

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Rock Gate (Ed's Place) ~~DA~~ 156

and/or common Coral Castle

2. Location

street & number 28655 South Federal Highway N/A not for publication

city, town Homestead N/A vicinity of

state Florida code 12 county Dade code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Tourist Attraction

4. Owner of Property

name Irving Barr

street & number 180 East Pearson

city, town Chicago N/A vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dade County Courthouse

street & number 73 West Flagler Street

city, town Miami state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Dade County Historic Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Florida Division of Archives

city, town Tallahassee state Florida

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1920s-1930s Builder/Architect Edward Leedskalnin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Coral Castle is a spectacular rock sculpture garden located in extreme southern Dade County, Florida. The complex, which consists of monolithic limestone sculptures weighing up to 30 tons each, was assembled during the 1920s and 1930s by a single individual, Edward Leedskalnin. The nationally recognized site was the monument Leedskalnin dedicated to his lifetime passions: hard work, astronomic and engineering experimentation and his lost love.

Edward Leedskalnin was born in Metei, Latvia, one of the Baltic countries, in 1887.¹ By the age of 26, he was engaged to Agnes Scuff² who was ten years his junior. Shortly before Agnes and Edward were to be married, the wedding was called off by the bride. Agnes' reason for not wanting to marry Edward was that she had come to realize that he was too old for her. Edward believed that Agnes' real reason was that he was poor. Dejected, Leedskalnin emigrated to Canada, believing that in the New World, the land of opportunity, he could become successful and wealthy and win back Agnes's admiration and love. In pursuit of this goal, Leedskalnin moved frequently, working at a variety of jobs. After living in Canada, Leedskalnin moved to the State of Washington to work in a lumber camp. There, his health, which had always been of a delicate nature, began to deteriorate. A doctor recommended that Leedskalnin move to a warmer state, either California or Florida. Leedskalnin chose San Francisco, a chilly city, where his health continued to grow worse. However, in San Francisco; Leedskalnin met a rancher who promised to pay his fare to south Florida in exchange for helping him with a cattle drive to Texas. Leedskalnin accepted the offer.

Leedskalnin arrived in Florida City in the early 1920s. Although he was a shy man, he soon befriended Ruben and Francis Moser who took him in while he regained his health. In 1923, the Mosers sold Leedskalnin an acre of land located southwest of Florida City for \$12.00.³ The ground on the property was composed of oolitic limestone popularly known as coral rock. There, Leedskalnin began what was to become his life's work and obsession.

At the Florida City property, Leedskalnin first built a simple wood shed as his home and then proceeded to make his rock creations. Much myth and folklore surround Leedskalnin's work at what came to be known as "Ed's Place." Unaided, Leedskalnin quarried, sculpted and erected mammoth pieces of oolitic limestone rock, most weighing several tons. The sculptures were an enigma, further compounded by Leedskalnin's secretive ways of working alone and at night.

Leedskalnin's rock sculptures can be classified into two categories: domestic and astronomical. Both subjects are central preoccupations of Leedskalnin's life. The domestic sculptures relate to Leedskalnin's yearning for Agnes, his "Sweet Sixteen." They include household furniture such as tables, chairs and couches, arranged in domestic settings - a dining room, a sitting room, and even a bedroom. These sculptures demonstrate Leedskalnin's desire for a family life, a desire which he was never able to fulfill for he remained single and led a solitary life. Leedskalnin's astronomical sculptures include monoliths of Saturn, Mars and the waxing and waning moon. These sculptures reflect Leedskalnin's interest in the scientific world, particularly in the fields of astronomy, physics, and engineering.

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Local residents and neighbors wondered how Leedskalnin was able to build and set upright the rock formations which continued to appear on his property. Leedskalnin always gave the same reply to these queries. He explained that he accomplished the work through his comprehension of the methods used by the pyramid builders, the practical knowledge of the laws of leverage and weight. The tools used by Leedskalnin in quarrying and sculpting the coral rock were fashioned from old car parts. As evidence, Leedskalnin's primitive tools are on display at Coral Castle with a note explaining how with "an uncanny knowledge of the laws of leverage and balance, engineering and sculpture, and with the aid of simple tools such as metal fall (block and tackle), rollers, jacks, wedges, slings, cables, sledges, chisels, and above all infinite patience and tremendous imagination, Leedskalnin was able to create the unique rock sculptures.

The public, however, was not satisfied with this ordinary account of Leedskalnin's construction methods. Many theories evolved as to how Leedskalnin was able to execute his rock works. Some claimed that Leedskalnin had received aid from extraterrestrials, others that he had discovered the secrets of gravitational force enabling him to render the mammoth rocks weightless.

Leedskalnin was a thrifty and frugal man, subsisting on the bare essentials. His diet consisted of vegetables and fruit which he grew on his property. Occasionally, he would eat a rabbit which he trapped. From scrap and junk piles, Leedskalnin would salvage waste materials and manufacture them into utilitarian objects. It is said that Leedskalnin also received some income from dividends of stocks he purchased in California. When "Ed's Place" began drawing attention and receiving publicity, Leedskalnin decided to take advantage of the commercial angle of his obsession, conducting tours for a small fee, thus augmenting his earnings.

In 1936, Leedskalnin published a booklet entitled "A Book In Every Home." It deals with three subjects: Ed's Sweet Sixteen, Domestic and Political Views. In 1945, he published two scientific treatises. One, entitled "Magnetic Current," is about the scientific principles of magnets and electricity. The other, entitled "Mineral, Vegetable and Animal Life," is about a perpetual motion apparatus. Although Leedskalnin had only a fourth grade education, his publications are knowledgeable and well written. Alone, he had taught himself the practical laws of nature which he readily applied to the creation of his oolitic limestone constructions. The sale of publications constituted another source of income.

In 1937, Leedskalnin decided to move. Several reasons have been given for this sudden change, after being established in one area for so long. One reason may have been that he depleted his coral rock supply. Another is that Leedskalnin was unhappy about encroaching development. His desire to move was further precipitated by a violent incident in which Leedskalnin was mugged, based on rumors that his life savings were hidden somewhere on the grounds of "Ed's Place." Perhaps, Leedskalnin's move can be attributed to practical considerations. Leedskalnin's subsequent actions seem to indicate that he wanted to capitalize on "Ed's Place" which had by this time become a popular and successful operation.

Leedskalnin purchased a ten acre tract on South Federal Highway (U.S. 1)⁴ and announced that he would moving there and taking his sculptures with him. He sought the aid of an area resident, Bob Biggers, to accomplish the awesome task. All Edward Leedskalnin wanted

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from Mr. Biggers, however, was the use of his truck. The move to the new site was done over an extended period of time, but it was completed by Leedskalnin without any assistance. As with the construction of the coral rock monuments, Leedskalnin worked alone and at night loading and unloading Biggers' truck.

