

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property _____

County and State _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable) _____

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100003522

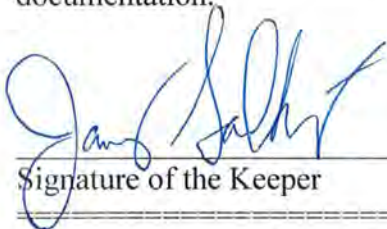
Date Listed: 3/20/2019

Property Name: Cycadia Cemetery

County: Pinellas

State: FL

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

3-20-2019
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 3/8: Level of Significance

The level of significance for the Cycadia Cemetery is State and Local. National significance is not justified.

The significance of the cemetery and its status as a Traditional Cultural Place is directly tied to the Tarpon Springs district, which was recognized at the state level of significance. Even if this was the sole example in the US, that in and of itself is not justification. The cemetery serves the Greek community of Florida and is recognized at the state and local levels.

The Florida State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

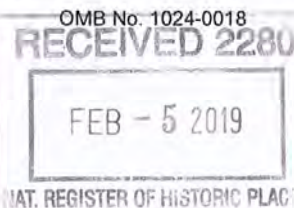
DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

SG 3522



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 Cycadia Cemetery

other names/site number FMSF# PI11594

2. Location

street & number 1105 E. Tarpon Ave. ☐ not for publication

city or town Tarpon Springs ☐ 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.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

SHHO 1/31/19
Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet 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

3-20-2019

Cycadia Cemetery
Name of Property

Pinellas Co., FL
County and State

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	
0	3	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	3	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY: Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY: Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other grave markers: granite, marble, concrete, wood

stainless steel, bronze, ceramic

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 HISTORY: European (Greek)

ART: Greek-American funerary monuments

Period of Significance

1905-present

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder****Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository

Cycadia Cemetery
Name of Property

Pinellas Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property appx. 30

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	2	9	2	3	2	3	1	1	5	0	3	7
Zone			Easting			Northing									
2	1	7	3	2	9	5	2	0	3	1	1	5	0	3	3

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

☐ 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
organization City of Tarpon Springs date 6/20/2018
street & number 324 E. Pine St. telephone 727-916-0235
city or town Tarpon Springs state FL zip code 34689

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 City of Tarpon Springs
street & number 324 E Pine St. telephone 727-938-3711
city or town Tarpon Springs state FL zip code 34689

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Cycadia Cemetery

Name of Property

Pinellas County, Florida

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n/a

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Summary Description

Cycadia Cemetery is located in Tarpon Springs, Pinellas County, Florida. The entrance at 1105 East Tarpon Avenue (SR-582) is approximately 1000 feet east of US-19. It is bounded by East Tarpon Avenue to the south, Jasmine Road to the east, and Cemetery Road to the west. It was formally established in 1887 (the same year as the formal establishment of the town) by Viola Keeney Beekman and maintained by the Women's Town Improvement Association—though the earliest recorded burial dates to ca. 1872. Named Cycadia Cemetery for the cycad trees planted along the original road (Reeves 1999), management was later given to the Women's Club. They bought more land to the north in 1942 and to the south in 1946 to become its current size of thirty acres. The City of Tarpon Springs assumed management in late 1946. According to the most recent digital list of burials (2016), Cycadia had 7322 gravesites with identified occupants, of which at least 3166 or 43% were of Greek heritage.¹ The characteristics that distinguish Cycadia from other cemeteries, local, regional, or national, are an extensive area containing grave markers with vernacular Greek American stylistic elements, as well as the associated Greek funerary customs performed in the cemetery—and these retain historic and cultural integrity. The first recorded Greek burial was in 1906, and they continue into the present.

Narrative Description

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.

Tarpon Springs' 140 acre Greektown Historic District is a traditional cultural property that preserves a strong ethnic and maritime character. 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. Although not contiguous with Greektown, Cycadia Cemetery is an essential component of Greek American community life and is certainly part of the cultural complex centering in Greektown—especially the residential area called the Fish House and St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Moreover, until the mid-twentieth

¹The numerical assessment is based on observably Greek names. This is probably an undercount since it is likely that some early Greeks in the sponge industry may have been buried without permanent grave markers. Moreover, there are situations in which names do not reflect ethnic heritage: Greeks whose names were Anglicized names upon entry into the US (e.g., Peterson), women who married non-Greeks, and those whose fathers were not Greek but who functioned as part of the Greek community (e.g., Toth).

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Cycadia Cemetery

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n/a

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

century, funeral processions proceeded on foot from St. Nicholas to Cycadia Cemetery—now they traverse the mile or so by motorized vehicles.

Cycadia Cemetery is located on 30 acres within Tarpon Springs, with the main entrance at 1105 East Tarpon Avenue (SR-582), approximately 1000 feet east of US-19. It is bounded by East Tarpon Avenue to the south, Jasmine Road to the east, fencing to the north, and Cemetery Road to the west. Rose Hill Cemetery, an historic African American cemetery listed on the National Register, is located to the east across Jasmine Road.

Context: Greeks in Tarpon Springs and Cycadia Cemetery

The Greek presence in Cycadia Cemetery is in direct measure to their demographic standing (Frangos 155). By late 1905, about 500 Greek men arrived to work in the sponge industry—at a time when Tarpon Springs had only a few hundred permanent year-round residents. Within a couple years, 100 sponge boats were based in Tarpon Springs and up to 1,500 Greeks worked Florida waters, along with those in related maritime businesses, as well as sponge merchants, European buyers, and investors. Throughout the twentieth century Greeks continued to settle in Tarpon Springs, seeking better opportunities and escape from difficult political and economic conditions (Bucuvalas Greeks 8). The first recorded Greek burial was in 1906 (Mary Zardos), followed by two more in 1907. They continue into the present.

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. As Moskos posited,

With the thriving sponge industry as its basis, Tarpon Springs became more than a “Greektown” enclave; it became a Greek town in fact. From 1905 into World War II, Tarpon Springs had a majority Greek population, a situation without parallel in any other town in the United States. (Moskos 26)

Yet in many ways, Greeks remained largely socially separate from the Anglo-American population (Frantzis 120-121)—probably partially because of the cultural differences, but certainly also due to on-going discrimination.²

Several scholars have come up with numerical analyses that differ slightly. Anthropologist Russell Bernard believed that there were about 800 Greeks in Tarpon Springs by 1907—most of them male (Bernard 44). Guggenheim Fellow Louis Adamic included a chapter about Greeks in Tarpon Springs in his 1940 book about immigrants in America, *From Many Lands*. He believed that Greeks numbered over 2,500—constituting more than 50% of the total population at the time (Adamic 123).

Edwin Buxbaum conducted the most thorough study for his 1967 anthropology dissertation, *The Greek-American Group of Tarpon Springs, Florida: A Study of Ethnic Identification and Acculturation*. In it he posits that the Greeks were “the majority in many of the years from 1905-1940 a situation which has had no other equal in any other community in the United States.” (Buxbaum 42, his underlining) He noted that ...“the number of Greeks had increased to a point where they were definitely a majority. Because of their aggressiveness and

² The population figures given by scholars are especially interesting because they contrast with historical accounts written by Anglo-American residents (Pent, Kilgo, Stoughton) that stress the history of the Anglo-American community over that of the Greek community—an action not supported by the numbers.

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Cycadia Cemetery

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industry, they were soon to become the dominant group in the city and remain so for many years. Even the conductors on the trains which came to Tarpon Springs would announce the arrival as "Greektown-Tarpon Springs" (Buxbaum 41). Buxbaum wrote that in 1905 the population of 740 included 500 Greeks who constituted 67.6%; in 1930 (using the US census alone) Greeks were 42.2%; in 1940, 73.5%; in 1960, using the US census alone, they were estimated to be 44.3%; and in 1965, using only the Polk Directory, they were estimated at 37.5%. He also stated that in 1907 there were 800 spongers; by 1939, 1000 men sponged that, including their wives and children, the Greeks numbered about 3500. The federal census total population that year was 3402.

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 individuals. Although the town had lost part of its Greek population to the northern steel mills, there was a new stream of Greek retirees from the north as well as some came directly from Greece in search of better economic opportunities. These included some men from the islands who initially worked in the sponge and shrimp fleets, as well as many who simply worked in restaurants or other Greek establishments (Moskos 26). Today, the percentage is estimated at about 15% due to outmigration to surrounding areas for jobs, homes, education, or other personal reasons, as well as an influx of new residents.

It is important to note that the accuracy of census reports has always been contested.³ It is likely that the census undercounted Greeks in Tarpon Springs during the early twentieth century for several reasons:

- many men would have been away at sea;
- limited English language skills may have hindered responses;
- confusion and suspicion about the reason for questions;
- women of the era from remote Greek islands may not have wanted to interact with census workers;
- illegal immigrants may have chosen to conceal that status (after the 1924 immigration act, there was widespread illegal immigration by many excluded groups, including Greeks) (Slayton).

The lack of data collection about ethnicity in recent years also calls into question the accuracy of recent estimates.

Physical Description

Like many cemeteries in the American South, Cycadia is not part of the sanctified grounds of a church. Established in 1887 by Viola Keeney Beekman, the cemetery has remained in constant use into the present (**Figures 1 & 2**). It includes at least 3166 grave plots (43% of total burials) of local Greek Americans—and Greeks were not buried there until 34 years after the first burial in 1872. The site retains its historical design, setting, and integrity to a high degree. It contributes to the sense of place, historical development, and culture of the

³ As noted in 10 Things You May Not Know About the U.S. Census, <http://www.history.com/news/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-u-s-census>: "3. Some Founding Fathers doubted the census' accuracy. The first census turned up only 3.9 million (non-Indian) Americans, including nearly 700,000 slaves, a result that President George Washington, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and other high-ranking government officials dismissed as an undercount. 'Our real numbers will exceed, greatly, the official returns of them,' wrote Washington, who put the blame on negligent census takers, as well as 'the religious scruples of some...[and] the fears of others that it was intended as the foundation of a tax.'"

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Greek community in Tarpon Springs through its location, materials, and associations. Aside from Greek Orthodox cemeteries officially linked to a church, it is probably the most culturally and historically Greek cemetery in the United States—especially since Tarpon Springs has the highest percentage of residents with Greek heritage of any city in the US.

Cycadia Cemetery has generally flat terrain and several paved roads that divide it into irregularly shaped sections. These roads were originally unpaved and lined with stone pavers. The older cemetery sectors are in the center and into the northern half beyond a manmade lake. Local undertakers D. Murphy and L. Vinson maintained the early records of names, burials, and locations. The cemetery is bounded on all sides by a metal fence approximately seven feet high (**Photos 1-4**). The main entrance for vehicles or pedestrians is via a large double metal gate opening onto East Tarpon Avenue (**Photo 5**). In the central section, there are four smaller entrances with metal gates opening onto Cemetery Road to the west (**Photo 6**). Only one of these entrances to Cemetery Road usually remains open (**Photo 7**).

There are two lakes: Lake Cycadia is in the middle of the southern half (**Photo 15**) and a smaller lake is in the northeast section (**Photo 8**). The two lakes were created in the 1930s as a WPA project. Historic vegetation includes oaks, cycadia, and oleander shrubs. In addition, family members have planted a wide variety of shrubs and trees near graves. Small alligators live in the lakes, and many birds linger on the lake banks—primarily egrets and herons.

Just inside the gates and north of the entrance at East Tarpon Avenue is a non-historic, 504 square foot frame vernacular city office building erected in 2006 (**Photo 9**). Next to it are two recent pre-constructed galvanized steel utility sheds for maintenance tools and golf carts (**Photo 10**). There is also a small utility shed in the northeast sector. To the east of the utility sheds is a non-historic mausoleum of masonry construction that contains a small chapel. The mausoleum is faced with two different colors of granite, off-white and terra cotta (**Photo 11**). It offers niches for both caskets and cremation remains (cremains), covered by granite slabs. There are niches for both a single casket and for two caskets (**Photo 12**). To the east of the mausoleum are two elevated areas designated as lawn cemeteries with only flat markers. Although Greeks are buried there, many consider it inappropriate that representations of the cross are not upright (**Photo 13**). To the north, at the eastern end of the lake, is a columbarium with niches for cremation urns on three sides of a central square (**Photo 14**). Very few of these have been purchased, since the Greek Orthodox religion frowns upon cremation.

In general, the graves are oriented east-west. When married couples are buried together, the man is usually situated to the right of the woman. Graves are commonly marked with headstones and sometimes footstones made of marble, concrete, granite, and other stones in a variety of shapes. Those of some wealthier citizens have larger markers, statues, or obelisks, or even small private mausoleums (**Photo 15**), such as that of sponge merchant Michael Cantonis. Many plots have stone (usually granite or marble), concrete, or brick coping or iron fencing (**Photo 16**). Most markers are in good condition and reflect at the minimum the name, birth and death dates of the deceased. Families have placed benches near a few sites to allow for a comfortable visit to the graves of loved ones, e.g., the family plot of Father Tryfon Theophilopoulos (**Photo 17**).

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n/a

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The site retains its historical design, setting, and integrity to a high degree—contributing to the sense of place, historical development, and culture of the Greek community through its location, materials, and associations.

Graves

Recent interviews with cemetery staff and an examination of cemetery records indicates that Greeks and Greek Americans constitute a large component of existing burials (43%) and the majority of incoming burials (Witkowski). Greek burials are distributed throughout the cemetery, though some areas possess a greater concentration, and they often differ from those of non-Greeks (**Photo 18**). Early in the twentieth century, the Greek Community, an organization associated with St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, purchased many plots, and later purchased more. They made these available for purchase to members of the Greek community or donated them to individuals who could not afford to purchase plots or died without means.

Discernable patterns in funerary art and burial rituals constitute an important example of funerary culture that Tarpon Springs shares with Greece and especially the Dodecanese islands. Moreover, many markers reflect a synthesis of evolving American styles with Greek cultural elements and decorative details, and some aspects (e.g., sponge industry imagery) do not occur elsewhere in the US.

