

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 29 1980

MAR 26 1980

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Palmer Island Light Station

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

New Bedford Harbor

CITY, TOWN

New Bedford

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Twelfth

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE
25COUNTY
BristolCODE
005**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☒ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☐ OCCUPIED
☒ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ OTHER: None**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

New England Division, U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

STREET & NUMBER

424 Trapelo Road

CITY, TOWN

Waltham

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02154

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Southern District

STREET & NUMBER

25 North Sixth Street, (Deed to U.S. dtd 14 March 1849, Bk 25 Pg. 105)

CITY, TOWN

New Bedford

STATE

Massachusetts 02740

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Map of Palmer's Island Light Station

DATE

March 1977

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

New England Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Real Estate

CITY, TOWN

Waltham

STATE

Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
☐ EXCELLENT	☒ DETERIORATED	☒ UNALTERED	☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ GOOD	☐ RUINS	☐ ALTERED	☐ MOVED DATE _____
☐ FAIR	☐ UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

historical Description: Built between 9 June and 22 September, 1849 by Charles M. Pierce, Masonry, under contract to the Superintendent of Lights, at a cost of \$1951. Though originally specified to be octagonal, the tower appears to have always been circular in plan, as it is today. Pertinent dimensions are as follows: (U.S. Coast Guard RG-26(a)).

Foundation: 3 ft. high rubble masonry

Tower: Rubble masonry 24 ft. high with 18 ft. 4 inch diameter and 3 ft. thick walls at base, and 10 ft. diameter and 18 inch thick walls at top (Exhs. A-D).

Floor: Brick

Stairs: Three flights of wooden stairs spiraling the inner face of the wall, and an upper flight of iron steps.

Entry: Two 6 ft. 10 in. x 3 ft. doors

Windows: Three 19 in. x 21 1/2 in. windows of twelve 8 in. x 6 in. lights (Exhs. A-D).

Lantern: Deck - 10 ft. diameter, of copper sheathed wood with iron railing, and tower access via scuffle.

Lantern - Specified as octagonal, iron with 6 plate glass lights of 24 in. x 15 in. on each face; 4 ft. x 2 ft. copper sheathed door in ventilator in dome top 15 in. high x 12 in. diameter with 2 ft. x 1 ft. copper sheathed vane above. The light may have been fueled by whale oil produced at this time, and was probably of the fixed white form noted in 1889.

Note: The 9 sided lantern now present (1979) may be original.

Lightning Rod: On tower exterior, from ledge to 1 ft. above vane on lantern.

A keeper's dwelling was built, and other buildings constructed on the island in later years. Their history and present condition are assessed in the attached Archaeological Reconnaissance Report. Various alterations were made to the structure during its use (U.S. Coast Guard RG 26(b)).

1857: The lenses of the light were replaced.

1863: A new "lantern" was installed. This may refer to either a new lamp in the structure, or replacement of the supposed octagonal lantern described above, with the 9 sided one now on the structure (Exhs. A-D). As noted

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

2

above, the lantern may have not been built in octagonal form as described in the original construction specifications. By 1931, the lantern had a single large pane of glass in each face, measuring 36 in. x 28 in. x 1/4 in., rather than the small panes of mid 19th century form. The ventilator was in the parapet. Lantern door has dimensions of 6 ft. 8 in. x 2 ft. 8 in. located on tower's N side.

1883: The iron hand rail on the dike to the tower was renewed (Exhs. A-D). If the island's form on Beer's map 1871 is accurate (see Archaeological Reconnaissance, attached) this dike may not have been built until after 1871.

By 1889: The light is a fixed white type.

May 31, 1900: A fog bell was installed in a frame pyramidal tower adjoining the island end of the dike (Exh. A). New stairs and deck were built.

1902: A frame covered way was built on the dike (Exh. B). The 1900 bell tower was apparently destroyed by storms or removed at about this time.

By 1929:
(New
Bedford
Standard
Times)
A frame bell tower on a concrete platform was attached to the lighthouse side opposite the dike. Access was provided by a small door and two rung ladder in the lighthouse (Exhs. C & D). The bell was mechanically rung at 10 second intervals and hung in an upper window of the tower. It was 3 ft. 4 in. diameter x 2 ft. 6 in. high, weighed 1260 lbs. and was made by Henry McShane in 1901. Though a vestibule remained, the covered way on the dike was gone by this time (Exh. C). A revolving red light may have replaced the fixed white one by this time, to be replaced by a fixed green one during the tenure of Captain Arthur Small.

By 1931: The following additional features are noted as existing by this time (U.S. Coast Guard RG-26(c)).

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In Lantern: A fixed light with green shade (replacing the revolving one noted above), of 870 candle power operated off a kerosene mantle of 1-1/4 in. diameter. The drum had 4 panels of 5 elements each with 5 upper and 3 lower prisms in each panel, all mounted on an iron pedestal. Focal plane was at 35.66 ft. m.s.l. and the light was classified as 5th order.

Tower: Contains a closet with shelves, for spare lamp parts. Tower is whitewashed.

- 1941: The lighthouse was automated to operate from Butler's Flat Lighthouse.
- 1962: Purchased by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- 1966: Vandals set fire to the building, gutting the interior. The bell tower may have been destroyed on this date or some time after 1939.

Present Condition:

- Tower: Intact in 1849 form with pre 1929 concrete base at bell tower (Exhs. E-K).
- Stairs: Charred ends of supports are present in notches within the interior masonry (Exh. F).
- Floor: Sand covered, concrete post in center probably stair support 1900 (Exh. G).
- Entry: Doors missing, evidence at door frame and roof of former covered way are visible around doorway. (Exh. E). Entry to bell tower site remains, with rungs (Exhs. G, I, & J).
- Windows: Lower window, on S side is bricked closed (Exh. H). No window frames remain (Exh. F).

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Lantern: Iron frame remains, slightly displaced; roofing and ventilator gone (Exhs. E, F, I, & K). Floor of tower is littered with 3/8 in. thick broken glass, probably from lantern windows; doorway is bricked shut (Exh. I); platform gone, railing has slid down tower sides (Exhs. E, H, I & K).

Dike: Made of rubble stone with quarried block upper course, island end washed away (Exhs. E, I & K). Bases of iron railing visible, railing fragments remain in water to either side of the dike.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES Built: 1849

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles M. Pierce

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of Palmer Island Light lies in two factors, its historic association and its architecture.

At the time of the light's construction, New Bedford was the major home port of the world's whaling fleet, supplying nearly 50% of the American oil supply. This prosperity was probably a major impetus for the lighthouse construction.

The whaling industry collapsed during the second half of the century, but considerable commercial and fishing traffic continued to operate out of the harbor throughout the late 19th and 20th century. The light was kept burning for nearly 100 years, through several major storms, including a gale which damaged the plank walk from the keeper's house to the tower on September 8, 1869, and the 1938 hurricane which destroyed the keeper's house. The keeper, Captain Arthur A. Small, was injured and his wife was drowned while attempting to reach the light.

An 1851 representation of the lighthouse is a prominent feature of the seal of the City of New Bedford (Fig. 3 of attached Archaeological Report).

The remaining features of the lighthouse are primarily those which date from its original construction in 1849, as the 1966 fire destroyed the wooden additions and modifications of the late 19th and early 20th century.

The tower, itself, has only been modified by the bricking of one window and the parapet door and cutting of the early 20th century bell tower door. Remains of the latter feature also include the concrete platform which supported it.

The iron lantern frame and parapet railing appear to date from at least 1863, and possibly from 1849.

The dike, though damaged, is substantially as built in the 19th century, with most of the railings remaining in broken condition nearby.

The hurricane damaged and fire gutted condition of the structure, though destroying much evidence of the 20th century interior and light mechanism, provides potential for restoration of the structure to any of the earlier

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periods of operation. As records of the structure appear to be fairly complete, a fairly accurate reconstruction to 19th century condition may be possible. The City of New Bedford has expressed strong interest in acquiring the property with the intention of performing such a restoration as a major component of a proposed park on Palmer's Island.

As one of the few early 19th century lighthouses remaining in the United States, this structure is representative of its type. Its present overall appearance suggests the 1849 form, due to loss of later additions. Further, the lighthouse has important historical associations as an important local feature of the local "made" landscape, reflected by its appearance on the city seal and in numerous photo essays in local newspapers. Because of these factors, Palmer's Island Light appears eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The potential restoration of the structure to operating condition would provide the modern visitor with a highly visible link to New Bedford's maritime past.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"New Bedford Standard - Times" library & microfilm (photographs)

U.S. Coast Guard RG-26

- 1849 Construction Contract
- Alterations to Palmer's Island Light
- 1931 Description of Palmer's Island Light

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 Acre

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM REFERENCES

A
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

As shown in red on map, being Exhibit M of attached Archaeological Report, entitled "Map of New Bedford - Fairhaven Barrier," dated April 1963.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John S. Wilson, Division Archaeologist and Robert L. Batt, Realty Specialist

ORGANIZATION

New England Division, U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

DATE

29 October 1979

STREET & NUMBER

424 Trapelo Road

TELEPHONE

(617) 894-2400 (X345)

CITY OR TOWN

Waltham

STATE

Massachusetts

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ☒

NO ☐

NONE ☐

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

DATE

28 Jan 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

2/26/80

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2/26/80

EXHIBITS



Exhibit

- A Circa 1900 postcard showing lighthouse, bell tower and keeper's dwelling. View to NNW.
- B Circa 1902 postcard showing lighthouse with cover way. View to NNW.
- C Circa 1930 photograph showing lighthouse and bell tower. View to NNW.
- D Circa 1929 photograph showing lighthouse with bell tower and buildings on island. View to SW.
- E Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View to west of lighthouse.
- F Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View upward of lighthouse interior.
- G Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - Robert Batt, 12 Jun 79
View of lighthouse interior from east doorway.
- H Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - Robert Batt, 12 Jun 79
View of lighthouse interior from south window.
- I Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View to SSW
- J Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
Interior view of bell tower hatchway.
- K Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View to north of lighthouse and dike.
- L U.S.G.S. Quad. Sheet, 64 Sec.,
New Bedford North, MA.
- M U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers Real Estate Map,
entitled "New Bedford - Fairhaven Barrier,"
dated Apr 63.