At the new location, Edward Leedskalnin recreated his Florida City sculpture garden, spreading it out upon approximately three acres of land. Leedskalnin did not leave any of the free-standing sculptures at the Florida City location, except for an upright slab topped by a carving of a six pointed star. This monolith was used as an admission gate and on its face the words "Adm. 10¢ Drop Below" are incised. Leedskalnin probably reasoned that he had no further use for this gate since at "Rock Gate," what he named his new home, Leedskalnin increased the admission price to twenty-five cents. The shy reclusive man took residence on the only artery connecting the South Florida mainland with the Florida Keys. Drivers could now see him reclining on his sculpted crescent moon, set atop the perimeter wall, waving to passersby. Visitors were attracted, and Ed seemed to like the attention.

Leedskalnin did not dismantle the perimeter wall at "Ed's Place," nor, his two-story living quarters and workshop. These more permanent structures he rebuilt from rock quarried on his new premises. Although abandoned and much overgrown, evidence of the wall and two-story structure still remains at the Florida City site.⁵

At Rock Gate, Leedskalnin continued the same lifestyle he had set for himself at Florida City. He made few additions to his collection of rock sculptures, dedicating most of his time to scientific experimentation. The few added creations were either of a practical nature or were related to his astronomical interests. Leedskalnin carved a bathtub out of coral rock and lined it with mortar so that the water would not seep out of the porous material. Near the bathtub, he dug a well, his water source. Leedskalnin also created a coral rock barbecue which functioned like a pressure cooker. His new astronomical works include a sundial, accurate within a minute, and a Polaris telescope.

Rock Gate's perimeter wall was unlike that of Ed's Place in that it included a nine-ton moveable gate. This gate is considered to one of Leedskalnin's most remarkable projects. This oolitic limestone "door" measures 81 inches in width, 92 inches in height and 21 inches in thickness. Its single pivotal point operates through a central vertical shaft with an automobile axle that connects the stone slab to the ground and the wall lintel overhead. This gate is so well balanced that it can be pushed open with one finger. The gate fits within one-quarter inch of the perimeter wall on both sides.

On December 4, 1951, Leedskalnin felt ill. He wrote a note stating, "Going to the hospital," and left it at the entrance of his home. Three days later, at the age of sixty-four, Edward Leedskalnin died of stomach cancer at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

Leedskalnin left no will. His only known survivor, a nephew, was not interested in the property. In 1953, Julius Levin, a Chicago businessman, purchased Rock Gate through probate court. Levin saw the tremendous potential of the property as a tourist attraction and shortly thereafter opened it to the public as Coral Castle.

Speculative theories relating to Leedskalnin's methods of construction and to his motives for constructing the rock wonderland continued to proliferate.⁶ Levin, who felt that these outrageous interpretations would tarnish Leedskalnin's reputation and discredit

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his lifework, took action. In 1955, he collected over 250 affidavits from Homestead area residents who had been acquainted with Edward Leedskalnin. The affiants testified that he/she "personally knew the late Edward Leedskalnin, and from actual knowledge could attest to the fact that the said Edward Leedskalnin began the construction of Rock Gate at a location in Florida City, Florida, on or about the year 1921, and subsequently moved some of the objects to its present location and continued the work until his death in December 1951; that he cut from the ground, moved and carved the huge weights of coral rock into the art creation known as Rock Gate without the aid of any individual or individuals; with simple hand tools; observed by the affiant on visits to Rock Gate while Edward Leedskalnin was alive, and in the process of constructing Rock Gate; and that the said Edward Leedskalnin was unmarried and lived alone on the premises during the period of the construction of Rock Gate and until his death."

Although Julius Levin never met Leedskalnin and could not ascertain Leedskalnin's motives or methodology, he sincerely believes the words written by Leedskalnin on a sign that appears at the entrance to Coral Castle. It simply states, "You Will Be Seeing Unusual Accomplishment." Today, Coral Castle continues to operate as a tourist attraction. Its present owner, Irving Barr, is a cousin of Julius Levin. In January, 1982, the Dade County Historic Preservation Board designated Coral Castle a local historic landmark, thus recognizing the magnificent and unique engineering and artistic accomplishments of its creator, Edward Leedskalnin.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Inscription incised on obelisk in Coral Castle's sculpture garden.
- ²Agnes' last name also appears in the literature of Coral Castle as "Skuvst."
- ³Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Book 1546, p. 8.
- ⁴Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Book 1802, p. 22.
- ⁵"Ed's Place" at Florida City was located at 18900 S.W. 352nd Street.
- ⁶Fred Graham, "A Monumental Feat Accomplished by One Man," and Jim Moseley, Book of Saucer News, Saucerian Publications, 1967.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>1937</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Rock Gate or Coral Castle is an open-air sculpture garden made up of mammoth oolitic limestone sculptures. The compound was constructed in two phases beginning in 1923. A number of the sculptures in the garden were assembled at the Florida City location but were moved to their present site in 1937. The remaining sculptures were fabricated at the present site. Better known as Coral Castle today, the garden is preserved as a tourist attraction and stands as a tribute to its creator and the amazing capacity of the human imagination.

Coral Castle, originally known as Rock Gate or Ed's Place, was once located southwest of Florida City. The complex, which was laid out on about an acre of land, consisted of a perimeter wall, a two-story structure which served as living quarters and workshop, and a number of monolithic oolitic limestone sculptures scattered about the enclosed space. In 1937, Edward Leedskalnin, Coral Castle's creator, decided to move to a new location and insisted on taking his rock masterpiece with him. At Ed's Place, Leedskalnin only left behind the structures of a permanent nature, removing all but one of the free-standing sculptures in his garden.

Edward Leedskalnin relocated north of Homestead on U.S. 1 and named his new home Rock Gate. Here, from rock quarried on the property, he recreated the perimeter wall and the two-story structure. This time, however, the complex was spread out on approximately three acres of land, thus necessitating a more formidable perimeter wall and living quarters/workshop structure than that at the Florida City location.

Apart from being of larger dimensions, the perimeter wall at Rock Gate was embellished with a nine ton gate, one of Edward Leedskalnin's most remarkable creations. The gate is 81 inches wide, 92 inches tall and 21 inches thick. It operates through a single pivotal point and is so well balanced that by gently pushing, it swings open. The gate fits snugly into the wall, within one-quarter inch of each of its sides. The perimeter wall was further adorned by the addition of several astronomical sculptures carved as part of some of the wall sections. The North perimeter wall was "crowned" by a thirty ton sculpture, the heaviest oolitic block at Rock Gate.

The living quarters/workshop structure that Edward Leedskalnin rebuilt at Rock Gate was larger in scale than that at his former location. It also differs in that the castellated tower structure is truly two-storied. Leedskalnin used the ground floor of the structure as his workshop and the upper story as his dwelling. At Florida City, Leedskalnin's living quarters were also located on the second story of a turret-like structure. The first story of this earlier building, however, was unusable space as a result of the unusually thick walls. Leedskalnin's one-story workshop was attached to his living quarters. At Rock Gate, Leedskalnin improved upon the design of this dual use structure, making maximum use of space.