Greek graves, cemeteries, and sometimes rituals in the US have always differed from those in the home villages of immigrants. In Greece, it was common prior to the 1970s to exhume bodies after three years, then wash the bones and place them in the cemetery's ossuary—and it is still not an uncommon practice in today. In rural Greek villages, family members owned and cared for individual graves or small cemeteries. In addition, in the late 1970s there was an increase in the placement over graves of permanent sarcophagi usually inscribed with the name and birthdate of the deceased (Frangos 155-156). The most commonly used stone in Greece appears to be marble. Burials in Greece and the US share such characteristics as candle houses, incense holders, marble, and Byzantine crosses (**Figure 3**). In Kalymnos there are images of sponge boats, anchors, or men in diving suits (**Figures 4 to 7**). Burials in other US regions share some features, but to a lesser extent.

Grave markers

Grave markers include both commercial and handmade examples in a variety of materials, such as granite, marble, concrete, wood, and stainless steel. They are of various ages, sizes, materials, and influences. However, they are primarily rectangular tablets/headstones, as are the fewer footstones, and generally follow the patterns of modern western funerary markers. Most are commercially made, including numerous marble or granite headstones provided by the federal government for military veterans. There are also numerous small, temporary stainless-steel markers that were either added before a larger marker, or for permanent identification in the case of in some early burials without local family. Marker inscriptions frequently appear in Greek. On pre-WWII graves, the majority of markers on Greek or Greek American graves are inscribed in Greek.

Many graves, such as that of sponge merchant Drosos Alahuzos (**Photo 19**), are covered with large stone slabs—usually marble. While many non-Greeks also prefer marble, it has special significance as a frequently used building material and the most common stone on grave markers or sarcophagi in Greece.

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One of the most common distinguishing features of Greek grave stones is that they are engraved or capped with a Greek or Byzantine cross. Byzantine crosses (the most common form in the Byzantine Empire) feature outwardly spreading ends (**Photo 20**). Greek crosses are characterized by four arms of equal length (**Photo 39**). In Cycadia, Byzantine crosses predominate, but they are often carved or etched onto a Latin cross or rectangular grave marker in addition to standing independently.

Often included on the gravestones are enamel or photo-ceramic portraits of the deceased, first patented in 1854 by two French inventors. The history is not fully documented, but it seems that the inclusion of these portraits on grave markers may have become more common in the early twentieth century—often on the graves of immigrants or those belonging to ethnic groups (Home & Montanarelli 13). While not a uniquely Greek or Greek American convention, it does seem that the gravestones of the Greek departed feature more of these photographs than those of non-Greeks—especially in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Considering area history, it is not surprising that many grave markers are engraved with sponge boats—though this is a feature unique to Tarpon Springs. Examples of sponge boat carvings include those on the stones of Nicholas C. Tsourakis (1918-1995), George A. Demopoulos (1949-1983), Themelis M. Mahinis (1891-1980), Theo Mahinis (1935-2005), Michael A. Houllis (1887-1975) (**Photo 21**), John Koursiotis (1925-1997), George Krouskos (1896-1972), Leonnidas Paskalakis (1898-1984), the Georgiou/Vatikiotis families (**Photo 22**), John Petrou (1919-2006), Costa Tsataros (1926-2001) (**Photo 23**), and Nick Gonatos (1933-2006). The boat carved on the marker of George N. Saittis (1913-1994) is named the Symi—most probably Saittis' home island. Naturally, the markers of boat builders Christodoulos S. Coutroulis (1885-1974) (**Photo 24**) and Phillip M. Sarris (1921-1977) (**Photo 25**) feature boats—and the boat is being built on Sarris' stone. Some stones feature other types of boats: the headstone of Ernest D. Kachikis (1925-1991), a merchant ship captain and port captain for over twenty years, is carved with a large merchant marine tanker; and there is a laser-cut images of the tourist boat of Capt. Steve Georgiou (1927-2011). There are also references to the sponge industry or maritime symbols. For example, the marker for George C. Andriotis (1913-1981) (**Photo 26**) is carved with a pair of sponge clippers; those for Mike J. Gianises (1888-1970), Giannis Panagis (1891-1946), Nikita M. Stergos (1893-1986) (**Photo 27**), and Louis Tsavaris (1929-2000) feature anchors. The stone for Mike Smolios (1894-1952) includes a ceramic portrait holding sponges in the Sponge Exchange (**Photo 28**), while that of Gabriel Peterson (1880-1938) notes that he was the inventor of the removal propeller guard (**Photo 29**)—an important piece of equipment that kept the propellers from cutting the divers' airhoses.

Other common motifs are the hardhat diving helmets and rubberized canvas suits worn to harvest sponges until the 1950s-1960s. The grave marker of John "The Greek" Maillis (1918-2002)—widely respected as the best sponge diver of his era, is marked with a carved diving helmet (**Photo 30**). That of John Katsaras (1902-1979) is carved with a helmet—and immediately under his name is *Kapetanios* (Captain). Diving helmets also appear on the markers of Gus Danapas (1920-1989) and John G. Tsangaris (1922-1979). Some markers, such as those of Petros Fatolitis (1892-1978), John C. Mangos (1892-1965) (**Photo 31**), Fotios Lekakis (1919-1987) (**Photo 32**), and Nikolaos G. Skyllas (1926-2011), feature ceramic photographs in their diving suits. The grave stone of Philip G. Fatolitis (1923-2012), features a laser-etched portrait of the deceased within a realistic laser etching of a diving helmet and "last of Tarpon's hard-hat divers" (**Photo 33**).

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Cycadia Cemetery

Name of Property

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County and State

n/a

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The frequent use of ancient Greek columns and urns document in stone the identification Greeks felt for their ancestors (Frangos 157). Among the graves that feature columns are those of Emmanuel (1872-1944) and Maria Stamatiades (1895-1932) and Stavros Sakellarides (1887-1948) from Nisyros (**Photo 34**); Maria Tsourakis (1888-1937); Costas G. Gianeskis (-1937); John (1919-2003) and Mary Mavromatis (1928-2010); Alexandra Lambrianou (1893-1947) from Halki (**Photo 35**); and James J. Topouzis (1884-1956) from Constantinople (**Photo 36**). And on many gravestones (e.g., 7.7.3, 7.7.7, 7.7.8) the inscription appears in Greek.

Many tombstones allude to the home island. For example, the Matsis marker not only features a map of Rhodes, but also pinpoints the two villages from which the couple emigrated (**Photo 37**). Markers without maps frequently mention the home island and/or village of the deceased—as noted for those mentioned in the previous paragraph. Another example is the beautifully carved Biliadis headstone noting, “George Born 1870 Naxos Greece Died 1929” and “Mary Born 1880 Calymnos Greece Died 1954” (**Photo 38**). Among the many other stones pinpoint home islands are Theodore Serelis (1892-1953) Karystos, Evia; and Costas Moutsatsos (1878-1930), Aegina (**Photo 39**). Markers mentioning Kalymnos are by far the most numerous. As anthropologist Steve Frangos posited, “The notation of the island of origin is noted on so many gravestones that it quite literally carried to the grave social distinctions strongly felt within the early community” (Frangos 157).

Greek graves in Cycadia include numerous sarcophagi, or above-ground stone boxes, usually made from slabs of marble, such as that of Socrates (1896-1923) and Marego Leoni (1872-1925) (**Photo 40**). Sarcophagi, usually false, became popular memorials in the late nineteenth century, but were generally displaced when flat memorials became popular in the 1950s (Sarcophagus). Their popularity for Greek burials in Cycadia well into the twentieth century might be attributed their predominance in many parts of Greece, combined with their prevalence in the Gulf Coast, south Florida and Caribbean regions due to the high water table and thin soil.

Numerous plots are set aside for the graves of a particular family group. Some are surrounded by a low curb, usually made of granite or marble—such as the marble curb surrounding the aforementioned Stamatiades-Sakellarides plot (**Photo 34**), as well as poured concrete, small concrete blocks, or wood. Some single graves may also be surrounded by a curb, such as the cement curb around the plot of Themelina Makryllou (1892-1981), whose grave is marked with a candle house (**Photo 41**). Other types of demarcation include elaborate iron work fences, marble posts linked with chains (**Photo 42**), low wood fencing, or block walls.

Handmade markers are usually crosses, upright rectangles, or crowned rectangles made of wood, concrete, or (in one case) terrazzo, they are usually inscribed with the names, birth and death dates. Among examples are the wooden Byzantine cross for John Tsangarinos (1909-1985) (**Photo 43**), whose family includes respected woodworkers. Similarly, there is wooden Byzantine cross for Evangelos Saroukos (d. 1995) (**Photo 44**), whose family was known for building wooden boats and houses.

During the early twentieth century, a number of Greeks were buried in section X without headstones or possibly with markers that disintegrated over time. Residents believe that these may have been the graves of sponge fishermen without family in the area or those without financial resources (Henderson). They were assigned a

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number by the local funeral parlor, which placed a teardrop-shaped marker with the number on the grave. In some instances, the deceased have been further identified and an aluminum plate with name, birth and death dates has been put on the grave. Records in the City of Tarpon Springs City Clerk's Office reveal that several men buried in this section were sponge divers such as Nick Demetrios (d. 1913) (**Photo 45**) or Nicholas Gerakios (d. 1913) who succumbed in the 1910s or 1920s to "sea suffocation." It is unclear today what was meant by this term, but it was probably an indication that the diver did not receive sufficient air.

Grave Accessories and Decoration

The Orthodox cemetery memorial candle holders seen on many if not most Greek graves have tops and bottoms made from anodized aluminum with a silver or gold finish holding a red or blue plastic cylinder, all of which is mounted on a 16" spike, angled stake, or table base. The plastic cylinder will hold a standard 7-day cemetery light candle. Many feature a Byzantine rather than a Latin cross.⁴ The total height of the cylinder, top and bottom is 17 ½ inches including the cross. Today candle holders can be purchased over the internet or from a local monument business such as the Cycadia Monument Company. These candle holders have largely displaced an older type of metal candle holders that was hung from a metal stand or placed on the ground (**Photo 46**).

Also available at Cycadia Monument Co. and other businesses are Orthodox candle houses. These small house-shaped boxes often have clear glass or plastic windows, though many are not fully enclosed. Made of stone, steel, plastic, or other materials, they are used for gravesite remembrances of the dead (**Photo 23-24**). They may contain candles, photographs of the deceased, and sometimes an incense burner (*livanistiri*) (**Photo 47**), incense (*livani*), charcoal (*karvounakia*). Formerly, there were many handmade wooden candle houses (**Photo 41**).

A common feature not exclusive Greek graves is flower vases that are permanently affixed to both flat and upright grave markers. Many of the Greek graves at Cycadia seem to receive regular visits and care, for it is striking how many real flowers can be found on them at all times of year (**Figure 8**). The flowers and other items described above imply a strong concept of personal and ongoing contact with the dead.

Another feature not exclusive to Greek graves: on or beside many graves, family or friends have left decorative items such as potted plants; crosses; plaster statuary of angels, kneeling children, or praying hands; balloons, candles, snow globes, plaques, or whirligigs. Individual sites or large family spaces may also feature statues, benches, large urns, trellises, intricate plantings of flowers, and wind chimes. In addition are a few items seen only on Greek graves, such as Greek flags (**Photo 48**).

⁴ Unfortunately, about a decade ago vandals broke the crosses off many of these cylinders (Vinson).

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Summary Significance

Cycadia Cemetery is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for local, state, and national significance under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage/European—Greek for its direct association with the Greek community and its cultural and religious practices, and under Criterion C: Art for the distinctive style of its Greek American funerary monuments. Since the period of significance ranges from 1905 into the present, the nomination also falls under Criterion G: less than 50 years or achieved significance within 50 years. The cemetery is a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP), as identified in *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* due to its direct association with ongoing Greek American cultural and religious funerary practices and grave markers. The property retains a high level of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.

Although not physically contiguous with the Greektown Historic District (also a TCP), Cycadia Cemetery has always been part an integral part of its cultural complex. In earlier days, they were physically connected by funeral processions that proceeded by foot from St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral to Cycadia Cemetery; today they cover the same route in cars. Priests from Greektown perform Greek Orthodox burial rituals at Cycadia, and residents perform other folk rituals. Gravesites include culturally prescribed accessories such as candle holders, Greek or Byzantine crosses, and other items. In addition to Orthodox symbols, gravestone designs often incorporate images of boats, divers, and other items that reflect the foundation of Tarpon Springs' Greek community in the sponge industry. In addition, the graves of celebrated Greek musicians, grave markers are often engraved with Greek instruments.

Narrative Significance

Cycadia Cemetery is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for local and national significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/European—Greek, for its association with Tarpon Springs' Greek community, the sponge industry, and Greek music, and as a site at which community members maintained Greek burial practices and religious rituals. It is also nominated under Criterion C: Art for the distinctive style of its Greek American funerary monuments.⁵ Since the period of significance ranges from 1905 into the present, the nomination also falls under Criterion G: less than 50 years or achieved significance within 50 years. Grave markers and funereal rituals that take place in Cycadia Cemetery continue to reflect Greek and Greek American traditional culture, thus supporting its standing as a traditional cultural property.

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

⁵ The NR Bulletin *How To Identify the Type of Significance of a Property* states: "High artistic values may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture." It also says "Properties that are important representatives of the aesthetic values of a cultural group, such as petroglyphs and ground drawings by Native Americans, are eligible" (https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_6.htm#critc).

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included an urban neighborhood that is the traditional home of a particular cultural group and 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 historical identity. While most sites nominated as TCPs 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" (Parker & King 3). Cycadia Cemetery clearly fulfills TCP criteria in its association with living cultural beliefs and practices and continuing importance for the community cultural identity.

Historical Context – Ethnic Heritage and Social History

Nestled around the bayous and Anclote River on the central coast of the Gulf of Mexico, Tarpon Springs is a unique community with a rich heritage based on its maritime history and Greek culture. First settled after the Civil War by white and black fishermen, farmers, and their families, the area became a winter home to wealthy northerners by the 1880s. It was formally incorporated in 1887, the same year that Cycadia Cemetery was established. The small town experienced a boom when the arrival of the railroad in 1888 made it more accessible to seasonal and permanent settlers. This increased the need for a designated burial area.