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FIG. 15
FIELD NOTE FORM



PROJECT: Palmer's Island Light Station

UNIT #: TP-A

DATE: 6/12/79

LOCATION: Slightly N of property line, PROFILE #:
W of oil house site

TOTAL DEPTH: 35 cm., 1/2 m. sq.

PHOTO #:

SOIL DESCRIPTION:

Loose gray sand, to 20 cm, dark brown sandy loam below 20 cm., bedrock at 40 cm. depth

ARTIFACTS:

None

INTERPRETATION/ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Area appears heavily disturbed by storm waves, and mechanical filling of the dwelling cellar to the North.

FIG. 16
FIELD NOTE FORM



PROJECT: Palmer's Island Light Station

UNIT #: TP-B

DATE: 6/12/79

LOCATION: Approx. NNW of TP-A, rear
edge of obvious surface dis-

PROFILE #:

TOTAL DEPTH: turbance around dwelling
site.

PHOTO #:

SOIL DESCRIPTION:

Gray sand to 30 cm. (bedrock)

ARTIFACTS:

Brick and Mortar fragments in upper 10 cm., brick fragment at approx.
20 cm. depth.

INTERPRETATION/ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Disturbed in dwelling cellar filling.

Property Palmer Island Light Station

State Ma - Bristol

Working Number 1-29-80 410

TECHNICAL

Photos 33

Maps 6

x not submitted form

CONTROL

Built in 1849 by the U.S. govt., this lighthouse served as an integral part of the New Bedford harbor, this 24 foot masonry structure lit the harbor entrance for over 100 yrs. a 1966 fire gutted the inside and post-1849 additions. the light has been removed now. foundation to the light-keepers house remains. as one of the few early 19th cent. lighthouses left this structure is important in architecture, commerce, transportation

HISTORIAN

accept
Patrick Andrews
2/19/80

ALTHOUGH THE LIGHTHOUSE IS A VIRTUALLY RUIN IT STILL RETAINS

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

THE BASIC FORM FOR WHICH IT IS SIGNIFICANT. THE ONE ACRE DOMINATED IS THE SAME THAT WAS ORIGINALLY ACQUIRED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE LIGHT. THE KEEPER'S HOUSE AND OTHER RELATED STRUCTURES ARE NOW GONE. (SEE ARCHEOLOGICAL REPORT)

accept
M. P. ...
2/26/80

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

accept
M. P. ...
2/26/80

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____

Federal Register Entry 2-3-81

Send-back _____

Re-submit _____

Entered MAR 26 1980

INT:2106-74



JAN 29 1980

FIG. 3 - 1851 CITY SEAL OF NEW BEDFORD



FIG. 9 - EASTERN BEACH, LOOKING N. TOWARD
LIGHTHOUSE: SHOWING RIPRAP



FIG. 10 - WESTERN BEACH: HOUSE WAS IN
AREA OF TREE

*Palmer Island Light Station
Bristol Co. - MA*

JAN 29 1980



FIG. 11 - ROCKY AREA ON WESTERN BEACH



FIG. 12 - VIEW N.E. FROM DWELLING CELLAR

JAN 29 1980

*Palmer Island Light Station
Bristol Co. MA*



FIG. 13 - VIEW E. FROM DWELLING CELLAR:
CISTERN FRAGMENT IN LOWER LEFT



FIG. 14 - CISTERN FRAGMENT: VIEW TO E.

