

AUG 10 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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 Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number Northernmost end of Little Cumberland Island
city, town St. Marys (X) vicinity of
county Camden code GA 039
state Georgia code GA zip code 31558

(n/a) not for publication

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:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	0	0
sites	1	0
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	2	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

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 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Signature of certifying official

8/10/89
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the
National Register

entered in the National Register

Helene Byrd 8/28/89

() determined eligible for the National Register _____

() determined not eligible for the National Register _____

() removed from the National Register _____

() other, explain: _____

() see continuation sheet _____

Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

TRANSPORTATION/ water-related

Current Functions:

OTHER

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

NO STYLE

Materials:

foundation	BRICK
walls	BRICK
roof	N/A
other	Cast Iron

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse is a sixty foot high circular brick structure, twenty-two feet in diameter at its base, tapering toward the top, which is only eleven feet in diameter, where the light was originally kept. It is a navigational lighthouse constructed in 1838 on a six-acre site. Originally, the site contained a keeper's residence and several support buildings which no longer exist.

The lighthouse is built of common brick, secured by mortar, in a circular shape, and tapers toward the top, which originally contained the light. The top portion is made of wood and glass.

On the interior there is a replacement wooden spiral stair supported by a central wooden post with a mid-level mezzanine wooden platform and then at the top of the wooden stair another wooden platform. From that platform to the next wooden platform/floor there is a cast iron beam which supported the firepot which was used for the original light. There is a small metal ladder leading to this platform/floor. At this upper level, where the light once was, there are now jalousie glass windows on all sides.

On the exterior, it has several small windows asymmetrically arranged at various levels. There is no ornamentation.

The interior walls are whitewashed.

There are no surviving historical mechanical systems.

The site is behind a sand dune and is covered with vegetation including live oaks, pines, and native shrubs. While the known

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7

outbuildings have all been destroyed, the foundation of the keeper's cottage is partially visible.

The site has some potential to yield information about the lifestyles of the occupants of the light-keeper's cottage, about the oil house, privy sites, and other known outbuildings due to those sites being located on the nominated property.

The major changes to the property include the demolition of the various outbuildings, the last one being the keeper's residence, torn down in 1968 and the materials being removed. The new spiral staircase inside the lighthouse was installed in 1968, replicating and replacing the original.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

AUG 16 1989

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance:

1838-1915

Significant Dates:

1838

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Joseph Hastings of Boston, builder.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

AUG 16 1989

Section 8

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse is significant in architecture because it represents one of the five remaining examples of lighthouse construction in Georgia. Built by the Federal government, the design was functional and traditional, built to weather the heavy coastal storms and guide ships through them. It is also significant in transportation because of the role it played in maritime transportation in Georgia. Its strategic position near Georgia's southernmost edge proved vitally important to safely guide shipping toward nearby harbors. It was a significant navigational aid, and part of a national system, which helped the antebellum economy, and for this lighthouse, the Southern economy, reach its peak by providing safe access to the important seaports. After the Civil War, when nearby Brunswick again became a major port, the lighthouse was an invaluable aid.

National Register Criteria

The Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse meets National Register Criterion A, "associated with events...broad patterns of our history" because as a lighthouse it has been a major element in the maritime and transportation history of Georgia and especially coastal Georgia. The lighthouse has served to guide ships into Brunswick harbor, one of Georgia's most significant harbors. It has been part of the United States' 200-year old tradition of lighthouses since it joined that team upon its construction in 1838. It continuously operated as part of that system of coastal lights until 1915. Due to her coast being protected by a series of large barrier islands, Georgia's ports were not safely approachable without the lighthouses. As one of five remaining lights in Georgia, this one serves as a reminder of that once important system of navigational aides.