Following the late nineteenth-century tradition of locating burial sites away from town, the cemetery was placed about a mile from the city center. The earliest extant cemetery plat from 1894 reveals a grid-like pattern in the shape of an L. Cycadia was established by Viola Keeney Beekman and maintained by the Women's Town Improvement Association—and later by the Women's Club. They bought more land to the north in 1942 and to the south in 1946 to become its current thirty acres. The City of Tarpon Springs assumed management in late 1946. Prior to 1904, all residents were buried in Cycadia. However, changes in social attitudes prompted the creation of Rose Hill Cemetery, one of the oldest African American cemeteries in Pinellas County. Its earliest recorded burial dates to 1904, but there are indications of earlier interments. Originally, Rose Hill Cemetery was the rear (east) section of Cycadia Cemetery and contiguous with it. African American community members and others believe that Jasmine Street, which now forms the western edge of Rose Hill and eastern edge of Cycadia, either covers graves or that the graves were disturbed in order to build the road (Smith, Emerson). Rose Hill Cemetery was established as a private entity for the purpose of creating a separate black burial ground in accord with segregationist practices of the era.⁶ In 1916, the Lake Butler Villa Association, operated by the Hamilton Disston family and John Cheyney, gave a 99-year lease to a local citizens' board formed on November 22, 1916. In 1917, the property was officially deeded to the African American community's Rose Hill Association.

By the 1920s, Tarpon Springs was a regional cultural center promoted as the "Venice of the South," but it had changed significantly because of the sponge business. The Industrial Revolution created great demand for sponges in addition to their household, hygienic, and medical uses—generating an important international

⁶ Although segregation officially ended in the 1960s, lay community historian Annie Dabbs and African American funeral director Robert Young believe that very few African American burials in nearby Cycadia Cemetery took place before about 2000 (Dabbs 2016, Young 2016). This was recently confirmed by City Cemetery Lead Operator David Witkowski.

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trade. Until a French merchant started exporting Bahamian sponges to Europe in the 1840s, the world supply was harvested in the Mediterranean. By 1849 Bahamian sponge fishermen developed operations in the Florida Keys, and trade developed between Key West merchants and New York wholesalers. Bahamians and Key West Conchs harvested sponges up both Florida coasts, returning to Key West to sell. Key West was one of the largest world markets by 1900.

Sponging became an important economic activity in Florida during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Due to its geographic location, Florida is the only state in the US that has a sponge industry. In 1873, Key West turtle fishermen near the mouth of the Tarpon Springs' Anclote River found sponges in their nets—the first sign of 9000 square miles of untouched beds stretching north to 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.

Commercial sponging was centered at Key West, Nassau, Bahamas, and Batabano, Cuba, prior to 1890, but it accelerated in the Gulf during the late 19th century. Around 1886, businessman/landowner John Cheyney began supplying sponges from Tarpon Springs to the U.S. market. He built warehouses for processing and selling sponges, and launched the first sponge boat. Soon others established companies in the area, supplied by sponge fisherman who hooked sponges with long poles from dinghies. During the 1890s, with an increasing amount of buying and packing activity, the industry began shifting to the Tarpon area, where buying and selling were originally done at the mouth of the Anclote River. Due to the Spanish American War of 1898 in Cuba, 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 here.

Greek immigrants significantly changed and expanded the sponge industry. John Cocoris arrived in 1896 as a buyer for the New York-based Lembessis Company. A year later, he began working for Cheyney, who helped finance Cocoris' early efforts to make the industry more efficient. In the first years of the 20th 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 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 decompression sickness (bends). 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" (Georgakas 46).

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, newspaper articles, and advertisements offering to pay travel expenses. Later in 1905, about 500 men arrived. Within a year or two, there were 100 sponge boats based in Tarpon Springs and up to 1500 Greeks working Florida waters. With the spongers came related maritime businesses: ship chandlers, machine shops, boat builders, and a sail loft. Greek sponge merchants established warehouses in Tarpon Springs with branches in their home islands and international trade centers. European buyers visited and investors came to finance sponge fishing ventures or

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boat building. In 1906 the Sponge Exchange Bank was established and in 1908 the Sponge Exchange was founded.⁷

The Sponge Exchange was an organized system established by the divers, boat builders, deck hands, and buyers for buying and grading the sponges. It 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.

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.

Greeks—especially those from Kalymnos, Symi, and Halki—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 boats or in boarding houses near the Sponge Docks. As they brought families, they lived in the small houses of the area just south of the Sponge Docks that became known as Greektown.

The constant stream of Greek immigrants changed Tarpon forever. Since the 1880s, the dominant social group had been wealthy Northern transplants or visitors who built grand residences near Spring Bayou and the major avenues. The Greeks, however, soon established Greektown, with numerous residences, stores, churches, restaurants, coffee houses, 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, at least half of the residents of Tarpon Springs were Greek and signs at the railroad station were posted both in English and Greek. Many businesses displayed both Greek and American flags (Burgess 175-176).

As the sponge industry ascended, the city acquired a Mediterranean character and its earlier role as a resort diminished. During the years from 1905 to 1940, Greeks constituted the numerically dominant cultural group. Although they maintained much of their traditional culture, they increasingly participated in all aspects of American life. As they acquired money, many moved out of Greektown and into more expensive homes, often in the Fruit Salad neighborhood south of Spring Bayou and Tarpon Avenue. Women played an important role in the Greek community: they not only handled the family's daily life while the sponge boats were out, but often were managed or worked in tourist shops or were employed in sponge warehouses.

⁷ For photographic documentation of the history and current status of the Greek community in Tarpon Springs and the sponge industry, see the National Register nomination for the Tarpon Springs Greektown Historic District at <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/14000321.pdf>.

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The sponge industry grew steadily throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Despite 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. The Greeks gradually began to influence municipal politics as the majority or by allying themselves with Black Tarponites. Many African Americans developed close relationships with the Greeks while working on their boats and in the warehouses—and often learned to speak Greek.

Tourism remained an integral part of the Florida economy despite the Depression. The 1939 *WPA Guide to Florida* characterized Tarpon Springs by its sponge operation and tours, Greek population and festivals, and little else (Federal Writers Project). Greek culture and sponges dominated the town's reputation during these years. In 1940, there were well over 1,000 men actively engaged in the sponge industry. Along with their families, they constituted roughly 2,500 Greeks in a town of 3,402. Then with the onset of World War II and closure of the European market, the supply of sponges decreased while the demand increased dramatically—making Tarpon Springs 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 (**Figure 9**).

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. 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 films⁸ about sponge divers assisted this process by popularizing romantic ideas about the sponge industry and publicizing Tarpon Springs. In addition, Epiphany ceremonies gained national attention and drew thousands of visitors.

By the late 1970s, an estimated one-third of 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

Tarpon Springs 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 Property records, over 76% of district

⁸ *16 Fathoms Deep* (1948) directed by Irving Allen and *Beneath the 12-Mile Reef* (1953) directed by [Robert D. Webb](#).

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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 former 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 (Henderson).”

Today Tarpon Springs is the epicenter of a corridor that hosts such a large ethnic population that the Greek government established a Consulate in Tampa—which estimates the area 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, none has a greater percentage of residents with Greek heritage than Tarpon Springs. Greek is widely spoken, there is Greek signage in many local businesses, and it is the primary language in many homes.

The emerging ethnic character of Tarpon Springs coincided with the development of mass tourism in the early 20th century, so businesses based on cultural tourism developed early. Still revolving around its Greek heritage and sponge industry, tourism remains Tarpon Springs’ biggest business. It is still centered in the 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 Greektown eateries, tourist stores, nightclubs, and community events are frequented by both locals and tourists. Some Greek businesses cater primarily to locals, such as Athens Street’s Greek market, bakery, and traditional *kafeneia*—gender-exclusive establishments where men gather to imbibe coffee and spirits, play cards, smoke, and talk. On Dodecanese Boulevard there is a store selling Greek music, books, and children’s books or games.

Among themselves, Greektown residents often stress their identification with an ancestral island, region, or town, while in communication with non-Greeks they are likely to assume a more general Greek ethnicity. Sponge merchant George Billiris noted the strong role played by island organizations such as the Pan-Kalymnian Society or Symian Society in retaining the regional culture of these groups in Tarpon Springs (Billiris). Gus Bilirakis, a local Congressman whose grandparents came from the Dodecanese and owned a bakery on Athens Street, thinks immigrants retain more identification with individual islands, whereas Greek Americans may consider themselves more generally Greek. Yet he finds that in Tarpon Springs the language, food, dance, and music maintain the unique accents of the Dodecanese islands of Kalymnos, Halki, and Symi (Bilirakis).

Historical Significance: Spongers and Greek Musicians in Cycadia Cemetery

Cycadia Cemetery is significant for the number of sponge divers and boat captains interred. 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, anchors, and diving helmets, or include porcelain portraits of the deceased in their diving suits or at the Sponge Exchange (see

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Section 7 for images). It is also significant that, due to the sponge industry, Tarpon Springs had a greater proportion of settlers from the Dodecanese islands than any other Greek community in the US.

To entertain the large Greek community—which has always become even larger in the winter season with the arrival of Greek snowbirds, many nationally respected Greek and Greek American musicians and vocalists have lived in Tarpon Springs and performed at *kafeneia* (coffee shops), restaurants, clubs, or for special events.

Among the most prominent buried in Cycadia Cemetery are the following:

- George Katsaros (1888-1997) was one of the most widely respected Greek musicians of the twentieth century. Born on Amorgos, he arrived in New York with his guitar in one hand and a suitcase in the other in 1913. For more than 80 years, his strong voice and unique style were heard in Greek restaurants, ballrooms, hotels, clubs, concert halls, and ships throughout the world. By the 1920s, Katsaros was so popular that he was signed to contracts by major record companies and many of his compositions became favorites in Greece and diaspora communities. People could easily relate to his songs about immigrant life in unfamiliar surroundings, difficult times, the comfort of family and friends, and the joy of hopes fulfilled. In 1988 the Greek government honored Katsaros with an award and a concert tour in recognition of his achievements. Katsaros was a long-time resident of Tarpon Springs, where he played at festivals and community events until the end of his life. He received a Florida Folk Heritage Award in 1990 **(Photo 49)**.
- Amalia Baka Vasilis (1897-1979) & Diamond Papachristou – One of the three most famous Greek female vocalists of the twentieth century, Amalia was a Romaniote Jew from Ioannina, Epirus, who emigrated to New York and converted to Orthodoxy. By the early 1920s, she began singing professionally in Greek *café amans*, Turkish clubs, and restaurants. Live performances remained the mainstay of her singing career, and she sang Greek and Turkish songs in a personal and intimate style. Her first recordings were eight Turkish songs for the M. G. Parsekian Record Company in Hoboken, NJ; then in Chicago, she recorded six Greek and Turkish songs for the Greek Record Company **(Photo 50)**. From the beginning, her daughter, Diamond, was with her at recording sessions and on stage, playing *doumbek* and sometimes singing duets. Diamond's grave is in front of her mother.
- George Anastasiou (1900-1962) - In the early 20th century, priests and others in America began to compose new Greek Orthodox liturgical music that abandoned the traditional Byzantine modes and single vocal line. The new music with European scales was often presented in a westernized style through choirs accompanied by organs. Among those associated with the progressive style was George Anastasiou, who arrived in the U.S. from Cyprus in 1920. He settled in Tarpon Springs in 1924, where he became the principal of the Greek Parochial School and served as head chanter at St. Nicholas Greek from 1931 to 1941. He organized the Byzantine Choir, composed liturgical music and edited the *Liturgical Hymnal* used in most Greek Orthodox churches of his time. **(Photo 51)**
- Louis Peronis (1884-1948) worked as a master candle maker in a miniature candle factory in the basement of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral. In addition, Peronis was known for playing Greek music on the violin. He appears on several recordings at the Library of Congress that were made by the WPA in Florida.
- When John K. Gianaros (1904-1998) came to the U.S. in 1922, he fell in love with the accordion and began studying music. In part because he was literate, Gianaros took particular pride in being a union musician. For almost forty years, he performed at private parties, hotels, and *café amans* in California,

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Miami, New York, and other cities across the country. From the 1930s to 1950s, he recorded with Columbia, Liberty, Kalos Diskos, Metropolitan, and Mastertone labels. He also co-owned Balkan Records and owned Astro Records. After his retirement, Gianaros continued to write and perform in Florida. He made his home in Tarpon Springs, where he was a favorite performer as well as at events throughout Florida. He composed "Big Sponge Boy," a song about sponge divers in Tarpon Springs. Gianaros received a Florida Folk Heritage Award in 1994, and continued to perform both traditional music and original compositions until his death.

- Nikitas Tsimouris (1924-2001) brought the complex music of the *tsabouna*, a type of island bagpipe, to Tarpon Springs. He was born in the village of Chora on Kalymnos to a family with a love of dance and music. On most nights family and neighbors gathered in their kitchen or courtyard for informal parties. As a child, Tsimouris learned to play the *tsabouna* from his father while they watched their sheep. Tsimouris arrived in Tarpon Springs in 1968. He worked on sponge boats, in restaurants and the stucco trade, and as custodian of St. Nicholas Cathedral during his later years. He performed for numerous family, Kalymnian Society, and community events, as well as at the Florida Folk Festival. Tsimouris received the National Heritage Fellowship in 1991—America's highest award in traditional arts.
- Spiros Skordilis (1930-2013) was born in Athens and learned to play guitar from his father. At 18 he formed Laiki Orchestra, which became well-known. Five years later he founded Blue Trio, which played *kantades* and European style music in Plaka tavernas. By 1958 he appeared nightly at Vachos Taverna with other popular musicians. Skordilis soon signed a contract with RCA, for whom he recorded original compositions including the hit, "*Oti arhizei oraio*" (When Something Beautiful Begins). Dissatisfied with the Junta, Skordilis left Greece with his wife, singer Lena Dana, for Canada and the U.S. In 1977 he settled in Tarpon Springs, where Lena died suddenly. Not long afterwards, he met his second wife and lyricist, Kay. During the 1970s Skordilis taught bouzouki to students through the Folk Arts in the Schools Program and Florida Folklife Apprenticeship Program, and for many years he conducted the Prometheus Chorus. He played locally for clubs, restaurants, and festivals for more than 30 years. **(Photo 52)**
- Eleni Skordilis/Lena Daina (1931-1978) was the wife of Spiros Skordilis and a well-regarded vocalist in Greece and in US Greek clubs. She appears singing into a microphone in the image on her marker.
- George Soffos (1953-2013) was born in Warren, OH, to a musical family with roots in Rhodes. He received a bouzouki at 12, then took lessons from Louis Fatimus, and joined a band when he was 14. He moved to Washington DC to study with John Tatasopoulos at 16, and soon performed alongside him. By 17 he began headlining nationally at popular clubs. A versatile musician with an extensive repertoire, Soffos often performed with top artists from Greece when they toured America. In the 1990s, Soffos settled in the Tarpon Springs area. From 2010 through 2012, Soffos dedicated himself to teaching promising students. He received a 2011 Florida Folk Heritage Award, served as master artist in the Florida Folklife Apprenticeship Program twice, and the National Council for Traditional Arts included him with the Guitar Masters at the Lowell Folk Festival in 2011. **(Photo 53)**
- There are numerous other musicians who were prominent both nationally and locally. Among them are: Phil Demas (1913-2006), son of a sponge fisherman, was a local band leader, drummer, and city commissioner who worked sixty years at Vinson's Funeral Home; Nicholas Patides (1931-2002), vocalist/guitarist, owned Zorba's nightclub; Peter Patides (1929-2004), guitarist co-owned Zorba's; Gregory Fysentzides (1945-2003)/drums; George Platanias (1934-2009)/keyboard; Alexandros Platanias (1925-

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2008)/clarinet, violin; Socrates "Taki" Demetrius (1952-2013)/violin, bouzouki, vocals; and Emmanuel Grigoris (1925-2017), a *nisiotika* violinist from Astypalea.

