

**The One Lincoln Road Building & DiLido Hotel
Miami Beach, Florida**

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AS
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A. Introduction



Preliminary Remarks about The One Lincoln Road Building & DiLido Hotel

The present study comprises a survey of the One Lincoln Road Building and DiLido Hotel, historic structures on Lincoln Road in Miami Beach. It was prepared in anticipation of a project to enlarge and connect the two buildings by adding a new structure above and behind the DiLido Hotel, and partially filling the existing service court between the two buildings. This study documents the existing buildings both historically and in their present condition. Included is historical research and analysis, reproduction of retrievable microfilm drawings, drawings depicting the existing plan layout, and a photo study.

This report addresses the architectural and urban significance of all elements of the site. Because the site comprises a composite structure built over several years, with contributions by several owners and architects, its historic significance lies in its multiple historical layers, as well as in the singular quality of individual elements.

According to a recently completed development agreement, a considerable addition to the existing One Lincoln Road and DiLido Hotel buildings can be built on the site. The location and configuration of this addition can be designed to minimally affect the historic resources of the existing structure. The proposed additions, as described above, should be designed to have the least impact on these resources, while reinvigorating the site. In the section of this report entitled *Recommendations*, a discussion of planning and design issues addresses the restoration of existing historic resources and the relationship of the new additions to the existing structure.

The One Lincoln Road Building & DiLido Hotel
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Location

Legal Description:

A. Parcel 1

Lots 18,19 & 20, Block 29, Fisher's First Subdivision of Alton Beach, a subdivision of Miami-Dade, Florida according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 2, at Page 77, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida

B. Parcel 2

All of lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 17 and the South half (S ½) of lots 5 & 16, Block 29, Fisher's First Subdivision of Alton Beach, a subdivision of Miami-Dade, Florida according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 2, at Page 77, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. Also, beginning (P.O.B.) at the Northeast corner of the South half (S ½) of lot 5 in block 29 as the same is shown and designed upon the Plat Florida; thence run in an Easterly direction along the North line of said South half (S ½) of lot 5 in block 29 produced to the Erosion Control Line of the Atlantic Ocean, said line recorded in Plat Book 105 at page 62, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida; thence run in a Southerly direction along the Erosion Control Line a distance of 280.059' to a point, said point being the intersection of the Erosion Control Line and the centerline of Lincoln Road as said road is shown on the above mentioned plat, produced easterly; thence run in a Westerly direction along the centerline of Lincoln Road produced Easterly to an intersection with the Easterly line of Block 29 produced Southerly; thence run in a Northerly direction along the Easterly line of said block 29 and its production Southerly, a distance of 278.878' to the point of beginning (P.O.B.)

B. Historical Analysis



A Short History of One Lincoln Road

The Site:

The site of the future Ritz-Carlton hotel, lying at the eastern terminus of Lincoln Road in Miami Beach, comprises several structures. These include an office / retail building on the corner of Lincoln Road and Collins Avenue, a resort hotel and the remnants of a cabana structure facing the ocean. Originally the location of a residential estate, it was quickly engulfed by the wave of resort development that characterizes Miami Beach's growth in the 1930's, 40's & 50's.

The subject area lies in *Fisher's First Subdivision*, so named because it was the first development by Carl Fisher, founder of the Alton Beach Development Company. Alton Beach established Lincoln Road as its centerpiece and most important street. Lincoln Road was to rival, in Fisher's words, Paris' Rue de la Paix. At the end of this street, on the Atlantic Ocean beach, Carl Fisher built his own home - *Beach Shadows* - in 1915. Although 20 years later Fisher's ambitious dream would be practically realized, the area was little more than a landfill in 1915. In her biography of Carl Fisher, Jane Fisher describes the establishment of Beach Shadows:

"In the face of growing anxiety in 1913 we built and moved into our home, the Beach Shadows, at the very time when Miami Beach itself was being made. The new house, although it was isolated in wilderness, surrounded by cranes and dredges and hundreds of hard-working men and sweating mules, gave the entire undertaking a feeling of permanency. It was the start of the new city."

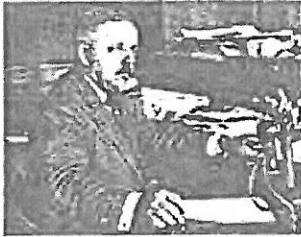
Fisher gathered around him men of the same ilk - primarily Midwestern industrialists. A succession of these men would occupy the site directly across Lincoln Road from Beach Shadows (the subject area). Around 1918, a large home was built by John H. Hanan (1849-1920).¹ Hanan was the Irish born president of the Hanan Shoe Company (later Hanan & Son), a Chicago based company with outlets in Paris & London. Hanan called the estate, which mirrored Fisher's own home, 'Stafford House'

Hanan died in (1920), and the estate was sold to Frank A. Seiberling, founder and president of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio². Like Fisher, Seiberling wealth was tied to automobile production. In 1898, at the age of 38 years old, Frank Seiberling began producing rubber using a vulcanization process developed more than 30 years earlier by Charles Goodyear (for whom he named the company). By the 1920's Goodyear was an important producer of tires for the fledgeling automobile industry. It is interesting to note that the other important 'rubber baron', Harvey Firestone, was also a notable resident of Miami Beach, residing in the former Snowden estate on Collins Avenue. Both the Firestone Estate and the Seiberling Estate became the site of important resort hotels (the Fountainebleau Hotel and the DiLido Hotel). Both hotels were designed by the same architect, Morris Lapidus.