JAN 29 1980

*Palmer Island Light Station
Bristol Co. MA*

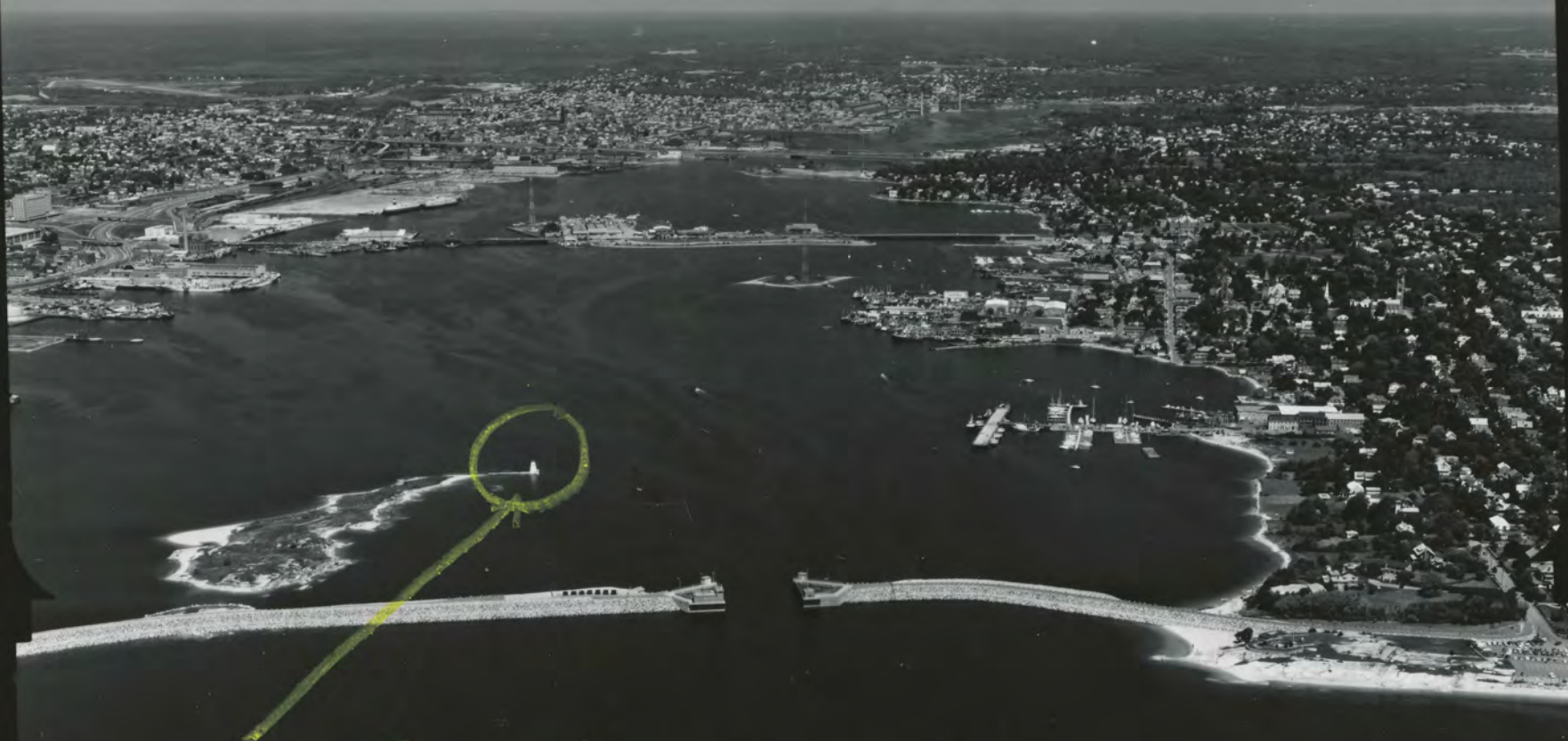
6-10-78

11:46

NEW BEDFORD

77-12

0-02



PALMERS ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

FIG. 2 - Aerial Photograph of

JAN 29 1980
Palmers Island

2022 Palmers Island, New Bedford Harbor.

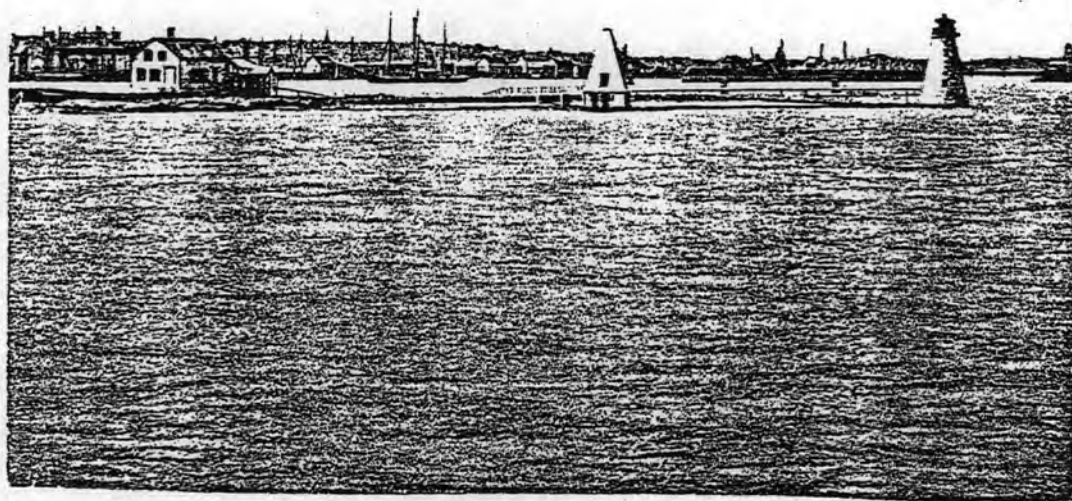


FIG. 6 - POSTCARD PHOTOGRAPH, ca 1900:
SHOWING KEEPER'S HOUSE TO LEFT

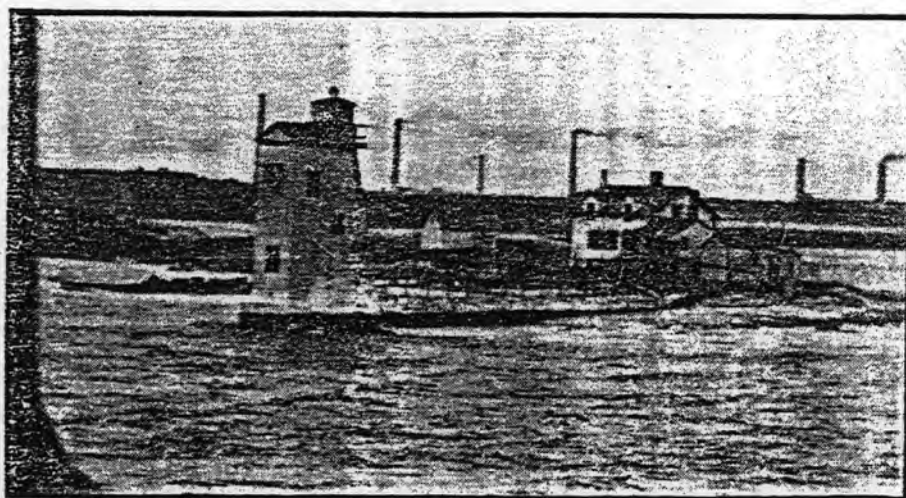
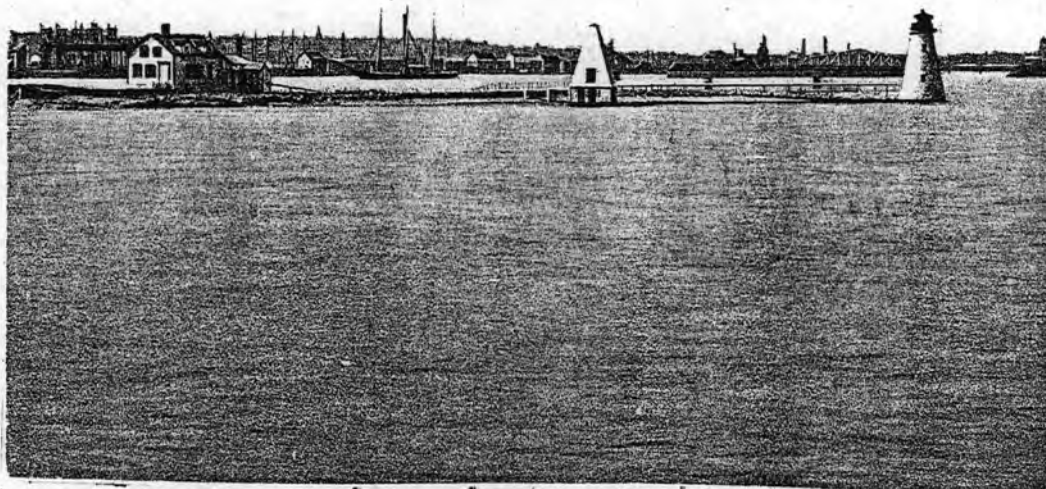


FIG. 7 - 1929 PHOTOGRAPH: SHOWING KEEPER'S HOUSE
& FUEL HOUSE TO RIGHT & BOATHOUSE IN CENTER REAR

JAN 29 1980

JAN 29 1980

2022 Palmers Island, New Bedford Harbor.



*Palmer Island Light Station
Bristol Co. Me.*

Circa 1900 postcard showing lighthouse, bell tower and keeper's dwelling. View to NNW.

Exhibit A

22376 — Palmer Island Light House, New Bedford, Mass.



Circa 1902 postcard showing lighthouse with cover way. View to NNW

Exhibit B

MAR 26 1980

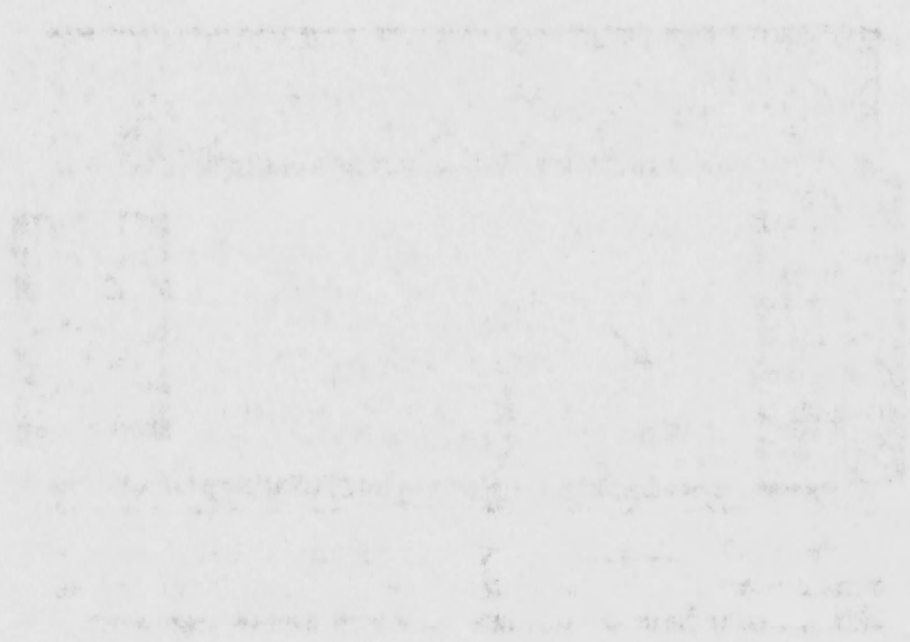


*Palmer Island Light Station
Bristol Co. Ma*

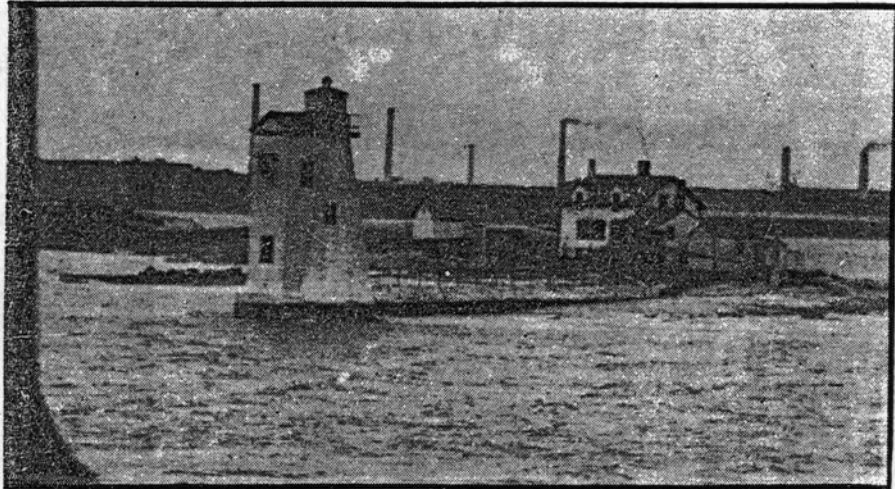
Circa 1930 photograph showing lighthouse and bell
tower. View to NNW

Exhibit C

JAN 29 1980



MAR 26 1980



In 1929, this photo was labeled "an unusual view of Palmers island in the foreground, with mills of New Bedford behind, taken from a Martha's Vineyard Bound steamer."

*Palmer Island Light Station
Bristol Co. MA.*

Cira 1929 photograph showing lighthouse with bell tower and buildings on island. View to SW

Exhibit D

JAN 29 1980

MAR 26 1980



Station Bristol Co.
Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View to west of lighthouse.

Exhibit E **JAN 29 1980**



Station *Bristol Co.*
MAR 26 1980

Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View upward of lighthouse interior.

Exhibit F JAN 29 1980



Palmer's Island Light, ^{Station} New Bedford, MA.
 Photog. - Robert Batt, 12 Jun 79 View
 of lighthouse interior from east doorway.

Exhibit G *Bristol CO.*



Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
 Photog. - Robert Batt, 12 Jun 79 View
 of lighthouse interior from south window.

Exhibit H

JAN 29 1980

MAR 26 1980



MAR 26 1980
Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View to SSW

Bristol Co. Exhibit I JAN 29 1980



MAR 26 1980 JAN 29 1980

Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.

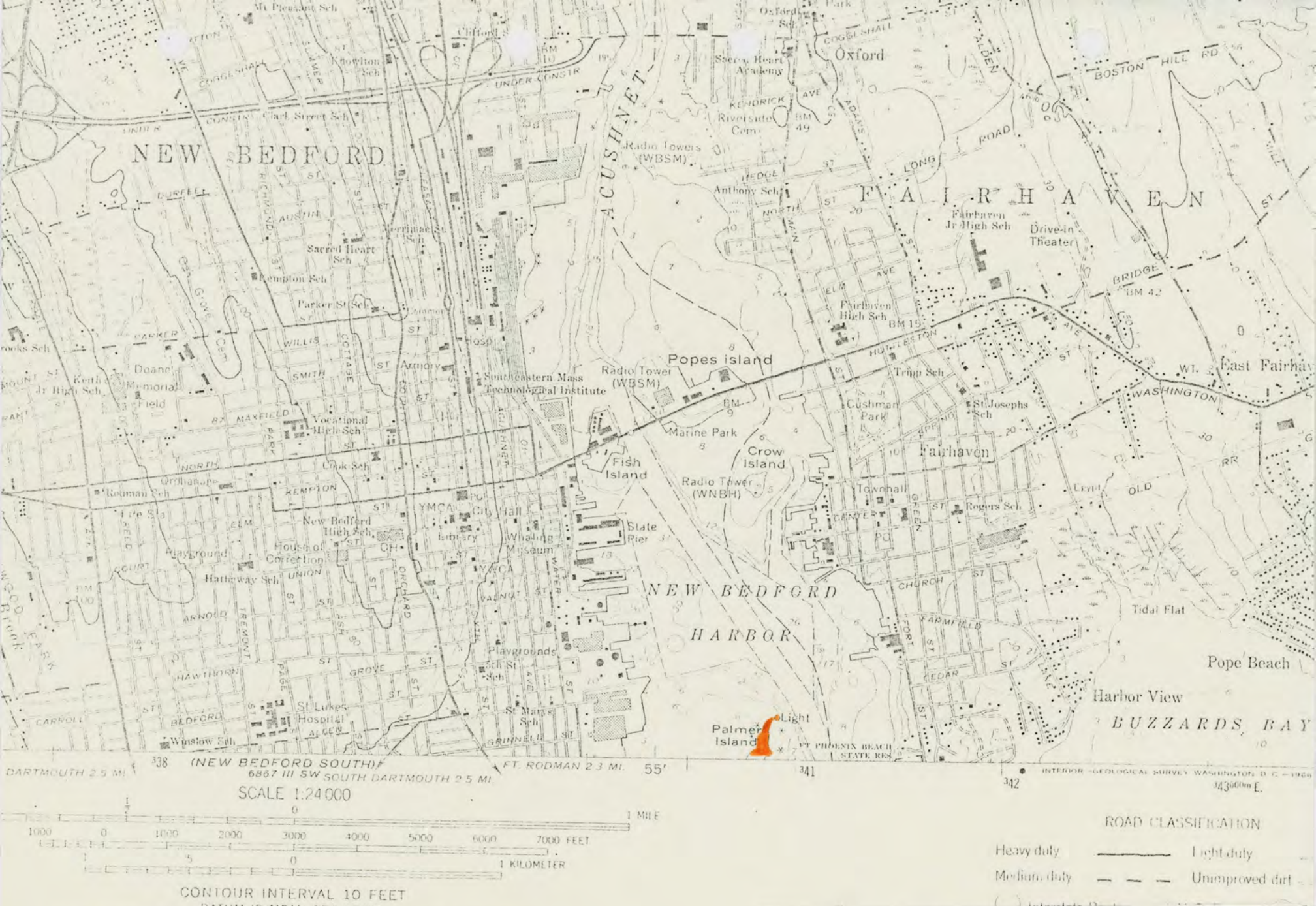
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79