There are other notables. One is Mother Superior Thekla Makris (1910-1992)—believed to be the first Greek Orthodox nun in North and South America (**Photo 54**). In addition, several long-time respected local priests, such as Fr. Tryfon Theophilopoulos and Fr. Theophilos Karaphillis, are buried here.

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

Since Greeks initially came to Tarpon Springs in relatively large numbers, they were able to maintain an unusually large portion of their culture intact. As folklorist Robert Georges noted:

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 (Georges & Jones 205).

Even today, residents retain many aspects of Greek/Greek American culture in their daily lives at home, work, or in religious environments. Indeed, many 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 their traditional culture. It is reflected in the built environment (e.g., sponge docks, Greektown residential neighborhood, St. Nicholas Cathedral, Cycadia Cemetery), 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.

The sections below describe the aspects of the community's traditional culture that are most pertinent to Cycadia Cemetery—religious traditions, funerary customs, the sponge industry, and music.

Religious Traditions

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral plays a pivotal role in the Greek community by sustaining religious traditions. Among the many residents interviewed, all stressed that the greatest force for cultural retention is the Greek Orthodox Church. It 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 attend and support it because of its cultural and historical significance.

Many arts associated with the Greek Orthodox Church developed during the Byzantine Empire (ca. 330-1453). Byzantine music and hymns are featured during the daily and special 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

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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. In almost all homes, Greek families display small, portable icons.

Religious holidays are extremely important community events with widespread participation. The two most important are Epiphany and Easter. Tarpon Springs' Epiphany celebration on January 6 is the largest and most widely known in the US. 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 (**Figure 10**), 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 (**Figure 11**). Afterwards, altar boys swinging censers streaming fragrant incense lead a procession (**Figure 12**) 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. About 50 youths dive from a semi-circle of dinghies. When a young man finds the cross, he shoots up through the water, triumphantly holding it above his head. (**Figure 13**). He is greeted with cheers of delight, then carried on his friends' shoulders back to St. Nicholas Cathedral to be blessed. Afterwards, there is a *glendi*, a celebration with food, dancing and music, at the church community center.⁹

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. On Holy Friday, the *kouvouklion*, representing the tomb of Christ, is decorated, blessed, (**Figure 14**) and carried in procession (**Figure 15**) around the St. Nicholas, 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.

Greek Orthodox Funerary Beliefs and Customs in Tarpon Springs

The basis for many death and mourning traditions is the Orthodox belief in eternal life. For example, because the church believes that the physical body is eternal and will be united with the soul during the Last Judgment, cremation is discouraged. Orthodoxy also emphasizes that unification with God is a positive aspect of death—thus the memorial dish *kolliva* symbolizes new life. Additionally, many beliefs are based on the life of Jesus. It is

⁹ 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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believed that the soul of the departed stays on earth for forty days, as did Christ before ascension to heaven—and this is the official mourning period (Rouvelas 133).

Immediately after a death, the family calls a priest to say the Trisagion service over the deceased before s/he is taken to the funeral home. The brief Trisagion or “Thrice-Holy” service is so-named because it begins with the prayer, “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us,” which is repeated three times. The Trisagion is repeated at the funeral home, the funeral, the graveside, and may be repeated in church on the third, ninth, fortieth day, and at six months, one year, and three year memorial services—or any time one feels the need. (Rouvelas 134, Greek Orthodox).

During the official church mourning period of forty days, close family members are expected to wear dark clothing. Many women wear only black, with little makeup or jewelry. The family is also expected to avoid dancing, parties, or any type of celebration (Rouvelas 135). In the past, Greek widows sometimes wore black for the rest of their lives. While this is no longer common, there are a number of older women in Tarpon Springs who still observe this custom (**Figure 16**). Also an older custom, some men stop shaving for forty days. In Greece, black banners may be hung on the front door or on a balcony. In recent years, when a sponge boat captain in Tarpon Springs died, a funeral wreath was hung on the door of his sponge boat (**Figure 17**).

Wakes or viewings usually take place at the funeral home from 6:00pm to 8:00pm on the day before the funeral. Many who cannot attend a daytime funeral due to work commitments offer sympathy and respect to the bereaved family at the viewing. A priest attends and performs the afore-mentioned Trisagion or “Thrice-Holy” Service. In addition, this is the time for eulogies by families and friends. In Greece, some viewings and funerals are/were dominated by wailing and funeral dirges (*mirologia*); the US church discourages this practice as a contradiction to the belief that death is reunification with God and has a positive aspect. The funeral home, with the input of the deceased’s family, usually prepares icon cards to give to guests at the viewing or the funeral. Most cards feature a Byzantine icon that had meaning for the deceased—often his/her patron saint—as well as the deceased’s name, dates of birth and death, and a prayer. (Rouvelas 139) After the viewing, close friends and relatives visit the grieving family to bring foods, such as *paximadia* (dry cookies similar to biscotti), that are associated with mourning.

Funerals

Funerals may occur on any day except Sundays (which honors the Resurrection) or Holy Saturday. In preparation for the funeral, an icon of a saint who had meaning for the deceased is placed in a corner of the casket by his or her head or in the hands of the deceased for the guests to kiss. Some include the *stefana* (marriage crowns) of the deceased in the casket, or they might cut the ribbon that joins the crowns and bury one crown with each member of the couple.

Just before the funeral, the priest may perform the Trisagion service at the funeral home. The deceased and family are then taken to the church, where the priest meets them at the front door and escorts them into the sanctuary. Traditionally the casket is open to acknowledge the reality of death and allow for final respects. It is placed facing east for the second coming. After family members are seated in the front rows, other guests then

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are seated in the church. The priest leads a funeral service with hymns, scripture readings, and prayers. The emphasis is Christ's teachings about eternal life and on requests that God forgive any sins and give rest to the soul of the departed.

After the dismissal prayer, the faithful sing "*Eonia I mnimi*" (May your memory be eternal). The priest invites attendees to bid their final farewells to the deceased. Starting at the rear of the church, guests stop briefly at the casket to look upon the deceased, kiss the icon or the departed, cross him/herself, then pass by the family and briefly express condolences. Traditional phrases of sympathy include (in Greek): "Life to you," "Memory eternal," "Life to us," "May God rest his/her soul," and "May their memory be eternal."

After the attendees and family have said their final farewells, the priest anoints the body in the shape of a cross with oil (and earth), and the casket is closed. He escorts the deceased, carried by the pall bearers, out of the church (Rouvelas 140-141). During the early days in Tarpon Springs, it was not uncommon to take a photograph of the deceased in the coffin to send to relatives in Greece who may have not seen their loved one for many years (**Figure 18**).

Burials

In the past, the bereaved walked in procession from St. Nicholas to Cycadia Cemetery, but today they are transported in a motor vehicle procession. According to Greek Orthodox tradition, the deceased should be buried with their eyes facing east in anticipation of the Second Coming. The ground must be blessed by a priest at the time of burial (Rouvelas 136). For the last time, the priest chants the Trisagion service and then sprinkles dirt on the closed casket in the form of the cross while saying "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein; you are earth and to earth shall you return" (Rouvelas 142-143). As guests file by the grave, each may throw a flower on the casket. Few stay to see the casket lowered into the ground. At the end of the service, the priest may announce the time and place of the *makaria*.

Although not part of officially sanctioned religious services, some burials feature more individualized tributes to the deceased. For example, when local musicians George Soffos and Spiros Skordilis died, their lifelong occupation was acknowledged through a final musical serenade by their colleagues—a folk practice that also occurs in Greece.¹⁰ The gravestones for both bear an engraving of their instrument, the bouzouki.

Following the burial, mourners share a meal (*makaria*) to celebrate the life of the deceased. This is a social custom and not an official church function. Upon arrival guests are offered brandy, then the meal. Fish is usually the main entrée since Christ shared a meal of fish with his disciples after the resurrection. Greek coffee and paximadia are served before or after the entree. (Bucuvalas Greek American Foodways 228). The family may also hold a *makaria* after the forty-day memorial.

¹⁰ For video excerpts of graveside performances for musicians George Soffos and Spiros Skordilis, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-wTNz_evjs or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHX5WoiEkx4>.

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One difference between Greek and Greek American burials is that in Greece, often bodies are exhumed after three years and the bones are transferred to an ossuary where they are placed with those of other family members.

Memorial Observances

The memorial service (*mnimosino*) is particularly important in Greek Orthodoxy. One reason is that the faithful believe that the prayers of the living can intercede for the deceased, who will face judgement at the time of the Second Coming. Memorials usually take place 40 days after the death, then at six months, one year, three years, and on the four Saturdays of Souls during the spring. Most of these occur on Sundays after the ordinary Liturgy—with the exception of several special days of other religious observances. The most important memorial service is the Sunday closest to the fortieth day after death, because Christ remained on earth for forty days after the resurrection. The Saturdays of the Souls commemorate all departed community members (Holy Trinity).

A memorial service appeals for forgiveness and rest for the deceased. It ends with a well-known hymn, "*Eonia I mnimi*"—may his/her memory be eternal. As at the funeral, the family sits in the front rows before the icon of Christ. They provide a symbolic dish called *kolliva* which sits on a small table with candles in front of the church *ikonostasion* during the service and is blessed by the priest. Afterwards, the family shares it with the other congregants. Often the family visits the grave site after church (Rouvelas 145).

In most Greek communities, a few women specialize in making *kolliva* for funerals or memorial services (**Figure 19**). *Kolliva* is assembled in a mound-like shape from boiled wheat, powdered sugar, raisins, ground walnuts, slivered almonds, parsley, sesame, anise and cinnamon, then covered with graham cracker crumbs or breadcrumbs and powdered sugar. Sugarcoated almonds and confectioners' candies form a cross and the initials of the deceased. *Kolliva* is highly symbolic: the mound signifies the grave, wheat connotes rebirth, powdered sugar reflects the soul's purity, and candies embody the sweetness of eternal life (Bucuvalas Greek American Foodways 228-229).

In addition to formal ceremonies, honor and love for the dead can be expressed by visiting the grave site and keeping the grave's memorial candle lit, lighting candles at church and home, donating to the church and other causes, submitting names to the priest for prayers during services, making *prosforo* (the bread used in Liturgies), and scheduling memorial or trisagion services. Aside from special memorial days, family members will visit grave site frequently if not daily after a death for the first 40 days, and to a lesser extent afterwards. They may also include the dead in holiday observances—for example by visiting the grave to light the memorial grave candles with the flame received in church during the Easter liturgy. As noted by Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Pittsburgh:

It is not uncommon, upon visiting the Cemetery, to find individuals praying, lighting candles and burning incense in remembrance for their departed family members. Their sense of continued connection with those who have gone to rest in the Lord is well reflected in the meaning of the word, "Cemetery," which in the original Greek means, "a place of sleep." Those who have "fallen asleep" in the Lord are also remembered through the beautiful hymn, "May their memory be eternal."

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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 start the season in early spring when the winds quiet and the water warms. May through October is the busiest season, but boats must dodge the late summer storms. 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. Two or three men usually go out on a sponge boat. The captain usually addresses navigation and 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.

The location of major sponge beds is widely known, but most captains discover abundant sites and mark them on charts, which they may pass on to worthy younger divers or captains. There are many types of sponges, but only a few are commercially viable. Divers must be able to identify and harvest those that will sell. 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. Today they wear modified scuba gear, with an air line to a compressor on the boat that supplies air. However, Nicholas Toth still makes the copper and brass diving helmets, which are used on tourist exhibition boats and bought by collectors.

Religious traditions remain important to many spongers. The pilot houses of Greek-owned craft inevitably include icons—especially of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of mariners and of Tarpon Springs—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. There are many stories of the sponge fishermen praying to St. Nicholas or St. Michael during dangerous storms, and being miraculously saved.

Back in port, the crew cleans the sponges of their decomposing skins—which often lends a strong fishy smell to the Docks. The crew sorts the sponges, then the captain calls buyers to view the catch and make offers (**Figure 20**). After a sale, the captain or owner is reimbursed for food and boat expenses, and each crew member receives a share proportional to his work. The boats try to commence another trip as soon as possible, but if weather prevents it, the spongers complete maintenance tasks such as cleaning and repairing boats or equipment.

Merchants are central to domestic and international distribution of sponges. Many belong to families that have worked in the business for generations. 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 their warehouses, sponges are processed or cut according to order specifications. Some are sold in their natural state, but trimmed to a size appropriate to the intended function. For cosmetic and other uses, sponges are bleached in successive chemical baths until they attain a yellow color. After sponges are trimmed to size, they are compacted into bales by a sponge press and shipped.

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Music

Greece has produced a rich variety of traditional, popular, and art music. Traditional music reveals historical influences from Byzantium, Turkey, and the Balkans, and includes both rural and urban traditions. Westernized song and music arose in the mid-19th century. Popular and contemporary Greek music often reflects influences from Europe, America, and the Middle East.

In the early 20th century, professional musicians traveled throughout the US to Greek enclaves, labor camps, and coffeehouses to entertain the men who first came to work. As communities formed, musicians entertained at weddings, picnics, religious festivals, and name day celebrations. By 1910, music clubs appeared in major urban areas as places to socialize, eat, drink, and enjoy music and dance. During this period, priests and others in America began to compose new Greek Orthodox liturgical music that abandoned the traditional Byzantine modes and single vocal line. The new music with European scales was often presented in a westernized manner through choirs accompanied by organs (Bucuvalas & Frangos) (**Figure 21**).