Fisher & Seiberling were both important in developing the automobile market in the United States. Their collaboration in the establishing of the Lincoln Highway, the nation's first cross country highway, is a notable example. The Lincoln Highway project was Carl Fisher's idea;

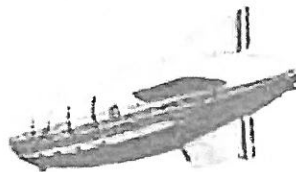
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Seiberling invested \$300,000. The Lincoln Highway has a direct relationship with Miami Beach, because the success of this project led Fisher to his next project: the Dixie Highway, a similar venture establishing a north-south highway leading from the Midwest to Miami Beach.



Frank A. Seiberling

Another contribution of Seiberling during the years of his winter residence of Miami Beach was the presence of the Goodyear Blimp in Miami. Stationed on Dodge Island, the blimp figures prominently in many postcards of the 1930's.



The Goodyear Blimp

Around 1925, the house was purchased by William Horlick (1846-1936), a British born manufacturer of food products. Horlick originated a formula for malted milk. He was the president of Horlick's Malted Milk Corporation, and Horlick Investment Company (Racine, Wisconsin). Both he and his son, William Horlick Jr. (1875-1940), died in the years between 1936-1940.

The estate, then located on the thriving but increasingly commercial east end of Lincoln Road, passed to a series of commercial uses before being demolished between 1950 and 1953. Owned at one time by Frank Webb, it became the 'Mansion Hotel', while the grounds became Mrs. Frances Mitnick's Carpet Golf and Auto Parking lot. A similar transformation occurred across the street, where Carl Fisher's estate, the Beach Shadows, became a delicatessen.

The Center Building (1945):

In a process similar to transformation of 'Millionaires Row' on Collins Avenue – the estate was acquired by Harry Sirkin, a developer who wished to redevelop the site as a grand hotel. Sirkin had developed both the Albion Hotel (1938) and the Lincoln Center Building (1937) on Lincoln Road. In 1945 he commissioned Igor Plevitzky, a prominent Miami architect and designer of the both the Albion and Lincoln Center, as well as the highly influential Shelborne Hotel (1941), to design a mixed-use resort structure on the corner of Lincoln Road and Collins Avenue. The 'Center Hotel and Office Building' project, was never built, but it laid the groundwork for the later development of the site, a development that would follow Igor Plevitzky's formula of integrated mixed-use buildings.

The Center Building project was also a fascinating taste of the world to come. Like the Lincoln Center and Albion buildings, it contained a blend of commercial and residential uses in one complex. Yet, in the six years since building the Albion, the terms of both function and style had changed. The project, in fact, is functionally and stylistically akin to the pedestal-tower structure of contemporary tower buildings.

It is interesting to compare the Center Building to the Albion, designed only seven years previous. The ground floor retail component of the Center has the proportions of a multi-level shopping center (the increase in its mass partially accounted for by the requirement for parking). More importantly - the office building and hotel components do not participate jointly in the creation of an atrium space, as at the Albion, but are instead each formed by independent functional criteria

The Center Building was conditioned by the emerging theme of 'year-round' convention hotel design. Guest rooms were large and divided into sleeping and living areas. The hotel block was turned to face the Southeast trade winds, and the west side rooms had a saw tooth configuration allowing each room to have a balcony facing north. Convention hotels required larger and more sophisticated lobby designs as well as shopping arcades. A change in zoning allowed retail to be located in hotel lobbies for the first time. The lobby of the Center, entered on a bias from Lincoln Road, formed the central focus of the scheme. A grand multistoried space was enlivened by the amoebae shaped cutout that revealed an upper mezzanine. In fact the integration of retail and grand hotel, the lyricism of the balcony cutout prefigure the work of Morris Lapidus 10 years later.

The Center Building was never built. In the uncertain economic conditions following World War II, it appears likely that the developer decided to follow a conservative strategy of piecemeal additions to the site. The three phases of this additive strategy were the Town & Beach Club, the commercial/office building known as One Lincoln Road, and the DiLido Hotel. In addition, a lot split separated the outbuildings of the former Stafford House into a separate lot, which would become site of Sagamore Hotel.

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The Town & Beach Club (1948-49)

The cabana club (Town and Beach Club) was built in stages between 1948 and 1949.

The club house building (remaining but severely altered) was the most interesting feature of the project. It is a small wedge-shaped pavilion that served as the entrance into the cabana club. On its western face, was a tall ribbed sign pylon on which the name was scrawled in modern cursive. Penetrating the wall and projecting from it was a jewelry store vitrine-type window. Hovering over the entry but anchored to the wall and supported on skewed metal bean-pole supports was a cloud shaped canopy.

Also of note was the diving board, a parabolic concrete structure which stood at the east end of the pool (demolished).

Cabana clubs were an extension of the bathing casinos, which once occupied prominent locations in Miami Beach. Early examples, predating most other construction on Miami Beach, include Hardies Casino at 5th Street and Ocean Drive and the Roman Pools at Collins Avenue and 22nd Street, just north of Collins Park. These were popular bathing spots where a cabana and access to an ocean beach and pool could be rented, and figured as important social spaces.

Most of the Town & Beach Club have progressively been lost, and only fragments remain.

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The One Lincoln Road Building (1949-50)

The One Lincoln Road Building was also built in stages between (1949-50). Developed by Harry Sirkin, it brought the overall site closer to the mixed use design conceived by Igor Polevitzky in 1945.

The first stage was completed in 1949, with the construction of a one story retail building (11 stores) at the corner of Lincoln Road & Collins Avenue (165-195 Lincoln Road, 1651-1663 Collins Avenue). Designed by Polevitzky, the building had a sophisticated storefront system comprised of projecting vitrines and recessed panels of structural glass. A remainder of the storefront, as well as the original lighting and interior décor, exists at Cy Clydes men's clothing store at 1651 Collins Avenue.

