

PHD 365416

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 3 1976
DATE ENTERED	JAN 18 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Owls Head Light Station

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

N.E. OF OWLS HEAD ON W. PENOBSCOT BAY

CITY, TOWN

Owls Head

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Knox

CODE

013

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

First Coast Guard District

STREET & NUMBER

150 Causeway Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds Knox Co.

STREET & NUMBER

Union Street

CITY, TOWN

Rockland

STATE

Maine 04841

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

OWLS HEAD LIGHT STATION

DATE

22 March 1976

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Commander, First Coast Guard District

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Dwelling was built in 1826, 34' x 21', 2 story with attached shed, wood frame construction, painted white with green trim.

Storage Building was built in 1826, 11' x 10' x 9' high, brick with shingle roof.

Light Tower was built in 1826, brick, 14' diameter, ~~30'~~ high, round, painted white. A bronze plaque was placed on the light by the Mussel Historical Society on July 21, 1962. The town of Owls Head has a park named "Lighthouse Park" on the land adjacent to the light station.

The light on the tower is a fourth order, fresnel cut glass lens protected by rectangular storm panes projecting a fixed, white beam, candle power 20400, 16 mile range, focal plane at high water, 100 feet.

The fog signal on the light tower is an ELG 300/02 with a range of 4 miles.

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Additional information pertaining to light tower:

1. Built by Jeremiah Berry and Green & Foster.
2. Height of focal plane above sea level - 99'
3. Dimension at base - 9' inside diameter
4. Dimension at parapet - 9' inside diameter
5. Materials used in construction are brick, stone and cement.
6. The form of tower is cylindrical.
7. The height of tower from base to ventilator ball of lantern - 23' 6".
8. Thickness of wall at base - 40", at parapet - 24".

Additional information on dwelling:

The Articles of Agreement dated 18 April 1825 between the superintendent of lighthouses in the State of Maine and Jeremiah Berry and Green & Foster states that they built a lighthouse and dwelling house on Owls Head, Thomastown, Maine for the sum of \$1888.

The house was 34' x 20', one story with cellar, two rooms with chimney in the middle and a porch. This original house was altered by addition of an ell, a second story and a piazza about 1854.

The house retains the flavor, the atmosphere, the feeling originally built into it by Jeremiah Berry and Green & Foster in 1825.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1826 (LIVENGOOD)

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following history of the Owls Head Light consists of extracts from "The Lighthouses of New England" written by Edgar Rowe Snow.

At the entrance to the attractive seaport of Rockland, Maine is a high, wave-swept promontory, visible to all who sail up or down Penobscot Bay. Pine trees and grassy terraces vie with each other for possession of this rocky headland, while at the very peak of the cliff, partly surrounded by spruce trees, is a lighthouse. Anyone who sails in the vicinity recognizes the location at once as Owl's Head.

The headland has been the scene of many battles, shipwrecks, and other dramatic episodes since the advent of the white man. When the Indians ruled the coast, they called it Medadacut. Many claim Owl's Head is the English translation. The owl's head which gives the promontory its name is easily identified in the rocky cliff by the two cavelike hollows which form the eyes and a ridge which makes the bridge of the owl's nose. Rocks that jut out on either side of the bridge form two eyeballs. The spruce trees are said to be so old that they outrival almost any others along the Maine Coast, with hanging moss creating a picturesque effect.

One of the first white men who landed at Owl's Head was the great Indian fighter Colonel Benjamin Church, who at the time of his pursuit of the red men in 1696 anchored off Monhegan to deceive the Indian warriors. Then, in the dead of night, Church ordered his entire party into whale boats in which they rowed all the distance to Owl's Head, arriving there at dawn. In spite of his carefully laid plans, Colonel Church found that the Indians had already fled the vicinity.