Leedskalnin brought to Rock Gate the free-standing sculptures that he had created at Florida City. In addition, he produced a few more, primarily of a practical nature or relating to his interest in astronomy. Leedskalnin put all of these oolitic limestone constructions in his sculpture garden. The only sculpture that Leedskalnin left at Florida City was an entrance gate to Ed's Place, incised with a "10¢" admission charge. Leedskalnin probably did not see any use for this sculpture, since at Rock Gate, the admission charge was increased to twenty-five cents.

The sculptures at Rock Gate, now known as Coral Castle, are arranged in thematic groupings. Starting at the main entrance door and proceeding clockwise the following is a description of Edward Leedskalnin's work:

--Entrance Door is metal and on its surface the path of the earth around the sun is drawn. Above the lintel of the door is a bell, taken from a Model T Ford.

--Three Ton Gate is located in front of the metal entrance door. The gate is triangular

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in shape and weighs 6,000 pounds. Balanced on the axle of a Model T Ford from the ground, the gate easily revolves.

- Reading Chairs are three in number and are arranged in a manner that takes advantage of appropriate reading light, according to the time of day. They weigh 4,000 pounds each and are able to rock.
- Florida Table is a sculpture executed in the shape of the State of Florida. A depression in the table which was meant to be used as either a finger bowl or a punch bowl represents Lake Okeechobee. Twelve chairs, each weighing 1,000 pounds, are placed around the table. Leedskalnin envisioned their use for meetings of the Governor and his cabinet.
- Polaris Telescope is made up of two parts. An upright, oolitic limestone slab, weighing 40,000 pounds and standing 25 feet tall, is located just outside of Coral Castle's perimeter wall. A circular hole carved at the upper end of this slab is intersected by two cross wires. These wires line up with a smaller hole drilled into the perimeter wall itself. Through this ingenious apparatus, the North Star can be observed.
- Moon Fountain consists of three pieces. It represents the phases of the moon through its monthly cycle. The waxing moon is located to the left of the fountain, the waning moon to the right. Each of these quarter moons weigh 36,000 pounds. The fountain itself represents the full moon and weighs 46,000 pounds. The moon fountain can be filled with water and be used as a pond, inhabited by fish and plants.
- Throne Room is made up a number of components. The "room" includes four thrones - a large one (for Leedskalnin), a medium one (for his "Sweet Sixteen"), a small one (for a child) and an "uncomfortable" one (for Leedskalnin's mother-in-law). In this area, there is also a "mad" rocker made of a single block of rock. The rocker seats two, but the seats do not face each other. The rocker is supposed to be used when a couple is quarrelling. The Throne Room also contains a love seat and a table for when the couple reconciles.
- Planets form part of Coral Castle's perimeter wall, located behind the Throne Room. There is a sculpture of Mars weighing 36,000 pounds, a sculpture of Saturn also weighing 36,000 pounds and a moon crescent weighing 46,000 pounds. The Nine Ton Gate described previously is situated on the wall adjacent to the planets.
- Bedroom includes an entire suite of rock furniture. There are a couple of twin beds, a couple of children's beds, a 155 pound rocking cradle, and an 85 pound child's rocking chair.
- Obelisk is placed at the far corner of the bedroom. The obelisk stands 40 feet high and weighs 57,000 pounds. Its apex is carved in the shape of a six pointed star on top of which is a weather vane. The obelisk is inscribed: "Made in 1928. Moved in 1939. Born 1887. Latvia, E.L."
- Repentance Corner is located next to the bedroom. This is a rock contraption

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that Leedskalnin would have used to punish his wife or children. A person's head would be inserted into a vertical slit perforated in a rock slab, the head would then be lowered all the way to the ground where it would be secured by a wooden wedge. A bench where Leedskalnin could sit to talk to the wrongdoers is also provided.

- Barbecue lies behind the Repentance Corner. This is another of Leedskalnin's ingenious inventions. The barbecue pit itself is made of oolitic limestone. The cooking portion of the barbecue is fashioned from old car parts and works as a pressure cooker.
- Feast of Love Table is situated across from the barbecue pit and is heart-shaped. The table features a heart-shaped indentation at its center used as a vase for a bouquet of flowers. The table weighs 5,000 pounds and is surrounded by benches.
- Children's Playground is based on the theme of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." This area includes several beds and chairs and even a porridge bowl, as in the children's story. In the same area, there is a "tree table," a piece of oolitic limestone in which a tree was growing, found by Leedskalnin. The palm tree presently planted in the table is not the original plant.
- First Rocking Chair is placed on a raised platform. It was Leedskalnin's first attempt at constructing a rocking chair and is displayed prominently, as a showpiece.
- Sundial is another of Leedskalnin's astronomical creations. The sundail functions accurately, within one or two minutes. It is only marked from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., what Leedskalnin believed working hours should be. The sundail also serves to mark the seasons.
- Sun Coach is a large, 8 foot diameter circular rock which rotates in order to make use of the best sun for tanning. The coach is provided with three rock pillows.
- Well is opened by a rolling stone wheel gate. At the bottom of several steps there is room to sit to cool off or space to store food. It was Leedskalnin's source of water.
- Tub is located near the well, used by Leedskalnin for bathing. It is lined in mortar to prevent water from seeping out of the porous rock material. Leedskalnin would fill the tub with water, let the water stand to heat by the sun, and, once warm, would take a bath. Next to the tub, Leedskalnin placed a mirror which is made of black slate covered by water, provide a reflective surface.
- Camera Stand is located at the center of the Coral Castle compound. The stand functions as a tripod from which photographs of different vistas of Coral Castle can be taken.
- Perimeter Wall surrounds the entire Coral Castle complex. Each of the limestone blocks that make up the wall is 8 feet high, 4 feet wide, 3 feet thick, and weighs several tons.

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--Pits are located outside of the perimeter wall, as visible evidence of the rock quarries from which Leedskalnin obtained his raw material.

In order to function as a tourist attraction, several additions and improvements have been made at Coral Castle. Outside the perimeter wall is a modern limestone structure which houses the gift shop and administrative offices of Coral Castle. The building was erected in 1982, replacing a wooden structure that had been used for the same purpose. It is unobtrusive in design and its location does not visually disrupt the view of Coral Castle. Adjacent to this functional building is a parking lot, recently repaved. Within the perimeter wall; in the sculpture garden, the owner and the manager of Coral Castle are currently planning the addition of lights. They would like to make greater use of Coral Castle at night, thus necessitating better lighting. The lights being proposed for installation are modern and unobtrusive in design and would be placed at inconspicuous spots. As a locally designated site, these additions and improvements made to Coral Castle since 1981 have been reviewed and approved by Dade County's Historic Preservation Board. Unimproved grounds, preserved as green space, surround Coral Castle.