Interior view of bell tower hatchway.

Exhibit J Bristol Co.



JAN 29 1980 Station
Palmer's Island Light, New Bedford, MA.
Photog. - James McDevitt, 12 Jun 79
View to north of lighthouse and dike
MAR 26 1980 Exhibit K Bristol Co.



Scale, 1000.



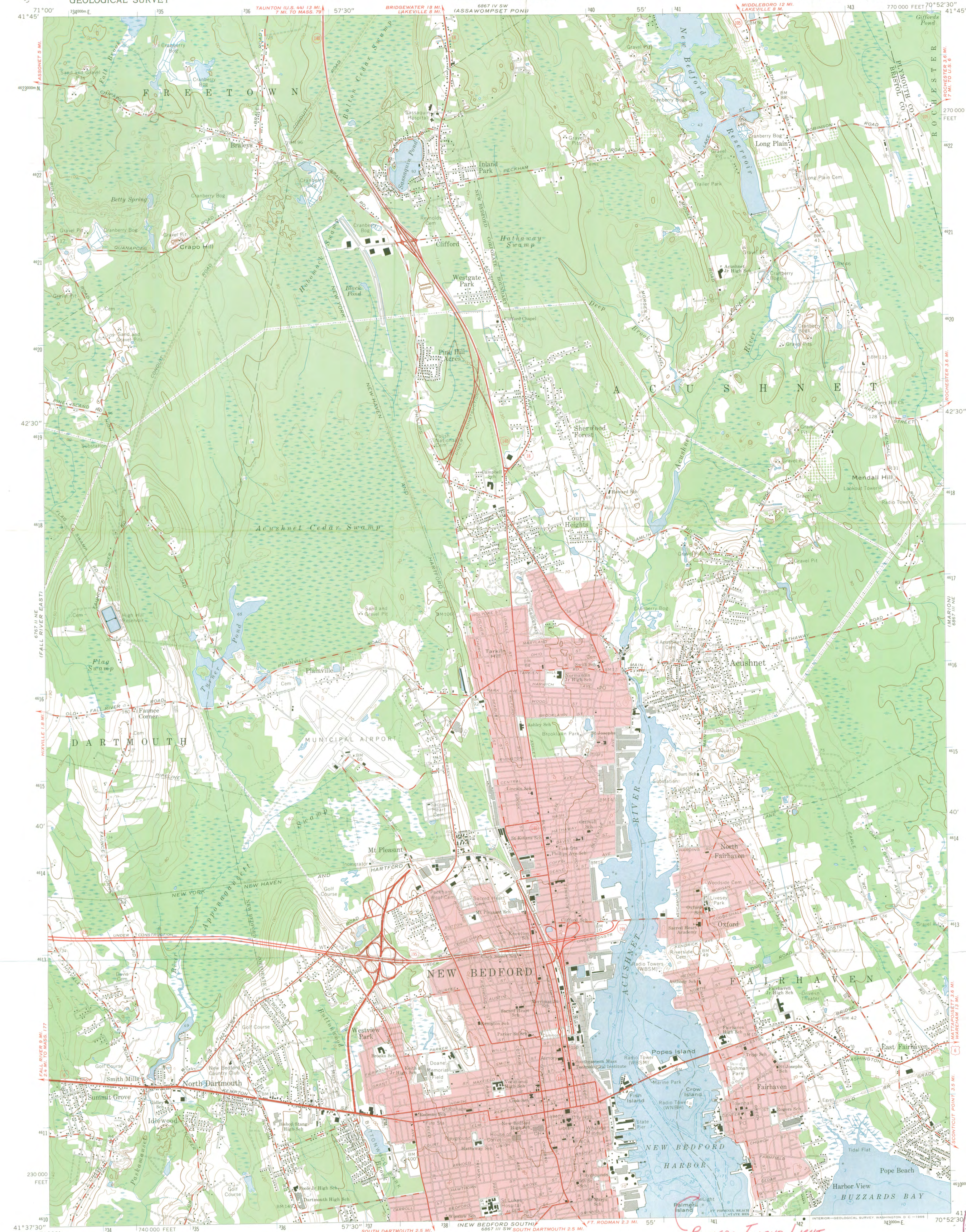
FIG. 4 - 1889 MAP OF PALMER'S ISLAND
LIGHT STATION

JAN 29 1980

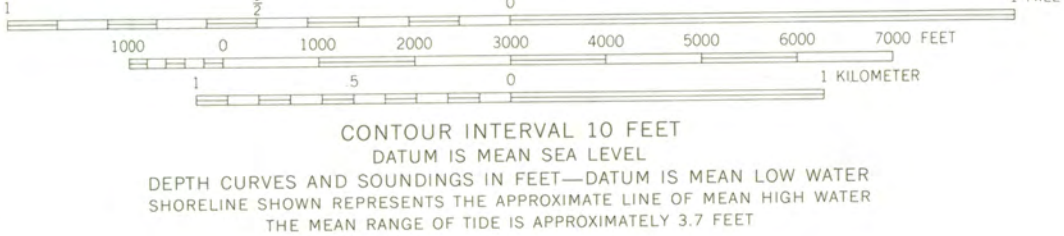
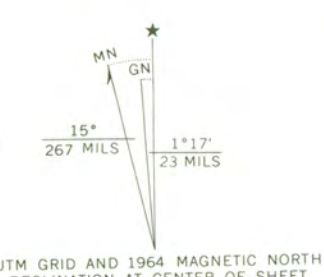


FIG. 5 - 1889 MAP OF BUILDINGS
PALMER'S ISLAND LIGHT STATION

JAN 29 1980



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1936. Revised 1964
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 252 (1964)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 19,
shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Boundaries in tidalwater areas from information furnished by
Massachusetts Department of Public Works



FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

NEW BEDFORD NORTH, MASS.
N4137.5—W70°52'30"

1964 U.S.G.S. Quad, Sheet, 64 Sec.,
AMS 6867 III NW—S New Bedford North, MA.

Exhibit L



FINAL
PROJECT MAP

DEPT. OF THE

USING SERVICE

LOCATION OF PROJECT

STATE

COUNTY

DIVISION

DISTRICT

ARMY AREA

MILES OF

MILES OF

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

RAILROADS

STATE ROADS

FEDERAL ROADS

AIR LINES

ACQUISITION

TOTAL ACRES ACQUIRED

FEE

PUBLIC DOMAIN { PERM. WITHDRAWAL
TEMP. WITHDRAWAL

USE PERMIT

TRANSFER

LEASE

LESSER INTERESTS

DISPOSAL

TOTAL ACRES DISPOSED OF

SOLD

PUBLIC DOMAIN { PERM. WITHDRAWAL
TEMP. WITHDRAWAL

USE PERMIT

TRANSFERRED

LEASES TERMINATED

LESSER INTERESTS TERM.

REASSIGNED

OTHER

LEGEND

EXCEPT FOR THE SPECIAL SYMBOLS SHOWN BELOW MAP
SYMBOLS ARE STANDARD IN ARMY MAP SERVICE
TECHNICAL MANUAL NO. 23.

RESERVATION LINE

RESERVATION LINE (Actual Survey)

TRACT BOUNDARY LINE

TRACT NUMBER

CONTOUR LINE

DISPOSAL

SEGMENT "2"

U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DIVISION, NEW ENGLAND
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WALTHAM, MASS.

REAL ESTATE

NEW BEDFORD-FAIRHAVEN BARRIER

U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers Real
Estate Map, entitled "New Bedford-
Fairhaven Barrier", dated Apr 63
Exhibit MAPPROVED BY: *[Signature]* DATE: APRIL 1963

OFFICE, CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

AUDITED OCE APPROVED 5-30-75

INSTALLATION OR PROJECT NO. NED-2-0010 SHEET 2 OF 7 DRAWING NO. 1678

TRACT REGISTER

TRACT NO.	LAND OWNERS	FEE	ACREAGE	REMARKS
200	E. ANTHONY & SONS, INC.	0.40		
201	TOWN OF FAIRHAVEN	1.00		
202	COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS	1.29		Acquired by local interests.
203	NEW BEDFORD GAS & EDISON LIGHT CO.	1.25		" " " " " "
204E	JAMES B. BUCKLEY, ET AL.		0.04	Acquired by local interests. Perp. eas. for ingress & egress.
205	TOWN OF FAIRHAVEN	0.51		Acquired by local interests.
200E	E. ANTHONY & SONS, INC.		4.70	Temp. easm't. for construction for 3 yrs. from 5-31-63
A	U.S. Treasury Department (U.S. Coast Guard)	1.00		Transferred from U.S. Treasury Dept. 2-24-67 and accepted by U.S. Army Corps of Eng. 3-20-67.