During the post-World War II era, the dominant musical instrument in Greek night clubs became the bouzouki. The 1960s saw a resurgence of the Greek club scene across America as the hit movies *Never On Sunday* (1960) and *Zorba the Greek* (1964) generated strong mainstream interest in Greek food, music, and clubs. *Bouzoukia*, or night clubs, usually offered celebrity vocalists singing Europeanized songs along with traditional music geared towards participatory dance. In the 1990s, the presentation of Greek music underwent a major change. Many who had left inner city communities turned increasingly to American music. As demand decreased, the number of *bouzoukia* diminished. Clubs and restaurants often switched to “Greek Nights” that offered live music only on weekends. To survive, most bands changed their focus to festivals, weddings, baptisms, and dinner dances and they decreased the number of musicians. Keyboards often replaced the rhythm section or lead instruments like the clarinet. Bands that once performed as a four- or five-piece orchestra were reduced to one vocalist and two musicians (**Figure 22**). In addition, disc jockeys co-opted many gigs that previously required live music (Bucuvalas & Frangos).

Today, music remains an essential part of Greek social events. The Greektown community has always maintained musical traditions performed by individuals and groups in homes, church, social organizations, and clubs or restaurants. For example, Greek Orthodox services include Byzantine chants and newer choral music. Receptions for weddings and baptisms usually feature 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. *Nisiotika*, the lively music of the Aegean islands, is particularly popular among Greektown residents, who mostly hail from the Dodecanese islands. A few 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 a master of Kalymnian *tsabouna* music (Lomax 96, 98) (**Figure 23**). More often, local musicians perform in ensembles with electrified bouzouki, keyboard, guitar, clarinet, and/or drum set.

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From the 1920s through the 1960s, numerous small independent Greek record companies appeared on the scene. From 1946 through 1954, Grecophon Record Company, founded by Skevos Zembillas, issued rarely recorded Greek island music (**Figure 24**). Beginning in 1946, Zembillas recorded local musicians at his studio at 530 Athens Street—which was in a gift and record shop owned by his father. Zembillas realized that very little Greek island music was commercially available. With Louis Peronis, Tarpon Springs' finest violinist, a local *laouto* or lute player, and himself on vocals, he recorded traditional island songs. He later formally established Grecophon Records in 1947 in Chicago (Bucuvalas Walk).

Over the years there have been many Greek music venues in Tarpon Springs, but the one at 508 Athens Street was one of the most long-lasting and popular. Its history reflects the way that Greeks listened to music after they came to America. For several decades, the Samarkos Coffee House located there was not only a place where men drank coffee, but also listened to music. It became a nightclub called Port Said in the 1960s, but new owners changed the name to Zorba's in 1969. Over the years, it was an integral part of a national circuit of Greek clubs at which many outstanding and prominent musicians performed (**Figure 25**). Some of those musicians, such as Greek music icons George Katsaros and Spiros Skordilis became permanent local residents. Unfortunately, a fire damaged the building and closed the club in early 2015. Nevertheless, music is still offered in other Greektown venues (Bucuvalas Walk).

Cultural/Historical Integrity

In Tarpon Springs, Greek cultural activities, practices, memories, and other cultural traditions have been tenaciously maintained. And since the first major wave of Greeks arrived in Tarpon Springs in 1905 to work in the sponge industry, Cycadia Cemetery has been the major site for community burials, replete with graveside ceremonies and on-going memorial observances. Grave markers reflect Greek heritage and the Greek Orthodox religion. While there have been some gradual changes in style or materials, grave sites have maintained a high level of consistency in terms of iconography, accessory items, and associated rituals.

The patterns in both funerary monuments and burial rituals at Cycadia Cemetery represent important examples of Greek funerary arts and ritual that have been both retained and somewhat modified in Tarpon Springs. Some of the funerary traditions, such as grave marker imagery reflecting the sponge industry, are not present in any other place in the US, but are a result of the unique geographical and historical patterns that promoted a Greek-based sponge industry in Tarpon Springs. The graves of several nationally prominent musicians reflect an important aspect of Greek culture—which is further emphasized by music-related grave imagery and inscriptions. They are also important because many of the venues in which the musicians performed and people gathered are now gone, so the graves of particular musicians may be the only tangible link to this aspect of Greek American social history.

Cycadia is arguably the most culturally and historically Greek cemetery in the United States. Although Greek burials in church-maintained cemeteries are entirely Greek Orthodox, Greek grave sites in church and secular cemeteries around the country often do not present the full array of traditional elements and accessories (e.g.,

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incense, candle holders, memorial rituals) as consistently as those in Cycadia Cemetery (Metropolitan Nikitas¹¹). Moreover, the unique social history of the Greek community of Tarpon Springs is reflected in the imagery related to the sponge industry on many gravestones. That is not typical of other cemeteries. Greek communities arose in urban and sometimes rural places as new immigrants sought employment in local industries, but their work is rarely referenced on grave markers. For example, many Greek community members in Los Angeles worked in the film industry, yet it is not reflected on grave markers (**Figure 26**). Likewise many in Lowell, MA, worked in the textile mills, but there is no depiction on grave markers. At Greek burials around the country, the most common references to ethnicity seem to be the Byzantine cross and the candle holder (**Figures 27, 28, 29**).

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 Cycadia Cemetery. Her research, as well as that of scholars who conducted past surveys, verifies the tenacity of local Greek and maritime culture in Tarpon Springs and in particular at Cycadia, and validates the status of the Cycadia Cemetery as an important traditional cultural property.

¹¹ Metropolitan Nikitas, born Nikitas Lulias in Tarpon Springs, is the Metropolitan Bishop of the Metropolis of the Dardanelles, under the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. He also is Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute in Berkeley, CA. Before being selected as metropolitan of the Dardanelles in Turkey, he served as the first Metropolitan bishop of the Greek Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Previously he was Associate Pastor at SS. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Merrillville, IN; chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago; Director of Development for International Orthodox Christian Charities; and Pastor of St. Demetrios Orthodox Church, Chicago. In addition, he often visits Orthodox parishes, serving the Divine Liturgy or teaching adult classes in Orthodox Christianity. A metropolitan is similar to a bishop or an archbishop in western Christian denominations.

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Cycadia Cemetery

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n/a

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Cycadia Cemetery

Name of Property

Pinellas County, Florida

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n/a

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Verbal Boundary Description

Cycadia Cemetery is bounded by East Tarpon Avenue to the south, Jasmine Road to the east, a fence to the north, and Cemetery Road to the west. It is located on 30 acres within Tarpon Springs, with the main entrance at 1105 East Tarpon Avenue (SR-582), approximately 1000 feet east of US-19.

According to the Pinellas County Property Appraiser the legal description is:

Tarpon Springs official map blk 117, lots 3 & 4 blk 118, lot 4, blk 119, lots 1 & 4, blk 120, lots 1 thru 4 incl blk 125, lots 1 & 2, blk 126, lot 1 and vac rds between all less rd r/w (in 07-27-16) and less rd take desc in o.r. 16538/2343 cont 28.25ac(c) in 07-27-16s south of E Pine St (Cycadia Cemetery) per deed book 1114 pg 497.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries are historically associated with Cycadia Cemetery and defined by the Pinellas County Property Appraiser.

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n/a

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Additional Documentation (Figures, plans, historic photos)

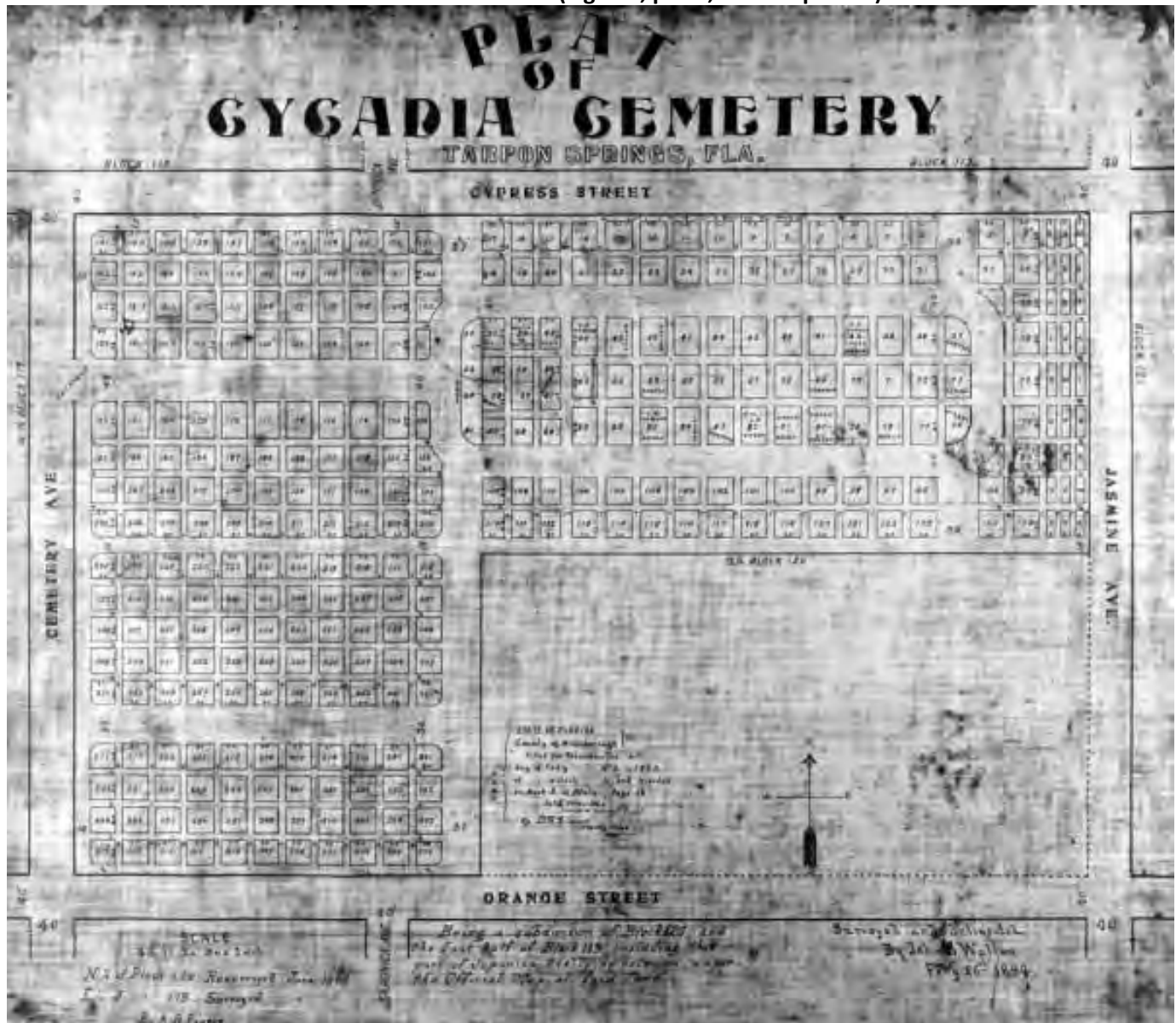


Figure 1. Plat of Cycadia cemetery-Tarpon Springs, Florida. 19--. Black & white photonegative, 3 x 5 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/5304>>, accsd 23 July 2018.

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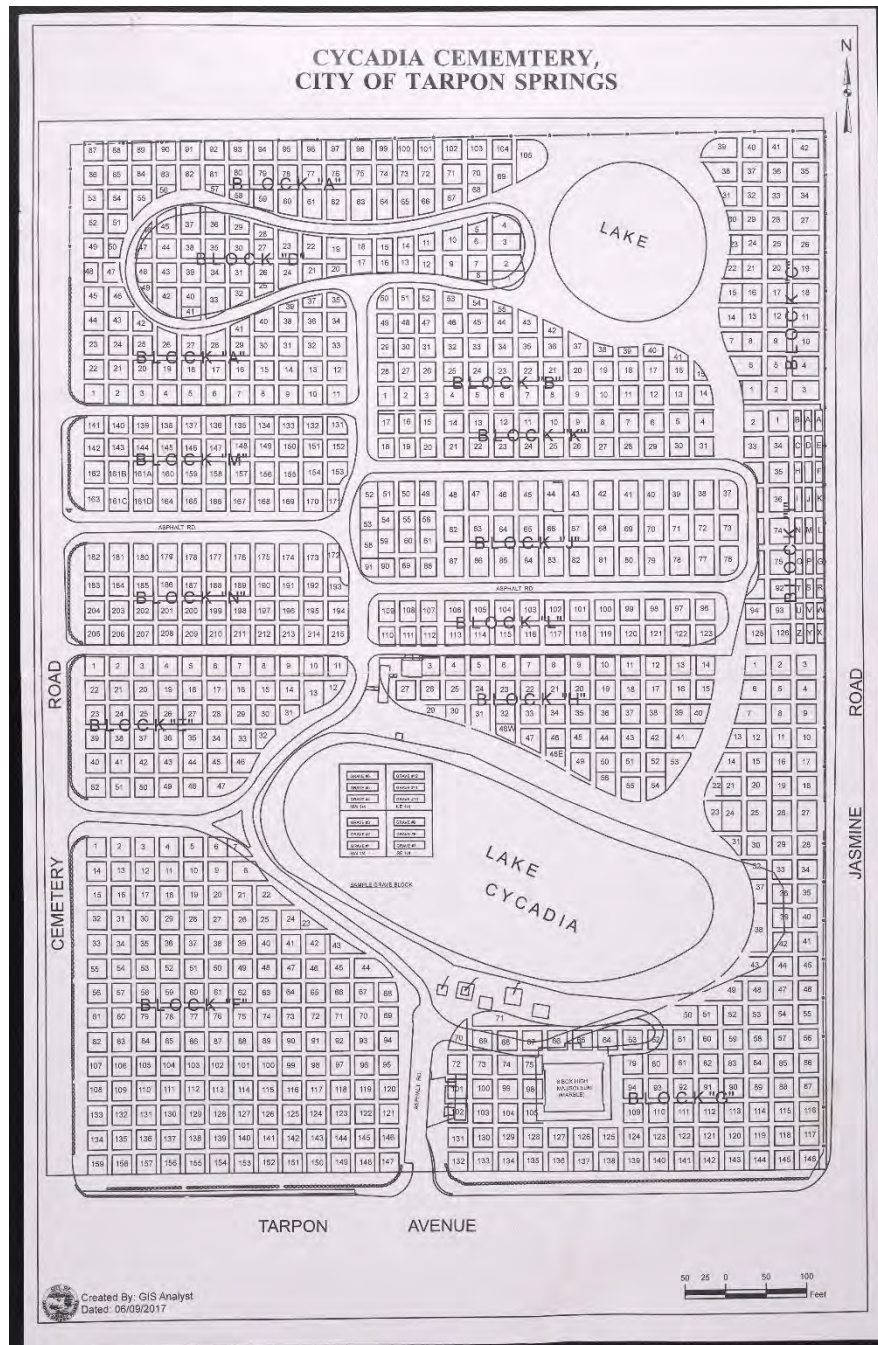


Figure 2. Cycadia Cemetery – current map. City of Tarpon Springs.