The most prominent tenant of One Lincoln Road, occupying the corner of Lincoln Road and Collins Avenue, was Wolfies Restaurant. Wolfies evolved out of a partnership between Wilfred "Wolfie" Cohen and Bill Sherman. Sherman was the co-owner of Fan & Bill's Restaurant, a popular eatery designed c. 1936 by Igor Polevitzky on 21st Street and Collins Avenue (converted by the Army Airforce into a mess during World War II, and currently the site of Wolfies. Several other restaurants, notably the Rascal House, were also created by the partnership.

In 1950, a two story office building was added over the existing one story commercial building. The addition, also designed by Polevitzky, had as its main feature a continuous wrapping system of bris-soleil on its Collins Avenue and Lincoln Road frontages. In addition to going up, the addition extended the building one structural bay toward the east, requiring the demolition of a small wood cabana structure, whose origins are unknown. The extension, comprising two new elevators, a new stair & elevator room, is the site of the present lobby.

A large traveling news sign composed of 1750 lights was apparently approved for installation atop the building in 1959. It is not known whether it was ever built.

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Plans for the Expansion of One Lincoln Road (1950)

On the drawings developed by Igor Plevitzky for the rooftop addition over One Lincoln Road figures a design for the extension of One Lincoln Road toward the east. The proposed addition would be a hotel facing the previous and existing cabana club on the east. The addition proposes to extend the architectural treatment of One Lincoln Road to the hotel, wrapping northward and forming a C-shaped structure. Only three years later, the strategy would not be followed by Melvin Grossman and Morris Lapidus, architects for the DiLido Hotel.

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The DiLido Hotel (1953)

At the time of its construction, the Miami News projected the DiLido to be Miami Beach's 'largest hostelry.'ⁱⁱⁱ The hotel was built on land still belonging to the Sirkin family, represented by Milton Sirkin, and leased to Irving Cohen & Saul Cohen, hoteliers who became the 'managing owners'. The lease duration was 20 years (although the turbulent and unpredictable finances of the DiLido (along with other South Miami Beach hotels) led the Sirkins to take the building back at least once.

It is not known why, after years of working on the site, and at the pinnacle of his career, Igor Polevitzky was not commissioned to design the DiLido. Perhaps the managing owners of the hotel brought their own architects. In 1953, Melvin Grossman was commissioned as architect, and Morris Lapidus as associate architect. This period represents the beginning of Lapidus' career as a resort hotel builder in Miami Beach. Lapidus' other work from this period include his first Miami Beach hotel, the Sans Souci, as well as the Nautilus (demolished), Biltmore Terrace (demolished) & Algiers (demolished).

The DiLido Hotel, with its unique double lobby, combined hotel and convention facilities with modest commercial activities (small shops and restaurants). It contained over 303 hotel rooms, a banquet room, dining room, cocktail lounge, nightclub and coffeeshop. The design integrated the hotel into the pre-existing One Lincoln Road building on the west side and the Town & Beach Club on the east side, making a mixed-use complex occupying nearly the equivalent of a typical Miami Beach block.

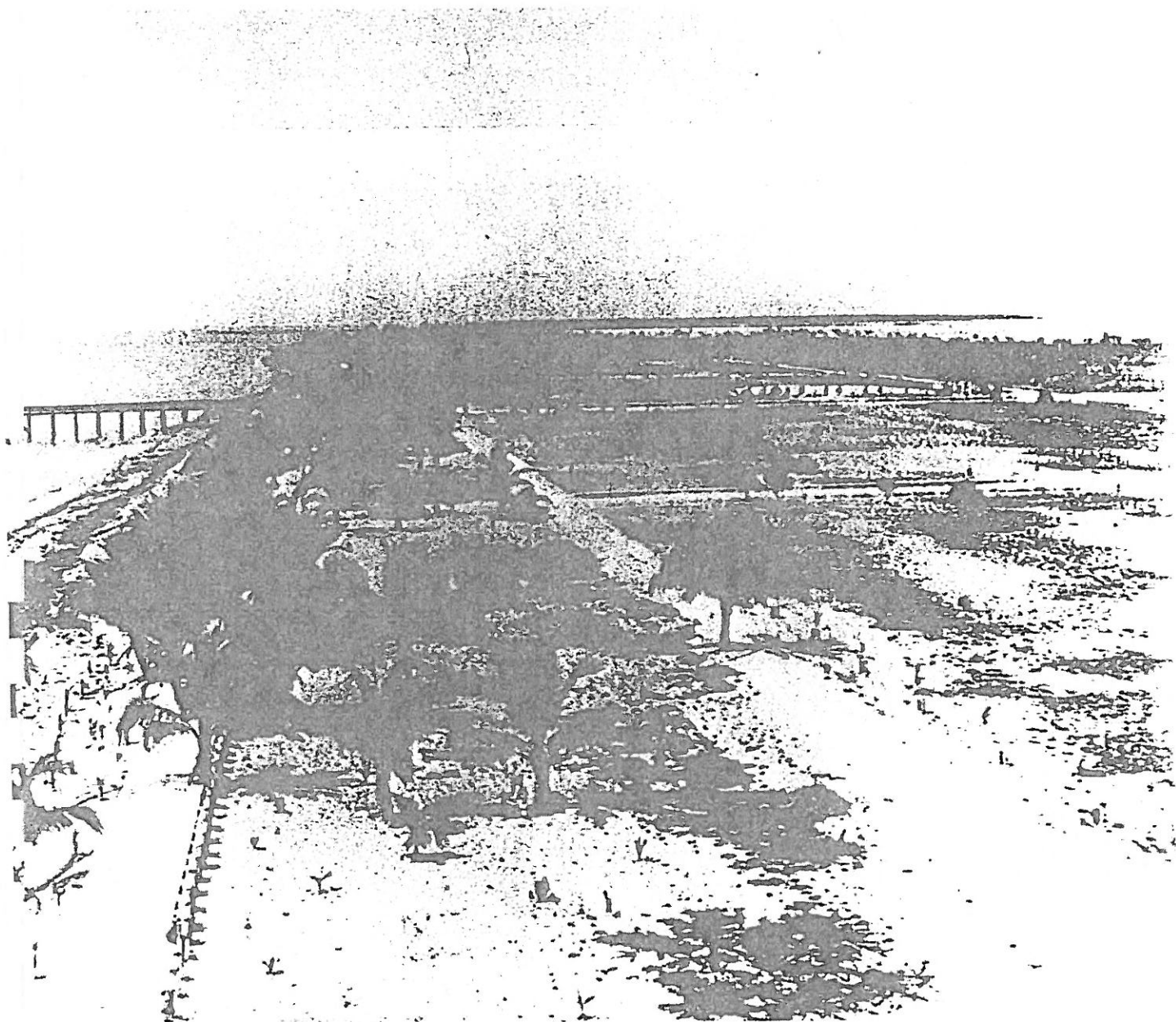
The construction of the DiLido was marked by heated disagreement between the hotel owners and its neighbors over the City of Miami Beach's granting of a licence to operate a nightclub within the DiLido Hotel. The nightclubs was strongly opposed by the neighboring hotel owner's, who wanted to limit the proliferation of clubs (establishments that could close at 5:00 am, instead of the customary 1:00 am. The proximity of a gradeschool posed other problems. In addition, the DiLido's nightclub was placed at the center of the property, not on Lincoln Road, requiring a change in the underlying zoning district. Notwithstanding the opposition, the nightclub was approved.