In the year 1745 young Thomas Sanders, on board a vessel captained by his father, was decoyed ashore by an Indian at Owl's Head. Once away from the ship, Sanders was surrounded by several red men and captured. His father later sent a ransom of fifty pounds, but young Sanders insisted on getting safe conduct back to the coast before paying the money. While walking through the dense woods, he borrowed his guard's gun to shoot ducks, fled

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"The Lighthouses of New England" by Edgar Rowe Snow

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.14 Acres +/-

UTM REFERENCES

C	X	19	496240	4881840	A	B	19	496510	4882160
		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
B	X	19	496510	4881510	D				
		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the southeast corner of the parcel to be described at the mean high water mark of West Penobscot Bay; thence N35° W 287 feet, more or less, to a point; thence N45° E 241 feet, more or less, to the mean high water mark of West Penobscot Bay; thence northeast, southeast and southerly by the mean high water mark. 1450 feet, more or less to the point first mentioned and point of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael F. Flaherty

ORGANIZATION

First Coast Guard District

STREET & NUMBER

150 Causeway Street

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

DATE

3/22/76

TELEPHONE

(617) 223-6903

STATE

Massachusetts

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Carol S. Stettin  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS OFFICER

DATE

4/27/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles Flaherty  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

1/18/78  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

1.17.78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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into the underbrush and thus escaped. Burying the ransom in the woods, he finally reached the coast, where he was soon aboard a Gloucester vessel bound back home. Fifteen years later he was sailing in the vicinity of Owl's Head and was becalmed. Remembering the cache of money, Captain Sanders went ashore and retrieved it from its hiding place.

On June 7, 1757, thirty war canoes landed at Owl's Head and in the battle that followed with the white men, two Penobscot Indians were killed and promptly scalped by Captain Joseph Cox, leader of the American forces.

After the Revolution, Thomaston and the entire surrounding vicinity was rapidly building up a substantial lime and shipping business. In 1822 lime sold from 84 cents to \$1.08 a barrel, while schooners from Owl's Head made voyages to Europe, returning with cargoes of salt. Sail after sail passed the attractive Maine promontory, but many of them were wrecked in fog and storm before they made port. Agitation started for the erection of a lighthouse, and when in 1823 the steamer Maine made regular stops at Owl's Head, plans were developed to build a light high on the nearby headland.

In September 1825, Keeper Isaac Stearns illuminated Owl's Head Light for the first time. The granite tower had been built at the highest peak of the promontory, eighty-two feet above the sea, with the focal point of the light one hundred feet above the water. For the next thirteen years Keeper Stearns was active at the lighthouse. He retired in the year 1838, at which time he was succeeded by William Masters.

William Masters became keeper of Owl's Head Light in 1845. In the equinoctial gale of March 21, 1847, the schooner HERO smashed against the rock shore at Owl's Head, while another unfortunate craft, the sloop LOUISA, hit at Crockett's Point.

In August 1849, Masters resigned in favor of Henry Achorn. The next year a terrific storm sent vessels ashore all along the coast. On January 24, 1850, the schooner DOVE went ashore at Ash Point. The vessel, owned by Captain William H. Crockett of Rockland, was a total loss.

One of the strangest events in the entire history of Maine took

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place between Owl's Head and Spruce Head in the year 1850. During the terrible December 22 gale of that year five vessels were thrown ashore between the beach at Owl's Head and Spruce Head, about eight miles away. The weather was far below zero that night, and spray froze on each of the five wrecked ships until they were encased in ice several inches thick.

A coasting schooner, owned by Henry Butters of Haverhill, had been anchored off Jameson's Point when the storm broke. Aboard the schooner were three persons, the mate, his bride-to-be, and a deck hand. The captain had left the ship at Rockland for some mysterious reason. Some said at the time that he had been discharged, others believed that he had merely fled from the vessel because of a strange premonition.

The schooner's cables snapped sometime before midnight and the vessel was pushed across the harbor by the terrific winds and waves, finally being thrown with great force against the cruel ledges just off Spruce Head. Although she filled at once, the schooner did not sink as the rocky cradle where she hit held her, her decks just above water.

Down below, the girl had already retired for the evening, but when the schooner crashed, the young woman grabbed a large blanket and hurried up on deck. The three frightened people huddled in the shelter of the taffrail. Every monstrous wave that roared in at them out of the storm left its covering of spray, which soon froze into solid ice. Something had to be done at once, or they would all perish.

The mate then thought of a plan. Making the girl lie down next to the taffrail, he lay down beside her and then covered her with the blanket. The deck hand crawled in beside the mate, and the blanket was pulled over so that all three were under its protection. The bitter night wore on. The tide rose higher and higher, until every single wave broke directly across the schooner. Each successive wave left its thin covering of ice which soon built up to a depth of several inches over the blanket, under which the three helpless people lay. Heavier and heavier grew the weight of the ice, and finally the two lovers, shut off from the air, lost consciousness.