The light meets Criterion C, "distinctive characteristics" etc., because it was designed and built as a lighthouse and due to that bears the remarkable characteristics of a lighthouse: its conical shape leading to a light tower, a central spiral stair (now replaced with a replica), made of brick to resist storms, and a location for a light to be visible to shipping. This functional, utilitarian design is unique to lighthouses and the purposes they served. Because the design and construction was government sponsored, it was similar, if not a duplicate of, several other designs along the U.S. eastern seaboard, showing an early example of the government's use of supervising architects or builders who oversaw a number of government sponsored buildings.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

AUG 16 1989

Section 8

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Criterion D, "may be likely to yield, information important...", may be met in the future, but is not being claimed in this nomination due to the unavailability of a map showing the location of the known structures. As a government reserve from 1838-1915, all construction and reconstruction on the site was provided for by an appropriation through an Act of Congress. Therefore we know that on the small, six-acre parcel, at one time or the other there was constructed a brick keeper's cottage (1838), a brick retaining wall (1876), a replacement keeper's cottage (1881), an assistant keeper's dwelling (by 1883), a brick oil house (1890), a boathouse (1896, and 1900), and various necessary buildings such as privies and kitchens. With this knowledge and the site's non-use for any farming or other ground disturbance use, it is highly likely that a lot of information could be found, if properly and systematically investigated through archaeology.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification, if applicable)

N/A

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

Historical Narrative and Context Statement:

The Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse is located on the northern end of Little Cumberland Island which is separated by Christmas Creek from Cumberland Island (a/k/a Greater Cumberland Island). Today the lighthouse on Little Cumberland is the southernmost in Georgia.

The Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse is one of five remaining in Georgia today. The others remain at Tybee Island, Cockspur Island, Sapelo Island, and St. Simons Island. They vary as to age, length of service, and size. All were built, as was this one, to protect a particular sea coast or harbor, guiding ships through bad weather and treacherous coasts. While there were also a few lighthouses on Georgia's coast which were totally deactivated and removed, such as the one that was once on Greater Cumberland Island, and the second one built on Sapelo in the early part of this century, the rest remain on or near sites where the lighthouses have stood since their sites were first chosen. The Little Cumberland light is the only one ever to be built at this location.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8

Little Cumberland today consists of approximately 2200 acres. In the original land grant from King George III to James Habersham of Savannah dated January 6, 1767, it was described as "an island of 1400 acres known by the name of Little Cumberland and bounded on the north and east by Sea Beach, south by an inlet, marshes and creeks of the same, and west by marshes and creeks leading therefrom." At one time Little Cumberland was owned by Gen. Nathanael Greene (1742-1786), and later his heirs who also owned a major part of greater Cumberland Island where they lived at Dungeness. Among these heirs were: Catherine Miller (formerly Mrs. Greene), Martha W. Nightingale, Cornelia L. Skipwith, Nathaniel R. Greene, and Louisa C. Greene, who sold the island to John Floyd and Charles Floyd of Camden County, Georgia in a deed dated May 25, 1808, for a consideration of \$1,000.

The need for a lighthouse at the entrance to St. Andrew Sound was recognized as early as 1802 when money was appropriated by Congress for this purpose. Over the next 35 years more than \$55,000 was appropriated for the construction of a light and more than \$30,000 was returned as surplus funds. Finally in 1838, the light was built, and, according to records of the Lighthouse Board, it remained in continuous operation until the early part of the 20th century.

In 1817, John Floyd (1769-1839) sold six (6) acres on the north end of the island to the United States government for \$500. During 1838, a lighthouse complex was built on that land at a cost of \$8,025. The compound included the lighthouse, a keeper's cottage, a warehouse, and a privy. Little Cumberland Lighthouse had a fixed white light on the third order, 78 feet above sea level, and was visible for 14 1/2 nautical miles throughout the horizon (360 degrees).

In 1858 the last slave ship to reach the shores of the United States, the "Wanderer", enlisted the help of the lighthouse keeper to safely guide the ship through St. Andrew Sound to Jekyll Island, the island just north of Little Cumberland. "The low featureless country afforded few landmarks to help a navigator unfamiliar with those waters. Constantly sand bars demanded the up-to-date and detailed knowledge of a local pilot. The "Wanderer" made her landfall on [at] Cumberland Lighthouse two miles across St. Andrew Sound from Jekyll Island, it appears probable that she timed her arrival to be offshore before dawn in order to make a night signal for a pilot and to have a full day to offload the Africans." The lighthouse keeper, James Clubb, a retired pilot, guided the "Wanderer" through St. Andrew Sound on November 29, 1858.

The lighthouse survived the early part of the War Between the States with little damage. A letter dated March 5, 1862 states:

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8

To: Captain T. A. Jenkins
Secretary of the Light-House Board, Washington.

Off the Town of Fernandina, March 5, 1862.