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Figure 3. Grave in the First Cemetery of Athens, Greece, with incense burner, candle holder, Byzantine cross and marble slab.

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Figure 4. Cemetery in Kalymnos, Greece, facing north. Note marble sarcophagi and accessories. The largest island group in Tarpon Springs is from Kalymnos.

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Figure 5. Cemetery in Kalymnos, Greece, facing west. Note anchor and candle box.

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Figure 6. Cemetery in Kalymnos, Greece, facing west. Note image of boat, candle houses, Byzantine crosses.

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Figure 7. Cemetery in Kalymnos, Greece. Note image of man in diving suit inside the candle house.

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Figure 8. Mihalis and Maria Mougros bringing flowers, candles, incense to family gravesite. Photo by Eleni Christopoulos-Lekkas.

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Figure 9. St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, facing south

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Figure 10. Blessing of Boats, Metropolitan Nikitas, Valadi Kouros, Fr. Vassilis, Capt Karistinos

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Figure 11. Divers praying in St. Nicholas. Courtesy of Lekkas Photography

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Figure 12. Priests walking in Epiphany procession from St. Nicholas to Spring Bayou.

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Figure 13. Cross retrieved, Epiphany 2014. Photo by Eleni Christopoulos-Lekkas.

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Figure 14. Reverend Father Michael Eaccarino, Protopresbyter, blesses the tomb of Christ on Holy Friday

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Figure 15. Holy Friday procession with kouvouklion.

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Figure 16. Katerina Zaronias wears mourning while making prosforo. Photo by Eleni Christopoulos-Lekkas

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Figure 17. Wreath for deceased on sponge boat. Photo by Jim Tuten/Tampa Tribune.

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Figure 18. Outside St. Nicholas Church, mourners pose for a photo with the deceased before the burial, circa 1920s. At the time, it was a widely accepted practice to photograph the deceased. Especially in the case of immigrants, this might be the only glimpse that the families back home would have had of their loved ones for many years. City of Tarpon Springs.

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Figure 19. Irene Koutelas makes *kollivo* for the memorial service of her cousin.

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Figure 20. Buyers view the largest sponge haul in decades by Captain Karistinos on the Anastasi, 9-10-10.

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Figure 21. Byzantine choir The Damaskenos, led by Father George Anastassiou (1900-1962), poses on the steps leading to the Spring Bayou pier in 1934. Courtesy of Esther Jordan Raptis.

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Figure 22. Elias Poulos and Spiro Skordilis sing, accompanied by George Soffos-bouzouki and Dino Theofilos-keyboard, Night in the Islands, 8-6-2011.

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Figure 23. Born on Kalymnos, Nikitas Tsimouris (1924-2001) played the tsabouna, a type of island bagpipe made from a goatskin.

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Figure 24. GrecoPhon 3A-Kalymniki Sousta with S. Zembillas & I. Maillis.

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Figure 25. Rebetika concert at Zorba's nightclub, 1-24-14. L-r dumbek player, Dino Siandris/guitar, Elias Poulos/vocals, Irene Karavokiros/vocals, Leonidas Zafiris/bouzouki, Dino Theofilos/keyboard.

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Figure 26. Charles P. Skouras, movie producer. Crypt at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Los Angeles.



Figure 27. Peter Chiklis & Nellie Sarakos Chiklis, Woodlawn Cemetery, Lowell, MA.

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Figure 28. E. D. Koureli grave with candle holder, engraved Byzantine cross, Philadelphia. Courtesy of Kostis Kourelis.

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Figure 29. Cemetery with small Greek section, Somersworth, NH. Photo by Tina Bucuvalas.

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County and State

n/a

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Photographs

Name of Property: Cycadia CemeteryCity or Vicinity: Tarpon SpringsCounty: PinellasState: FLPhotographer: Tina BucuvalasDate Photographed: various

Description of photograph(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photos are sorted by section, page number, and order on the page. Unless otherwise noted, photographs are facing west and were taken by Tina Bucuvalas.

1. View of southeast corner with boundary metal fence, looking southeast.
2. View of southwest corner with boundary metal fence, looking southwest.
3. View of northern boundary metal fence, looking northwest.
4. View of eastern boundary metal fence looking east. Jasmine Road and Rose Cemetery can be seen through the fence.
5. View of main entrance opening onto East Tarpon Avenue, looking south.
6. Smaller entrance with metal gate opening onto Cemetery Road, looking to the west.
7. Open western gate entrance to Cemetery Road, looking west.
8. Northeast sector lake, view facing east.
9. Frame vernacular city office building erected in 2006, view facing southeast.
10. Pre-constructed galvanized steel utility sheds, view facing south.
11. Non-historic mausoleum of masonry construction, view facing southeast.
12. Mausoleum close-up of Theodore & Christina Tagaras in double-casket space, facing east.
13. Elevated lawn cemetery sections, view facing east.
14. Columbarium for cremation urns, view facing east.
15. Cantonis private two-crypt mausoleum, view facing north.
16. Iron fencing around Tiliakos family plot, facing west.
17. Bench at Theophilopoulos family plot, view facing west.
18. Non-Greek graves of Meres and Salley families
19. Marble slab over the grave of sponge merchant Drosos M. Alahuzos (1900-1955), facing west.
20. Byzantine cross on the grave marker of Faneromeni Hatzileris (1946-2017), view facing northwest.
21. Sponge boat on the grave marker of Michael A. Houllis (1887-1975)
22. Sponge boat on the grave marker of Georgiou/Vatikiotis families
23. Sponge boat on the grave marker of Costa Tsataros (1926-2001)
24. Sponge boat on the grave marker of Christodoulos S. Coutroulis (1885-1974)
25. Boat building scene on the grave marker of Phillip M. Sarris (1921-1977)
26. Sponge clippers on the grave marker of George C. Andriotis (1913-1981)
27. Anchor on the grave marker of Nikita M. Stergos (1893-1986)
28. Mike Smolios (1894-1952) seated in front of *klouva* (cell) at the Sponge Exchange
29. Propeller guard inscription on grave marker of Gabriel Peterson (1880-1938)
30. Diving helmet on the grave marker of John "The Greek" Maillis (1918-2002)

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31. Ceramic portrait in diving suit of John C. Mangos (1892-1965)
32. Ceramic portrait in diving suit of Fotios Lekakis (1919-1987)
33. Laser etched portrait of Philip G. Fatolitis (1923-2012) inside diving helmet
34. Ancient Greek columns on graves of Emmanuel (1872-1944) and Maria Stamatiades (1895-1932)
35. Ancient Greek columns on the grave of Alexandra Lambriano (1893-1947) from Halki
36. Ancient Greek columns on the grave of James J. Topouzis (1884-1956) from Constantinople
37. Matsis grave marker with map of Rhodes, back of grave marker and facing east.
38. Billias grave marker stating George Born 1870 Naxos Greece Died 1929 and Mary Born 1880 Calymnos Greece Died 1954
39. Grave marker for Costas Moutsatsos (1878-1930) from Aegina
40. Marble sarcophagus grave for Sokratis Leoni (1896-1923) and Marego Leoni (1872-1925)
41. Cement curb around grave of Themelina Makryllou (1892-1981)
42. Tzaveris-Hazimanolis family plot surrounded by marble posts linked with chains
43. Wooden Byzantine cross for John Tsangarinos (1909-1985)
44. Wooden cross on the grave of Evangelos Saroukos (d. 1995)
45. Tear-drop marker for sponge diver Nick Demetrios (d. 1913)
46. Old-style candle holder on grave of Evdokia Lambros (d. 1991), newer one on Kalodoukas grave
47. Incense burner (*livanistiri*) next to Byzantine cross on Skevos D. Zaharopoulos (1927-2002) grave
48. Greek flags, anchor, and incense burner on Skourellos grave site.
49. Grave marker of George Katsaros (1888-1997), facing west.
50. Grave marker of Amalia Baka Vasilis (1897-1979), facing west
51. Grave marker of George Anastasiou (1900-1962), facing west
52. Grave marker of Spiros Skordilis (1930-2013), facing west
53. Grave marker of George Soffos (1953-2013), facing west
54. Grave of Mother Superior Thekla Makris (1910-1992), facing north.

Cycadia Cemetery

1105 East Tarpon Ave.
Tarpon Springs, Pinellas Co.
Florida, 34689

UTM:

A: 17R 329232 3115037

B: 17R 329520 3115033

C: 17R 329511 3114632

D: 17R 329227 3114636

USGS Quad: Elfers

Datum: WGS84

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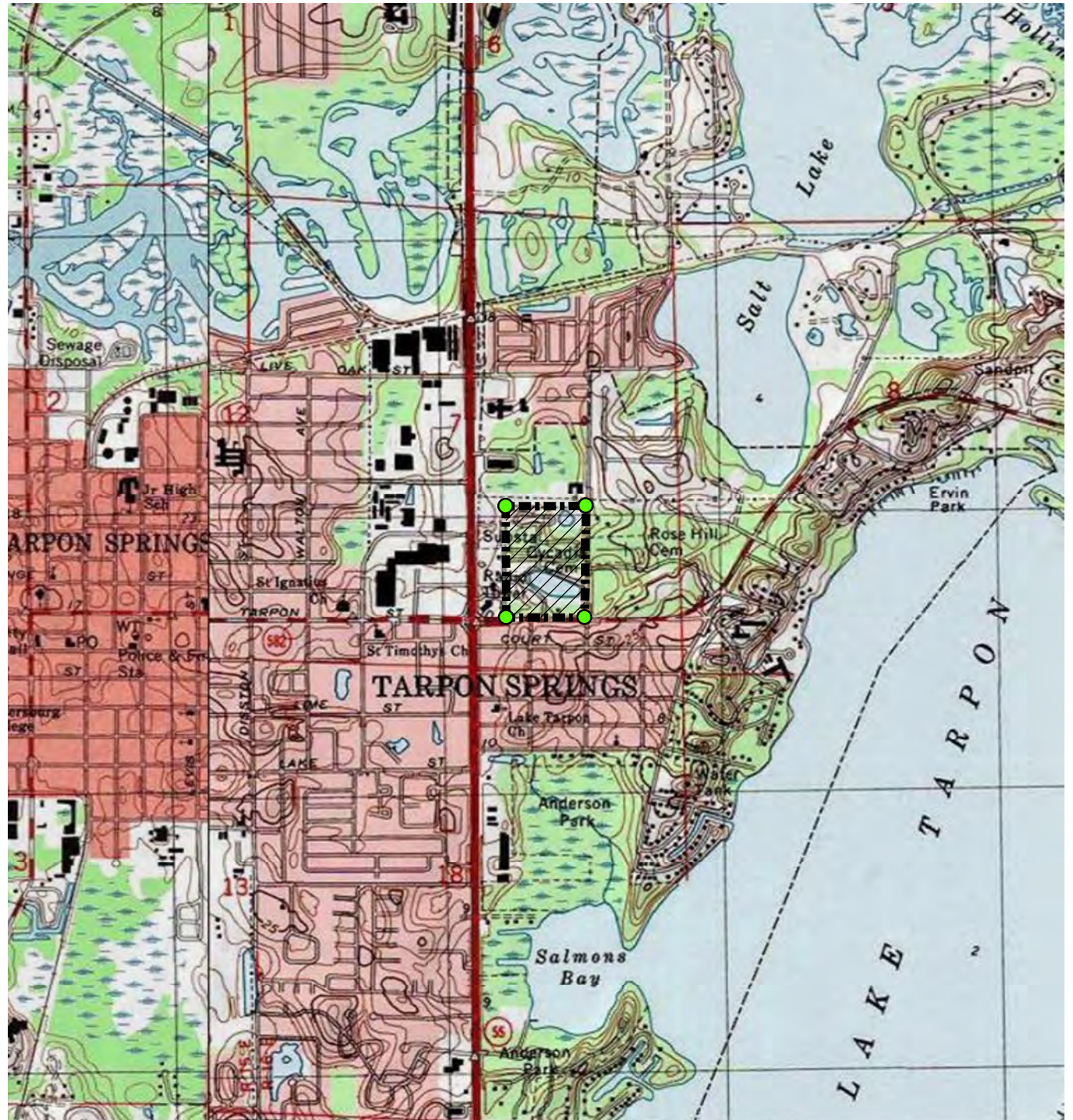
 Cycadia Cemetery

Date: 10/26/2018

1:24,000

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet
0 250 500 1,000 Meters

Source: © 2013 National Geographic
Society, i-cubed



Cycadia Cemetery

1105 East Tarpon Ave.
Tarpon Springs, Pinellas Co.
Florida, 34689

UTM:

A: 17R 329232 3115037

B: 17R 329520 3115033

C: 17R 329511 3114632

D: 17R 329227 3114636

USGS Quad: Elfers

Datum: WGS84

Legend

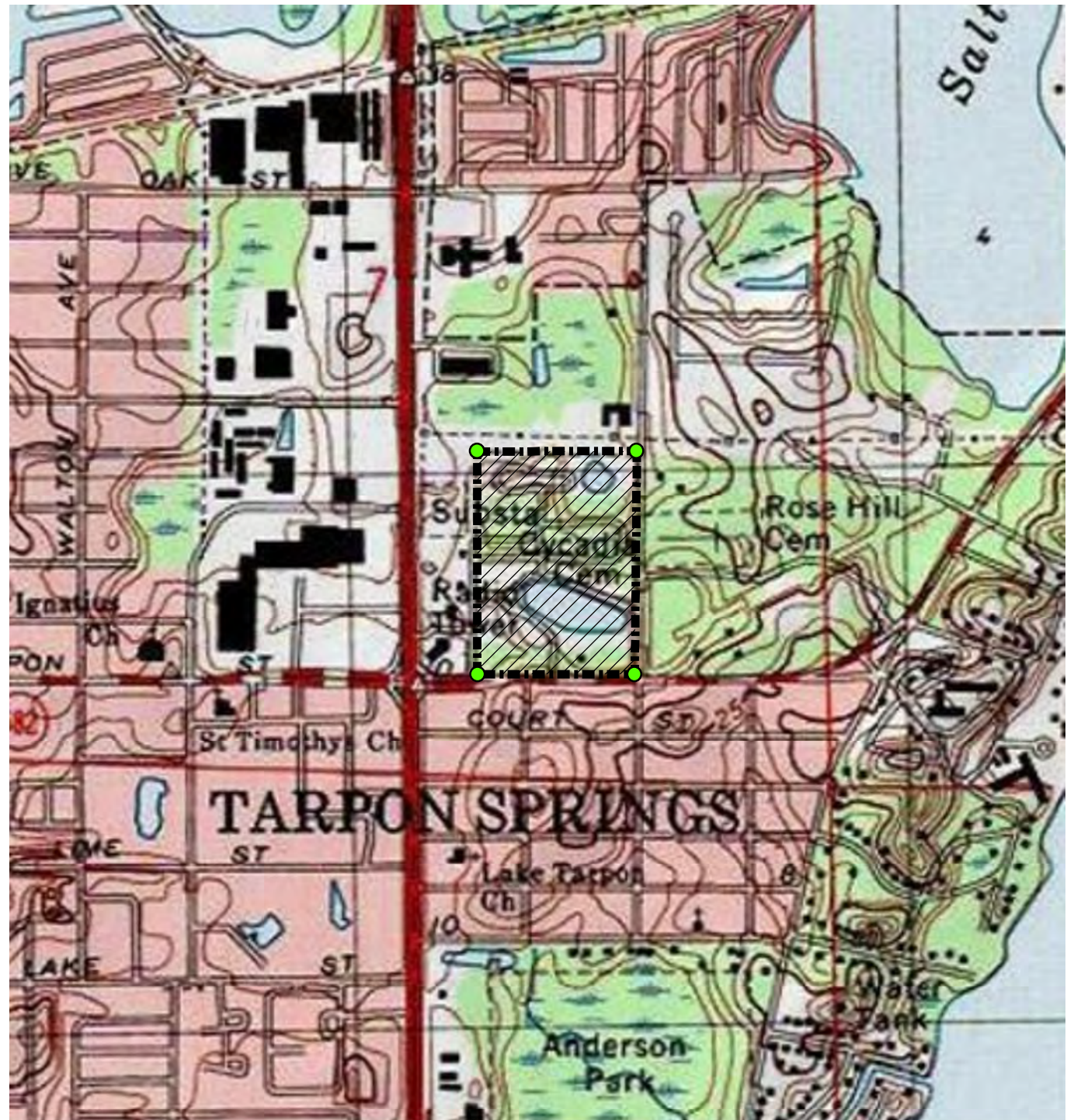
 Cycadia Cemetery

Date: 10/26/2018

1:12,000

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet
0 125 250 500 Meters

Source: © 2013 National Geographic
Society, i-cubed



Cycadia Cemetery

1105 East Tarpon Ave.
Tarpon Springs, Pinellas Co.
Florida, 34689

Lat/Long:

A: 28.149953, -82.739077

B: 28.149955, -82.736148

C: 28.146340, -82.736184

D: 28.146340, -82.739071

UTM:

A: 17R 329232 3115037

B: 17R 329520 3115033

C: 17R 329511 3114632

D: 17R 329227 3114636

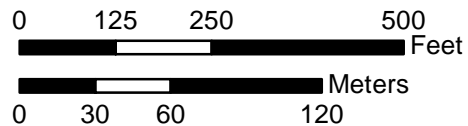
Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Cycadia Cemetery

Date: 10/26/2018

1:3,000



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye,
Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus
DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and
the GIS User Community





ΠΑΠΑΜΑΡΚΟΥ

ΠΑΠΑΜΑΡΚΟΥ

ΤΕΙΚΟΥΡΑΣ



BRONN
MAY 10 1890
OCT 10 1960

CROSS
MAY 10 1890
OCT 10 1960

DENTIS OUNDOBANKIS
MAR 6 1892
APR 14 1960

LYNN CEMETERY
SECTION
A

JOHN D.
PHARMINGOS
MAY 27, 1901

JOHN D.
PHARMINGOS
MAY 27, 1901

FANNIE PATILLIS
JAN. 7, 1883 — JULY 11, 1962

AT REST 1880























CANTONIS

MICHAEL GEORGE
MAY 25, 1915
NOVEMBER 17, 2009



ANASTASIA HARRAS
JANUARY 11, 1927
AUGUST 24, 2014



INBI

GEORGE

1906-1960

KALOTINA

1890-1960

TILIAKOS

THEOPHILOPOULOS

VERY REVEREND
FATHER TRYFON
JUNE 6 1935
OCT 18 2005

PRESBYTERA
ELENI
JULY 25 1936
MAR 22 2011

ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
PROTOPRESBYTER 1975 - 2005

FATHER TRYFON

CHRIS
FEB 1 1928
FEB 26 2006

PARR

GOLDIE
MAY 3 1930



KALIOPE A. LERIOS
MAR. 13 1923
JULY 11 1946

DROSOS M. ALAHUZOS

MAR. 11 1900 FEB. 20 1955



ANTONIOS T
DEC. 3, 1891
OCT. 30, 1992

EMMANUEL M. ALAHUZOS

ΕΓΓΕΝΗΟΝ
ΤΟ ΚΑΛΥΜΝΟ ΕΤΟΣ 18
ΑΠΕΒΙΩΣΕΝ
ΤΗΝ 27^η ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ 19

ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΓΙΩΤΗΝ ΜΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΝ
ΠΡΟΣΦΕΡΟΜΕΝ ΩΣ ΕΝΘΥΜΙΟΝ Τ
ΠΟΥ ΕΛΑΤΡΕΒΕ ΤΟΣΑ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΔΙΑ
ΣΤΟ ΜΗΝΗΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΘΝΙΑ.
ΠΑΝ ΜΕ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΙ
Ω ΑΝΤΑΜΟΡΟΥΜΕΝ.



HATZILERIS

PRESBYTERA
TANEROMEN
MAY 15 1916
AUG 5 2017

EMMANUEL N.
HATZILERIS
DEC. 24 1953
AUG. 22 1986

CHRISTIE

SECTION
F



HOULLIS



FATHER
MICHAEL A.
AUG. 15, 1887
JAN. 6, 1975

MOTHER
ANASTASIA K.
MAR. 13, 1894
AUG. 13, 1983



Georgiou

Vatikiotis



WILLARD C
SR

FEDEMICHAH

KWAPIL

TSATAROS

COSTA
SEPT. 28, 1926
AUG. 24, 2001

COMING HOME



Small plaque on the ground in front of the headstone.



MAILLIS



NICHOLAS P.
AUG. 12 1909
AUG. 11 1997

NOTHING NOW IS LEFT
BUT A MAJESTIC
MEMORY OF OUR
LOVE THAT WILL LIVE
WITH ME FOREVER



NICKIE N.
MAR. 2. 1919
OCT. 4. 2007



COUTROULIS

FATHER
CHRISTODOULOS S.
JAN. 29. 1885
OCT. 2. 1974

MOTHER
MARIA K.
OCT. 21. 1892
JULY 7. 1993



KOUREMETIS

JOHN M.
MAY 25 1906
AUG. 21 1968

LULA C.
MAY 30 1915
DEC. 21 2010



HE IS JUST AWAY
PHILLIP M. SARRIS
SEPTEMBER 22, 1921
AUGUST 31, 1977
MASTER BOAT BUILDER



BELOVED MOTHER
ANASTASIA L.
OCT. 19, 19
AUG. 26, 19





GEORGE C.
1913 — 1981

BELOVED FATHER

CHLOE
1925 — 1999

BELOVED MOTHER

ANDRIOTIS



NIKITA M. STERGOS

SEPT. 15. 1893

MAY 31. 1986

FATHER



MIKE

SEPT. 15,
1894



MAY 10,
1952



MIK
SE
MA
TO THE



IN MEMORIAM
GABRIEL PETERSON
1880 — 1938

INVENTOR OF THE REMOVABLE
PROPELLER GUARD
U. S. PAT. 1713446
MAY 14, 1929

MAILLIS



JOHN C.
JUNE 9 1918
DEC. 13. 2002



MARY L.
AUG 12 1932
MAY 26, 2006

JOSEPH
APRIL 20, 1920
AUGUST 23, 1994

JOSEPHINE
1920 — 1993

MANGOS

JOHN C.
1892 — 1965



DEGENHARDT

DS

Gravestone

Gravestone

APHRODITE
KOUROUNIS
SEPT. 26, 1929
APRIL 22, 1987



FOTIOS D.
LEKAKIS
JAN. 6, 1919
NOV. 19, 1987





*The Last of Tarpon's
Hard Hat Divers*

FATOLITIS

PHILIP G.

DEC. 16, 1923 — FEB. 4, 2012



U.S. COAST GUARD & U.S. NAVY

Loving Husband, Father & Granddaddy



EMMANUEL STAMATIADIS
EK NIZOU DODECANESE
OCT 6 1872 - APR 22 1942

MARIA EM. STAMATIADIS
EK NIZOU DODECANESE
MAY 28 1895 - JUNE 5 1932

MARIA TSOURAKIS
1888 - 1927

STAVROS N. SAKELLARIDES
EK NIZOU DODECANESE
NOV 3 1887 - NOV 14 1928



ALEXANDRA LAMBRIANO
EN HALKIS
BORN 1893 DIED MAR. 26, 1947

IOANNIS TANATHIS
EK HALKIS
BORN 1891 DIED JAN. 16, 1946

JAMES J. TOPOUZIS
BORN CONSTANTINOPLE
MAR 13, 1884 — MAY 30, 1956

SAVAS C.
NOV. 10, 1891
OCT. 24, 1950

GEORGIADIS
DEVELOPMENT IN
THE WAR
OCT 24 1950

ERIFI
MAR
MAR

MATSIS

KREMASTI

PSINTHOS

RODOS

ISLAND



PLEASE
NO PARKING
FUNERAL

PLEASE
NO PARKING
FUNERAL





GEORGE
BORN 1870
NAXOS, GREECE
DIED 1929

BILLIAS



MARY
BORN 1880
CALYMNOS, GREECE
DIED 1954



COSTAS MOUTSATSOS

ΕΝΘΑΔΕ ΚΕΙΤΕ
ΚΩΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ Β. ΜΟΥΤΣΑΤΣΟΣ
ΕΞ ΑΙΔΙΝΗΣ
ΕΓΕΝΝΗΘΗΝ ΑΠΡ. 1878
ΑΠΕΒΙΩΣΕΝ ΙΑΝ. 1930



SOLOS DIAMANDIS
1901 — 1951

EPIFANIO MARINO
1899-1923
ANTONI
1872-1923

DIAMANTIS LEONIS
1890 — 1960



CHRISAUGI KELOUDES
AUG. 21, 1905
DEC. 17, 2001

CHRISAUGI KELOUDES
AUG. 21, 1905
DEC. 17, 2001





KANARIS

JACOB
FEB 4 1900
MAY 23 1980

SINA
O 1901
11 1980



ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΣΑΡΟΥΚΟΣ

NICK DEMETRIOS
MAY 18, 1913
#42

42 NICK
DEMETRIOS
MAY 18, 1913

42



ZAHAROPOULOS

SKYVOS D

1927





OS
MIRRELL
NOV. 22, 1920
OCT. 16, 1997



SKOURELLOS
TOS
15 1920
17 1982
KALIOPE
DEC. 31. 1928
SEPT. 28. 2012





NESTOR M.
OCT 5, 1907
MAY 17, 1973

NAFSIKA
AUG 10, 1907
JUN 2, 1973

CHALLOURAKIS



CHALLOURAKIS

IS
1899
1973

KATSAROS

MA

GIANESKIS

AMALIA VASILIA
AUG. 15, 1899 MAR. 28, 1979



GEORGE
ANASTASSIOU
NOV. 21, 1899
AUG. 21, 1962

RUTH COX
BORN 7, 1900
AUG. 2, 1962

IS SIMOS
1964

KOULIANOS



SKORDILIS

SPYRIDON
JULY 20, 1930
JUNE 15, 2013



KALLIOPE "KAY"
MARCH 20, 1936



GEORGE EMANUEL
SOFFOS

NOV. 6.
1953



JAN. 8.
2013

LOVING FATHER, SON,
BROTHER AND FRIEND





MAKRIS

MOTHER SUPERIOR
THEKLA MAKRIS
FIRST GREEK ORTHODOX NUN
NORTH & SOUTH AMERICA
DECEASED AUG. 19, 1992

NO
FISHING

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Cycadia Cemetery

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: FLORIDA, Pinellas

Date Received: 2/5/2019 Date of Pending List: 2/28/2019 Date of 16th Day: 3/15/2019 Date of 45th Day: 3/22/2019 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100003522

Nominator: Other Agency, SHPO

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG	

☒ Accept ☐ Return ☐ Reject 3/20/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The cemetery is really an extension of the Tarpon Springs HD, which serves as a TCP. The burial practices, customs, and funerary artwork found in the cemetery reflect the ongoing cultural traditions of the Greek community. The cemetery is a TCP, with Ethnic heritage and art as primary areas of significance, although only at the state and local levels.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : Yes

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

GUS M. BILIRAKIS
12TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
DIGITAL COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
VICE-CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0912

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2112 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0912
(202) 225-5755

DISTRICT OFFICES:
(727) 232-2921

NEW PORT RICHEY OFFICE
7132 LITTLE ROAD
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 34654-5514

TARPON SPRINGS OFFICE
ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE CAMPUS
BILIRAKIS BUILDING ROOM 38
38500 US HWY 19 NORTH

November 13, 2018

National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear National Register Review Board:

I am pleased to express my strong support for the nomination of Cycadia Cemetery to be added to the National Register (NR) of Historic Places.