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- Affidavits, Notarized by Bodil K. Lowe, Spring, 1955.
- Ash, Agnes. "The Little Man Who Moved Mountains" The Miami News, February 13, 1966.
- "Coral Castle," Designation Report, Dade County Historic Preservation Board, December, 1981.
- "Coral Castle," English Tour Guide (brochure).
- "Coral Castle," Site Inventory Form, Dade County Historic Survey.
- "Coral Castle Is 20th Century Wonder" St. Augustine Record, June, 1974.
- "Coral Castle: Thirty Years Work" The Chicago Tribune, reprinted by the Keyes Co.
- Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Abstract Book 1546, p. 8.
- Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Abstract Book 1802, p. 22.
- Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Abstract Book 2287, p. 173.
- Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Abstract Book 10993, p. 1241.
- Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Plat Book Volume 6, p. 21.
- "Ed Is Doing A Colossal Job of Moving But He Wants No Help, Thank You" Newspaper article, August, 1939.
- Glass, Ian. "Roses are Red, Coral is Gray, Heart's Heavy - - 3 Tons Anyway" The Miami News, February 14, 1973.
- Graham, Fred. "A Monumental Feat Accomplished by One Man."
- Jinks, William. "How One Man's Love Turned to Stone" The Miami Herald, Tropic Magazine, May 14, 1972.
- Kofoed, William. "Wizard of Coral Castle" Coronet, February, 1958.
- Lake, Carroll. Civil Engineering Magazine, 1958.
- Leedskalnin, Edward. A Book in Every Home Privately published by Edward Leedskalnin, Homestead, FL., 1936.
- Leedskalnin, Edward. Magnetic Current The Franklin Press, Inc., Miami, FL., August, 1945.

(See Continuation Sheet)

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3.

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Man - Look Over Ed's Place and See the Possibility of Making Money"
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por of Unfilled Love" The Miami Herald, March 21, 1954.

'A Loner's Strange World of Rock" Aloft, Summer, 1968.

se. "Coral Marvel Baffles the Best Engineers" The Miami Herald,
1.

The Lonely Philosopher of Florida's Stone Castle" The Miami Herald,
ine, April 22, 1962.

"A Monument to Sweetheart" The Miami Herald, June 15, 1973.

h. "S. Dade History Found in a Castle, 2 Houses" The Miami Herald,
ction, November 12, 1981.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Goulds

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	5	5	6	0	0	0	2	8	2	0	2	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning 250' N of SW corner of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ continue N 145 ft. NELY ALG SELY R/W/L SR#5. This area includes all significant properties.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Maria Temkin/Michael Zimny, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Division of Archives

date April 2, 1984

street & number The Capitol

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida

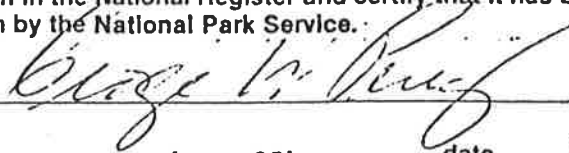
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title George W. Percy, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/2/84

For NPS use only

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

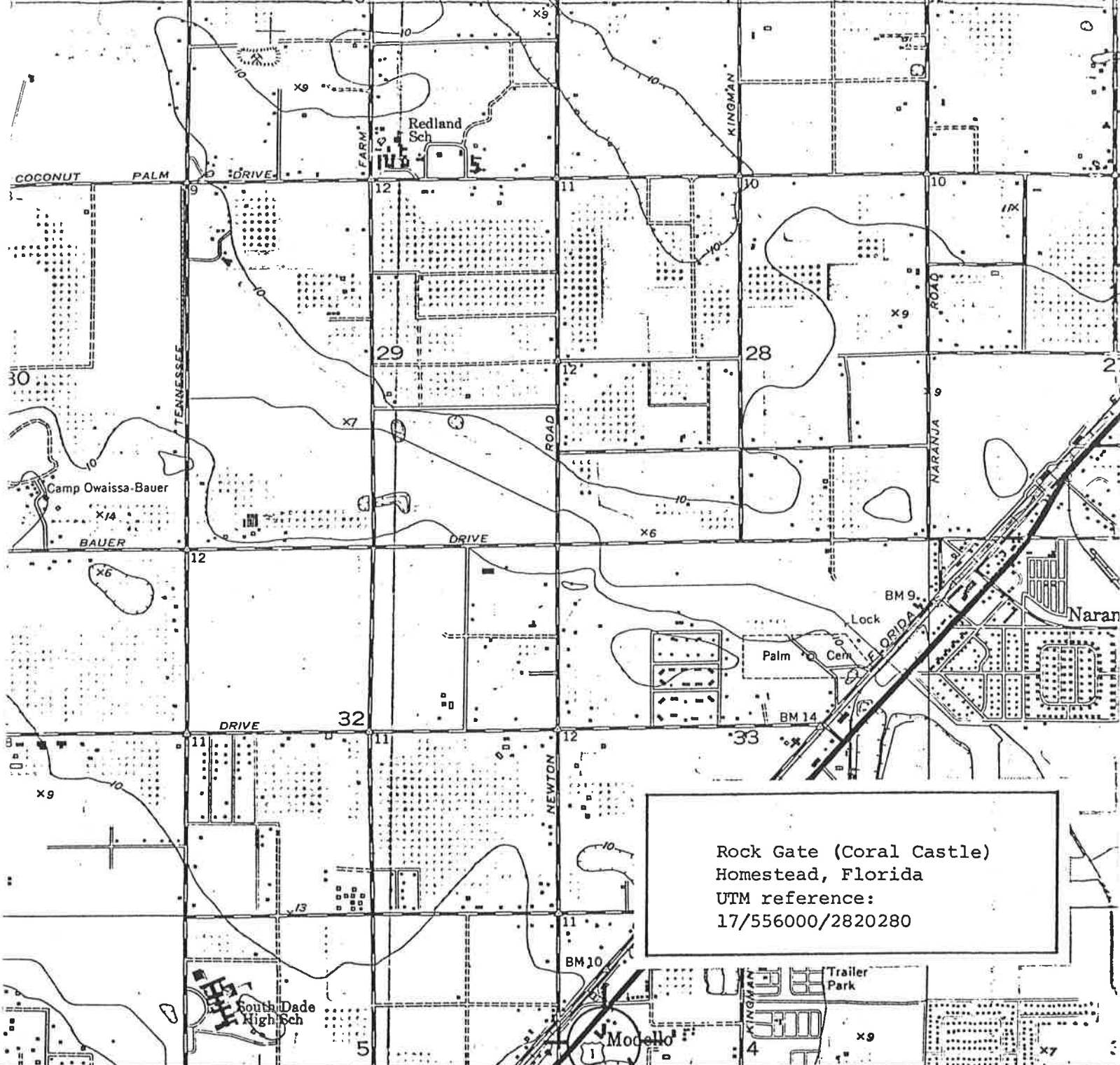
date

Keeper of the National Register

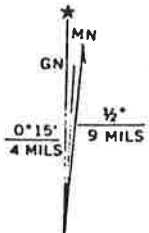
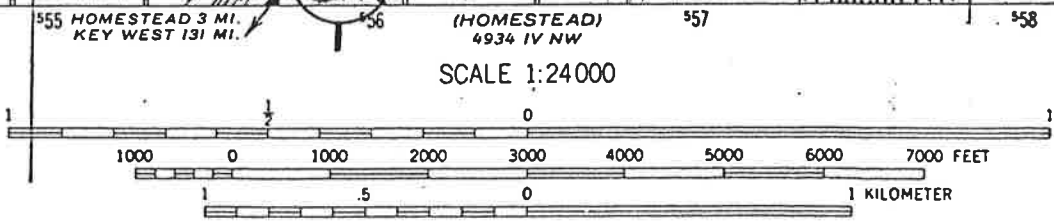
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Rock Gate (Coral Castle)
 Homestead, Florida
 UTM reference:
 17/556000/2820280



