207	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1954	_____

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Hibiscus Street (cont.)

225	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI11774
227	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI11775
229	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1919	PI11776
230	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1939	PI11777
310	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI01460
316	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1914	_____
328	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	_____

Hill Street

530	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1958	_____
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Hope Street

110	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
113	Church	Masonry Vernacular	1950	_____
113A	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1997	_____
113B	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1950	_____
113C	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1950	_____
114	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01466
131	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1942	_____
132	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
133	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1938	PI01467
202	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01468
207	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1961	_____
208	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	PI01469
215	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1976	_____
218	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1954	_____
218A	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1954	_____
306	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01471
308	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
311	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
312	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
319	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01473
401	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01474
403	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____

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**Hope Street (cont.)**

500	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	_____
512	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
512A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
514	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1935	_____
514A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1935	_____
601	Club	Masonry Vernacular	1950	_____
611	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1959	_____
614	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1938	_____
615	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1963	_____

**Live Oak Street**

80	Restaurant	Frame Vernacular	2002	_____
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**Maragos Street**

531	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
533	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1939	_____
548	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1942	_____

**Mill Street**

13	Shed	Frame Vernacular	1940	_____
14	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
18	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1939	_____
22	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
28	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1946	_____

**East Orange Street**

11	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1976	_____
15	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1945	PI11801
27	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1920	PI11802
123	Club	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01518

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**West Orange Street**

7-11	Office/Store	Masonry Vernacular	1937	PI11817
12	Office	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI01530
17	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1910	PI01531
40	Condo	Masonry Vernacular	1982	_____

**West Park Street**

18	Mixed Use	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI11819
23	Sponge Warehouse	Frame Vernacular	1909	PI11820
26 (NR 5/10/1991)	Sponge Warehouse	Frame Vernacular	1926	PI01545
39	Residence	Folk Victorian	1925	PI01547
41	Residence	Minimal Traditional	1956	PI11822
48	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	2003	_____
59	Residence	Folk Victorian	1920	PI01549
64	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1920	_____
69	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1961	_____
72	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI11825
76	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01551
79	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1944	PI01552
80	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1965	_____
106	Sponge Packing Hse	Metal Vernacular	1901	PI01594

**East Pine Street**

12	Warehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1931	_____
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**North Pinellas Avenue**

1	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1951	_____
7-9	Office/Store	Masonry Vernacular	1951	_____
10	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1955	_____
11-17-19	Strip Stores	Masonry Vernacular	1955	_____
18-22	Strip Stores	Masonry Vernacular	1946	PI11835
29	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1937	_____
36-44	Church	Neo-Byzantine	1943	PI01563
117	Residence	Craftsman	1915	PI01564

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North Pinellas Avenue (cont.)

121	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI11837
127	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI01565
128	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1950	PI11838
201	Store/Office	Masonry Vernacular	1941	PI11839
210	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1926	PI11843
215	Residence	Craftsman	1900	PI01568
218	Apartments	Mission	1925	PI01567
221	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1915	PI01569
228	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1961	_____
301	School	Masonry Vernacular	1926	_____
348	Church Center	Modern	2002	_____
401	Store/Office	Masonry Vernacular	1961	_____
501	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1970	_____
509-511	Warehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1957	_____
510	Store	Frame Vernacular	1953	_____
536	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1935	_____
538	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1935	_____
543	Auto Repair	Frame Vernacular	1958	_____
601	Auto Repair	Masonry Vernacular	1939	_____
605	Sponge Warehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1938	_____
606	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular		
619	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1958	_____
700	Store	Frame Vernacular	1934	_____
701	Restaurant	Frame Vernacular	1937	_____
802	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	2001	_____
807	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1967	_____
816	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	2002	PI01575
820	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
926	Store	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
940	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1945	_____
1052	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1931	PI00577
1055	Warehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1970	_____
1056	Bar	Frame Vernacular	1946	_____
1057	Industrial	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____



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**Read Street**

21	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1997	PI01582
29	Residence	Craftsman	1915	PI01583
29A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI01583
33	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1959	PI11845
34	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1953	PI11846
34A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1953	PI11846
40	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1954	PI11847
46	Residence	Craftsman	1924	PI11848
56	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01588
58	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01590
62	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01591

**Roosevelt Boulevard**

0	Park-Cocoris Park			_____
273	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1956	_____
307	Bakery	Masonry Vernacular	1969	_____
400	Sponge Warehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1950	_____
432	Sponge Warehouse	Masonry Vernacular	1950	_____

**North Spring Boulevard**

36	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1888	PI01618
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**Spruce Street**

521	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
524	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1969	_____
537	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
539	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____

**East Tarpon Avenue**

1	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1925	
9	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1950	PI11883
11	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1936	_____
17	Church Offices	Masonry Vernacular	1949	_____

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West Tarpon Avenue

20	Club	Frame Vernacular	1890	_____
32	Hotel	Queen Anne	1910	_____

Sponge Boats—Structures at Sponge Docks

<u>Address</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Date Built</u>	<u>NR Date</u>	<u>Site File #</u>
700-770 Dodecanese	Sponge Docks	1905	N/A	_____
Dock 590	Dock	1927	N/A	PI1705

Boats

Dock 590	St. Nicholas IV	1927	8/3/1990	PI1705
700 Dodecanese	St. Nicholas III	1939	8/3/1990	PI1702
708 Dodecanese	Anastasi	?	N/A	_____
710 Dodecanese	Angeliki	?	N/A	_____
726 Dodecanese	Native Talent	?	N/A	_____
730 Dodecanese	Agios Nikolaos	?	N/A	_____
740 Dodecanese	N.K. Symi	1935	8/2/1990	PI01703
750 Dodecanese	Susie Sea	?	N/A	_____
750 Dodecanese	G&A	?	N/A	_____
756 Dodecanese	Nina	?	N/A	_____
760 Dodecanese	Little Joe	?	N/A	_____
770 Dodecanese	Agios Fanourios	?	N/A	_____

Noncontributing Resources

<u>Address</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Site File #</u>
<u>Acacia Street</u>				
26	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1940	_____
42	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1956	_____

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**Ada Street**

23	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1954	_____
40	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1918	_____
45	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI01349
51	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
52	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1936	_____
72	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1930	_____

**West Athens Street**

110	Manufacturing	Masonry Vernacular	1931	_____
126	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1924	_____
422	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1950	_____

**West Cedar Street**

523	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1926	_____
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**West Center Street**

38	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1919	PI11742
43	Office	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI11743

**Division Street**

508	Triplex	Frame Vernacular	1970	PI01408
553	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1900	PI01413

**Dodecanese Boulevard**

100	City Government	Frame Vernacular	1979	_____
509	Strip Store	Masonry Vernacular	1976	_____
824-850	Strip Stores	Masonry Vernacular	1989	_____
933	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1968	_____
937	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1982	_____

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**Grand Boulevard**

200	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1982	PI01423
219	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1982	PI11760
233	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1922	PI01427
302	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI11761
303	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
310	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1953	PI01430
400	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01431
539	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1914	_____
540	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
540A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
542	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
568	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____

**Hope Street**

219	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1950	_____
219A	Garage	Frame Vernacular	1950	_____
301	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1974	PI01470
301	Garage	Frame Vernacular	1974	_____
303	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1946	_____
400	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1945	_____
410	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1977	PI01476
429	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
430	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1930	_____
432	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01478
609	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____

**East Orange Avenue**

99	Office	Frame Vernacular	1946	PI11803
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**West Orange Avenue**

4	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1966	PI01529
18	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1945	_____
26	Office	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01532

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**West Orange Avenue** (cont.)

29	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1965	PI01533
34	Office	Folk Victorian	1900	PI01534
39	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1900	PI11818

**West Park Street**

34	Residence	Folk Victorian	1900	PI01546
40	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI11821
53	Residence	Folk Victorian	1925	PI01548
56	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI11823
73	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____

**North Pinellas Avenue**

116	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	_____
133	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1920	PI01566
229	Duplex	Frame Vernacular	1926	PI01570
423-425	Store	Frame Vernacular	1915	_____
424	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	_____
428	Apartments	Masonry Vernacular	1961	_____
540	Office	Frame Vernacular	1964	_____
739	Auto Repair	Masonry Vernacular	1937	_____
801	Store	Masonry Vernacular	1979	_____
900	Restaurant	Masonry Vernacular	1935	PI01576

**Read Street**

15	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1942	PI01580
16	Duplex	Masonry Vernacular	1937	PI11844
20	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01581
20A	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	PI01581
31	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1915	PI01584
47	Residence	Colonial Revival	1915	PI01585
50	Residence	Craftsman	1915	PI01586
57	Church	Masonry Vernacular	1920	8PI1680
57	Parsonage	Masonry Vernacular	1920	8PI1680

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**Read Street (cont.)**

66	Residence	Craftsman	1919	PI01592
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**Roosevelt Boulevard**

130	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1946	_____
130A	Utility Building			
199	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1900	_____
201	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1956	_____
601	Marina	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
827	Marina	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
950	Store	Metal Frame	1976	_____
1000	Storage	Masonry Vernacular	1945	_____
1003	Packing House	Corrugated Metal	1938	_____

**North Spring Boulevard**

22	Residence	Queen Anne	1887	8PI1617
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**Spruce Street**

509	Residence	Craftsman	1925	_____
525	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1963	_____
526	Residence	Frame Vernacular	1925	_____
540	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	1951	_____
544	Residence	Masonry Vernacular	2007	_____

**East Tarpon Avenue**

23	Office	Masonry Vernacular	1904	_____
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**West Tarpon Avenue**

110	Motel	Masonry Vernacular	2007	_____
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Contributing-Noncontributing Properties

All properties having any direct connection to persons of Greek descent, culture, or activities are considered contributing regardless of their date of construction or physical integrity as usually applied in historic district National Register nomination proposals. Alterations over time that reflect or reinforce the cultural values of the Greek residents are considered significant.

