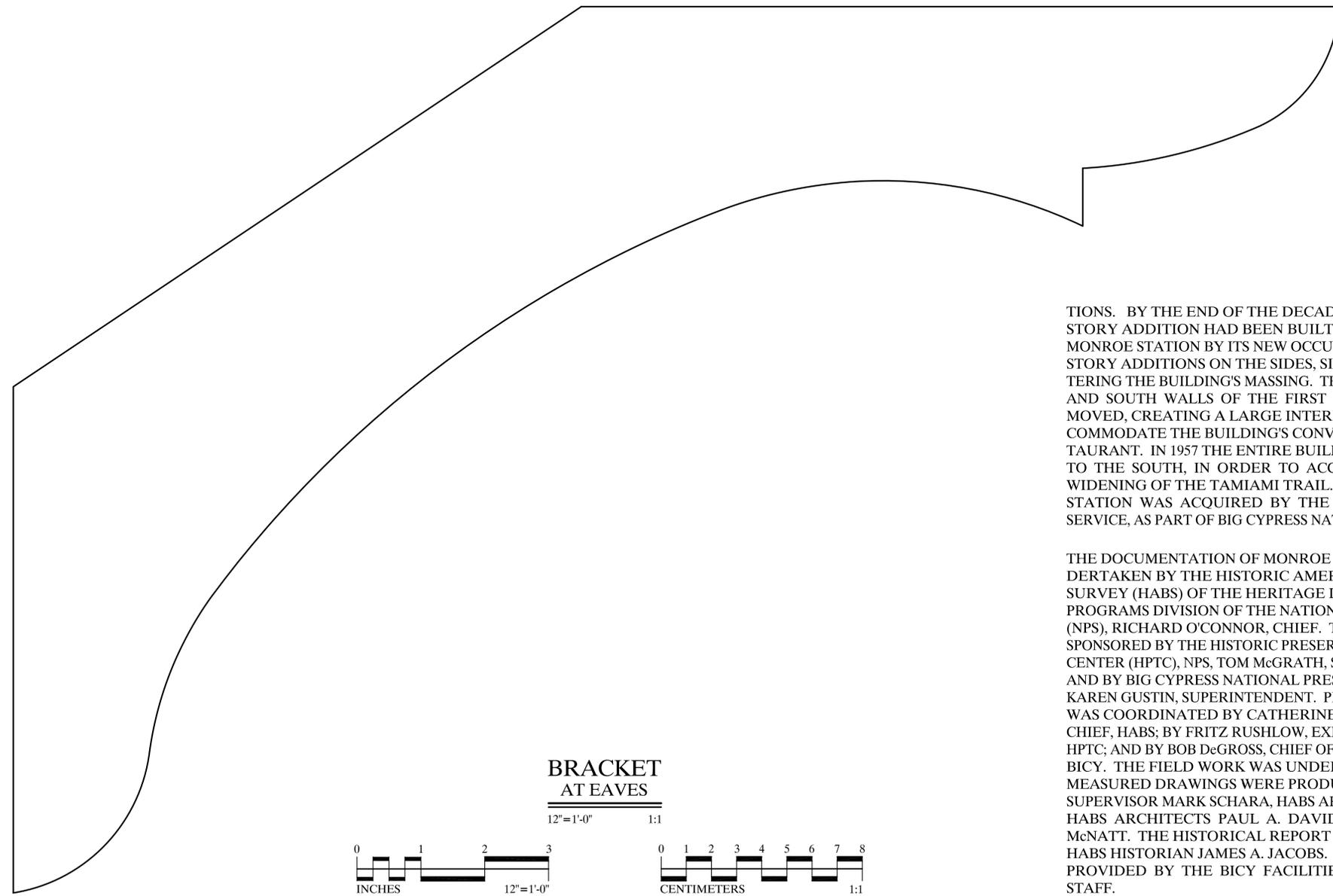


MONROE STATION

MONROE STATION WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1928 AS A POLICE STATION AND MOTORIST REST STOP, PROVIDING AMENITIES TO TRAVELERS ALONG AN UNDEVELOPED STRETCH OF THE TAMiami TRAIL IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA. CONSTRUCTION OF THE HIGHWAY, ONE OF THE MAJOR ROAD BUILDING EFFORTS OF THE ERA, WAS BEGUN IN 1915. INTENDED TO CONNECT TAMPA ON FLORIDA'S WEST COAST WITH MIAMI ON THE STATE'S EAST COAST, THE PROJECT RAN INTO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AS IT ADVANCED EAST OF NAPLES AND ENCOUNTERED THE ARDUOUS TASK OF CONSTRUCTION THROUGH THE EVERGLADES. BARRON GIFT COLLIER (1873-1939), A DEVELOPER AND MAJOR PROPERTY OWNER IN EASTERN LEE COUNTY, PERSUADED THE STATE LEGISLATURE IN 1923 TO CREATE A NEW COUNTY CONSISTING LARGELY OF HIS LAND HOLDINGS, AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE COLLIER COMPANY ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTY'S SEGMENT OF THE TAMiami TRAIL. FOLLOWING THE HIGHWAY'S DEDICATION IN 1928, IT SOON BECAME APPARENT THAT THE LACK OF AMENITIES ALONG THE DESOLATE, UNINHABITED STRETCH OF ROAD THROUGH THE EVERGLADES WAS PROBLEMATIC FOR MOTORISTS. THUS BY NOVEMBER 1928 THE COMPANY HAD BUILT SIX IDENTICAL REST STOPS, AT APPROXIMATE TEN-MILE INTERVALS, PROVIDING SERVICES TO MOTORISTS AND HOUSING THE COLLIER COUNTY SOUTHWEST [FLORIDA] MOUNTED POLICE, WHICH PATROLLED THE TAMiami TRAIL ON MOTORCYCLES.

MONROE STATION WAS BUILT OF WOOD BALLOON-FRAME CONSTRUCTION, SHEATHED ON THE EXTERIOR WITH HORIZONTAL WEATHERBOARDS. AS ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED, THE BUILDING CONSISTED OF A TWO-STORY HIPPED-ROOF RECTANGULAR BLOCK, APPROXIMATELY 12' x 24' IN PLAN, WITH A ONE-STORY SHED ACROSS THE BACK. A FLAT-ROOFED CANOPY ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING, WIDE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE AN AUTOMOBILE, PROTECTED THE GAS PUMP. THE FIRST FLOOR ORIGINALLY HOUSED A SMALL STORE AND REST ROOMS. THE SECOND FLOOR CONTAINED A TWO-ROOM APARTMENT FOR THE HIGHWAY PATROLMAN AND HIS FAMILY.