GRID AND 1969 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DIRECTION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Map compiled by the Geological
 Survey in cooperation with State of Florida
 Aerial photographs taken 1969
 Not field checked
 Dashed lines indicate extension of urban areas

Goulds

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

NOMINATION PROPOSAL - FLORIDA

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

DIVISION OF ARCHIVES, HISTORY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT - FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Rock Gate (Coral Castle)

AND/OR COMMON

Ed's Place

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

28655 South Federal Highway

CITY, TOWN

Homestead

STATE

Florida

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY
Dade

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT

___ BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

___ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___ PUBLIC

PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

N/A

STATUS

OCCUPIED

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

___ COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

___ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

PARK

___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

OTHER: Tourist

attraction

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Irving Barr

STREET & NUMBER

180 East Pearson

CITY, TOWN

Chicago ___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

ZIP CODE

60611

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dade County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

73 West Flagler Street

CITY, TOWN

Miami

STATE

Florida

ZIP CODE

33130

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Dade County Historic Survey

DATE

August, 1981

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Mgmt.

CITY, TOWN

Tallahassee

STATE

Florida

CONTINUATION SHEET

CONTINUATION SHEET I:

The living quarters/workshop structure that Edward Leedskalnin rebuilt at Rock Gate was larger in scale than that at his former location. It also differs in that this castellated tower structure is truly two-storied. Leedskalnin used the ground floor of the structure as his workshop, and the upper story as his dwelling. At Florida City, Leedskalnin's living quarters were also located on the second story of a turret-like structure. The first story of this earlier building, however, was unusable space as a result of the unusually thick walls. Leedskalnin's one-story workshop was attached to his living quarters. At Rock Gate, Leedskalnin improved upon the design of this dual use structure, making maximum use of space.

Leedskalnin brought to Rock Gate the free-standing sculptures that he had created at Florida City. In addition, he produced a few more, primarily of a practical nature or relating to his interest in astronomy. Leedskalnin put all of these new oolitic limestone constructions in his sculpture garden. The only sculpture that Leedskalnin left at Florida City was an entrance gate to Ed's Place, incised with a "10¢" admission charge. Leedskalnin probably did not see any use for this sculpture, since at Rock Gate, the admission charge was increased to twenty-five cents.

The sculptures at Rock Gate, now known as Coral Castle, are arranged in thematic groupings. Starting at the main entrance door and proceeding clockwise, the following is a description of Edward Leedskalnin's world:

- Entrance Door is metal and on its surface the earth's path around the sun is drawn. Above the door's lintel is a bell, taken from a Model T Ford.
- Three Ton Gate is located in front of the metal entrance door. The gate is triangular in shape and weighs 6,000 pounds. Balanced on the axle of a Model T Ford, from the ground, the gate easily revolves.
- Reading Chairs are three in number and are arranged in a manner that takes advantage of appropriate reading light, according to the time of day. They weigh 4,00 pounds each and are able to rock.
- Florida Table is a sculpture proportionately shaped in the form of the State of Florida. A depression in the table, that was meant to be used as either a finger bowl or a punch bowl, represents Lake Okeechobee. Twelve chairs, each weighing 1,000 pounds, are placed around the table. Leedskalnin envisioned their use for meetings of the Governor and his cabinet.
- Polaris Telescope is made up of two parts. An upright, oolitic limestone slab, weighing 40,000 pounds and standing 25 feet tall, is located just outside of Coral Castle's perimeter wall. A circular

CONTINUATION SHEET

CONTINUATION SHEET II:

hole carved at the upper end of this slab is intersected by two cross wires. These wires line up with a smaller hole drilled into the perimeter wall itself. Through this ingenious apparatus, the North Star can be observed.

- Moon Fountain consists of three pieces. It represents the moon's phases through its monthly cycle. The waxing moon is located to the left of the fountain, the waning moon to the right. Each of these quarter moons weigh 36,000 pounds. The fountain itself represents the full moon and weighs 46,000 pounds. The moon fountain can be filled with water and be used as a pond, inhabited by fish and plants.
- Throne Room is made up of quite a few components. The "room" includes four thrones - a large one (for Leedskalnin), a medium one (for his "Sweet Sixteen"), a small one (for a child) and, even an "uncomfortable" one (for Leedskalnin's mother-in-law). In this area, there is also a "mad" rocker made of a single block of rock. The rocker seats two, but the seats do not face each other. The rocker is supposed to be used when a couple is quarrelling. The Throne Room also contains a love seat and a table for when the couple reconciles.
- Planets form part of Coral Castle's perimeter wall, located behind the Throne Room. There is a sculpture of Mars weighing 36,00 pounds, a sculpture of Saturn also weighing 36,000 pounds, and, a moon crescent, weighing 46,000 pounds. The Nine Ton Gate described previously, is situated on the wall adjacent to the planets.
- Bedroom includes an entire suite of rock furniture. There are a couple of twin beds, a couple of children's beds, a 155 pound rocking cradle, and, an 85 pound child's rocking chair.
- Obelisk is placed at the far corner of the bedroom. The obelisk stands 40 feet high and weighs 57,000 pounds. Its apex is carved in the shape of a six pointed star on top of which is a weather vane. The obelisk is inscribed: "Made in 1928. Moved in 1939. Born 1887. Latvia, E.L."
- Repentance Corner is located next to the bedroom. This is a rock contraption that Leedskalnin would have used to punish his wife or children. A person's head would be inserted into a vertical slit perforated in a rock slab, the head would then be lowered all the way to the ground where it would be secured by a wooden wedge. A bench, where Leedskalnin could sit to talk to the wrongdoers is also provided.
- Barbecue lies behind the Repentance Corner. This is another of Leedskalnin's ingenious inventions. The barbecue pit itself is made of oolitic limestone. The cooking portion of the barbecue is fashioned from old car parts and works as a pressure cooker.