Noncontributing properties are those that have no direct connection to the Greek culture (as represented in this enclave) regardless of date of construction. Associative values have been documented through interviews and government records.

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### SUMMARY

The Tarpon Springs Greektown area is the epitome of a Greek American traditional cultural property. For local Greek Americans, it is a place of great significance in terms of its tenacious continuity of traditional culture, extensive Greek infrastructure, and also because it is the focal point for Greek culture for the region and the only Greek community based on the sponge industry. Tarpon Springs has been a traditional Greek community since 1905—when Greeks first immigrated to the town in large numbers. Greek identity is expressed and reinforced through a wide array of everyday activities and special events. It is reflected in the area's built environment, architectural ornamentation, boats, occupations, music and dance in restaurants or embedded in community events, social or regional organizations, rites of passage, beliefs, family values, foodways, sacred and secular events, and religious practices. Moreover, tourism—the city's economic engine—is primarily cultural tourism focusing on Greek heritage and the sponge industry. The two religious structures, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral and St. Michael Shrine, are integral to the practice of traditional culture in the district.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

Tarpon Springs' Greektown District is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage/European as the commercial and residential center of the Greek community that developed through their participation in the sponge industry—a community which continues to have the highest percentage of residents of Greek heritage in the United States. It is also significant in the area of Maritime History: soon after the Greeks' arrival with new harvesting methods, it became the world center of the sponge industry and it remains an important center, albeit in a more modest form, today. Its period of significance ranges from 1905 until the present day. As a traditional cultural property, Greektown residents have maintained intact a considerable portion of the Greek culture taught to them by their parents and grandparents. Most aspects of the sponge industry, including boat building and repair, docking, processing, selling, and storing, have been conducted in this area since 1905.

National Register Bulletin #38, *Guidelines for evaluating and documenting traditional cultural properties*, defined a traditional cultural property (TCP) as "one that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community." Examples included an urban neighborhood that is the traditional home of a particular cultural group, and that reflects its beliefs and practices; and a location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important in maintaining its



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historical identity. While most sites nominated as traditional cultural properties have been Native American sacred sites, Bulletin #38 notes that, "...should not be taken to imply that only Native Americans ascribe traditional cultural value to historic properties, or that such ascription is common only to ethnic minority groups in general. Americans of every ethnic origin have properties to which they ascribe traditional cultural value, and if such properties meet the National Register criteria, they can and should be nominated for inclusion in the Register."<sup>6</sup> The proposed Greektown District not only fulfills TCP criteria, but provides an exceptionally clear model for a TCP district.

**Historical Context – Ethnic Heritage and Maritime History**

The Early Years

Tarpon Springs is a unique community with a rich heritage based on its Greek culture and maritime history. First settled in 1876, the area soon to be named Tarpon Springs became a winter home to wealthy northerners by the early 1880s. By the 1920s, the city was a regional cultural center promoted as the "Venice of the South." But the town had changed. Sponges determined its direction.

The Industrial Revolution created great demand for sponges in the cleaning, ceramics, shoe-finishing, and printing industries in addition to household, hygienic, military, and medical uses—generating an important international trade. Until a French merchant first imported Bahamian sponges in the 1840s, the entire world supply was harvested in the Mediterranean. The West Atlantic sponge industry encompassed Florida, the Bahamas, Cuba, and other Caribbean Basin locations. By 1849 Bahamian sponge fishermen developed large operations in the Florida Keys, and trade soon developed between Key West merchant and New York wholesalers. Conchs from Key West, Bahamians, and Cubans harvested sponges up the Gulf Coast and up the east coast to Miami, returning to Key West to sell them. They harvested sponges using the hook method, snagging them from the sea floor using long poles with grapples. Key West was one of the largest world markets by 1900.

Sponging was an important economic activity in Florida during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1873, Key West turtle fishermen near the mouth of the Anclote River in Tarpon Springs found sponges in their nets—the first sign of 9000 square miles of untouched beds. Spongers also

<sup>6</sup> Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King. Guidelines for evaluating and documenting traditional cultural properties. National Register Bulletin #38. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, [1990]. P. 3.

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discovered large quantities in the Rock Island vicinity farther north near Apalachicola. Vessels came from Key West and the British West Indies to capitalize on the high quality and abundant sponge beds along the Gulf Coast from Apalachicola to Key West.

Commercial sponging was centered at Key West, Nassau, Bahamas, and Batabano, Cuba, prior to 1890, but sponge fishing in the Gulf accelerated in the late 19th century. In 1886 (or 1889 according to some sources) Tarpon Springs businessman and landowner John Cheyney began supplying sponges on a small scale from Tarpon Springs to the U.S. market. After visiting Key West, where he realized that sponges were abundant and could be purchased inexpensively, he became interested in the sponge business. Cheyney formed the Anclothe and Rock Island Sponge Company, built warehouses for processing and selling sponges, and financed and launched the first hook sponge fishing boat.

During the 1890s, with an increasing amount of buying and packing activity, the industry began shifting to the Tarpon area. Packing houses were built, sponge presses installed, and buyers located there. Originally, buying and selling were done at the mouth of the Anclothe River near the kraals, large wooden cages in the water where sponges were stored prior to processing. Due to the Spanish American War of 1898 in Cuba—only 90 Miles south of Key West, sponging vessels from Apalachicola to Key West came to Tarpon Springs rather than Key West to sell their harvest. As a result, a number of Conchs and Bahamians from Key West settled there.

The Greeks Arrive

Greek immigrants significantly expanded and changed the sponge industry. John Cocoris, from Leonidion, Kymourias, Greece, spearheaded the Greek involvement. Cocoris arrived in Tarpon in 1896 as a buyer for the Lembessi Company of New York. He lived in Baillie's Bluff, near one of the kraals, where the Lembessi warehouse was located. A year later, he began working for John Cheyney, who financed Cocoris' early efforts to make the industry more efficient.

In the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cocoris and his three brothers surveyed the Gulf and found it full of sponges at all depths. They believed that more and better sponges could be gathered with the deep-sea diving methods common in the Aegean. Sponges had long been harvested in Greece with breath-hold diving and hooking, but in 1863 deep-sea diving utilizing a rubberized canvas suit attached to a metal helmet and hand-cranked air compressor was introduced into the Dodecanese Islands. It increased production dramatically, but was extremely dangerous because many divers suffered from crippling bends

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(decompression sickness). The Cocoris brothers brought a crew, boat, and equipment from Greece. The first diver reported, "There are enough sponges down there to supply the whole world."<sup>7</sup>

In Greece, sponge diving crews from the Dodecanese islands of Kalymnos, Halki, and Symi and the Saronic Gulf islands of Aegina and Hydra learned about Tarpon Springs through letters as well as newspaper articles and advertisements offering to pay travel expenses. In the summer of 1905, about 500 men arrived. Within a year or two, there were 100 sponge boats based in Tarpon Springs and up to 1,500 Greeks working Florida waters.

Greek sponge merchants established warehouses in Tarpon Springs with branches in their home islands and international trade centers. European buyers visited frequently and investors came to finance sponge fishing ventures or boat building. In 1906 the Sponge Exchange Bank was established and in 1908 the Sponge Exchange was founded. Profits from sponging also financed other businesses such as the Sponge Exchange Cigar Company.

The Sponge Exchange was an organized system established by the divers, boat builders, deck hands and buyers for buying and grading the sponges. The Exchange consisted of iron-grilled *klouves* (storage cells) separating the catches around the perimeter, with an auction block in the center. This cooperative warehouse across from the sponge docks was the site of sponge auctions every Tuesday and Friday. In the early years, the Greeks donated a portion of each trip's harvest to build a church dedicated to St. Nicholas, patron saint of mariners. With the spongers came many other Greeks working in related maritime businesses: ship chandlers, machine shops, boat builders, a sail loft, and sponge packing houses. Using both deep-sea diving and hooking techniques on boat with sails and eventually engines, the Greeks harvested four times the quantity and often better quality sponges from deeper waters than could the Conchs. They revolutionized the sponge industry and by the early 1900s, Tarpon Springs was the largest sponge port in the United States. The combined fleets of the Greeks and Conchs made sponges Florida's most lucrative sea product during the early twentieth century.