BY THE MID-1930s, THE STATE OF FLORIDA HAD ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PATROLLING THE STATE'S HIGHWAYS, AND THE MOUNTED POLICE FORCE WAS DISBANDED. CONCURRENTLY, WITH THE ONSET OF THE DEPRESSION, THE COLLIER COMPANY WAS EXPERIENCING SERIOUS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES, FORCING IT TO LEASE, SELL, OR CLOSE THE SIX TAMiami TRAIL STA-



TIONS. BY THE END OF THE DECADE, A LARGE TWO-STORY ADDITION HAD BEEN BUILT TO THE REAR OF MONROE STATION BY ITS NEW OCCUPANTS, WITH ONE-STORY ADDITIONS ON THE SIDES, SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERING THE BUILDING'S MASSING. THE ORIGINAL EAST AND SOUTH WALLS OF THE FIRST STORY WERE REMOVED, CREATING A LARGE INTERIOR SPACE TO ACCOMMODATE THE BUILDING'S CONVERSION TO A RESTAURANT. IN 1957 THE ENTIRE BUILDING WAS MOVED TO THE SOUTH, IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE WIDENING OF THE TAMiami TRAIL. IN 1987 MONROE STATION WAS ACQUIRED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, AS PART OF BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE.

THE DOCUMENTATION OF MONROE STATION WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY (HABS) OF THE HERITAGE DOCUMENTATION PROGRAMS DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS), RICHARD O'CONNOR, CHIEF. THE PROJECT WAS SPONSORED BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRAINING CENTER (HPTC), NPS, TOM McGRATH, SUPERINTENDENT; AND BY BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE (BICY), NPS, KAREN GUSTIN, SUPERINTENDENT. PROJECT PLANNING WAS COORDINATED BY CATHERINE LAVOIE, ACTING CHIEF, HABS; BY FRITZ RUSHLOW, EXHIBITS SPECIALIST, HPTC; AND BY BOB DeGROSS, CHIEF OF INTERPRETATION, BICY. THE FIELD WORK WAS UNDERTAKEN AND THE MEASURED DRAWINGS WERE PRODUCED BY PROJECT SUPERVISOR MARK SCHARA, HABS ARCHITECT; AND BY HABS ARCHITECTS PAUL A. DAVIDSON AND JASON McNATT. THE HISTORICAL REPORT WAS WRITTEN BY HABS HISTORIAN JAMES A. JACOBS. ASSISTANCE WAS PROVIDED BY THE BICY FACILITIES MAINTENANCE STAFF.

MONROE STATION
50910 TAMiami TRAIL EAST

BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE

DRAWN BY: PAUL A. DAVIDSON | MARK SCHARA
MONROE STATION PROJECT, 2007
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FLORIDA
COLLIER COUNTY

FL-544

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