CONTINUATION SHEET

CONTINUATION SHEET III:

- Feast of Love Table is situated across from the barbecue pit and is heart-shaped. The table features a heart-shaped indentation at its center, used as a vase for a bouquet of flowers. The table weighs 5,000 pounds and is surrounded by benches.
- Children's Playground is based on the theme of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." This area includes several beds and chairs, and, even a porridge bowl, as in the children's story. In the same area, there is a "tree table," a piece of oolitic limestone in which a tree was growing, found by Leedskalnin. The palm tree presently planted in the table is not the original plant.
- First Rocking Chair is placed on a raised platform. It was Leedskalnin's first attempt at constructing a rocking chair and is displayed prominently, as a showpiece.
- Sundial is another of Leedskalnin's astronomical creations. The sundial functions accurately, within one or two minutes. It is only marked from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., what Leedskalnin believed working hours should be. The sundial also serves to mark the seasons.
- Sun Coach is a large (8 feet in diameter), circular rock which rotates in order to make use of the best sun for tanning. The coach is provided with three rock pillows.
- Well is opened by a rolling stone wheel gate. At the bottom of several steps there is room to sit to cool off or space to store food. It was Leedskalnin's source of water.
- Tub is located near the well, used by Leedskalnin for bathing. It is lined in mortar to prevent water from seeping out of the porous rock material. Leedskalnin would fill the tub with water, let the water stand to heat by the sun, and, once warm, Leedskalnin would take his bath. Next to the tub, Leedskalnin placed a mirror which is made of black slate covered by water, to provide a reflective surface.
- Camera Stand is located at the center of the Coral Castle compound. The stand functions as a tripod from which photographs of different vistas of Coral Castle can be taken.
- Perimeter Wall surrounds the entire Coral Castle complex. Each of the limestone blocks that make up the wall is 8 feet high, 4 feet wide, 3 feet thick, and, weigh several tons.
- Pits are located outside of the perimeter wall, as visible evidence of the rock quarries from which Leedskalnin obtained his raw material.

CONTINUATION SHEET

CONTINUATION SHEET IV:

In order to function as a tourist attraction, several additions and improvements have been made at the Coral Castle site. Outside the perimeter wall is a modern limestone structure which houses the gift shop and administrative offices of Coral Castle. The building was erected in 1982, replacing a previous wooden structure that had been used for the same purposes. It is unobtrusive in design and its location does not visually disrupt the view of Coral Castle. Adjacent to this functional building is a parking lot, recently repaved. Within the perimeter wall, in the sculpture garden, the owner and the manager of Coral Castle are currently planning the addition of lights. They would like to make greater use of Coral Castle at night, thus necessitating better lighting. The lights being proposed for installation are modern and unobtrusive in design and would be placed at inconspicuous spots. As a locally designated site, these additions and improvements made to Coral Castle since 1981, have been reviewed and approved by Dade County's Historic Preservation Board. Unimproved grounds, preserved as green space, surround Coral Castle.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES CONTINUATION SHEETS

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

USGS Goulds

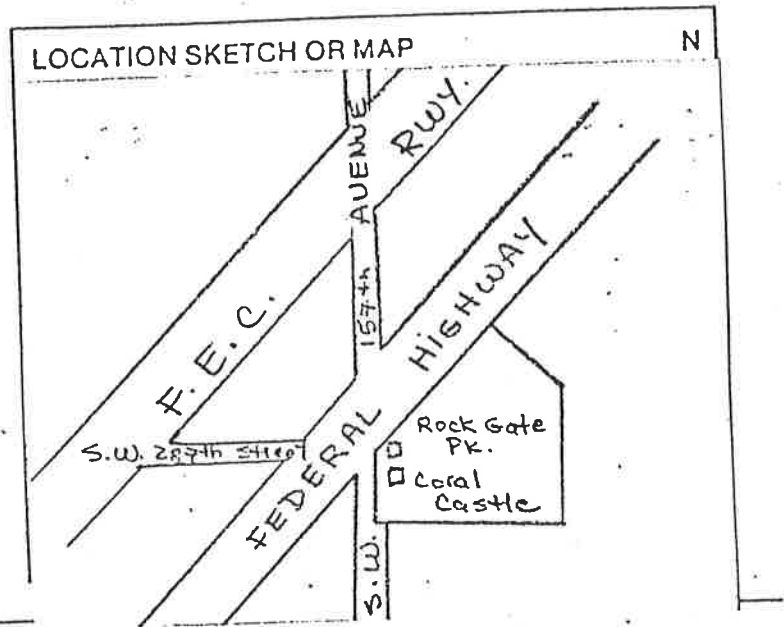
Site Size (Approx. Acreage of Property):

3 acres

UTM Coordinates:

1, 7 | 15, 5, 6 | 0, 0, 0 | 2, 8 | 2, 0 | 2, 8, 0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

Township	Range	Section
57	39	4



VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning 250' N of SW corner of SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of NW 1/4 continue N 145 ft NELY ALG SELY R/W/L SR #5.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Maria T. Tenkin

December, 1983
DATE

ORGANIZATION

Dade County Historic Preservation Division

TELEPHONE

STREET & NUMBER

90 S.W. 8th Street, Suite 309

305 579 2553

STATE

ZIP CODE

CITY OR TOWN

Miami

Florida

33130

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Tourist attraction
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1920s - 1930s BUILDER/ARCHITECT Edward Leedskalnin

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Coral Castle is a spectacular rock sculpture garden built at the southern tip of Dade County by the creative imagination of a man obsessed by love. The complex, consisting of sculpted monolithic stones weighing up to 30 tons, was built during the 1920's and 1930's by a single individual, Edward Leedskalnin, with the aid of simple tools and a thorough understanding of ancient engineering principles. The nationally recognized petrified home, surrounded by and set under the stars, was the monument Mr. Leedskalnin dedicated to his lifetime passions: hard work, astronomic and engineering experimentation, and his lost love.

TEXT SUPPORTING SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The widely renown open-air monument known as Coral Castle is the product of a single individual, Edward Leedskalnin. Coral Castle is comprised of a two-story tower, originally used as a workshop and living quarters, and a sculpture garden of massive oolitic limestone formations, all of which is enclosed within an eight foot high, three foot thick wall. The Coral Castle complex is a testament to the talents of its builder in its uniqueness of design and construction.

Edward Leedskalnin was born in Metei, Latvia, one of the Baltic countries, in 1887.¹ By the age of 26, he was engaged to Agnes Scuff² who was ten years his junior. Shortly before Agnes and Edward were to be married, the wedding was called off by the bride. Agnes' reason for not wanting to marry Edward was that she had come to realize that he was too old for her. Edward believed that Agnes' real reason was the he was poor. Dejected, Edward Leedskalnin emigrated to Canada, believing that in the New World, the land of opportunity, he could become successful and wealthy and win back Agnes' admiration and love. In pursuit of this goal, Leedskalnin moved frequently, working at a variety of jobs. After Canada, Leedskalnin moved to the state of Washington to work in a lumber camp. There, his health, which had always been of a delicate nature, began to deteriorate. A doctor recommended that Leedskalnin move to a warmer state, either California or Florida. Leedskalnin chose San Francisco, a chilly city, (See Continuation Sheet I)

CONTINUATION SHEET

CONTINUATION SHEET I:

where his health continued to grow worse. However, in San Francisco, Leedskalnin met a rancher who promised to pay his fare to south Florida in exchange for helping him with a cattle drive to Texas. Leedskalnin accepted the offer.