Another issue described in contemporary new articles involved the tax valuation of the building, which the owners fought to lower. In any case, the falling fortunes of Lincoln Road during the late 1950's seemed to have had an important effect on the operation of the DiLido hotel, creating a succession of bad seasons.

In 1964, the zoning Board granted a variance to permit construction of a two story parking garage on the site. The parking garage was never built, however the south cabana building was demolished some years later, making way for a grade level parking area which expanded the parking located in the former right-of-way of Lincoln Road. At some point, a significant portion of the north cabana building, including all the cabanas, were removed.

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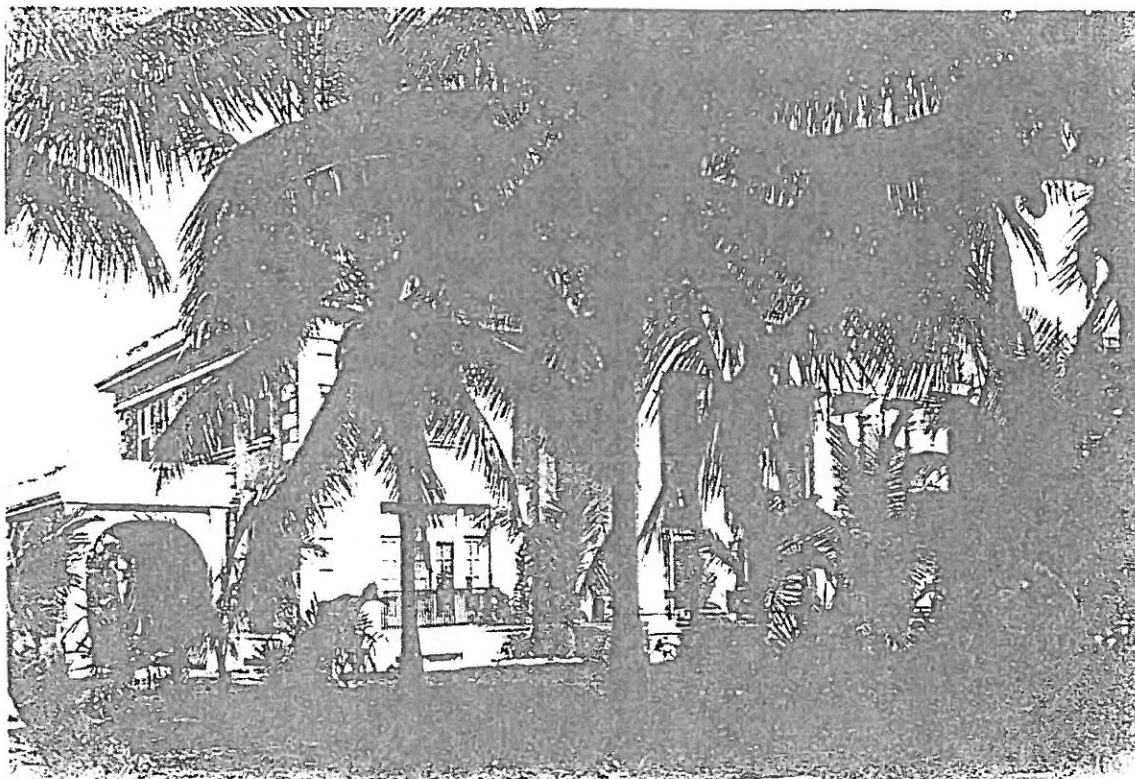
Historical Images and Photos