SIR: I have the pleasure to inform the Light-House Board that the light-house on Little Cumberland is in a perfect state of preservation. The lens was carefully taken down by the light-house keeper, who came to me in St. Andrew Sound, and has impressed me very favorable by his spirit and loyalty. He thinks the lens at St. Simon's is with it at Brunswick, where I hope to recover the same.

The Light-House Board is aware that the light-house on St. Simon's was destroyed by the rebels.

A large number of buoys have been recovered here. I see no moorings for them, however. The light-house is uninjured, but I have not yet discovered the apparatus.

In haste, yours, truly,

S F. Du Pont,
Flag Officer [U.S. Navy]

But, in 1867 it was reported that "extensive repairs have been made to restore it after its damage by the rebels," which was not, however, so extensive that it had to be taken out of service. Shortly thereafter encroachments by the sea from the northwest exposure were serious enough to call for the construction of a large brick wall built to a depth of 2 feet below the tower. The space between the wall and the tower was filled with concrete and covered over with brick to arrest the damage, according to the account. This now presumably lies under the dune. Some of the island residents report the periodic appearance and disappearance of a brick structure at the base of the tower as wind erosion scours and fills. It could be the keeper's house, or perhaps the wall.

In 1879 the "old style tower" (timbers built into the brick-work) began to show need for repair. Iron structural members were installed and the rusted-out iron lantern deck was replaced with a wood deck. This in turn was replaced by an iron deck in 1901, which is probably the one now in place.

This lighthouse on St. Andrew Sound was operated until 1915 by the U. S. government when the last keeper was removed. The light had been decommissioned in 1913, by an act of Congress, who also issued an

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8

order that the structure be sold. However, the light was not dimmed until March 15, 1915. R. L. Phillips Company, of Brunswick, Georgia, bought the lighthouse and six (6) acres of land at auction in 1923-1924, for \$800.

In 1961, the Little Cumberland Island Association, consisting of sixty-five members, purchased the island, including the lighthouse, allowing 10% of the land to be developed as cottages, with the rest left as wilderness. At no time has Little Cumberland Island been farmed, lumbered, grazed, or even extensively lived upon except by lighthouse keepers.

The July, 1967, newsletter of the Little Cumberland Island Association states: "The two derelict buildings at the lighthouse are to be removed and the old bricks made available to members wanting to buy them for island construction. Proceeds are to be used to cover the cost of replacing the lighthouse spiral staircase and the steel superstructure."

By early 1969, the Association completed restoration of the island's lighthouse, and its condition differed remarkably from the one when they took possession of it several years earlier. Sand dunes had drifted twenty feet on one side of the tower, blocking the entrance at the time work began. As the sand was dug away, the spiral stairs were found intact, though water entering from a deteriorated roof had so damaged the lower portions that they were replaced by a replica in the same design. The masonry was as perfect as the day the lighthouse was built, though a steel superstructure at the top had to be restored and eight jalousie windows installed to keep out inclement weather. An original cast iron firepot, providing the light source, is still in place.

Although the tower can be relighted, the Association has no plans to do so, as it might confuse mariners and become a death-trap to migrating birds. From atop the Little Cumberland Light is seen St. Andrew's Sound to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the island to the south, and the Marshes of Glynn on the west.

9. Major Bibliographic References

O'Connor, Maggie. "Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse." Historic Property Information Form, March 2, 1989. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Material from the National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 26, related to this particular lighthouse. Copies of some of the material is on file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- () 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- (X) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- (X) Other, Specify Repository: National Archives

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 460540 Northing 3426800

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is marked on the attached plat.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is the same six acres sold to the U.S. government in 1838 and by them in 1924. It is all the land that has ever been associated with the lighthouse tract.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
organization Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone 404-656-2840 **date** August 10, 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

PHOTOGRAPHS 1
Section number _____ Page _____

LITTLE CUMBERLAND ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

St. Mary's vicinity, Camden County, Georgia

Photographer: James R. Lockhart

Negative: Filed with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Date photographed: August 1989

Description:

1 of 7: North facade; photographer facing south.

2 of 7: South facade; photographer facing east; northeast.

3 of 7: Entrance; photographer facing southeast.

4 of 7: Interior, just inside entrance; photographer facing southeast.

5 of 7: Stairs, looking up.

6 of 7: Cast iron support, at top of stair.

7 of 7: Looking out from tower; photographer facing east.