<sup>7</sup> Dan Georgakas. "The Greeks in America." In *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*. Vol. 14. 1-2 (1987): 5-54. P. 46.

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The Community Flourishes

Greeks continued to settle in Tarpon Springs, seeking better opportunities in a difficult industry and escape from deteriorating political conditions in their home islands. At first men arrived alone, but soon they were joined by their families. When the men first came, they often lived on the boat or in boarding houses near the Sponge Docks. As they brought families, they lived in the small houses of Greektown, just south of the Sponge Docks.

This influx, and similar subsequent immigrations, changed Tarpon forever. Previously, the dominant social group was composed of wealthy Northern visitors who built grand winter residences around Spring Bayou and the major avenues. The Greeks, however, soon established Greektown, with many residences, stores, churches, restaurants, coffee houses (**Photo 26-27**), and recreational facilities that stretched from the Sponge Docks to the central section of the city. Sponge fishing and related activities served as the economic base for the community. By 1913, as many as half of the residents of Tarpon Springs were reputedly Greek and signs at the railroad station were posted both in English and Greek.<sup>8</sup> Many businesses displayed Greek flags alongside the American flag.<sup>9</sup>

As the sponge industry ascended, the city acquired a Mediterranean character and its earlier role as a resort diminished. During many of the years from 1905 to 1940, Greeks constituted the numerically dominant cultural group. Although they maintained much of their traditional culture, they also participated in all aspects of American life. As they acquired money, many moved out of Greektown near the docks and into more expensive homes, often in the Fruit Salad part of town south of Spring Bayou and Tarpon Avenue.

Women played an important role in Tarpon Springs. They not only handled most aspects of the family's daily life while the sponge boats were out, but frequently were involved in commerce through management of gift shops or employment in sponge warehouses.

The sponge industry grew steadily throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Although building slowed in most of Florida after the collapse of the Florida Land Boom in 1926, Tarpon Springs continued to develop—buoyed by the success of the spongers even during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Burgess. *Greeks in America: An Account of Their Coming, Progress, Customs, Living, and Aspirations*. Boston: Sherman, French & Company, 1913. P. 175.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. P. 176.

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The Greeks gradually began to control municipal politics as the majority or by allying themselves with Black Tarponites. African Americans had settled in Tarpon Springs since its inception, and some Bahamians had arrived in the late nineteenth century. Many subsequently developed close relationships with the Greeks while working on their boats and in the warehouses—and learned to speak Greek. Despite the Depression, tourism remained an integral part of the Florida economy. The 1939 *WPA Guide to Florida*<sup>10</sup> characterized Tarpon Springs by its sponge operation and tours, Greek population and festivals, and little else. At least publicly, Greek culture and sponges dominated the little town's reputation during these years.

In 1940, there were well over 1,000 men actively engaged in the sponge industry. These men and their families constituted roughly 2,500 Greeks in a town of 3,402. With the onset of World War II and closure of the European market, the supply of sponges decreased while the demand increased dramatically and Tarpon Springs was the world's leading sponge producing center. The prosperity was such that St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, the grandest building in Tarpon Springs, was constructed in 1943 at the height of the war. The prosperity of the wartime sponge industry ended with the cessation of hostilities in Europe.

In the 1930s, a sponge disease began spreading north in the Caribbean and Atlantic, destroying the Bahamian, Cuban, and other Caribbean sponge beds. By 1948 it had devastated the Florida beds, Mediterranean sponges flooded the market, and Dupont introduced cheap synthetic sponges. Tarpon Springs' harvest plummeted. From a record high production of \$4 million in 1946, the total fell over \$1 million in the following year. Many families left for the steel mills of Indiana or Ohio. During the decade from 1947 to 1957, the sponge industry nearly collapsed. By the time the beds recovered in a decade or two, most children of the divers and captains had entered more secure occupations and the link with the past was all but broken.

Nevertheless, Tarpon Springs survived and thrived. In the late 1940s and early 1950s tourism edged out sponges to become the City's biggest source of income. In 1948 and 1953, two films<sup>11</sup> featuring the sponge exchange assisted this process by popularizing romantic ideas about the sponge industry and publicizing Tarpon Springs. In addition, the Epiphany ceremonies gained national attention and drew thousands.

<sup>10</sup> Federal Writers Project. Works Project Administration. *Florida: Guide to the Southernmost State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965, c1939. Pp. 420-423.

<sup>11</sup> *16 Fathoms Deep* (1948) directed by Irving Allen and *Beneath the 12-Mile Reef* (1953) directed by Robert D. Webb.

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By the late 1970s, an estimated one-third of the residents were Greek or of Greek descent in a town that then numbered some 13,000. Sponge fishing continued on a limited basis until the mid-1980s. Due to catastrophic sponge mortalities in the eastern Mediterranean in 1986, Tarpon Springs experienced a major revival supporting about 40 working boats. By 1996, however, due to pollution and other causes, it leveled off at 8 to 10 boats working regularly and a handful of others working periodically.

**Historic Significance**

The Tarpon Springs Greektown area preserves a unique ethnic and maritime character. According to the 2010 Census, among Tarpon Springs' 23,544 residents, the official percentage of Greek descent shrank to 12% as many moved to nearby communities for work or larger homes. However, there is reason to believe that the Census under-reports Greek heritage since many residents list themselves simply as American. Census records for the Greektown district alone are not available, but according to Pinellas County records, over 76% of district properties are currently owned by Greeks—the highest concentration in Tarpon Springs. An even higher percentage was owned in the past by Greek residents. Nickollet Tsourakis Henderson, a school teacher and City Historic Preservation Board member who grew up in Greektown says, "Kally [George] and I talked about what percentage of the residents were Greek and we both said 98%. I would say this figure would be valid into the early 80s. As the 2nd and 3rd generations of Greek Americans began experiencing economic success and the idea of extended families living under one roof became a thing of the past, the area changed."<sup>12</sup>

Tarpon Springs also is the epicenter of a corridor that hosts such a large ethnic population that the Greek government established a consulate in Tampa—and the Greek Consulate estimates the Greek/Greek American population as almost twice the size reported in the Census. Greeks, particularly those with Dodecanese heritage, retain significant political power at all levels. While some major U.S. cities have a larger Greek population, no other has a greater percentage of residents with Greek heritage than Tarpon Springs. Greek is commonly heard on the street and in the shops of this area, and many residents are monolingual in Greek.

The emerging ethnic character of Tarpon Springs coincided with the development of mass tourism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, so businesses based on cultural tourism developed early. Still revolving around its Greek heritage and sponge industry, tourism is Tarpon Springs' biggest business. It is centered in the

<sup>12</sup> Nickollet Tsourakis Henderson. Email message to Tina Bucuvalas. Tarpon Springs, 2/10/14.

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Greektown area—especially Dodecanese Boulevard along the docks where boats unload sponges or tourists take cruises. Across the street, the old Sponge Exchange was demolished and turned into boutiques. A plethora of Greek eateries, tourist stores, nightclubs, and community events are frequented by both locals and tourists. Some ethnic businesses cater primarily to locals, such as nearby West Athens Street's Greek market, bakery, and traditional *kafeneia*—gender-exclusive establishments where men gather to imbibe coffee and spirits, play cards, smoke, and discuss politics or sport. On Dodecanese Boulevard there also is a store with Greek music and children's books or games.

National Heritage Fellowship recipient Nick Toth explains some of the connections between tourism and Greektown cultural traditions, "What we have here is so interesting that it would be hard for people to stay away from it. Here, the ambience, with the water, emulates the Dodecanese. We have such strong traditions. It's almost like you can come here for a day trip, you don't need a passport, and it's like being in Greece. People embrace the traditions to preserve them....it gives positive reinforcement and a sense of pride from people who want to come to Tarpon, go to Greek restaurants, have the food, listen to the Greek music.... If you didn't have the tourists maybe you wouldn't realize why it's important and what should be maintained. ...If we can be good custodians of this asset that we've been handed down, then it will maintain its value and increase its value both culturally and monetarily."<sup>13</sup>

Despite the influx of tourists, many residents maintain such a strong sense of cultural, in-group cohesion that it is difficult for non-Greeks to penetrate. Greek identity is expressed and reinforced through a wide array of everyday activities and special events that are part of the traditional culture. It is reflected in the area's built environment (e.g., sponge docks, Greektown residential neighborhood, St. Nicholas Cathedral), architectural ornamentation, boats, occupations, music and dance in restaurants, or embedded in community events, social or regional organizations, rites of passage, beliefs, family values, foodways, sacred and secular events, and religious practices. Tarpon Springs also provides important cultural resources to the state and region, such as Greek baked goods and wholesale food businesses, the annual Epiphany celebration, or musical groups.

