

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Matinicus Rock Light Station

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Matinicus Rock

N/A not for publication

city, town Matinicus Island,

vicinity

state Maine

code ME

county Knox

code 013

zip code 04851

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
<u>2</u>	_____ sites
<u>4</u>	_____ structures
	_____ objects
	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Light Stations of Maine

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

12/17/87

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

Signature of commenting or other official

U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

1/25/88

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Alvina Byers

Entered in the  
National Register

3/14/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: Water-Related

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: Water-Related

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Light Station

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Granitewalls Stone: GraniteWood: Shingleroof Asphaltother Iron Deck and Lantern onSoutheast Tower

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Matinicus Rock Light Station consists of a widely separated pair of cylindrical granite towers, only one of which remains active. A rectangular frame and granite keeper's house is connected to the functioning light tower. Extant ancillary structures include a frame shed and boathouse.

**1. LIGHT TOWER AND KEEPER'S HOUSE - CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE**

Rising to a height of forty-one feet from its base to the middle of the lantern, the southmost of the two towers is an ashlar granite structure whose shaft is capped by a narrow circular walkway. It was built in 1857. Framed by an iron railing, this walkway is surmounted by a short round brick stage punctuated by a row of bulls-eye windows. The twelve-sided lantern, which is glazed from its base to the polygonal roof, is surmounted by a spherical ventilator. A winding iron stair extends from the base of the tower to the brick stage. A short, narrow brick workroom connects the tower to the keeper's house.

The dwelling rests on a tall basement and features semi-circular tapered shafts at each end that are the surviving bases upon which earlier towers were built. There is a central door flanked by windows on the building's front, west elevation and three symmetrically placed windows across the rear. Frame, shed roofed dormers, each of which contains three windows, are additions to the original configuration of the dwelling. The granite section of this building is the only remaining feature from the 1847 remodeling of the station that was designed by Alexander Parris (1780-1852).

**2. LIGHT TOWER - CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE**

Standing 180 feet to the north of the active tower is the granite base of the second tower, also erected in 1857. Similar in design to its counterpart but originally taller, this structure has lost its lantern room, workroom and frame board-and-batten assistant keeper's house. Documentary photographs show that a long covered passageway originally linked this tower to the main granite dwelling.

**3. SHED - CONTRIBUTING BUILDING**

The small gable roofed shed is located to the east of the inactive light tower. It is sheathed in wood shingles.

**4. BOATHOUSE - CONTRIBUTING BUILDING**

Standing to the northwest of the inactive tower is the 20' X 31' frame boathouse erected in 1890. Covered in wood shingles, this building has windows on both side elevations, a narrow gable roofed shed at the rear and boat slips leading from the large front opening.

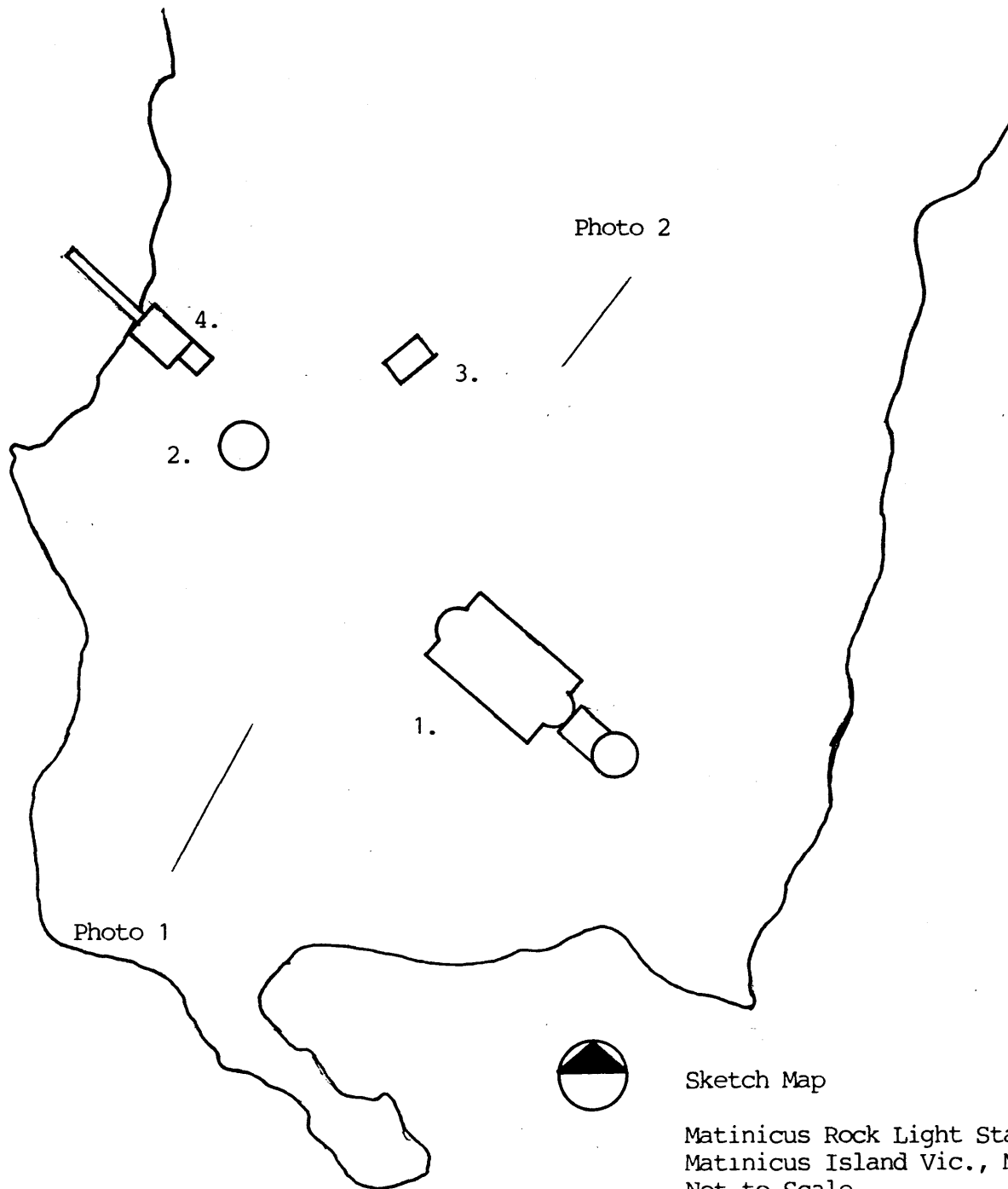
 See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Sketch Map