Note —
Mapping of land designated on this sheet
was performed by Tibbitts Engineering Corp.,
New Bedford & Marion, Massachusetts under
Contract No. DA-19-016-CIVENG-62-228
and PO#NEDSP-63-608 and 63-1065.

NOTE
Tract A and Acquisition Authorization shown,
NOT AUDITED - ACREAGE NOT INCLUDED IN
STATISTICS.

1st Ind. OCE to NED, dated 1-10-67.
Title 10, Section 2571, U.S. Code.

ACQUISITION AUTHORIZATION

DRAWN BY: _____

TRACED BY: _____

CHECKED BY: _____

SUBMITTED BY: *[Signature]*RECOMMENDED BY: *[Signature]*APPROVED BY: *[Signature]*

DATE: APRIL 1963

OFFICE, CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

AUDITED OCE APPROVED 5-30-75

INSTALLATION OR PROJECT NO. NED-2-0010

SHEET 2 OF 7

DRAWING NO. 1678

DATE

REVISIONS

BY

DATE

REVISIONS

DATE

REVISIONS

NEW BEDFORD

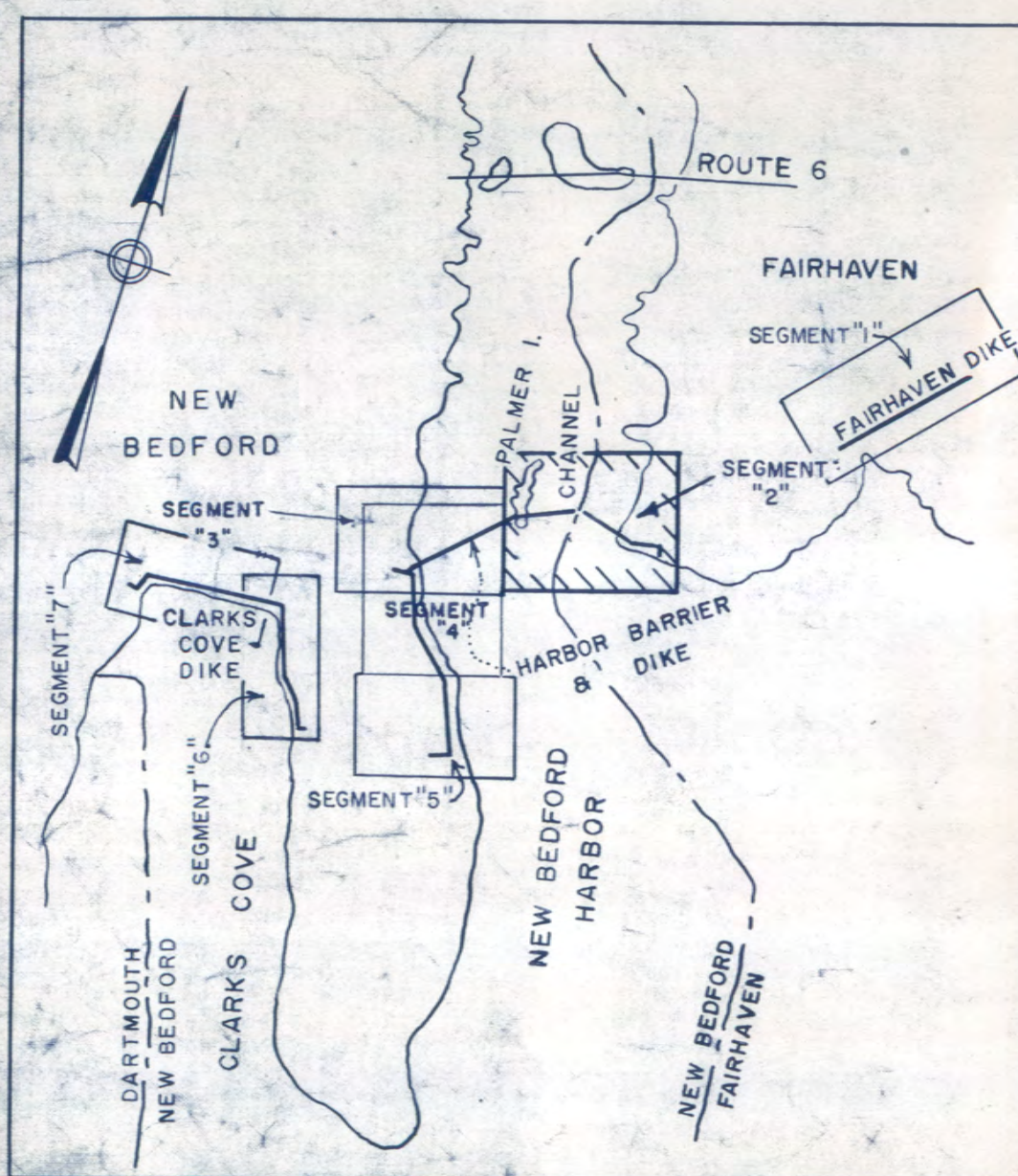
FAIRHAVEN

HARBOR

NEW BEDFORD

BYPASS CHANNEL

BYPASS CHANNEL



SEGMENT INDEX MAP

SCALE
0 1 MILE

0.40 of an acre, fee, conveyed to the City of New Bedford, by the Secretary of the Army
by QCD dated 4-27-69 (Tract 200).

1.00 acre, fee, conveyed to the City of New Bedford, by the Acting Secretary of the Army
by QCD dated 1-17-75 (Tract 201).

10 Acres reported excess on SF 118 to General
Services Administration 11-21-77 who conveyed

Acres to
By QCD dated

TRACT REGISTER

TRACT NO.	LAND OWNER	ACREAGE				REMARKS
		FEE	EASMT.	LEASED	PERMIT	
A	U.S. Treasury Department (U.S. Coast Guard)	1.00				Transferred from U.S. Treasury Dept., 2-24-67 and accepted by U.S. Army Corps of Eng. 3-20-67.

PROJECT MAP

DEPT. OF THE ARMY

USING SERVICE CORPS OF ENGINEERS
CIVIL WORKS

LOCATION OF PROJECT

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

COUNTY BRISTOL

DIVISION NEW ENGLAND

DISTRICT

ARMY AREA FIRST

20 MILES SE OF PROVIDENCE

35 MILES S OF BROCKTON
IN NEW BEDFORD

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

RAILROADS

STATE ROADS

FEDERAL ROADS 6

AIR LINES

ACQUISITION

TOTAL ACRES ACQUIRED 1.00

FEE

PUBLIC DOMAIN WITHDRAWAL

USE PERMIT

USE PERMIT (OTHER THAN P. D.)

TRANSFER FEE 1.00

LEASE

LESSER INTERESTS

DISPOSAL

TOTAL ACRES DISPOSED OF

SOLD

PUBLIC DOMAIN WITHDRAWAL

USE PERMIT

USE PERMIT (OTHER THAN P. D.)

TRANSFERRED

LEASES TERMINATED

LESSER INTERESTS TERM.

REASSIGNED

OTHER

LEGEND

EXCEPT FOR THE SPECIAL SYMBOLS SHOWN BELOW MAP
SYMBOLS ARE STANDARD IN ARMY MAP SERVICE
TECHNICAL MANUAL NO. 23.

RESERVATION LINE

RESERVATION LINE (Actual Survey)

TRACT BOUNDARY LINE

TRACT NUMBER

CONTOUR LINE

DISPOSAL

EXTENDED OWNERSHIP LINE

1st ind. OCE to NED, dated 1-10-67.
Title 10, Section 2571, U.S. Code.

ACQUISITION AUTHORIZATION

U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DIVISION, NEW ENGLAND
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WALTHAM, MASS.

REAL ESTATE

PALMER ISLAND LIGHT STATION

DRAWN BY: *ARK*
TRACED BY:
CHECKED BY:
SUBMITTED BY:
David P. K...

RECOMMENDED BY:

APPROVED BY:

CHIEF, PLANNING & CONTROL, REAL ESTATE DIVISION
OFFICE, CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

DATE MARCH 1977

SCALE IN FEET

20 0 20 40

SHEET 1 OF 1 DRAWING NO. 1877

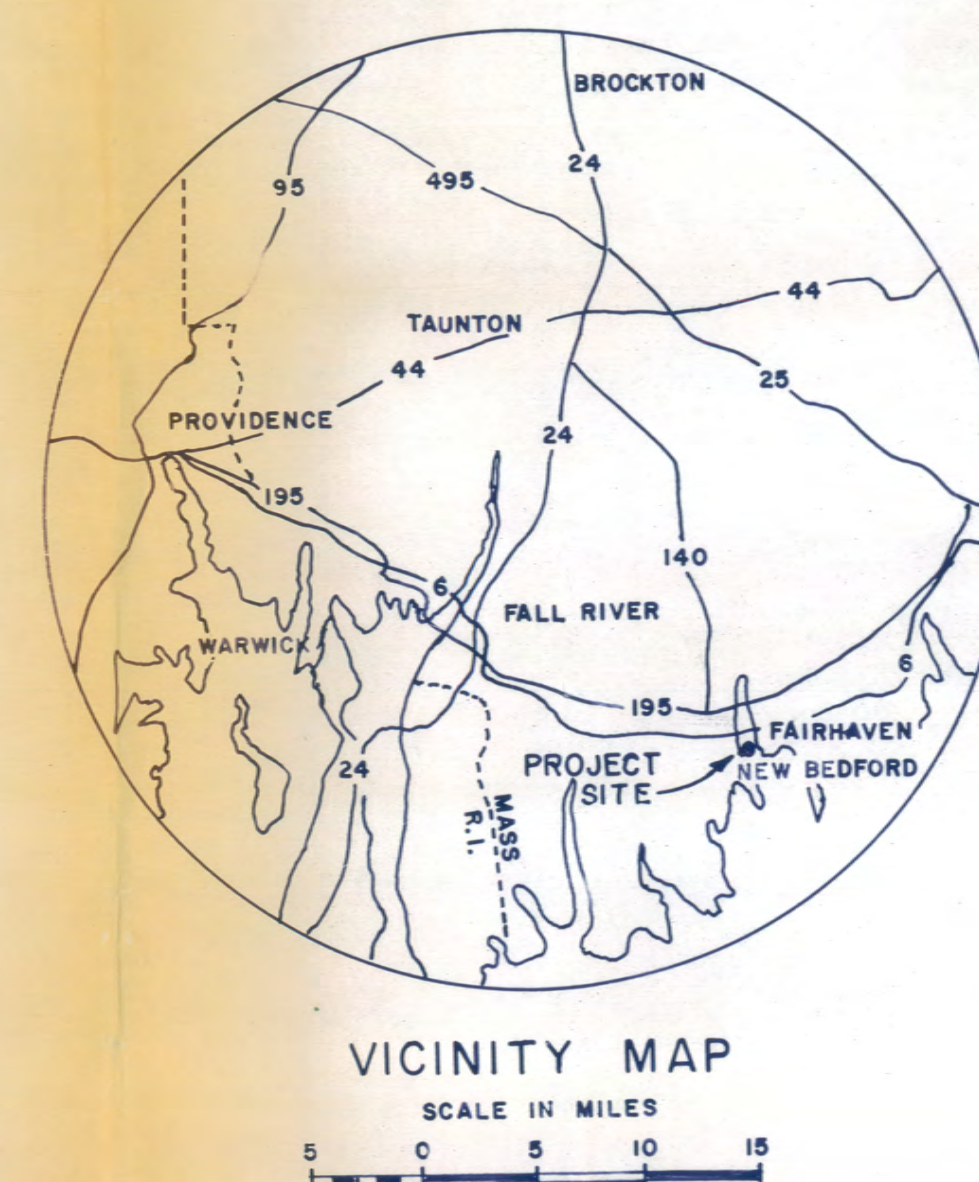
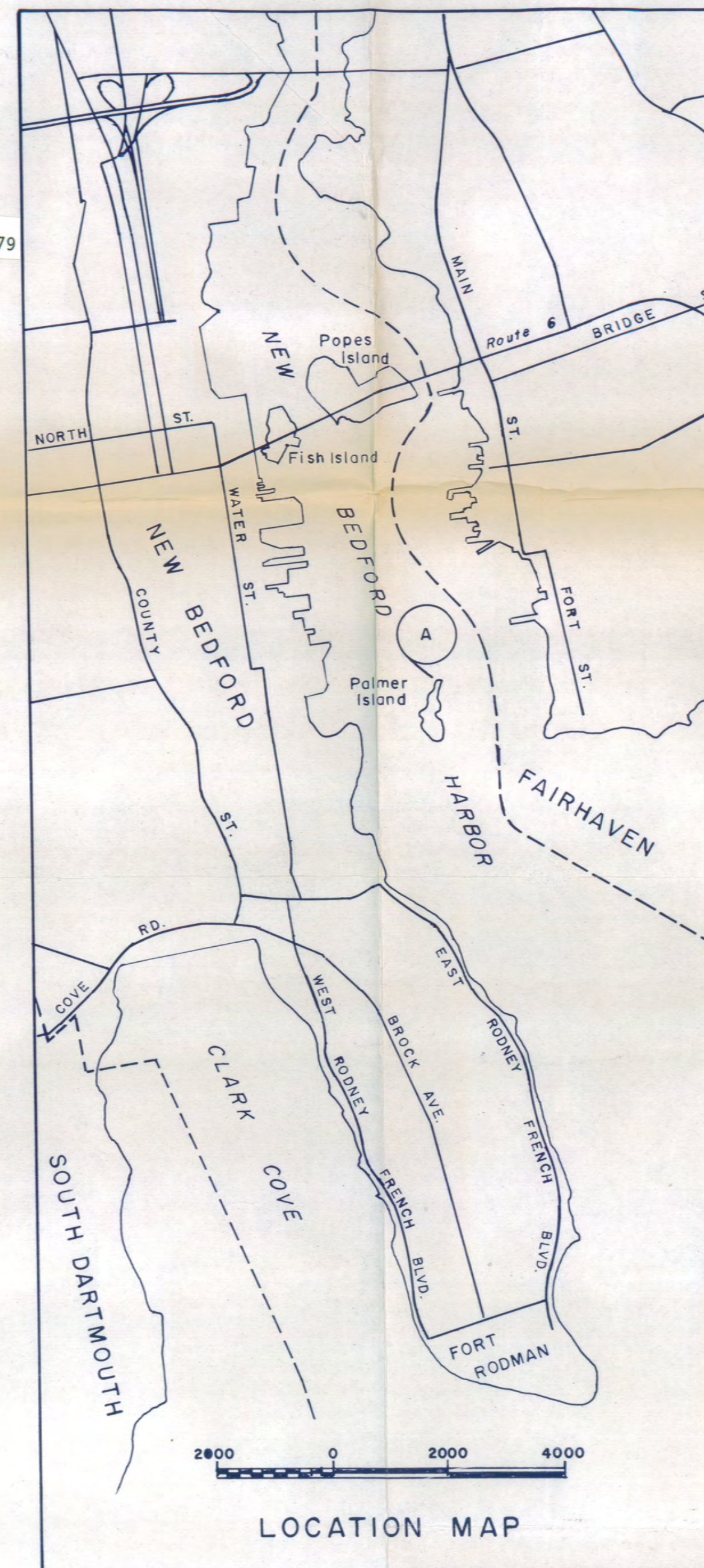
INSTALLATION OR PROJECT NO.

MICRO-FILMED	DATE	REVISIONS	BY



FIG. 8 - 1939 MAP OF PALMER'S ISLAND LIGHT STATION, WITH 1962 REVISIONS & 1979 TEST PIT LOCATIONS

NOTE:
Soundings are in feet and tenths and refer to M.L.W.
All bearings refer to Magnetic North.
Survey made August 24, 1939.
Points A, B and C are Triangulation Points established this date.
See survey notes in Field Book 1938-1 pages 53-64.
This plan is a copy of the U.S. Coast Guard drawing number 2610, entitled "Plan and Topography,
Palmer Island Light Station, New Bedford Harbor, Mass., dated Sept. 6, 1939, scale 1 inch = 20 feet.

MASSACHUSETTS
PROJECT SITE

STATE INDEX



City of New Bedford • Office of Historic Preservation

Room 13 • City Hall • 133 William Street
New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740
(617) 999-2931

February 26, 1979

Mr. John S. Wilson
Environmental Analysis Branch
Planning Division, New England Division
Corps of Engineers
424 Trapelo Road
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154



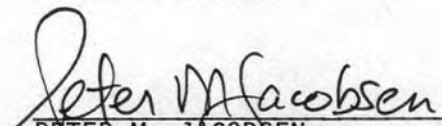
Dear Mr. Wilson:

As we discussed on the phone, I am enclosing a copy of our office's research on Palmer's Island, New Bedford. As you will see the prepared form is actually for the lighthouse located on the island; however, the attached historical significance covers the entire island.

I hope this information will prove useful to you in your archaeological survey. If we may be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

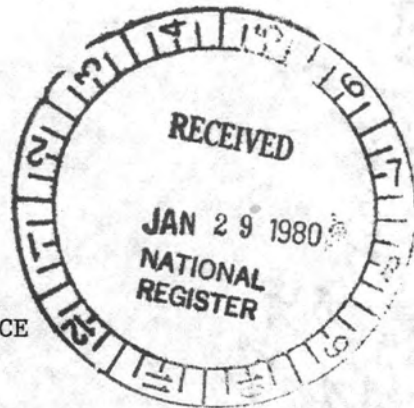
Our office would, of course, be very interested in the results of your survey and would appreciate a copy of any information you compile.

Very truly yours,


PETER M. JACOBSEN
Financial Technical Advisor

PMJ/maa

Enclosure



AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE RECONNAISSANCE

OF

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

ON

PALMERS ISLAND

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

Prepared for:

New England Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Waltham, MA 02154

By: John S. Wilson
Division Archaeologist
Principal Investigator

Meredith Weiss Belding
Co-investigator

MAR 26 1980

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MAR 26 1980

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A. Introduction

In 1962, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers purchased the Palmers Island Light Station from the U.S. Coast Guard, for use as a temporary navigational beacon. In January 1979 the Corps, through the General Services Agency, announced an intention to dispose of legal title on the property to other Federal, State or local agencies or interests.

A comment was received from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (Appendix 1) stating that the property might contain historic features (the lighthouse) or archaeological resources eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, in accordance with the Corps responsibilities under Executive Order 11593 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665), a cultural resource reconnaissance was performed on 12 June 1979 by Mr. John S. Wilson, the Division Archaeologist and his assistant, Mrs. Meredith Weiss Belding, accompanied by Mr. Robert Batt of the New England Division's Real Estate Division.

This study resulted in the following report on archaeological resources and a National Register nomination for the lighthouse structure and adjoining property. This report serves as an attachment to the nomination form.

B. Background Research

Palmers Island is located in New Bedford Harbor immediately north of the hurricane barrier (built in 1962-66) (UTM: N 4609800; E 340900). Government Property consists of about one acre on the north end of the island (Figs 1 & 2).

There are no recorded prehistoric sites on Palmers Island, and the rather exposed location at the harbor mouth probably made it a less desirable habitation area than more sheltered mainland portions of the inner harbor. However, historic background indicated a high probability of contact period occupation features. During King Philips War (1676) the island was used as a prison for Indians, as was done at similar locations in Boston Harbor (Bertram 1978) (see Appendix 2). It is unlikely that frame structures were built at that time, and any archaeological features present would be expected to resemble those at prehistoric habitation sites.

Examination of historic maps indicates that the shoreline of the island was considerably altered during the last quarter of the 19th century, presumably through storm wave action. An 1871 map (Beers 1871) shows a considerable area of land to the northwest of the lighthouse, and a small pond, presumably of saltwater. The city seal, adopted in its original form in 1851, also shows the lighthouse on land though the pond is not visible (Fig 3). By 1895 however, Palmers Island appears to have approximately the

same configuration as at present, with the lighthouse at the end of a causeway (Everts & Richards 1895).

Initial historic occupation of the island appears at the time of the American Revolution, when the island was briefly garrisoned (Bertram 1978). Again, no permanent structures appear to have been built.

The first permanent structures built on Palmers Island were the masonry lighthouse and frame keeper's dwelling built by the U.S. Government in 1849. The lighthouse structure is more fully described in the National Register nomination form.

The dwelling was a 1-1/2 story frame structure of 7 rooms, measuring 32 feet 3 inches x 23 feet 5 inches, with an ell on the northeast side, measuring 16 feet 4 inches x 12 feet 5 inches (Figs. 4 & 5). It had 3 doors, including a cellar entrance, and 15 windows, including 3 in the cellar. There was a single chimney with 2 stove flues and 3 fireplaces. The cellar was a full cellar of stone with brick above ground level, and contained a 2,500 gallon capacity brick cistern, measuring approximately 8 feet x 7 feet, which collected drinking water from the roof (U.S. Coast Guard Rg-26). Early 20th century photographs show that the house was a typical small vernacular Greek Revival structure (Figs 6 & 7).

A privy, measuring 5 feet 2 inches x 4 feet 11 inches was also built slightly northwest of the house in 1849 (U.S. Coast

Guard Rg-26, Figs 4 & 5). A plank walk from the house to the light tower was also built about this time.

During the nearly 100-year history of the light station, several other outbuildings were constructed, and alterations made to the house (U.S. Coast Guard Rg-20).

The gale of September 8, 1869 destroyed portions of the plank walk noted above, and damaged the keeper's boat. Later in that year the walk was rebuilt and a frame boathouse constructed. The latter structure measured 14 feet 4 inches x 27 feet 4 inches and had a 54-foot way with hand operated winch and fall (Figs 4, 5 & 7).

In 1885, a barbed wire fence was built along the Government property line (Figs 4 & 5).

In 1887, a brick floor was laid in the house cellar and the wharf repaired. This is the only reference to a wharf in consulted documents. It is not shown on the 1889 maps of the light station. A new 155-foot long walk was built at this time, between the dwelling and lighthouse (Fig 4).

The 1889 maps noted above (Figs 4 & 5) show a frame fuel house, measuring 14 feet 5 inches x 10 feet 5 inches, immediately north of the dwelling. This was probably built at an earlier date, as the large quantities of fuel necessary for the light operation would have needed more storage space than the dwelling or light tower could provide. A brick well is also shown near the

rear entrance of the dwelling, where a porch has also been added. The well appears to have gone out of use by 1931.

In 1901, 75 tons of riprap were laid down on the eastern beach, opposite the house (Figs 8 & 9) (U.S. Coast Guard 1939).

In 1905, a brick oil house was built on the property line south of the dwelling. This structure measured 8 feet 8 inches x 10 feet 8 inches and contained a 257 gallon kerosene tank to hold fuel for the light (Fig 8). The old fuel house may have been converted to a storage shed at this time.

On September 21, 1938, a hurricane destroyed the dwelling, and presumably all other frame structures on the island except the lighthouse. A portable 2 car garage was moved to the island, and served as operator's quarters until the light was wired for automatic operation in 1941.

A map of Government property drawn in 1939 (U.S. Coast Guard 1939) (Fig 8) shows the dwelling cellar with cistern, the well, the oil house, the riprap on the eastern beach, as well as brick and concrete retaining walls on the west beach, and concrete walk sections from the front to back doors of the house site and in the vicinity of the boathouse location. The boathouse, fuel house, and privy, which probably had no substantial foundations, are not indicated, and presumably had no visible remains after the hurricane.

C. Field Investigation

The field investigation involved two components: surface examination of Government property on the island and subsurface testing with shovel and 40 cm. soil corer.

Most of the island was found to be covered with dense vegetation, primarily overgrown domestics such as asparagus, roses, and laurel, or field varieties such as poison ivy, daisies, and varied grasses. The east shore is primarily open beach, while the western shore has several rocky points (Figs 9-24). Tidal range averages 3.7 feet.

No prehistoric material was observed on the exposed shoreline or the few relatively open areas above the beach. A considerable quantity of historic period debris was evident on the beach, particularly on the western shore. Most of this material is recently deposited wood or plastic flotsam, but some steel scrap probably dates from the latter end of the lighthouse operation period. The beachline location and poor preservation of this debris severely limits any analytical value it might have in interpreting activity at the lighthouse or keeper's dwelling.

An effort was made to locate the keeper's dwelling site and other structures associated with it. The dwelling foundation's northern ell is entirely overgrown with laurel and roses and could not be defined, nor could the well at its eastern side. Portions of the concrete walk which followed the eastern and northern walls

of the house foundation were discernible. As expected, the privy and fuel house have no visible remains.

The main portion of the dwelling foundation was readily visible, and is constructed of dry laid fieldstone, as was typical of the period. This feature was filled in - 1962. The remains of the brick cistern are readily identifiable, but it was apparently demolished in the foundation filling, and now consists of several large sections of mortared brick lying haphazardly within the foundations (Figs 13 & 14).

The 1.5-foot high brick wall to the west of the house site is not visible, and was apparently demolished in the foundation filling, or by subsequent storm waves. Numerous brick fragments line the western shores. The abutting concrete wall, however, remains intact. The oil house at the southern Government property boundary is now gone, though the badly rusted remains of a steel tank lying on the western beach may be from this feature. A concrete platform with mortared brick floor is evident at the former oil house location. Its western end is eroded, presumably by undermining due to storm waves. This feature probably supported the building's superstructure. The section of concrete walk near the boathouse location could not be located. As expected, the boathouse and the 1939 temporary keeper's quarters have left no remains.

Subsurface testing consisted of random coring in areas

sufficiently distant from observed historic features to present possibly undisturbed horizonation. Extremely loose gray sand was found throughout and rock was generally encountered at 30-40 cm depths. Two 0.5 m square shovel test pits (TP-A & TP-B) were excavated near the southern property boundary in areas of greatest elevation (4.3 feet above mhw) within the Government property and also fairly distant from the filled dwelling foundation (Figs 8, 15 & 16). TP-A revealed loose gray sand to 2.0 cm depth with dark brown sandy loam to bedrock at 35 cm depth, while TP-B revealed gray sand to bedrock depth at 30 cm. Brick and mortar fragments were present within the gray sand horizon, indicating that this level is either fill or bulldozer disturbance from the foundation filling activity. The dark horizon may be original ground level, or more probably a truncated surface left after the disturbance above.

D. Interpretation

The presence of intact prehistoric or contact period cultural resources, or of identifiable remains of the Revolutionary War occupation of the island is extremely remote within the Government property bounds. Historic maps indicate that extensive landscaping was done in the area around the lighthouse keeper's dwelling. This activity may have disturbed any resources in the area. Comparison of 1871 and 1895 maps of the island, though both are sketchy, indicates that a considerable area of land north of

the lighthouse eroded during the last quarter of the 19th century. Any sites along that part of the shoreline have obviously been destroyed. Finally, the filling of the dwelling foundation in the 1960's disturbed virtually the entire surface of the island within Government property bounds, leaving approximately 20-30 cm depth of fill or disturbed material. The probability of intact cultural resources remaining in the 0-15 cm below this depth is extremely unlikely in view of the extent and degree of disturbance observed.

At the time of topographic mapping of the island in 1939, the dwelling ruins and associated features were readily identifiable and could have constituted an historically and archaeologically valuable site. However, the action of storm waves and the heavy disturbance of terrain throughout the Government property during filling of the foundation has probably destroyed the scientific interpretive value of any subsurface features at the site. In the case of features visible on the surface, the historic maps, documents, and photographs provide much more information than could be obtained by examination of these features in their present condition.

E. Recommendations

With the exception of the lighthouse, there appears to be no cultural resources within the Government property bounds on Palmers Island of sufficient physical integrity to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Obviously, the lighthouse and keeper's house constitute a unit in the historic sense. Though the keeper's house would not be eligible for the National Register by itself, it could be legitimately linked to the lighthouse's eligibility, on historic grounds, and it might be desirable to include it in a restoration or preservation plan for the lighthouse, by clearing the foundation of loose debris and brush and providing interpretive signs.

REFERENCES CITED

- Beers, D.G. & Co.
1871 Atlas of Bristol County, Massachusetts.
New York, D.G. Beers & Co.
- Bertram, C.
1978 Background collected for historic inventory form. City of New Bedford Office of Historic Preservation. (Unpublished ms).
- Everts, L.H. & L. J. Richards
1895 Atlas of Bristol County, Massachusetts
Philadelphia, Everts & Richards.
- New Bedford Standard Times
(n.d.) Early photographs in files
- U.S. Coast Guard RG-26 (Unpublished records in National Archives)
- a. Construction contract for Palmers Island Light Station - 1849.
 - b. Map of Palmers Island Light Station - 1889.
 - c. Map of buildings: Palmers Island Light Station - 1889.
 - d. Records of alterations to Palmers Island Light Station.
 - e. Description of Palmers Island Light Station - 1931.
- U.S. Coast Guard
1939 Map of Palmers Island Light Station - 1939, with revisions of 1962 by U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers.
- U.S. Geological Survey
1964 New Bedford, North 7.5 min. Quadrangle

APPENDIX 1

Correspondence



PAUL GUZZI

Secretary of the
Commonwealth

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

294 Washington Street Boston, Massachusetts 02108

(617) 727-8470

26
118

January 3, 1979

A.A. Ausiello, Realty Specialist
Real Property Division
Federal Property Resources Service
General Services Administration
Region One
John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

Re: Disposal of Tract "A"-Palmer Island, New Bedford, Massachusetts

to Mr. Ausiello:

My office has consulted with the New Bedford Office of Historic Preservation. That office is currently researching the history of the Palmer Island Light. From their information and information you have supplied us with, it appears that the Light may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

I suggest, in accordance with 36CFR 800, that GSA request a determination of eligibility for the structure and parcel. As you know, should the Light be eligible it will be necessary to comply with the Advisory Council's Procedures for the Protection of Cultural Resources before completing this disposal.