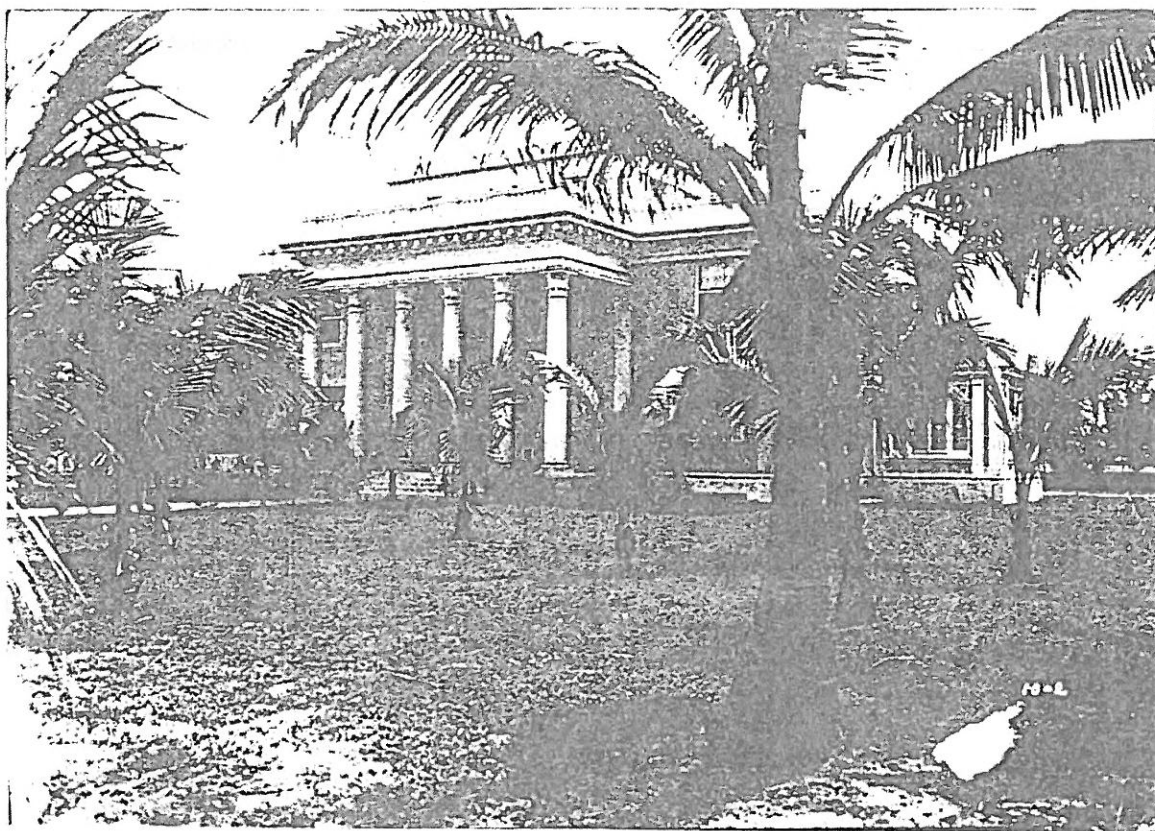
View toward Lincoln Road from North, along Collins Avenue. c. 1914



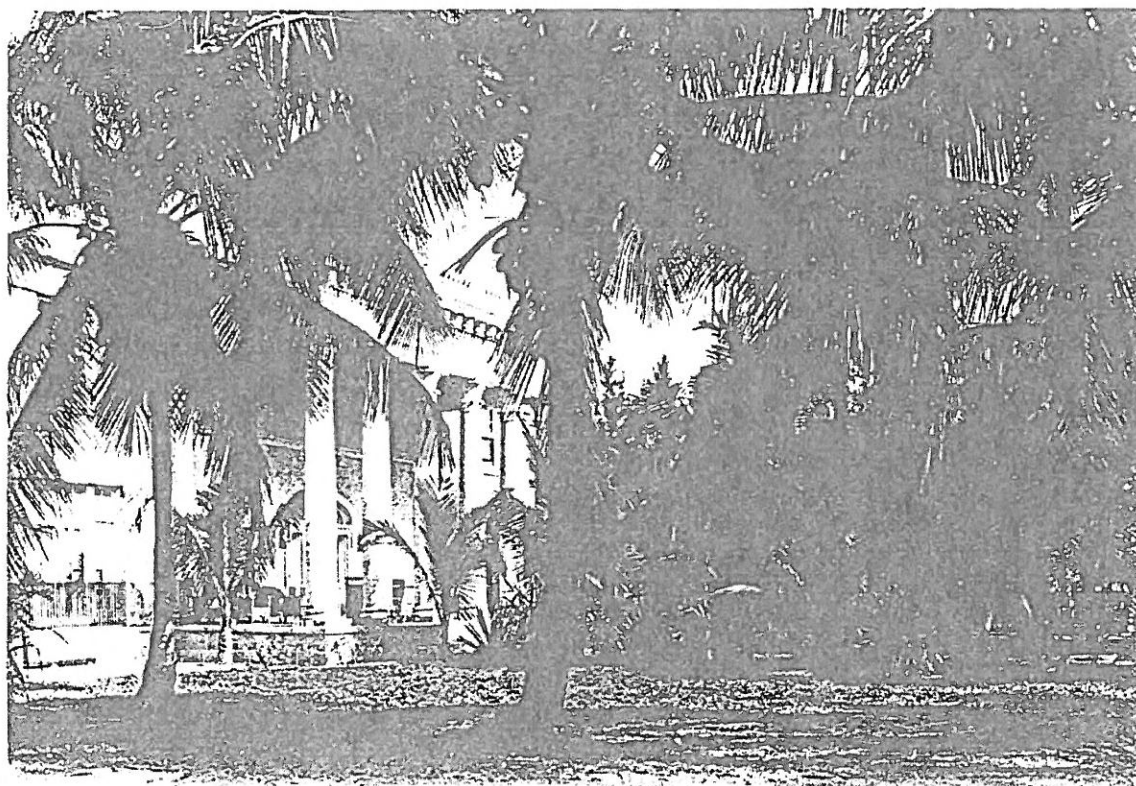
The First House in Fisher's First Subdivision, Carl Fisher's Beach Shadows. c. 1915