Among themselves, Greektown residents often stress their identification with an ancestral island, while in communication with non-Greeks they are more likely to assume a more general Greek ethnicity. Sponge merchant George Billiris believes that all aspects of Greek culture and identity are active, but notes the strong role played by Kalymnian and other island organizations in retaining regional culture.<sup>14</sup> Gus

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<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Toth. Interview with Tina Bucuvalas. Tarpon Springs, May 6, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> George Billiris. Interview with Tina Bucuvalas. Tarpon Springs, August 2005.

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Bilirakis, the local Congressman whose grandparents came from the Dodecanese and had a bakery on Athens Street, thinks immigrants retain more identification with individual islands, whereas most Greek Americans consider themselves more generally Greek. Nevertheless, he finds that in Tarpon Springs the language, food, dance, and music maintain the unique accents of the islands of Kalymnos, Halki, and Symi.<sup>15</sup>

**Significance as a Traditional Cultural Property - Ethnic Heritage and Maritime History**

Since Greeks came to Tarpon Springs in relatively large numbers, they were able to maintain an unusually large portion of their culture intact: "The Florida climate was comparable to that of their home islands. Because of their numbers, they could continue to speak Greek, practice the Greek Orthodox religion, maintain their family structure, and perpetuate familiar dietary habit and modes of dress. The men engaged in the same occupation as they had in Greece and used the same technology in their work. Theirs was virtually a life transplanted."<sup>16</sup> Today, Greektown residents retain many of the following aspects of Greek/Greek American culture in their daily lives. Much of the traditional culture is maintained in the homes of Greektown's majority Greek residents. Other cultural practices are part of the district's working or religious environments. Greek is widely spoken throughout Greektown and is the primary language in many homes, and there is some signage in Greek.

And to the residents of Greektown, it was and is even more than that. As Nickollet Tsourakis Henderson explains, "I believe our ethnic neighborhoods are reminders of this country's immigrant past. Whether it's Tarpon Springs' Greektown or Lowell, Massachusetts, Little Havana or San Francisco's Chinatown, they are important links to a time when America was a land of promise for those willing to work hard. My Greektown was a neighborhood of Greek speaking friends and relatives, bakeries and grocery stores where we shopped and were extended credit until the end of the month and could pay our tabs. Everyone knew everyone and we looked out for each other. After morning chores were done we visited each other's homes for coffee or just to talk. If our babies were restless and couldn't sleep we knew to go to Kally's house. If you had ringworm or the Mati [evil eye] you went to Niki Ergas'. Our neighborhood was self-sufficient. We didn't have to look further than our back yards for help....Many of the homes in Greek town are also classic shotgun style homes. There are still a few of the sponger shacks in the area. The *kafeneio* still attracts Greeks of all generations. Many of the residents are now 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation

<sup>15</sup> Congressman Gus Bilirakis. Interview with Tina Bucuvalas. Palm Harbor, August 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones. *Folkloristics: An Introduction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. P. 111.



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Greek Americans who choose to live in ancestral homes or are returning to their roots.”<sup>17</sup>

Domestic Life

Domestic arts express the individual’s aesthetic vision through media that fulfill basic needs for family and community. Greek girls traditionally learned embroidery, crochet, and tatting—often to make clothing or linens for their dowry (*prika*). Few create these beautiful items today, but some households still display needlework produced by the older generation. In addition, children wear regional clothing for dance groups or community events. Many order costumes from Greece, but some local needlework experts create beautiful regional dress with intricate details (**Photo 28**).

Despite extensive intermarriage and assimilation, local Greek Americans preserve their cultural heritage and cohesive community through strong ties to the family, Greek Orthodox Church, and other social institutions. Families usually encompass multiple generations and dozens of cousins, many of whom may live in close proximity in Greektown. For instance, members of the Tsangaris family owned most of the homes on the southern end of Athens Street—and many continue to live there. The *prika* officially ended in Greece in the 1980s, but informally it continues through the custom of giving daughters a nearby home when they marry.

Homes in which residents practice Greek traditional culture are not always discernable from the outside. But inside, the aesthetic arrangement and display of objects is one way in which values are expressed. While the proportion of Greek artifacts varies, most homes contain items that symbolize ethnic identity. Several categories of objects are displayed, including those that reflect historic village life, the ancestral region, Greek Orthodoxy, and national identity (**Photo 29**).

Greektown houses and businesses often feature architectural ornamentation or landscaping that alludes to Greek heritage: classical columns (**Photos 18-19**) may adorn bungalows or Cracker style homes; planters with Greek key designs are a common feature; classical statuary may be present (**Photo 20**); and some are painted in the blue and white of the Greek flag. Families often utilize plants around their homes for culinary, decorative, and ritual purposes similar to those in Greece, e.g. lemon, mandarin and other fruit trees, basil and rosemary, or such common Mediterranean flowers as geraniums, carnations, and roses.

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<sup>17</sup> Nickollet Tsourakis Henderson. Email message to Tina Bucuvalas. Tarpon Springs, February 10, 2014.

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As in Greece, households often pave the *avli* (courtyard), carefully configure their potted plants within the space, and sweep it daily.

Foodways

Foodways include the complex of social customs based on the selection, preparation, and consumption of foods or beverages. Every day and holiday foods are served in households and a limited variety are made publicly available through events or Greektown's many restaurants (**Photo 30**). Greek markets sell imported staples, canned goods, and even frozen foods. Despite the ready availability of American foods, many area residents serve predominantly Greek food.

Foodways in Greektown follow general Greek American cuisine in their reliance on fresh seasonal vegetables, meat, seafood, and assorted imported supplies. Many meat and poultry dishes are widely known favorites available in both restaurants and homes: lamb *yiouvetsi* (lamb with tomatoes and orzo), chicken roasted with garlic and lemon, *pastitsio* (pasta and meat casserole topped with *krema* or white sauce), *moussaka* (eggplant and meat casserole), *keftedes* (meatballs), *dolmades* (stuffed grape leaves called *fila* by Dodecanese Islanders), rice pilaf, and roasted potatoes. Popular seafood dishes include grilled octopus, baked fish, and fried squid—and seafood is always served with lots of lemon wedges. Greek bread (similar to Italian) is served at meals, but is usually consumed plain. Pastries, such as *baklava*, *koulourakia* (twisted butter cookies), *kourambiedes*, *galaktoboureko* (custard in filo), rice pudding, and *loukoumades* (fried honey puffs), are made for special occasions and are usually kept on hand by housewives for daily hospitality.

Many Greektown residents also prepare specialties from the Dodecanese Islands. For example, in the early twentieth century, spongers went to sea for several months. Although the men often ate fresh fish, they broke the monotony of their diet with a preserved meat called *kavourmas*. (**Photo 31**) Before sailing, the crew prepared enough *kavourmas* to last an entire trip. Outside over a wood fire, they filled a washtub with beef or lamb, then stirred it with a small paddle as it cooked for hours in fat before being sealed into cans. The preparation of *kavourmas* became a local social occasion as well as a necessity. Spongers no longer need to prepare it, but some residents still make it on special occasions or to teach others about the tradition.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Tina Bucuvalas. "If the Pot Boils, Friendship Lives': Greek American Foodways." *Ethnic American Food Today Encyclopedia*. New York: Altamira Press, forthcoming 2014.

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For Easter, some residents prepare regional Dodecanese foods such as the Easter bread called *eftazimo*. Made in observance of God's command to Moses to prepare unleavened bread for the flight from Egypt, the name refers to kneading the dough seven times. Although it does not contain yeast, the juice of fermented garbanzo beans provides enough leavening to raise the dough. The juice is mixed with flour, salt, sugar, anise, mastic, and nigella seeds, to produce loaves with a delicious and unusual flavor. Another bread associated with the Easter season commemorates Christ raising Lazarus from the dead. St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral parishioners bake *lazarakia*, **(Photo 32)** small spice breads in the form of Lazarus, on the Saturday before Holy Week. In compliance with Lenten restrictions, they lack eggs or dairy.

Religious Traditions

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral plays a pivotal role in the Greektown community by sustaining religious traditions. Among the many residents interviewed, all stressed that the greatest force for cultural retention is the Greek Orthodox church. The church also provides opportunities for children or for adults entering the church to learn the language through Greek school and to absorb the culture through church-sponsored activities. St. Nicholas is not only the primary religious institution attended by district residents, but many Greeks from surrounding communities support it because of its local cultural and historical significance.

Many arts associated with the Greek Orthodox Church developed during the time of the Byzantine Empire (ca. 330-1453). Byzantine music and hymns are featured daily during the Liturgies at St. Nicholas Cathedral. Orthodox Christians believe that the icon is a vehicle of divine power and grace, through which those who are represented are present. Orthodox tradition fixed many features in the depiction of the saints and holy family so that the relationship between the prototype and recurring photos would not be lost. In churches, icons adorn walls, the *proskynetarion*—the stand that holds the day's icon, the *iconostasio*—a screen that separates the chancel from the nave, and other surfaces **(Photo 33)**. In almost all homes, Greek families display small, portable icons.

The Shrine of St. Michael Taxiarchis, the patron saint of the Dodecanese island of Symi, was built by a local family in gratitude to St. Michael for the miraculous healing of a son. Today, the shrine that they built in their backyard on Hope Street attracts visitors from near and far who desire healing for themselves or loved ones. On the feast day of St. Michael, November 8, hundreds of local residents attend services at the shrine.