Matinicus Rock Light Station  
Matinicus Island Vic., Maine  
Not to Scale

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Engineering  
Transportation

Period of Significance

1827-1937

Significant Dates

1847  
1857

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Parris, Alexander (Dwelling)  
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

**State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.**

Occupying a lonely island off the south end of Matinicus Island, the Matinicus Rock Light Station was established in 1827 and substantially rebuilt in 1847 and 1857. Originally classified as a primary seacoast light (a designation changed to secondary seacoast light by 1886), this station is of particular importance as a guide along the coastal shipping lanes off the southern entrance to Penobscot Bay. Although it has lost a number of its ancillary buildings, the existing components nevertheless retain their integrity of design, materials, setting and association that meet the requirements for registration as outlined in the multiple property submission "Light Stations of Maine". The evaluation of significance proceeds from the associated historic contexts Maritime Transportation in Maine: ca. 1600-1917 and Federal Lighthouse Management: 1789-1939.

Matinicus Rock Light Station was the fourteenth such complex established along the Maine coast. At the time of initial construction it was the most distant light from the mainland and the first one to employ a pair of towers. These were located at the ends of the original rectangular rubble stone keeper's house with wooden towers. The 1847 rebuilding resulted in the construction of the existing granite dwelling and twin towers again located at each end of the house. Ten years later new towers were designed and placed 180 feet apart. The importance of the station as well as the inclement weather is further demonstrated by the fact that a steam fog signal was established here in 1869 making it one of the few such devices put into service in Maine at this early date. After the 1857 reconstruction the complex at Matinicus was continually enlarged and transformed through the addition and removal of a host of ancillary buildings such as dwellings, rain sheds and cisterns. Beginning in the 1950s, however, many of these buildings and structures have been pulled down as new aids to navigation have made these components obsolete. In 1983 the station was automated.

Matinicus Rock Light Station derives significance under Criteria A and C. Criteria A is satisfied by the association of the complex with Maine's critical reliance on maritime transportation and the aids that made navigation possible. Criteria C is met by the station's highly distinctive configuration that is an unusual example of mid-nineteenth century light station design and construction.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Annual Report of the Light-House Board. Washington, D. C.: U. S. G. P. O.: various issues.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**

U. S. Coast Guard

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Approximately 25 acres

**UTM References**

A 

1,9	51117,3,0	4,8 4,8 2,1,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

1,9	51116,9,0	4,8 4,7 3,9,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

1,9	51120,4,0	4,8 4,8 2,0,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

D 

1,9	51113,6,0	4,8 4,7 4,1,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property of approximately 25 acres occupies the entire island known as Matinicus Rock.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the Matinicus Rock Light Station embraces the entire island of Matinicus Rock. This includes the buildings, structures and immediate physical setting associated with the complex. There is no other use of this island.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October, 1987

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333

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Continuation Sheet**

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Matinicus Rock Light Station  
Matinicus Island Vic., Maine

This continuation sheet is being submitted to redefine the period of significance of the Matinicus Rock Light Station, Matinicus Island Vic.

A previous National Register review of the multiple property submission for "Light Stations of Maine" and accompanying individual nomination forms determined that the period of significance of the resource must begin at a point in time that is no earlier than the oldest existing component of the complex. It is understood that while a case could be made for extending the date to that time when the light station was established, irregardless of the presence of surviving elements, the framework of the submission does not sufficiently address how this can be done. (See Review Comments dated 1/21/88.)

Based upon this finding, therefore, the period of significance of the Matinicus Rock Light Station should be 1847-1937, the date of construction of the earliest surviving building and/or structure.