Stafford House, view from beach. c. 1918



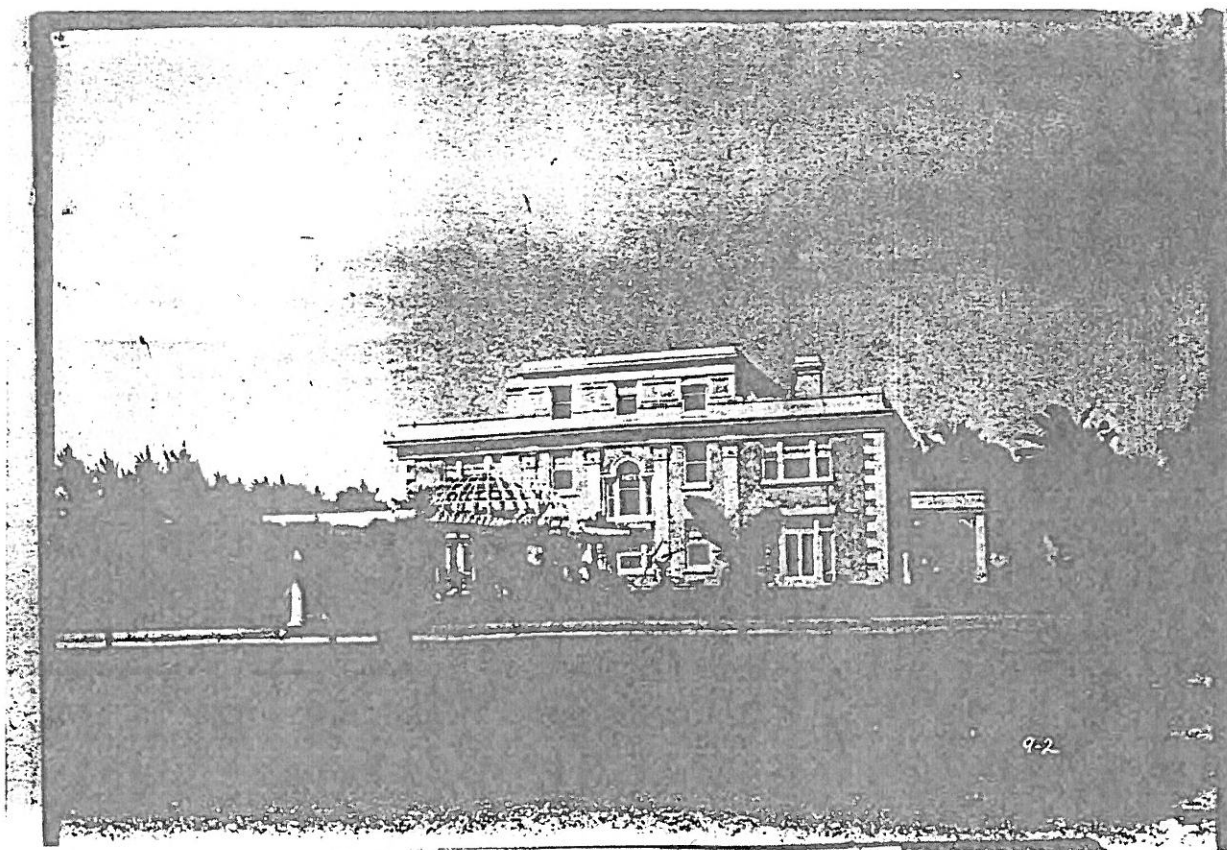
Stafford House, view from beach. c. 1918



Stafford House, view from beach. c. 1918



Stafford House, yard with gazebo. View from Collins Avenue. c. 1918



Stafford House, view from Collins Avenue. c. 1918



Aerial view of east end of Lincoln Road, Published in Life Magazine. February 24, 1941



Mansion Hotel (formerly Stafford House), showing miniature golf site on left, c. 1940



Mansion Hotel (formerly Stafford House). c. 1940

Additional sheets
See list

MIAMI BEACH

DADE COUNTY

APR -6 1921

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Scale 100 ft. to an inch Broadway, New York

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Sanborn Map, 1921

PLAT BOOK

OF

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FLORIDA

AND SUBURBS

FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS, PRIVATE PLANS AND ACTUAL SURVEYS.

Compiled under the direction of and

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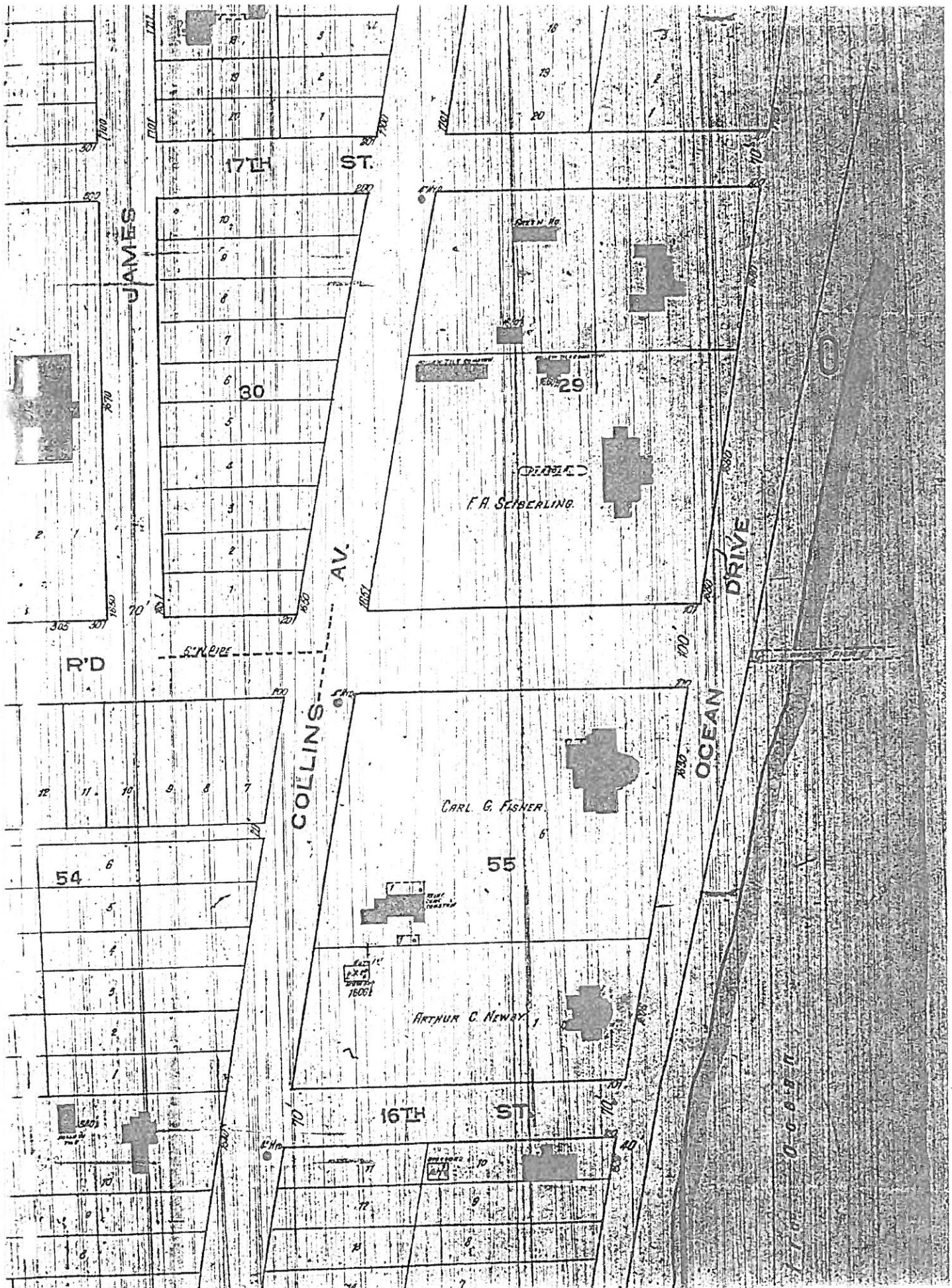
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