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**Religious Holidays**

In Greektown, residents observe not only major holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, and Epiphany, but also numerous Saints' Days. Given limited space, the sections below detail some traditions of the major holidays.

Epiphany

Tarpon Springs' Epiphany celebration on January 6 is the largest and most widely known in the United States. Epiphany commemorates Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan, when the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, as well as the manifestation of the Holy Trinity. As practiced in Greece for centuries, Tarpon Springs priests bless the boats and the sea as part of Epiphany—an essential event for seafaring communities since boats traditionally would not sail in the unhallowed sea between Christmas and Epiphany. On the day before Epiphany, a priest goes to the Sponge Docks to bless the boats (**Photo 34**), as well as local businesses. Then residents join thousands of visitors on Epiphany at an array of events commencing with a Liturgy in St. Nicholas Cathedral. Afterwards, altar boys swinging censers streaming fragrant incense lead a procession (**Photo 35**) down West Tarpon Avenue to Spring Bayou, followed by church officials bearing banners or jeweled crosses, children in colorful costumes, dance troupes, city officials, divers, and a young woman bearing a white dove. Thousands watch the priest bless the waters, then the young woman releases the dove as the priest casts a white cross into the waters.

The dive is the highlight of Epiphany. Since 1920, young men have braved the chilly waters of Spring Bayou in hopes of capturing the coveted cross to ensure a year of blessings. About 50 youths dive from a semi-circle of dinghies (**Photo 36**). When a young man finds the cross, he shoots up through the water, triumphantly holding it above his head. He is greeted with cheers of delight, then carried on his friends' shoulders back to St. Nicholas Cathedral to be blessed. The youths parade throughout town singing hymns then proceed to the *glendi*, a celebration with food, dancing and music, at the church community center.<sup>19</sup>

Easter

<sup>19</sup> Tina Bucuvalas. "Greeks." In *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Vol. 6, *Ethnicity*. Edited by Celeste Ray. Revised edition. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. Pp. 149-150.

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As befits the most important day in the Greek Orthodox calendar, Easter traditions are extensive. Prior to Easter, women prepare special baked goods and dye boiled eggs red. Easter observances at St. Nicholas include special Liturgies each day of Holy Week. After the Holy Thursday Liturgy, many women sing haunting *mirologia* (laments) far into the night (**Photo 37**). On Holy Friday, the *kouvouklion*, representing the tomb of Christ, is decorated, blessed, (**Photo 38**) and carried in procession (**Photo 39**) around St. Nicholas Cathedral, followed by hundreds of mourners. The resurrection is celebrated with a late Saturday night Liturgy during which the lights are extinguished, and the priest brings out a single candle whose flame is passed to those of the worshippers. Guarding the flame, the parishioners return home, where they use the flame to form a cross of soot on their doorframe. Others flock to the nearby Prometheus or AHEPA clubs to break the strict Lenten fast with *magiritsa* soup. Easter Day is celebrated with a feast of roast lamb and other dishes avoided during Lent.

Not all Easter traditions are officially sanctioned. Until recent anti-terrorism legislation suppressed it, Tarpon Springs preserved the custom of igniting firecrackers or loud home-made “Greek bombs” (gunpowder wrapped in cardboard and tape) during the Easter period. Based on the Bible’s admonition to make a joyful noise, this practice occurs throughout Greece but is fiercely observed in the Dodecanese islands. During the weeks before Easter, many Greektown families fatten lambs or goats in their yards, (**Photo 40**) and butcher them on the Saturday before Easter. Many families roast the meat and *kokoretsi* (sweetbreads seasoned and wrapped with intestines) at home for a feast that includes many foods not eaten during the Lenten season—and the delectable smells permeate the district (**Photo 41**).

### Celebrations

#### Life Cycle Events

Life cycle events are observed with elaborate secular and religious ritual. In the Greektown community, a variety of customs are associated with births. Naming traditions are particularly strong among Greeks, who usually name children after grandparents or other honored older relatives—resulting in numerous cousins with the same name. There are also strong regional naming traditions, often associated with local saints. Baptism marks the entry of the child into the church. At St. Nicholas Cathedral or St. Michael’s Shrine the child is immersed in a baptismal font and the godparent(s) assist the priest in anointing it with oil. *Martyrika*, witness pins distributed at baptisms bearing the names of the child and godparent, are a vestige of times when written records were rare and witnesses were necessary for the important event. Weddings at St. Nicholas are particularly rich in tradition. For instance, the *stefana* (crowns linked with a ribbon) symbolize the couple’s union and their status as king and queen of a new household. After the

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wedding, these elaborate creations are displayed in their homes in a special case. Greek music and dance dominate wedding receptions. *Boubounieres* (small net packets containing sugar-coated almonds) are distributed to the guests. Some believe that the almonds symbolize the sweetness and bitterness of married life. At night, young girls may slip the boubounieres under their pillows in order to dream of their future husbands.

Being a *koumbaros* or *koumbara* (sponsor) for a wedding or a *nounos* (godfather) or *nouna* (godmother) for a baptism is a position of great honor and life-long commitment. *Koumbaroi* participate in the wedding by exchanging the crowns over the heads of the couple and providing necessary items. Godparents provide spiritual and sometimes economic support (**Photo 42**).

Many customs surround death and mourning. Some older Greektown women make *kolliva* for funeral or memorial services. They assemble it in a mound using boiled wheat, powdered sugar, dark or golden raisins, ground walnuts, slivered almonds, sesame, anise and cinnamon covered with graham cracker or bread crumbs and powdered sugar. They decorate it with almonds and confectioners' candies, often making a cross and the initials of the deceased. The family presents *kolliva* to the priest at St. Nicholas so that it will be blessed during the Liturgy. Afterwards it is distributed to the congregation at the church hall.

Sadly, the dangerous profession of sponge diving resulted in many deaths. The gravestones, mausoleums, and large family plots in Cycadia Cemetery are among the most distinctive in the nation—and they differ from graves both in Greece and among non-Greek Tarponites. Many headstones are carved with sponge boats and diving helmets (e.g., George A. Demopoulos, J.D. Christmas, and especially Nicholas C. Tsourakis). The tombstone of John Katsaras (1902-1979) has a helmet carved below his name and between his dates of birth and death—and immediately under his name is *Kapetanios* (Captain).<sup>20</sup> There are many other examples, including porcelain photographic portraits of men in their diving suits (**Photos 43-45**).

### *Secular Celebrations*

The Greektown community celebrates many types of festive occasions. Secular celebrations sponsored by fraternal organizations or regional clubs (e.g., the Pan-Kalymnian Federation, Tarpon Springs

<sup>20</sup> Steve Frangos. "Eternal Be Their Memory!: Cycadia Cemetery, Tarpon Springs" In *The Florida Folklife Reader*. Edited by Tina Bucuvalas. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011. Pp. 156.

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Taxiarchis Symian Society, or Halki Association of Tarpon Springs) at the St. Nicholas Spanos Center provide opportunities to socialize and share their regional heritage. A popular event is Greek Independence Day on March 25 (**Photos 46-47**), celebrated with a parade from St. Nicholas Cathedral, down Pinellas Avenue to Dodecanese Boulevard and the Sponge Docks and a *glendi* (party) at the St. Nicholas Spanos Center that include dance groups, children in regional costumes, community organizations, church officials, and dignitaries from Greece.

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral sponsors at least two Greek festivals per year. While their primary function is fundraising, they offer the public a chance to enjoy Greek popular music, dance and food. Festivals generally present only a narrow range of culture, but they provide an opportunity for elders to teach young community members. Older women supervise cooking, while men and women teach dances to children and young adults. The time together allows them to share vital knowledge about those traditions, other significant cultural information, and community history.

More recently, the City of Tarpon Springs has presented Night in the Islands at the Sponge Docks (**Photo 48**). The event offers Greek music and social dancing, along with restaurants putting tables outside on the Sponge Docks. The event not only replicates village *panigiria* (feast day celebrations) that take place throughout Greece, but also has revived an older practice of holding celebrations by the Sponge Exchange on the Sponge Docks.

### Maritime Occupational Culture

#### Sponge Fishing

Work on a sponge boat follows both annual and trip cycles. The annual cycle is determined by weather and water visibility: most boats make their first trip in late March or April when the winds quiet and the water warms, but May through October is the busiest season. The best months are May and June, before the storm season of late summer. The length of a trip depends on a boat's size and thus ability to store harvested sponges. Small boats may stay out 2 weeks and larger boats 3 or more weeks with favorable conditions. Before leaving port, the captain stocks the boat with sufficient food, fuel, ice, and other necessities.