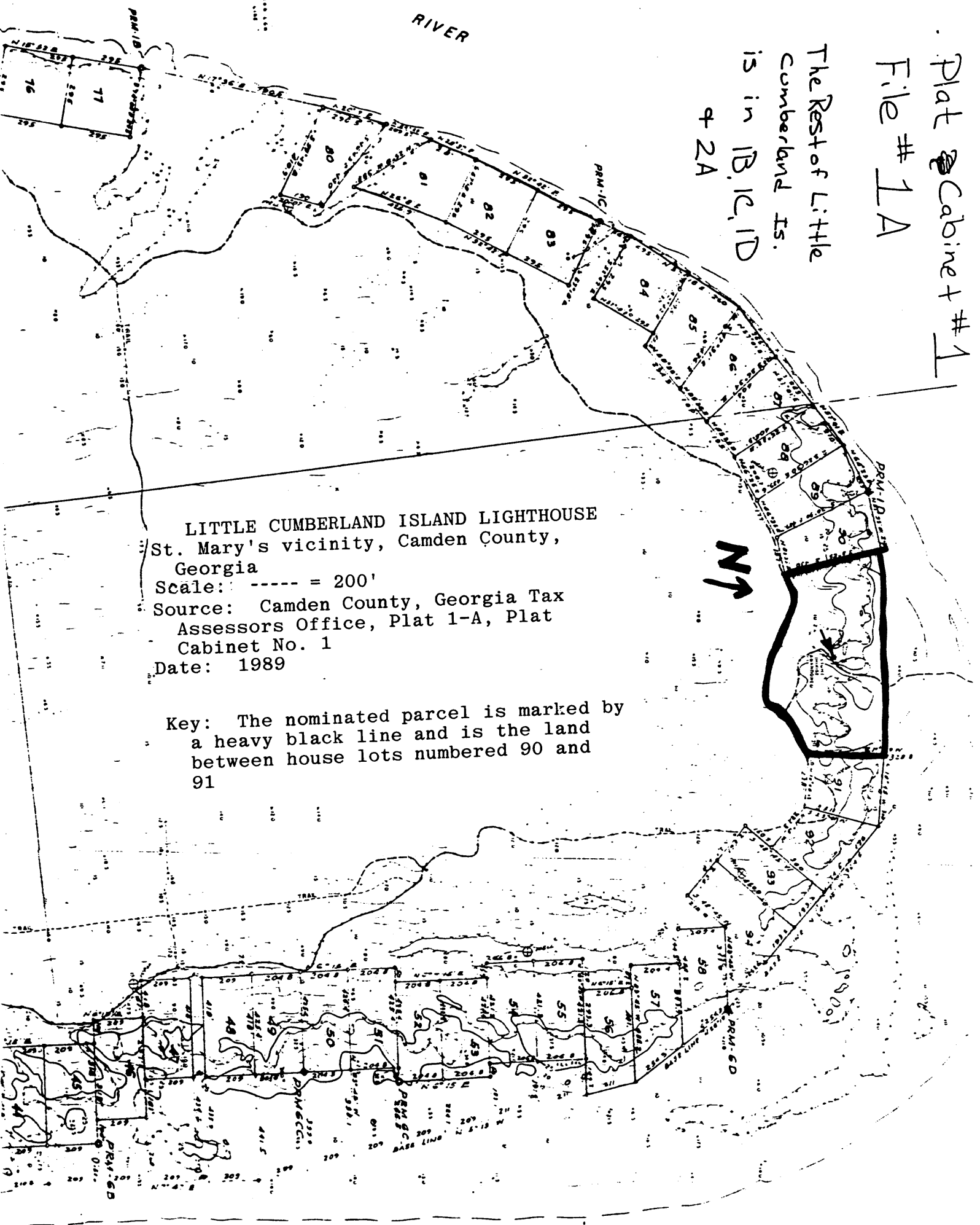
Plat ~~2~~ Cabinet # 1

File # 1A

The Rest of Little
Cumberland Is.
is in B, C, D
& 2A

LITTLE CUMBERLAND ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE
St. Mary's vicinity, Camden County,
Georgia
Scale: ----- = 200'
Source: Camden County, Georgia Tax
Assessors Office, Plat 1-A, Plat
Cabinet No. 1
Date: 1989

Key: The nominated parcel is marked by
a heavy black line and is the land
between house lots numbered 90
and
91



OCEAN SECTION