Cycadia Cemetery is located in the historic City of Tarpon Springs, Florida, which has the highest percentage of Greek Americans of any city in the United States. In 1905, John Cocoris, a Greek businessman, introduced the technique of sponge diving to Tarpon Springs by recruiting divers and crew members from the Greek islands of Aegina, Hydra, Kalymnos, Symi, and Halki. The sponge trade soon became one of the leading maritime industries in Florida and the most important industry in Tarpon Springs, generating millions of dollars a year. Cycadia Cemetery has served as the final resting place for many of these early Greek immigrants, their descendants, and some of the area's most prominent families for more than 130 years.

As a second generation Greek American and as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I urge you to give this nomination your most serious consideration, considering the cultural significance and uniqueness of Cycadia Cemetery, likely the most culturally and historically Greek cemetery in the United States.

Sincerely,



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



**Consulate General of Greece
Tampa, Florida, U.S.A.**

Tampa, 16 November 2018
A.P.F. 46/40/AS 569

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been recently informed by Ms Bucuvalas, Tarpon Springs' Curator of Arts and Historical Resources, about the nomination of the Cycadia Cemetery in this city to the National Register of Historic Places.

Tarpon Springs is a truly unique place, I believe, for both United States history and the Greek collective conscious. It is a place whose history is directly connected to the arrival of a large number of Greek immigrants, their success and their development, together with the development of the city and the surrounding area. The large Greek population of Tarpon Springs eventually led to a substantial Greek-American population in the entire region.

As a matter of fact, this population is the reason why the Greek Consulate General is located in Tampa and not in Miami, where all the other European Consulates are to be found.

From this point of view, the Cycadia Cemetery is, clearly, an integral part of the Greek-American community's current culture and its history. At the same time, it adds to the cultural diversity of the United States, a country which prides itself on this.

Therefore, I believe that it is indeed fitting to give national recognition to Cycadia Cemetery by listing it on the National Register of Historic Places for local, state, and national significance.

Sincerely,

Dimitrios Sparos
Consul General of Greece





December 5, 2018

National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the proposal submitted by Dr. Tina Bucuvalas regarding the Cycadia Cemetery in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

While it may seem strange to many that one should receive a request to have a cemetery on the list of historic places in this country, it is also important to remember that cemeteries can be understood and seen as a treasury of culture, history, language, architecture, and customs. A prime example of this can be seen in the Cycadia cemetery and it is this treasury and the various expressions there which must be documented and preserved.

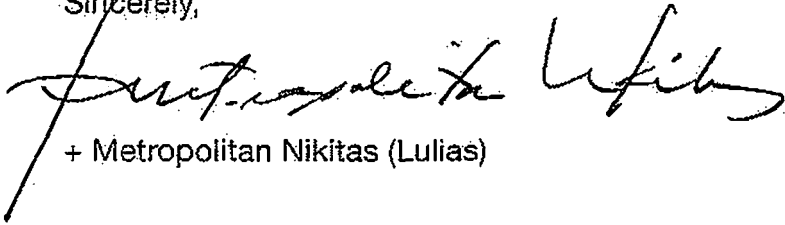
As a native son of Tarpon Springs, I remember my visits to the cemetery as a child. I recall the customs and religious practices we kept, as we visited the graves of our departed family members. I felt at home amongst the crosses, gravestones, and vigil lamps that burned there. It was later in life, when I visited other cemeteries, that I noticed the many differences. Tombstones were inscribed in English and anything above ground was forbidden, so that the mowers might move easily across the lawns. The cemeteries lacked character and seemed empty. While beautiful and solemn in their own way, the other cemeteries did not seem to have the sacred character that I knew and loved. Cycadia cemetery was and is different.

The cemetery in Tarpon Springs is a record of history and it tells stories. It recalls the past and the struggles of Greek immigrants, just as it speaks of the history of the early Floridians. This sacred area is the place where all the once-citizens of a small town, where segregation played its role, now formed a community of their own even though there is an area known as "the Greek section".

As our world develops and changes, we need not erase the past. In fact, it behooves us to recall our past and our identities, even by studying and recording the ways we practiced death rituals and customs. The great authors of antiquity recorded the deaths of the heroes, so they might be remembered for countless generations. We too should record and document the past, so history is not lost in the dusty pages of time.

When I visit Tarpon, I always go to the cemetery. I go, not only because my parents, grandparents, relatives, and friends are there, but also because I sense the peace and richness that is there. I join the hopes of many that all this won't be lost.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Metropolitan Nikitas (Lulias)". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

+ Metropolitan Nikitas (Lulias)



OFFICE OF
MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

324 EAST PINE STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 5004
TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA 34688-5004
(727) 938-3711
FAX (727) 937-8199

October 3, 2018

Florida Division of Historical Resources
State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 S. Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

RE: Nomination of the Cycadia Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear State Historic Preservation Officer,

The City of Tarpon Springs is a Certified Local Government. As such, the City is committed to an ongoing effort to preserve and protect its historical resources and cultural heritage. To that end, as Mayor of the City of Tarpon Springs, and on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and citizens, we enthusiastically support the nomination of the Cycadia Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Cycadia Cemetery is a significant historic cemetery. Although not physically contiguous with the Greektown Historic District, Cycadia Cemetery has always been an integral part of its cultural complex. The cemetery has remained in constant use into the present and consists of more than 3,166 grave plots of local Greek Americans. The site retains its historic design, setting and integrity to a high degree. It contributes to the sense of place, historic development and culture of the Greek community in Tarpon Springs. Cycadia Cemetery is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/European-Greek, for its direct association with the Greek community and its cultural and religious practices and under Criterion C: Art, for the distinctive style of its Greek American funerary monuments.

The City of Tarpon Springs Heritage Preservation Board approved the nomination at the September 10, 2018 regular meeting and made a recommendation to the Mayor and Board of Commissioners to support the nomination application. On October 2, 2018, the Mayor and the Board of Commissioners reviewed and approved the nomination of Cycadia Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact the City's Planning and Zoning Department at (727)-942-5611.

Respectfully,

Chris Alahouzos
Mayor



Heather M. Urwiller, AICP
Director

City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

Planning and Zoning Department
324 E Pine Street
Tarpon Springs FL 34689
(727) 942-5611

September 21, 2018

Tina Bucuvalas, Curator of Arts & Historical Resources
City of Tarpon Springs
(via email: tbucuvalas@ctsfl.us)

**RE: Request for Support of Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places
Cycadia Cemetery, Tarpon Springs, Florida
Application #18-87**

Dear Ms. Bucuvalas:

This letter serves to inform you that the City of Tarpon Springs Heritage Preservation Board (HPB), at their regular meeting of September 10, 2018, reviewed your application for National Register designation support for the Cycadia Cemetery. The HPB voted to support the nomination of the cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. McNeese, AICP
Principal Planner

cc: File #18-87

MINUTES
HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA
REGULAR SESSION – SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA, MET IN REGULAR SESSION IN THE CITY HALL AUDITORIUM, 324 EAST PINE STREET, ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2018, AT 6:30 P.M., WITH THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:

	Cynthia Tarapani	Chairperson
	Carol Johnson	Vice Chairperson
	Laura Milford	Member
	Patricia Cornell	Member
ABSENT/EXCUSED	Carrie Page	Member
	Tekoa Bean	Alternate
ALSO PRESENT:	Patricia McNeese	Principal Planner
	Erica Augello	Board Attorney
	Kimberly Yothers	Secretary to the Board

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

Mrs. Tarapani called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Recording Secretary Yothers called the roll.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carrie Walsh, 225 Pineapple St., indicated that she wanted everyone in the Historic District to receive the post cards when an application was being heard. She also mentioned that the garage at 301 Bay Street, was an issue because of the height.

Mrs. Tarapani reiterated from last month's meeting that the issue with the garage at 301 Bay Street was in the hands of the Permitting Department.

Mrs. McNeese explained that the notification issue was going to be reviewed but she did not think sending post cards to the entire district was practical. She indicated that the agendas were posted prior to the meetings, and were available on our website.

Mrs. Tarapani emphasized that everyone that lived in the district should be diligent in checking the website each month to find out what was on the agenda. She believed that 200 feet was too short but indicated that the distance requirement was going to be up to the Board of Commissioners. She also mentioned the possibility of using technology to get the information out to people, such as list serves.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

August 6, 2018

MOTION: Ms. Milford
SECOND: Ms. Johnson

To approve minutes for August 6, 2018.

Vote on Motion: Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed as follows:

Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Milford	Yes
Ms. Johnson	Yes
Mrs. Tarapani	Yes

4. **QUASI-JUDICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND SWEARING IN OF SPEAKERS**

Mrs. Augello did not make the quasi-judicial announcement because the application was not quasi-judicial.

5. **APPLICATION 18-87; 1105 E TARPON AVE.; CYCADIA CEMETERY; REQUESTING SUPPORT FOR NOMINATION AS A HISTORIC PLACE ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

Staff:

Mrs. McNeese introduced Dr. Tina Bucuvalas from the Cultural Resources Department, and noted that Ms. Bucuvalas was going to give a presentation regarding the application.

Dr. Bucuvalas began with discussion of a recent publication by the State of Florida called Preserving Florida's Heritage which noted Tarpon Springs' Greektown History District as a Traditional Cultural property, Greek folklife, and the arrival of Greeks as mentioned and important to the State.

Dr. Bucuvalas then gave a presentation that explained the below points:

- The application would get the Cemetery listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR).
- This did not impose obligation but encouraged preservation by:
 - Providing official recognition
 - Imposing limited protection
 - Making the property eligible for Federal financial incentives
- Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) were eligible based on cultural practices and beliefs that:
 - Were rooted in the community's history
 - Were important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.
- The National Register did not want to list *all* historical cemeteries on their register.
- There had to be distinctive features that made the property unique and Cycadia Cemetery had such features.

(Continued)

**APPLICATION 18-87; 1105 E TARPON AVE.; CYCADIA CEMETERY; REQUESTING
SUPPORT FOR NOMINATION AS A HISTORIC PLACE ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER
(CONTINUED)**

Dr. Bucuvalas then went on to describe specific features of the Cemetery which made it unique. She brought up the grave markers that displayed various pictures and carvings of sponge boats, sponge processing, and sponge divers. Then she described religious and ritualistic designs and symbols related to the Greek funereal culture. She also noted that there were several influential Greek musicians buried in the cemetery. Lastly, Dr. Bucuvalas specified that at least 43% of those buried in the cemetery were of Greek descent.

Board:

Ms. Cornell brought up that the rules of the cemetery did not allow for crosses to be placed in an upright position and asked if this distinction would change that.

Dr. Bucuvalas explained that this only pertained to the lawn cemetery section where it was a cemetery rule and that the listing on the NR would not change that rule.

Mrs. Tarapani asked why the cemetery was not part of the same nomination as the Greek Town area as was originally planned.

Dr. Bucuvalas indicated that the application was hurried because the State Historic Preservation Resource Officer was going to retire; this was the first application of its kind and they had worked closely with her to get the wording correct, so they wanted to submit the application to the NR while she was still in office.

Mrs. Tarapani inquired as to whether the City Commission had weighed in on this application.

Mrs. McNeese indicated that the procedure was that the Historic Board heard the application, then it was brought to the Board of Commissioners.

Mrs. Tarapani indicated that she didn't believe that this application complimented the diversity of Tarpon Springs and its cemetery. She went on to describe the diversity of Tarpon Springs and explained that she thought there should be recognition for all of the cultural aspects of Tarpon Springs, not only the Greek population.

Dr. Bucuvalas emphasized that the NR did not want to place all cemeteries on the register and that in order to qualify, the unique cultural aspects of the cemetery had to be outlined. She did not want anyone to believe that she was trying to disrespect any other contributor to the City.

Mrs. Tarapani asked what the benefit would be for the cemetery to be on the NR.

Dr. Bucuvalas informed her that it was the honor of being listed on the NR as a cemetery of distinction.

(Continued)

**APPLICATION 18-87; 1105 E TARPON AVE.; CYCADIA CEMETERY; REQUESTING
SUPPORT FOR NOMINATION AS A HISTORIC PLACE ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER
(CONTINUED)**

Public:

Carrie Walsh, 225 Pineapple St., asked for clarification as to whether the operations would change if the cemetery was added to the NR.

Dr. Bucuvalas indicated that the operations would not change.

Mrs. Tarapani added that she was unable to support the application because she believed that it ignored too many groups that contributed to the Historic Nature of the cemetery.

Dr. Bucuvalas responded that once the cemetery was on the register not many people read the entire document and the cemetery was able to be promoted in any way the City wished.

MOTION: Ms. Milford
SECOND: Ms. Cornell

To approve application 18-87.

Vote on Motion: Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed as follows:

Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Milford	Yes
Ms. Johnson	Yes
Mrs. Tarapani	No

6. STAFF COMMENTS

Mrs. McNeese updated the Board with status of the Small Matching Grant Application. She explained that the application ranked 13th out of 60 overall and 3rd in the federal ranking. Therefore, the federal government has guaranteed an award of \$18,250. She went on to explain that we were 11th on the state list and if the portion of the state budget that our funding was promised from was passed, we should be awarded the full grant amount requested. If we were awarded full funding, we had to begin the project by July 2019 and the project then had to be completed by June 30, 2020.

Mrs. Tarapani asked if we were allowed to issue the RFP prior to the grant being funded.

Mrs. McNeese indicated that we were allowed to prepare the documents, but we were not allowed to advertise until we had a grant contract in place.

Mrs. Tarapani suggested that on future light agendas, we discuss items related to preparation of the project. She wanted to have ideas in place prior to the grant approval, such as a public input forum.

Mrs. McNeese agreed that it was a good idea to have discussions in advance of the project and that the Board should note pet peeves they had with the guidelines as well as new ideas.

7. **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mrs. Tarapani expressed her pleasure with the new Historic Street Signs.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Chairperson Tarapani adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.



Cynthia Tarapani, Chairperson



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RON DESANTIS
Governor

JENNIFER KENNEDY
Interim Secretary of State

January 31, 2019

Dr. Julie Ernstein, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for **Cycadia Cemetery (FMSF#: 8PI11594) in Pinellas County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Ruben A. Acosta
Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures