

An Archaeological Survey
of the Lower Keys
Monroe County, Florida

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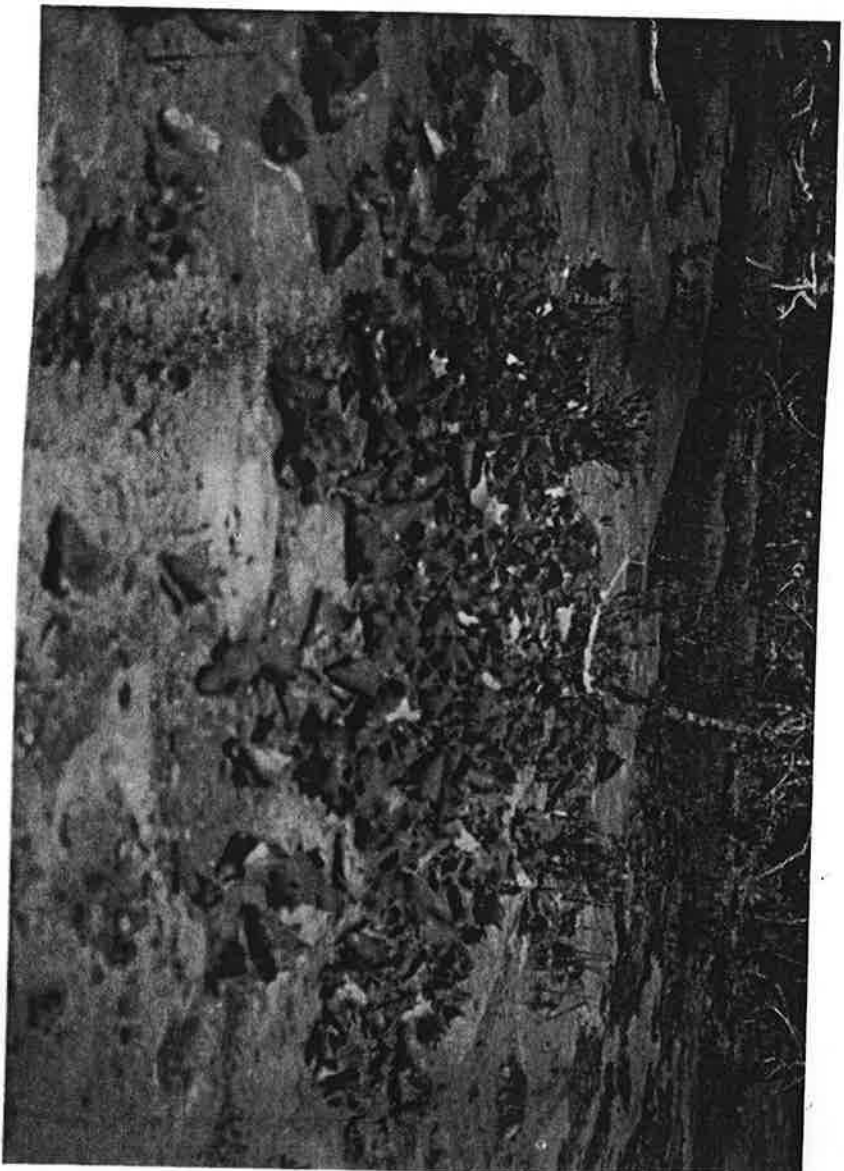
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Conducted by
The Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc.

AHC Technical Report #19

September, 1990

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Pivotal to this project's completion was the Florida Keys Land and Sea Trust. Their active role in supporting historic Preservation activities in the Keys made our job considerably easier. They acted as a conduit for information, encouraged collectors to donate archaeological collections to their new museum, arranged informant interviews, and even provided logistical support to access sites by boat. Trust director Chuck Olson deserves special recognition for his outstanding interest in this project.

Since much of the project area is managed by the United States Department of the Interior as National Preserves, it was only with their cooperation that access and data recording within those federal properties could be accomplished. A special permit issued to the AHC allowed for that access, and we thank Debbie Holle, Preserve Director of Big Pine Key National Deer Preserve for her support.

Housing was provided by Beth Read, a board director of the

AHC, who allowed our survey crew to use her family's vacation home as a project base.

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INTRODUCTION

The Florida Keys archaeological survey was conducted as part of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy's ongoing historic site survey of the Florida Keys. The project began in 1985 when the first phase of the survey was conducted on Key Largo and resulted in the assessment of 46 archaeological and architectural sites (Carr 1985). The second phase, the Middle Keys survey, was conducted from February through November of 1987 (Carr et. al 1988) and resulted in an additional 69 sites assessed. This report describes the AHC survey of the Lower Keys which was initiated in December, 1989, and continued through August, 1990. A total of 58 archaeological and historic sites were assessed and are described in this document. Unlike the previous two work phases, architectural sites were not a principal focus of this study, although several structures were recorded.

The primary goal of the AHC survey is to provide a comprehensive inventory of historic and archaeological sites of the Florida Keys. These assessments have provided site forms to the State of Florida Master Site file and resulted in technical reports available to Monroe County and State planners. This expanded site data base and a growing awareness of the high population of historic sites in the Florida Keys should help planners make informed decisions for historic site management and project reviews.

The project's second goal is to contribute towards a data base for scholars and students of history and archaeology to better assess Florida Keys prehistoric and historic sites in relation to cultural affinities, settlement patterns, and ecological relationships. Although subsurface testing and the recovery of artifacts were limited during this study, sufficient information on site types, locations, and site chronology was interpreted and recorded to stimulate additional studies on prehistoric and historic settlement and adaptation in the Keys.

The geographic scope of work for this project was from Big Pine Key southward to Stock Island. The Island of Key West was not included in this study because of the extensive development there. An archaeological survey of Key West will be costly and time consuming, and need a high degree of public interaction to complete. A Key West survey will hopefully be conducted by the AHC within the next several years.

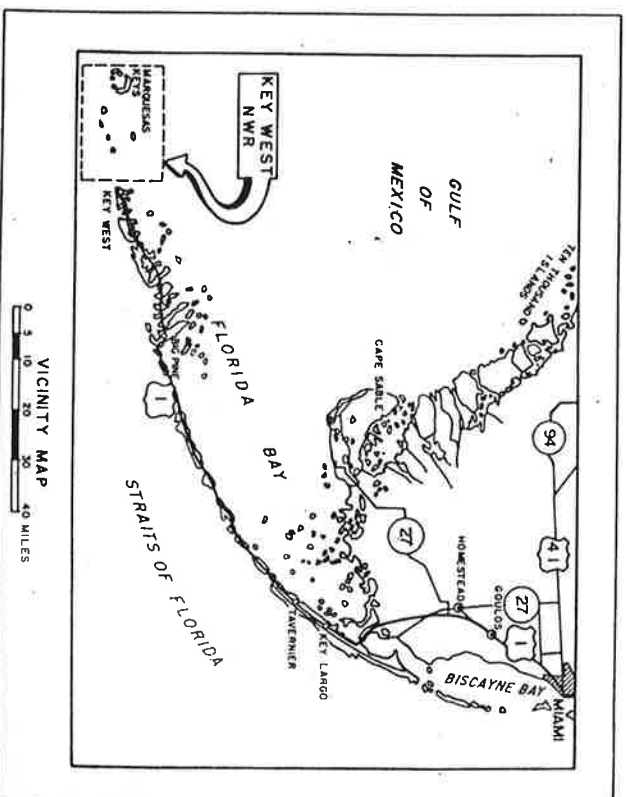


Figure 1.
Project Area Map of the
Florida Keys.