Edward Leedskalnin arrived in Florida City in the early 1920's. Although he was a shy man, he soon befriended Ruben and Francis Moser who took him in while he regained his health. In 1923, the Mosers sold Leedskalnin an acre of land located southwest of Florida City for \$12.00.³ The ground on the property was composed of oolitic limestone popularly known as coral rock. There, Ed Leedskalnin began what was to become his life's work and obsession.

At the Florida City property, Edward Leedskalnin first built a simple wood shed as his home and then proceeded to make his rock creations. Much myth and folklore surround Leedskalnin's work at what came to be known as "Ed's Place." Unaided, Edward Leedskalnin quarried, sculpted and erected mammoth pieces of oolitic limestone rock, most weighing several tons. The sculptures were an enigma, further compounded by Leedskalnin's secretive ways of working alone and at night.

Leedskalnin's rock sculptures can be classified into two categories: domestic and astronomical. Both subjects are central preoccupations of Leedskalnin's life. The domestic sculptures relate to Leedskalnin's yearning for Agnes, his "Sweet Sixteen." They include household furniture such as tables, chairs and couches, arranged in domestic settings - a dining room, a sitting room, and even a bedroom. These sculptures demonstrate Leedskalnin's desire for a family life, a desire which he was never able to fulfill for he remained single and led a solitary life. Leedskalnin's astronomical sculptures include monoliths of Saturn, Mars and the waxing and waning moon. These sculptures reflect Leedskalnin's interest in the scientific world, particularly in the fields of astronomy, physics, and engineering.

Local residents and neighbors wondered how Leedskalnin was able to build and set upright the rock formations which continued to appear on his property. Leedskalnin always gave the same reply to these queries. He explained that he accomplished the work through his comprehension of the methods used by the pyramid builders, the practical knowledge of the laws of leverage and weight. The tools used by Leedskalnin in quarrying and sculpting the coral rock were fashioned from old car parts. As evidence, Leedskalnin's primitive tools are on display at Coral Castle with a note explaining how with "an uncanny knowledge of the laws of leverage and balance, engineering and sculpture, and with the aid of simple tools such as metal fall (block and tackle), rollers, jacks, wedges, slings, cables, sledges, chisels, and above all infinite patience and tremendous imagination," Leedskalnin was able to create the unique rock sculptures.

CONTINUATION SHEET

CONTINUATION SHEET II:

The public, however, was not satisfied with this ordinary account of Leedskalnin's construction methods. Many theories evolved as to how Leedskalnin was able to execute his rock works. Some claimed that Leedskalnin had received aid from extraterrestrials, others claimed that Leedskalnin had discovered the secrets of gravitational force enabling him to render the mammoth rocks weightless.

Leedskalnin was a thrifty and frugal man, subsisting on the bare essentials. His diet consisted of vegetables and fruit which he grew on his property. Occasionally, he would eat a rabbit which he had trapped. From scrap and junk piles, Leedskalnin would salvage waste materials and manufacture them into utilitarian objects. It is said that Leedskalnin also received some income from dividends of stocks he had purchased in California. When "Ed's Place" began drawing attention and receiving publicity, Leedskalnin decided to take advantage of the commercial angle of his obsession, conducting tours for a small fee, thus, augmenting his earnings.

In 1936, Leedskalnin published a booklet entitled "A Book In Every Home." It deals with three subjects: Ed's Sweet Sixteen, Domestic and Political Views. In 1945, he published two scientific treatises. One, entitled "Magnetic Current," is about the scientific principles of magnets and electricity. The other, entitled "Mineral, Vegetable and Animal Life," is about a perpetual motion apparatus. Although Leedskalnin had only a fourth grade education, his publications are knowledgeable and well written. Alone, he had taught himself the practical laws of nature which he readily applied to the creation of his oolitic limestone constructions. The sale of the publications constituted another source of income.

In 1937, Edward Leedskalnin decided to move. Several reasons have been given for this sudden change, after being established in one area for so long. One reason given is that Leedskalnin had depleted his coral rock supply. Another reason that is advanced is that Leedskalnin was unhappy about encroaching development. His desire to move was further precipitated by a violent incident in which Leedskalnin was mugged, based on rumors that his life savings were hidden somewhere on the grounds of "Ed's Place." Perhaps, Leedskalnin's move can be attributed to practical considerations. Leedskalnin's subsequent actions seem to indicate that he wanted to capitalize on "Ed's Place" which had by this time become a popular and successful operation.

Leedskalnin purchased a ten acre tract on South Federal Highway (U.S. 1)⁴ and announced that he would be moving there and taking his sculptures with him. He sought the aid of an area resident, Bob Biggers, to accomplish the awesome task. All Edward Leedskalnin wanted from Mr. Biggers, however, was the use of his truck. The move to the new site was done over and extended

CONTINUATION SHEET III:

CONTINUATION SHEET

period of time, but it was completed by Leedskalnin without any assistance. As with the construction of the coral rock monuments, Leedskalnin worked alone and at night loading and unloading Biggers' truck.

At the new location, Edward Leedskalnin recreated his Florida City sculpture garden, spreading it out upon approximately three acres of land. Leedskalnin did not leave any of the free-standing sculptures at the Florida City location, except for an upright slab topped by a carving of a six pointed star. This monolith was used as an admission gate and on its face the words, "Adm. 10¢ Drop Below," are incised. Leedskalnin probably reasoned that he had no further use for this gate since at "Rock Gate," what he named his new home, Leedskalnin increased the admission price to twenty-five cents. The shy reclusive man took residence on the only artery connecting the South Florida mainland with the Florida Keys. Drivers could now see him reclining on his sculpted crescent moon, set atop the perimeter wall, waving to passersby. Visitors were attracted, and Ed seemed to like the attention.

Leedskalnin did not dismantle the perimeter wall at "Ed's Place," nor, his two-story living quarters and workshop. These more permanent structures he rebuilt from rock quarried on his new premises. Although abandoned and much overgrown, evidence of the wall and two-story structure still remains at the Florida City site.⁵

At Rock Gate, Leedskalnin continued the same lifestyle he had set for himself at Florida City. He made few additions to his collection of rock sculptures, dedicating most of his time to scientific experimentation. The few added creations were either of a practical nature or were related to his astronomical interests. Leedskalnin carved a bathtub out of coral rock and lined it with mortar so the water would not seep out of the porous material. Near the bathtub, he dug a well, his water source. Leedskalnin also created a coral rock barbecue which functioned like a pressure cooker. His new astronomical works include a sundial, accurate within a minute, and a Polaris telescope.

Rock Gate's perimeter wall was unlike that of Ed's Place in that it included a nine ton moveable gate. This gate is considered to be one of Leedskalnin's most remarkable projects. This oolitic limestone "door" measures 81 inches in width, 92 inches in height and 21 inches in thickness. Its single pivotal point operates through a central vertical shaft with an automobile axle that connects the stone slab to the ground and the wall lintel overhead. This gate is so well balanced that it can be pushed open with one finger. The gate fits within one-quarter inch of the perimeter wall on both sides.