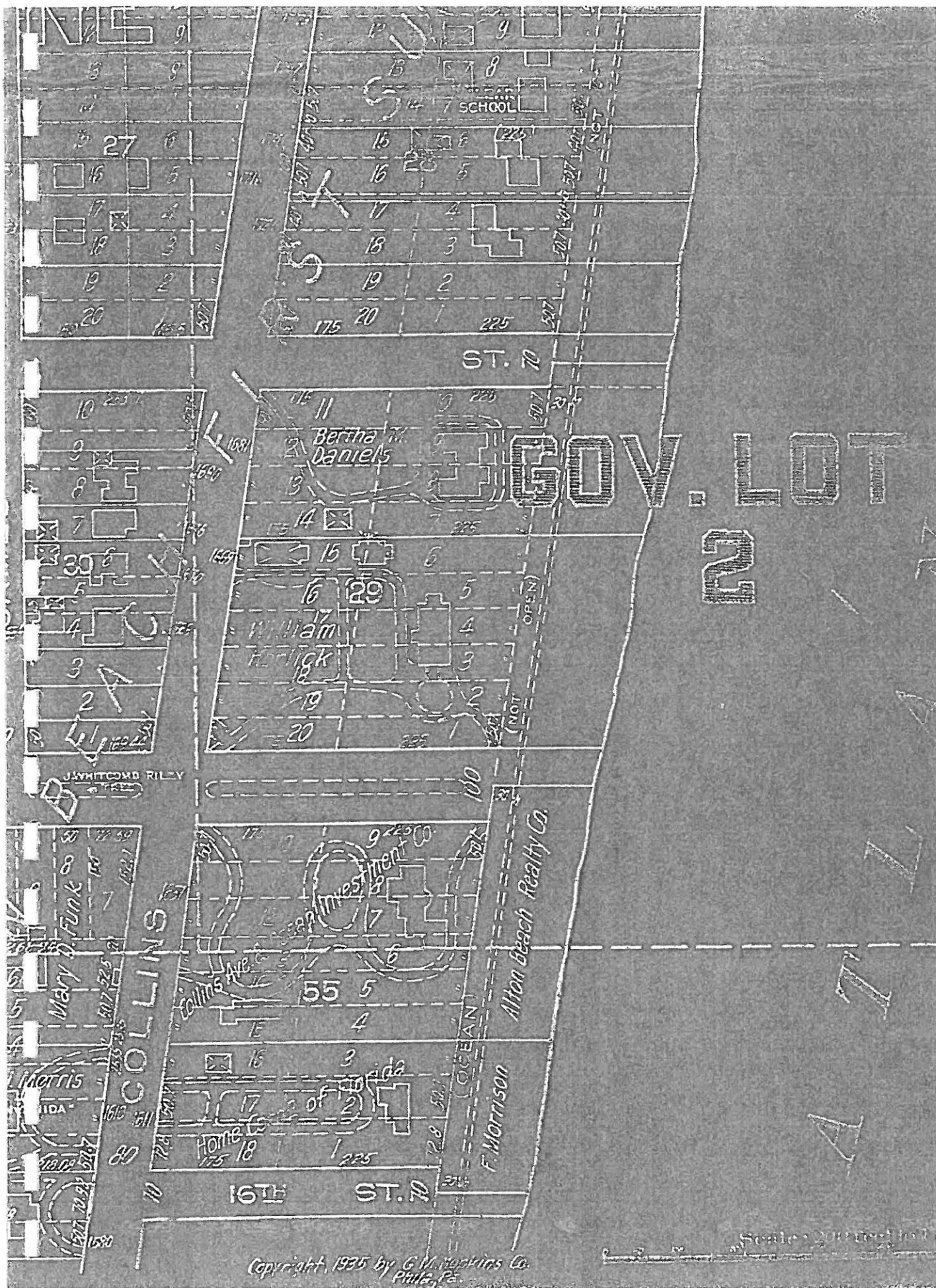
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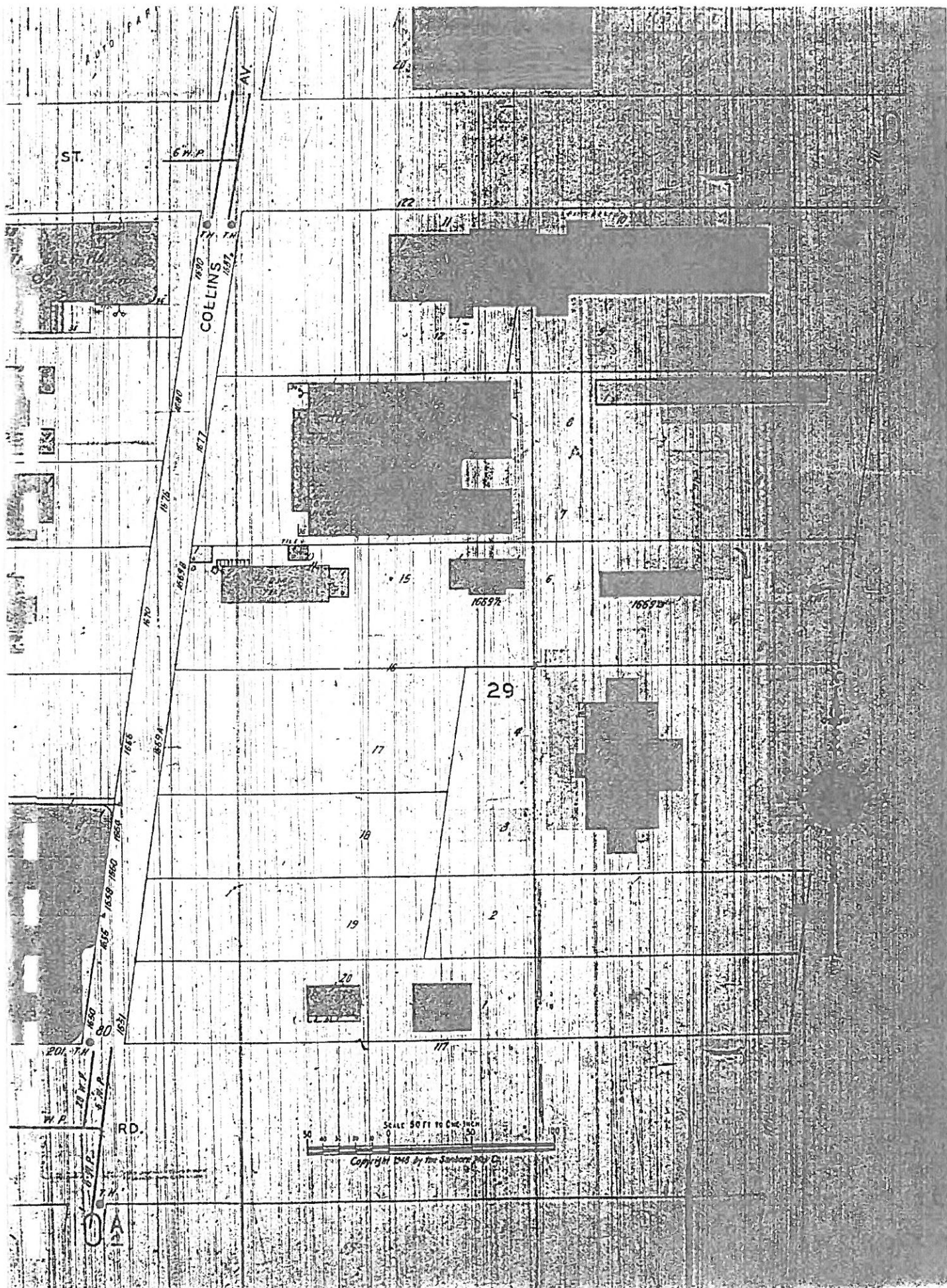
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