The location of major sponge beds is widely known, but most captains gradually discover particularly abundant sites and mark them on charts, which they may pass on to worthy younger divers (**Photo 49**). There are dozens of types of sponges in the Gulf, but only a few are commercially viable. Divers must be

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able to identify and harvest those that will sell (**Photo 50**). Two or three men usually go out on a sponge boat—between them fulfilling the functions of captain, divers, engineers, and deckhands. The captain or boat owner usually addresses mechanical issues. The engineer or deckhand watches the diver to see that he is not pulled by the boat, the air line is clear, and that the boat is steered in the direction needed by the diver.

Back in port, the crew cleans the sponges of their decomposing skins—which lend a strong fishy smell to the Docks (**Photo 51**). The crew then sorts the sponges, (**Photo 52**) and the captain then calls buyers to view the catch and make offers (**Photo 53**). After a sale, the captain or owner is reimbursed for food and boat expenses, then each crew member receives a share proportional to his work. The boats soon commence another trip.

Sponge boats often do not work during winter months due to the wind from cold fronts. Instead, the fishermen complete tasks for which they did not have time while at sea, such as cleaning and repairing boats or equipment.

Religious traditions remain important to many spongers. The pilot houses of Greek-owned craft inevitably include icons—especially of St. Nicholas, as well as saints' cards, *tamata* (ex-votos), crosses, and other items. Some display blue beads to ward off the evil eye—a belief common in countries surrounding the Mediterranean (**Photo 54**).

Merchants are central to domestic and international distribution of sponges. Often they belong to families that have worked in the business for generations, and can discern where and when a sponge was harvested. In the past, there were many independent local sponge buyers, as well as agents of larger international merchant houses. Today, Tarpon Springs's few active large-scale buyers have close personal or business ties with distributors in Greece, other parts of Europe, and/or the Bahamas.

In the distributors' warehouses, sponges are processed or cut according to order specifications. Some are sold in their natural state, but they may be trimmed to a size appropriate to the intended function (**Photo 55**). For cosmetic and other uses, sponges are bleached in successive chemical baths until they attain a yellow color. Then they are trimmed to small sizes, compacted into bales by a sponge press, and shipped. This work is still done in Greektown—notably on the Sponge Docks, but there are also warehouses just outside the district.



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Related Maritime Traditional Culture

Until the late 1950s to early 1960s, sponge divers wore a heavy canvas and rubber suit topped with a helmet made from copper, brass and plate glass. Antonios Lerios immigrated to Tarpon Springs in 1913, where he repaired boat hardware and made helmets into his 90s. Growing up in Tarpon Springs, Nicholas Toth visited his grandfather's machine shop and gradually absorbed his knowledge. After college, he decided to carry on the family tradition and work with his grandfather. Although a few commercial factories still make helmets, Toth is now the sole practitioner of this as a craft tradition. He received a National Heritage Fellowship in 2003 and Florida Folk Heritage Award in 2008 for his beautiful, well-made helmets. He still works in the workshop that his grandfather founded off N. Pinellas Avenue, by the Anclote River <sup>21</sup> (Photo 56).

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hundreds of boats based on the *achtarmas* style sponge boat (a sub-type of the *trechantiri*) common in the Dodecanese islands were built by Greeks along the Gulf Coast from Tarpon Springs to Apalachicola. A third generation master sponge boat builder, George Saroukos is the only remaining builder and repairer of traditional Greek sponge boats in this hemisphere. After emigrating from Kalymnos in the late 1970s, he continued building boats without printed plans. He also made the 17 dinghies in the style of sponge hooking boats that are used for the Epiphany cross-diving competition. Saroukos received a 2009 Florida Folk Heritage Award, and has a business next Nicholas Toth (Photo 57).

In their leisure time, the men who built or worked on the sponge boats sometimes make elaborate model boats to delight their families or friends. Most models are exact replicas, produced in much the same way as real boats. The men create almost everything usually found on board, including blocks, bracket, lanterns, and many other items. They often paint the models like working sponge boats: white with a few red, black and/or yellow horizontal stripes along the sides, or with a black base and Greek blue trim. Model boat builder Steve Stavrakis, who worked on sponge boats, lived on Grand Blvd. before he died in 2012 (Photo 58).

<sup>21</sup> Tina Bucuvalas. "Nicholas Toth." In *Just Above the Water: Florida Folk Art*, by Kristin Congdon and Tina Bucuvalas. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006. Pp. 251-253.

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Performing Arts

Music

Greece has produced a rich variety of traditional, popular, and art music. Traditional music reveals historical influences from Byzantium, Turkey, and the Balkans. Two streams of traditional music share many influences and elements: classical (Byzantine chanting) and folk, which includes both rural and urban traditions. Westernized song and music arose in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Orchestral music based on folk melodies and rhythms (*entechno*), was produced by such composers as Mikis Theodorakis. Popular and contemporary Greek music often reflects influences from Europe and America. Greek MTV features artists performing a fascinating synthesis of western rock with Greek or Middle Eastern scales, rhythms, and dance.

The Greektown community has always maintained regional, religious, and popular musical traditions performed by individuals and groups in homes, church, and social organizations. Today, music and dance are embedded in a wide range of community events. Greek Liturgies at St. Nicholas or St. Michael always include Byzantine chants. Receptions for weddings and baptisms (often at the Spanos Center) always include live Greek music; and depending on the deceased, music may be played at burials in Cycadia Cemetery. Musicians and singers perform popular and traditional, old and new Greek music (**Photo 59**). *Nisiotika*, the lively music of the Aegean islands, is particularly popular among Greektown residents, who came primarily from that area. Some musicians still play older traditional instruments such as the *laouto*, *lyra*, and *tsabouna*. For example, the late National Heritage Fellow Nikitas Tsimouris, who sometimes worked on sponge boats, was master of Kalymnian *tsabouna* music.<sup>22</sup>

In Greektown, most musicians play or sing in ensembles with bouzouki, keyboard, guitar, clarinet, and/or drum set (**Photo 60**). On West Athens St., the popular club/bar Zorba's has offered nightly Greek music and social dance for decades. In addition, music is regularly offered at nearby restaurants such as Mama's, Dimitri's, Mama Maria's, and occasional others. And of course, most community events feature live music, and many take place at St. Nicholas' Spanos Community Center or Church Hall, the Sponge Docks, and other Greektown venues (**Photo 61**).

<sup>22</sup> Anna Lomax. "Musical Practice and Memory on the Edge of Two Worlds: Kalymnian *Tsambouna* and Song Repertoire in the Family of Nikitas Tsimouris. In *The Florida Folklife Reader*. Edited by Tina Bucuvalas. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011. Pp.96-153.

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**Cultural/Historical Integrity**

Although Greek culture occurs throughout Tarpon Springs as many Greek families or family members have moved to new homes, nowhere are their activities, practices, memories, and other cultural traditions as tenaciously maintained as they are in the area known as Greektown--which remains the historic and contemporary heart of the Greek community.

Dr. Tina Bucuvalas, Curator of Art and Historical Resources /City of Tarpon Springs, and former State Folklorist/Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, has conducted ethnographic research to determine the current integrity of Tarpon Springs' historical and cultural heritage to the town. Her research, as well as that of scholars who conducted past surveys, verifies the tenacity of Greek and maritime culture in Tarpon Springs, and validates the status of the Greektown as an important traditional cultural property.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Greektown is bounded by:

South: Spring Bayou and Tarpon Avenue on the south;

East: Hibiscus Street in the southeast quadrant, heading north to Pine Street, then west (left) to Pinellas Avenue, then north on Pinellas to the south bank of the Anclote River

North: Anclote River

West: Heading south from the Anclote River along Roosevelt Boulevard. Turning east on West Park Street, then heading east to Grand Blvd., then south on Grand Boulevard and right into the middle of the south bank of Spring Bayou [where they dive for the cross on Epiphany].

The specific boundaries of the district are shown as a dashed line on the map accompanying this National Register nomination.

**Boundary Justification**

Boundaries were defined as those areas in which traditionally constituted the Greektown, as determined by a working group of district residents, business owners, and people raised in the district—many of whose families lived there for generations. The northern boundary on the Anclote River also includes sponge boats docked in the river, since they are an integral part of the history and current functioning of this traditional cultural property.

**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS**

RECREATION AND CULTURE/MUSIC FACILITY  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/PROCESSING SITE  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/INDUSTRIAL STORAGE

RECREATION AND CULTURE/MUSIC FACILITY  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/PROCESSING SITE  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/INDUSTRIAL STORAGE

**UTM References**

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
5.	17	326613	3114992

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2. Tarpon Springs Greektown Historic District, Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County), Florida
3. Tina Bucuvalas
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5. City of Tarpon Springs
6. View of main (south) elevation, looking north
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**Items 2, 3, and 5 are the same for the rest of the photographs unless otherwise noted.**

1. 208 Hope Street
4. 2014
6. View of main (west) elevation, looking east
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1. Diver's cottage behind 624 Cross Street, facing the alley between Cross and Maragos Streets
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1. 430 Athens Street
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1. Sponge Docks, on left is 701-715 Dodecanese looking down toward the Sponge Exchange
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1. Dodecanese Boulevard-Gonatos Building, 628 Dodecanese, in background, 701-715 Dodecanese in foreground
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1. Philoptochos Building, owned by St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 601 Hope Street
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1. Feast Day of Saint Michael, Saint Michael Shrine, 113 Hope Street
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1. Koursiotis residence with Greek columns, Greek key vase, and classical statuary, 316 Grand Boulevard
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1. Fannie Angeli boat under construction.
  4. 1937
  5. Florida State Archives. N047446.
  6. direction unknown
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1. *St. Nicholas III* at Sponge Docks, Dodecanese Boulevard, with *St. Nicholas IV* in the background
  4. 2010
  6. View of main elevation, looking northeast
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1. *Tarpon Springs* Greek boat (formerly the *N.K. Symi*) at Sponge Docks during Night in the Islands event, 700 block Dodecanese Boulevard
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  6. View of main elevation, looking east
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1. Rusticated block site wall, Greek key vases, blue and white painted residence at 115 Athens Street
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1. Lazaro's *kafeneion* (coffee shop), 501 Athens Street
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5. Florida State Archives
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1. John Klonaris making Greek coffee at *kafeneion* (former Lazaro's), 501 Athens Street
3. Robert L. Stone
4. 2006
5. Florida Department of State, Tallahassee
6. View of interior, looking east
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1. Levendia Dance Troupe in Greek costumes performing at the Epiphany *glendi*, Spanos Center, 348 North Pinellas Avenue
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6. Kalotina Mougros shows children how to make *lazarakia* at St. Nicholas Cathedral Hall, View of interior, looking south
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6. Chanters (in black) and priests in front of icons at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, View of interior, looking north
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6. Goat and lamb fattening up before Easter in the backyard, View of backyard, looking east
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6. Nicholas Toth making glass retainer & leather rings for diving helmet at his workshop, View of interior looking west

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6. Boat Builder George Saroukos at his boat yard, View looking north

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1. Steve Stavrakis at his shop,

3. Bud Lee

4. 2003

5. University of Central Florida

6. Steve Stavrakis, who lived at 410 Grand Boulevard, with model sponge boat, View of main elevation looking south

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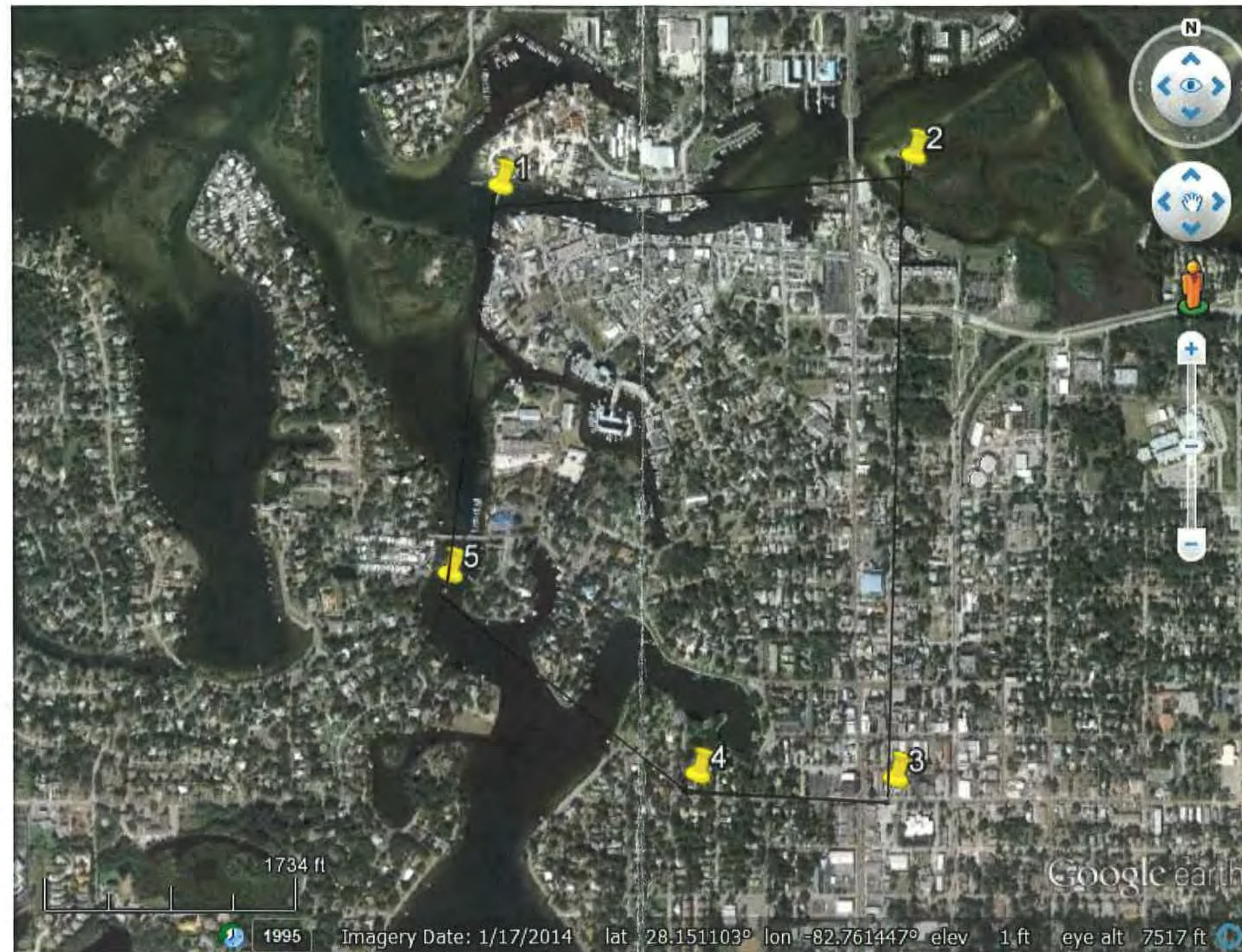
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4. 2012
6. View of interior looking north
7. Photo 61 of 61



**TARPON SPRINGS GREEKTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT, PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

#1  
Latitude: 28.156992°  
Longitude: -82.764427°

**UTM References**

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	326744	3115778

#2  
Latitude: 28.157465°  
Longitude: -82.753690

**UTM References**

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	327620	3115829

#3  
Latitude: 28.145062°  
Longitude: -82.756018°

**UTM References**

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	327567	3114532

#4  
Latitude: 28.145170°  
Longitude: -82.760270°

**UTM References**

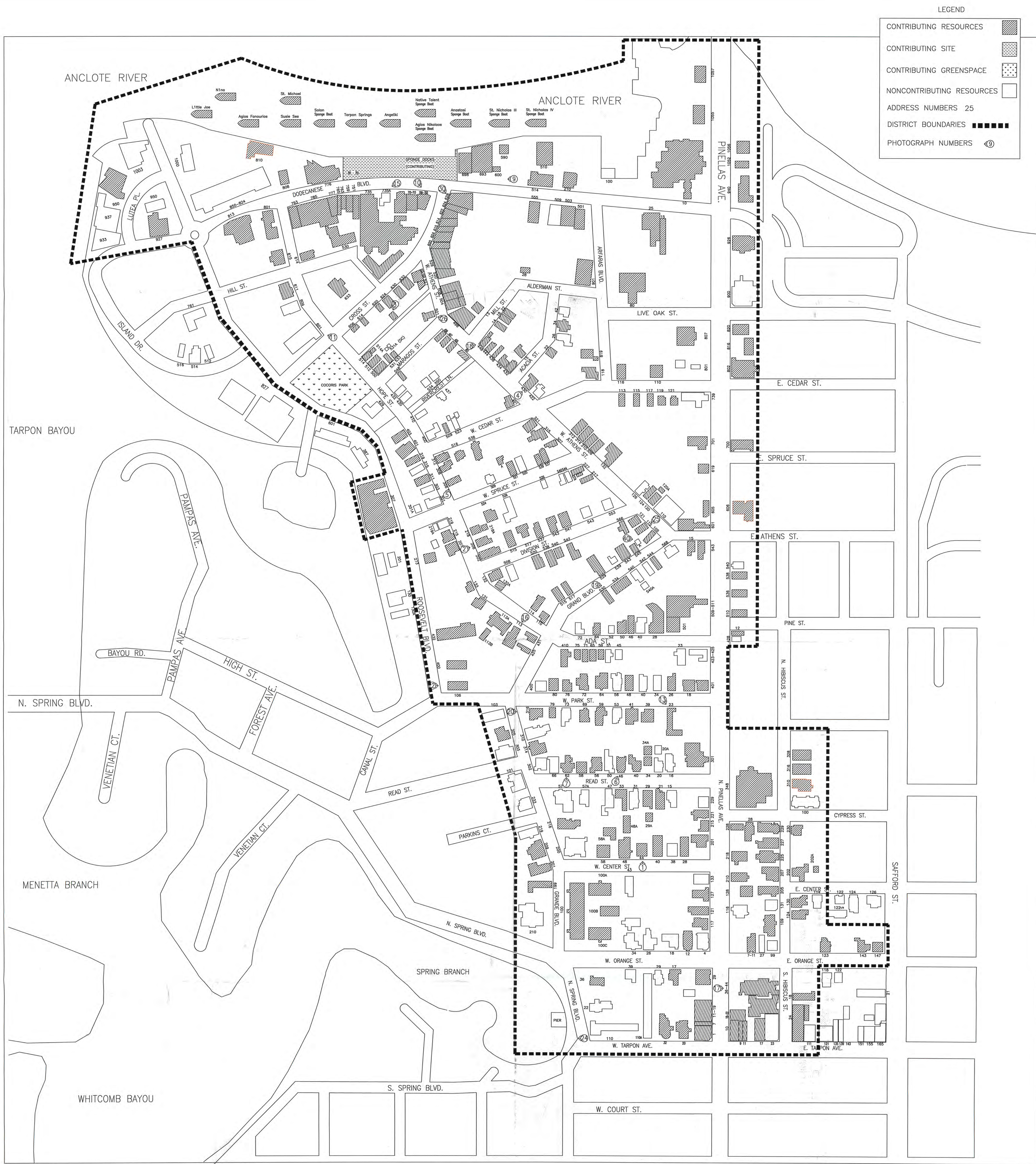
<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	327143	3114532

#5  
Latitude: 28.148933°  
Longitude: -82.765621°

**UTM References**

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	326613	3114992





LEGEND

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

CONTRIBUTING SITE

CONTRIBUTING GREENSPACE

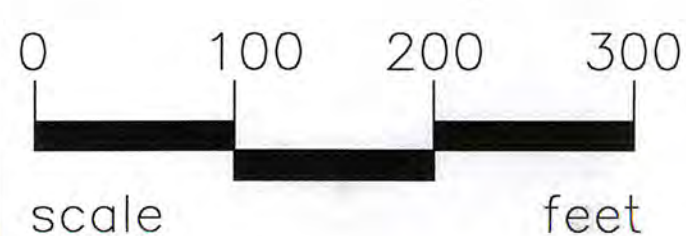
NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

ADDRESS NUMBERS 25

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

PHOTOGRAPH NUMBERS

GREEKTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT  
TARPON SPRINGS (PINELAS COUNTY), FLORIDA



MAP PREPARED FOR:  
Tina Bucuvalas, Ph.D.  
Curator of Arts & Historical Resources  
City of Tarpon Springs  
23 Parkin Ct.  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689  
Phone: 727-937-1130, Fax 727-943-4855  
Email: tbucuvalas@ctsfll.us  
Email: www.tarponarts.org

DRAWN BY: W. CARL SHIVER  
DRAWING DATE: FEB-MAR 2014

DRAWING NUMBER SHEET NO. 1 OF 1  
N/A

THE DR. GREEKTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP WAS DRAWN IN  
IN AUTOCAD USING A VARIETY OF VISUAL RESOURCES  
INCLUDING A PLAT MAP OF THE DISTRICT PROJECT, AERIAL  
GOOGLE EARTH, PROPERTY APPRAISER'S MAPS, SANBORN FIRE  
INSURANCE MAPS, AND GOOGLE STREET VIEW. THE MAP WAS  
DRAWN TO APPROXIMATE SCALE BUT VARIATIONS WERE ALLOWED  
FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLARITY.

MAP REVIEWED BY: CARL SHIVER  
FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
P.A. GRAY BUILDING  
500 SOUTH BROWN STREET  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250  
PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-6333  
TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278  
FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6437
































St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Community  
**YOUTH CENTER**



A small, single-story white building with a gabled roof is the central focus. The word "SPONGES" is painted in large, bold, black capital letters on the side of the building, positioned above a small, dark doorway. The building is surrounded by lush tropical vegetation, including several tall palm trees with large fronds. To the left of the building, there are stacks of wooden crates or pallets. In the foreground, a paved road or sidewalk is visible. On the right side of the image, a green street sign with white lettering reads "ROOSEVELT BLVD". The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day, with shadows cast by the trees and the building.

SPONGES

ROOSEVELT BLVD









SPONGE EXCHANGE  
TARPON SPRINGS  
FLA



TARPON SPRINGS  
SPONGE EXCHANGE

CASHIER  
←

Sponge Processing

• Greek W  
• Greek B  
• Domestic  
Ice Cold  
Soft D  
Greek S





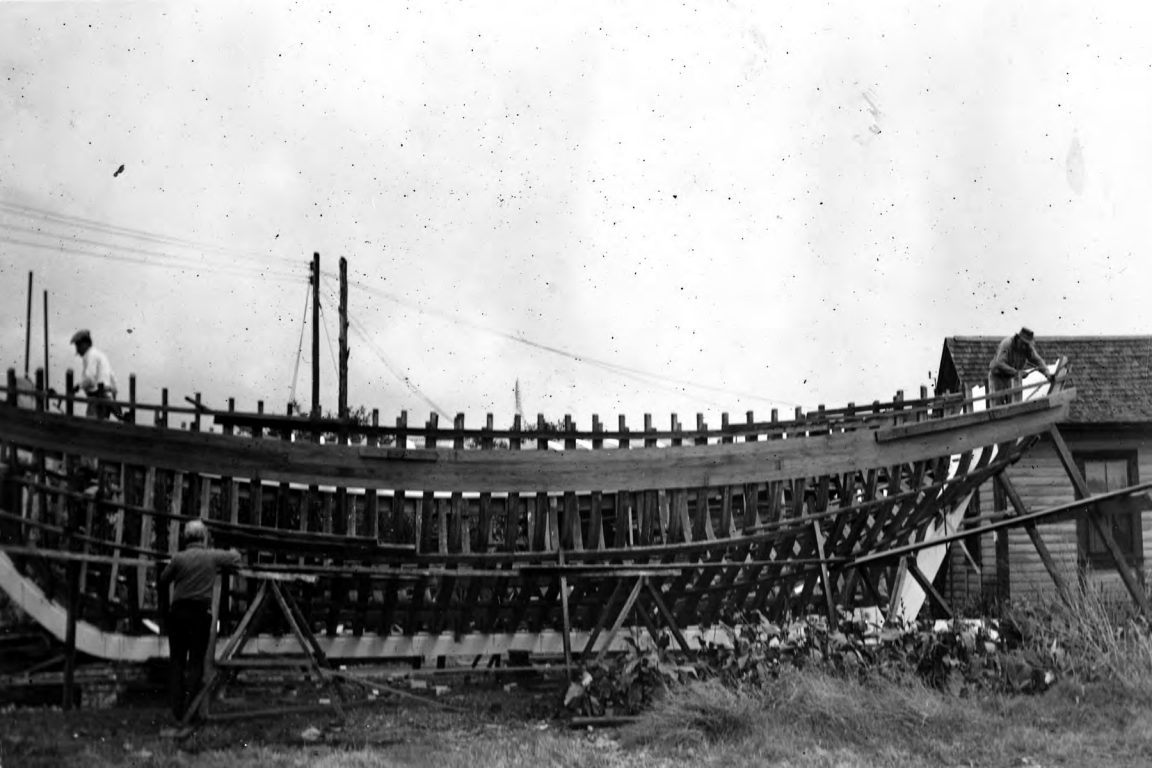
















SPONGE DIVING EXHIBITION

ST. NICHOLAS III





















MAGEIPEION  
**MYKONOS**  
AUTHENTIC GREEK COOKERY

ΚΟΥΒΛΑΚΙ ΓΝΗΣΙΑ ΣΠΙΤΙΚΗ ΚΟΥΖΙΝΑ

FREE  
**PARKING**  
MYKONOS

BUD  
LIGHT  
OPEN

MAGEIPEION  
**MYKONOS**  
AUTHENTIC GREEK COOKERY















GREEK CROSS DAY CELEBRATION  
TARPON SPRINGS, FLA.  
"THE VENICE OF THE SOUTH."

















PETROS T. FATOLITIS

OCT. 10,  
1892



FEB. 23,  
1978

LOVING UNCLE AND FATHER

*Georgiou*



*Vatikiotis*



JOSEPHINE  
1920 — 1993

JOHN C.  
1892 — 1965

MANGOS







ST. MARK  
GREEK SCHOOL



SPONGE FACTORY

Australian oil of Eucalyptus

Australian oil of Eucalyptus

SPONGE FACTORY  
WORLD'S LARGEST  
SPONGE FACTORY

FREE  
SPONGE DIVING  
SHOW & MUSEUM  
THE ORIGINAL SPONGEDIVERS SPONGE FACTORY

WORLD'S LARGEST  
SPONGE FACTORY

EUCALYPTUS OIL  
RELIEVES  
SINUS  
ASTHMA  
RAT FEVER  
BRONCHITIS  
EMPHYSEMA  
ARTHRITIS  
BACKACHE  
NEURALGIA  
INFLUENZA  
NOSTALGIA

WORLD'S LARGEST  
SPONGE FACTORY

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SPONGE FACTORY









ANASTASI





















DEEP SEA FISHING  
INFORMATION  
TAKE ONE

VASE or BASKET SPONGE  
Nature's Flower Pot