CONTINUATION SHEET

CONTINUATION SHEET IV:

On December 4, 1951, Leedskalnin felt ill. He wrote a note stating, "Going to the hospital," and left it at the entrance of his home. Three days later, at the age of sixty-four, Edward Leedskalnin died of stomach cancer at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

Leedskalnin left no will. His only known survivor, a nephew, was not interested in the property. In 1953, Julius Levin, a Chicago businessman, purchased Rock Gate through probate court. Levin saw the tremendous potential of the property as a tourist attraction and shortly thereafter opened it to the public as Coral Castle.

Speculative theories relating to Leedskalnin's methods of construction and to his motives for constructing the rock wonderland continued to proliferate.⁶ Levin, who felt that these outrageous interpretations would tarnish Leedskalnin's reputation and discredit his lifework, took action. In 1955, he collected over 250 affidavits from Homestead area residents who had been acquainted with Edward Leedskalnin. The affiants testified that he/she "personally knew the late Edward Leedskalnin, and from actual knowledge can attest to the fact that the said Edward Leedskalnin began the construction of Rock Gate at a location in Florida City, Florida, on or about the year 1921, and subsequently moved some of the objects to its present location and continued the work until his death in December 1951; that he cut from the ground, moved and carved the huge weights or coral rock into the art creation known as Rock Gate without the aid of any individual or individuals; with simple hand tools; observed by the affiant on visits to Rock Gate while Edward Leedskalnin was alive, and in the process of constructing Rock Gate; and that the said Edward Leedskalnin was unmarried and lived alone on the premises during the period of the construction of Rock Gate and until his death."

Although Julius Levin never met Leedskalnin and could not ascertain Leedskalnin's motives or methodology, he sincerely believes the words written by Leedskalnin on a sign that appears at the entrance to Coral Castle. It simply states, "You Will Be Seeing Unusual Accomplishment." Today, Coral Castle continues to operate as a tourist attraction. Its present owner, Irving Barr, is a cousin of Julius Levin. In January, 1982, the Dade County Historic Preservation Board designated Coral Castle a local historic landmark, thus recognizing the magnificent and unique engineering and artistic accomplishments of its creator, Edward Leedskalnin.

CONTINUATION SHEET

FOOTNOTES:

¹Inscription incised on obelisk in Coral Castle's sculpture garden.

²Agnes' last name also appears in the literature of Coral Castle as "Skuvst."

³Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Book 1546, p. 8.

⁴Dade County, FL. Recorder's Office, Deed Book 1802, p. 22

⁵"Ed's Place" at Florida City was located at 18900 S.W. 352nd Street.

⁶Fred Graham, "A Monumental Feat Accomplished by One Man," and Jim Moseley, Book of Saucer News, Saucerian Publications, 1967.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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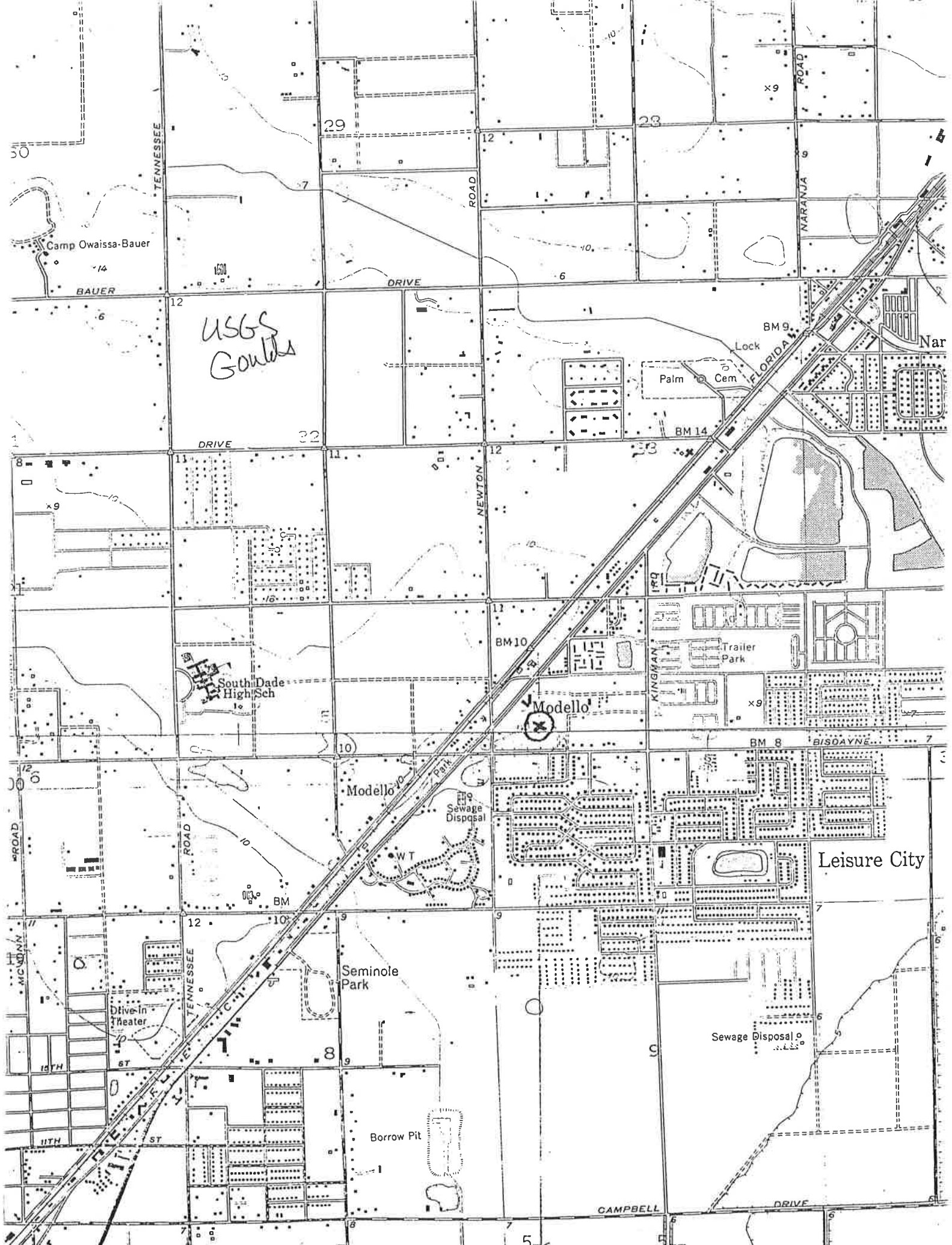
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USGS
Goulbs

DRIVE 32

South Dade
High Sch

Modello

Modello

Leisure City

Seminole
Park

Drive-in
Theater

Borrow Pit

Sewage Disposal

CAMPBELL

DRIVE

56

57