Then the tide started to turn and go out, and as morning came,

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the deckhand, who had kept hacking with his sheath knife to keep a small air hole open through the thick ice, took heart. Striking and slashing at the heavy icy covering that had entombed him with his two companions, at times using his bleeding hands as clubs, he chopped and punched his way out from under the ice cap that had built itself up over the three shipwrecked victims. Without question, the heavy woolen blanket had saved his life. It was then six o'clock in the morning.

After resting a few moments from the strenuous exertions of escaping from the ice cap, the sailor crawled to the rail nearest shore, clambered over the side, and dropped to the icy rocks below. Working his way on hands and knees, he finally reached the high-tide mark, and then collapsed from exhaustion. It was still below zero, so he forced himself to get up and continue his efforts. Foot by foot, yard by yard, the bruised and bleeding man fought his way through the heavy drifts of snow that lined the shore. Now falling, now upright, the sailor made steady progress inland, until finally he reached a road. In the distance he saw a pung driven by Keeper Masters of Owl's Head Light coming slowly his way. Knowing that he was to be saved, he fell across the highway in a dead faint.

Brought to the keeper's home, the sailor was quickly revived and asked to tell his story. When the keeper and his family realized that the boy and girl were still aboard ship under the heavy blanket and several inches of ice, they made plans to reach the schooner. Retracing the sailor's steps in the snow, the members of the rescue party were soon able to see the masts of the schooner showing above the snowdrifts.

A short time later several of the rescue party boarded the schooner. Guided by the directions given them, they arrived at the taffrail where the two lovers were encased in the ice. Chopping and cutting around their forms, the men soon were able to lift the frozen pair up from the deck, although it was agreed that they had probably frozen to death. The boy and girl were carried over the side and handed down to others waiting below. The rescuers decided that an effort should be made to revive them. Within a half hour they were taken to



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a home where they were treated with application of cold water. At first the water's temperature was almost freezing, and then it was gradually raised until it reached approximately fifty-five degrees. Next the hands and feet of the two frozen people were slowly raised and lowered, and their bodies ceaselessly massaged.

The girl was the first to awaken from her deathlike sleep, stirring slightly after two hours' attention. Her lover took almost a full hour more to respond to the steady treatment, but he finally showed signs of life, and a few moments later actually opened his eyes.

Both were covered with warm blankets and made to rest. Several weeks elapsed before they were able to get up and walk, but when spring came they had almost completely recovered. The following June their marriage took place. The story of their strange experience was told up and down the Maine coast for many generations. It is not known whether any of their descendants are still living.

The deckhand fared worse, however. Whether it was from his more exposed position, or because of his efforts in reaching help, he never fully recovered from his terrifying experiences that bitter December night in 1850. He did not go to sea again, but became a well-known figure on the local waterfront.

Keeper Joseph G. Maddocks came to Owl's Head Light in 1873. Ten years before, at the Battle of Gettysburg, he had been wounded in the arm. Previous to the war he was a shipbuilder, but because of his wounds he was unable to continue in shipping circles and so became a lighthouse keeper. He married Clara Emery, of Owl's Head, and they had five children.

The fuel consumed in the lantern in 1873 was lard oil. Keeper Maddocks had to keep a constant fire in the winter-time to prevent the lard oil from freezing. Afterward kerosene took the place of lard oil, while electricity from the Maine Central line now supplies the current to illuminate the bay. When Keeper Maddocks first came, the fog bell was on the shed, an ordinary bell, rung by hand--then came the tidewater bell on the rocks below the lighthouse.

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In heavy storms spray went completely over the house itself, located on the cliff. Just before one of the storms Keeper Maddocks saw a small fishing boat out in the bay. Darkness was falling. In the morning he found a cod line washed up on the rocks in front of the house. As he pulled at the line he found it led into deep water, and seemed to be fastened to something cumbersome. Obtaining his skiff, he rowed over by the rocks and discovered a man's body entangled in the line. It was the fisherman who had been out in the storm the night before.

At eleven o'clock one night, when everyone else was in bed, Mrs. Maddocks was rocking the baby. Suddenly she heard footsteps come up on the porch and saw four men peering in at her through the window. Their boat had been smashed on the rocks and they were wet and hungry. Awakening her husband, Mrs. Maddocks prepared a meal for the unfortunate seamen, while the keeper dried them off and arranged to get someone to take them back to Rockland. The men had been on a fishing cruise, but their schooner was smashed to pieces and everything aboard was lost.

I spoke with Mrs. Maddocks when she was 102 years old. She recalled the many years she had spent at Owl's Head. One winter the whole bay froze over for miles around. Keeper Maddocks and his wife watched a horse and sleigh cross the expanse of ice between Rockland and Vinalhaven, while scores of people walked out over the ice drawing their sleds after them.

Mrs. Maddocks told of the sixteen acres of land belonging to the lighthouse reservation at Owl's Head. Incidentally, there were more than eleven shipwrecks around Owl's Head before Keeper Maddocks left in 1896.

The last regular keeper of the old Lighthouse Service at Owl's Head was Augustus B. Hamor. Entering the service in 1913, he was sent to Egg Rock near Bar Harbor. He remained there seventeen years and was then transferred to Owl's Head Light in June 1930.

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One day, as I was sitting in the dining room of the Owl's Head home of Keeper Hamor's daughter, Pauline, she told me the story of her springer spaniel Spot, who loved the signal bell and the boats of the bay. His whole interest in life seemed centered on the lighthouse, the fog bell, and the shipping that passed the promontory. He was always watching for boats to pass the light and as soon as they would get near enough to the cliff, Spot would run over to the bell rope and give it a few quick tugs with his teeth, pulling with all his strength until the peal of the bell would echo out over Penobscot Bay. Then, as the craft answered with either whistles or bell, the happy dog would dash down to the water's edge and bark at the passing vessel. It was a joyous life.

One of the best-loved of all the craft that sailed by the light was the Matinicus mail boat, captained by Stuart Ames of Rockland. Quite often Mrs. Ames would call up the light station to ask whether they had seen the mail boat coming from Matinicus, and in this way Mrs. Ames had a little advance notice about the time to put dinner on for her husband.

One terribly stormy night, when the snow-laden wind was cutting in across the island, the telephone rang. It was the wife of Captain Ames, who was terribly worried about her husband, then several hours overdue.

"My husband speaks so often of your dog, Spot. Do you think that he might be able to hear the mail boat's whistle?" asked the frantic wife. Keeper Hamor replied that they would let the dog out and see what might happen. But after a half hour outside in the gale, Spot returned to the house and scratched at the door to be let in. He had a dejected air, which told the others that he had not heard the mail boat. Lying down in his dry corner, Spot was about to go to sleep, when suddenly he raised up on his haunches, his ears alerted and every muscle in his body tense with expectation. Spot had heard the whistle of the mail boat.

Springing up from his corner, he scampered across the hallway and barked to be let out. The others watched him scramble

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through the great drifts on his way to the lighthouse bell, but he was unable to reach the signal, for the snow had piled up several feet high in the vicinity. Prevented from reaching the bell, the dog made his way along the edge of the cliff, where the wind was sweeping the snow clear, and reached the point nearest to the boat, barking furiously all the time. Keeper Hamor went out into the storm and followed the dog.

Soon he, too, could hear the whistle of the mail boat, and realized that if the dog's bark could be heard by Captain Ames, he in turn would know where he was and be able to get his bearings in spite of the storm. After a period of violent barking, there came an answer out of the storm—three distant blasts of the mail boat's whistle—a signal indicating he had heard the barking dog. The Matinicus boat was even then charting a safe course for Rockland.

Two hours later a grateful wife called up the Hamor residence and expressed her thanks to the spaniel Spot, who had saved the Matinicus mail boat from disaster. Spot was then sleeping soundly in his corner, proudly dreaming of his feat of rescue. The spaniel is now buried near the fog horn he loved so well.

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The lighthouse at Owl's Head designates the entrance to Rockland Harbor, Maine.

The ships that were guided to safe harbor by the light carried the goods, raw material and people that assisted in the development of coastal villages to modern towns and cities of today.

Ships and boats were the main mode of transportation, and the sea, rivers and streams were the only roads.