If you should have any questions please contact Joe Orfant of my staff.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Weslowski

Patricia L. Weslowski
State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

cc: Antone Souza
Sharon Conway

W/JRO/ts



General Services Administration, Region 1
John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse
Boston, MA 02109

Date : January 16, 1979

Reply to
Attention of : 1DR

Subject: Tract "A" - Palmer Island
New Bedford, Massachusetts
D-Mass-675

To :
M. S. Phillips, Chief
Real Estate Division
New England Division, Corps
of Engineers
Department of the Army
424 Trapelo Road
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154

By letter dated January 3, 1979 (copy enclosed), the State Historic Preservation Officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has advised this office that, based upon currently available information, the subject property may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Although the letter requests that GSA seek a determination of eligibility for the property, this responsibility rests with the holding agency which, in this case, is the Department of the Army.

It is requested, therefore, that your Department take appropriate action to comply with the State Historic Preservation Officer's request on this matter.

For your information, we expect that the City of New Bedford will apply to acquire this property for historic monument purposes.

A. AUSIELLO
Realty Specialist
Real Property Division
Federal Property Resources Service

Enclosure

18 JAN 1979

APPENDIX 2

City of New Bedford Historic Commission
Historic Survey Form

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Palmer's Island is a six acre island at the base of the Acushnet River. The island was named in the 1650's in honor of William Palmer after he was scalped by the Indians. He was one of the first of seven freemen to settle in the territory of Dartmouth.

The island, which was once covered with cedar trees, was first used as a prison for Indians awaiting trial in Plymouth. One Indian in particular who awaited trial on the island in 1676 was named "Little Eyes." Another Indian "Rightfoot", who proved himself friendly to the settlers, was appointed as guardian.

During the 1700's there is mention in deeds of three owners of Palmer's Island. The first two were Captain Seth Pope and Jonah Hathaway, who purchased land on the southern portion of the island on March 30, 1710. No history could be found of Jonah Hathaway, but Seth Pope was quite influential in the community.

Seth Pope was the son of Thomas Pope who came to Plymouth on the ship "Mary and John" in 1627. Thomas served in the colonial army, was the town surveyor and constable, and served on the jury. But his tendency to express his opinions freely together with his ready temper involved him in disputes which led to arrests and fines on several occasions. In 1673 he moved his family to Dartmouth Territory. When he landed on the Acushnet River he negotiated with the Wampanoag Indians for 172 acres of land which today comprise a large portion of the town of Fairhaven.

Seth Pope was born in January of 1648. When he was a young man he was ordered to depart from the town of Sandwich for pedaling goods. When he left he vowed he would eventually come back and buy the town. In 1685 he was chosen Selectmen for Dartmouth. Four years later he was re-elected and was also chosen as a representative for the Plymouth General Court. By 1691 he was made Justice of the Peace for Dartmouth. In 1700 he made his promise a reality by purchasing a large portion of Sandwich including a grist mill, fulling mill and a weaving shop.

The third owner of the island in the eighteenth century was named in a deed dated January 17, 1736. In this deed Joseph Russell, Jr. willed his share of Palmer's Island to his son Caleb Russell. Joseph Russell, Jr. had arrived in Dartmouth in 1711 and purchased most of the land south of Union Street along the Acushnet River.

Palmer's Island was used as a garrison during the Revolutionary War.

Although the property on Palmer's Island passed through many hands, it was not until 1849 that the first building appeared. At that time one acre of land was purchased on the northern tip of the island by the United States Government for the construction of a lighthouse and home for the lighthouse keeper. In this period the whaling industry was still growing and New Bedford had one of the busiest harbors in the world, exporting almost half of the nation's supply of oil.

For almost a hundred years lighthouse keepers lived in the home and kept the waters illuminated for safe travel. In September of 1938 a hurricane destroyed the house and the keeper's wife, Sara Small, was washed away by a wave. She had been trying to reach her husband in the lighthouse. The keeper, Captain Arthur A. Small, was injured and took a leave of absence. While Captain Small was keeper, the light was changed from a revolving red beam to a fixed green light.

During Captain Small's leave a substitute keeper was hired and a portable two car garage was moved to the island and equipped for living quarters. The substitute keeper's name was Martin Maloney. He had become a hero during the 1938 hurricane: He had been stationed at Bullock's light in Providence and had miraculously kept the light going as waves crashed into the lower part of the lighthouse. Captain Maloney was still tending the lighthouse on Palmer's Island in August of 1939 when the country celebrated the 150th anniversary of National Lighthouse Week. He invited anyone interested to visit the lighthouse where he explained its operation.

The lighthouse no longer required a keeper when it was wired for operation from the Butler's Flat lighthouse (located on the west side of the channel in the outer harbor). In 1966 the lighthouse caught fire and the inside was completely destroyed.

In 1866 the other five acres of the island were owned by George W. Furber who, together with Hutching Tillinghast, built a summer home. A few years later the building was altered and made into Furber's Hotel. The hotel soon gained a questionable reputation because of the entertainment provided for the whalers between trips. In 1890 a dance hall and bowling alley were added. Many passengers were carried from the mainland on the steamer "Genevieve."

In 1888 the property was acquired jointly by Abbot P. Smith and J. Arthur Beauvais who were often referred to as members of a syndicate. Rumors spread of the operation of a gambling casino on the island.

In 1893, Dr. Ezekiel H. Noble acquired the property and converted it back into a summer home. Not long afterwards the property reverted back to Mr. Smith and Mr. Beauvais who in turn sold it to the Hathaway Mill Corporation and the Acushnet Mill Corporation.

On August 30, 1905, the house - which had just been repaired for a tenant - caught fire and burned to the ground. The spectacular blaze, which was viewed by people on both shores of the Acushnet River, may have been caused by youngsters seen playing in the area.

Before the old hotel was destroyed several proposals had been made for its use. One summer Dr. Immanuel P. Feiffer, who claimed to have invented a cure for rheumatism, rented the hotel for use as a sanitarium; however, his plans never materialized. The City had also proposed to

buy the building for an infirmary.

Joseph B. C. Tuell was the only child ever born on Palmer's Island. He was the son of one of the lighthouse keepers. When he died in 1935 at the age of 77 he had his ashes sprinkled over the island. His sister Sarah was married to Henry Worth, the famous New Bedford lawyer and historian.

Since the destruction of the old hotel several other proposals for the island's use have been made but never carried through. The Hathaway and Acushnet Mills Corporations wanted to use the land for the storage of coal but the plan proved uneconomical. A proposal was also made to install landing strips for the use of an airport for small planes, but the island proved to be too small for planes to use safely in poor weather conditions. At one time the city wanted to run railroad tracks onto the island and build a steamship terminal.

Although none of these proposals have ever gone through, Palmer's Island remains legendary. The lighthouse greeted ships coming home from whaling or fishing trips. For generations the island has also been a special recreation place for family picnics and clambakes.

FIGURES



**MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts
02108
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Secretary of State

December 14, 1979

Mr. M.S. Phillips
Chief, Real Estate Division
Department of the Army
New England Division, Corps of Engineers
424 Trapelo Road
Waltham, Mass. 02154



Dear Mr. Phillips:

I have reviewed the nomination form for Palmer's Island Light Station in New Bedford Inner Harbor. In my opinion, and in the opinion of the State Review Board, it appears to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The lighthouse has played an important role in the navigational history of New Bedford. In accordance with 36 CFR Part 1202.15(b), I am returning the form to you so that you may forward it to the Secretary of Interior.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

PLW/mt
enc.

10 DEC 1979

*Nice short
letter -*



133 William Street
New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740
(617) 999-2931

City of New Bedford
HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Carol Shull
Acting Keeper of the National Register Book
National Register
Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service
United States Department of the Interior
Washington DC
20243

January 22, 1980

Dear Ms. Shull:

The New Bedford Historical Commission at a meeting held January 9, 1980, voted unanimously to support the nomination of Palmer's Island to the National Register of Historic Places. In view of the importance of Palmer's Island in New Bedford History, the New Bedford Historical Commission would like it to be accorded Landmark Status which is also held by the Bedford Landing - Waterfront Historic District.

Sincerely,

Roger R. Guay (p.m.)
Roger R. Guay
Chairman

RRG/pm
ff:1/22/80

HORIC PLACES

DATE _____

JAN 29 1980

1160000

(C)

INF 711

[illegible]

DATE AC IS TAKEN

INITIALS



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DAEN-CWP-P

29 January 1980

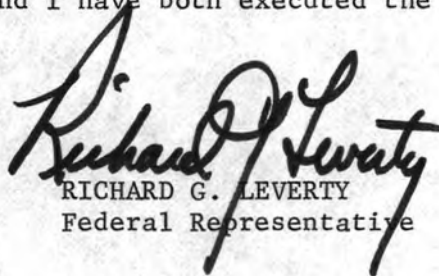
Carol Shull, Acting Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
U. S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Inclosed are an original and two copies of your form 10-306 and accompanying documents nominating the Palmer's Island Light Station, New Bedford, Massachusetts, to the National Register of Historic Places.

One of the accompanying documents is a December 14, 1979 letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission expressing the view that this property meets the criteria for inclusion in the Register. The State Historic Preservation Officer and I have both executed the original of the nomination.

Incls
as


RICHARD G. LEVERTY
Federal Representative



THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	
JAN 30 1980	
DATE REC'D	
INDIVIDUAL (ATTACHED)	
INFORMATION (ATTACHED)	
TELEPHONE CALL (ATTACHED)	
DATE ACTION TAKEN	
INITIALS	



18
1875

RECEIVED
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

[Handwritten signature]

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540
The National Register of Historic Places is a program of the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. It is a list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Properties listed on the Register are those having historic or prehistoric significance and are considered to be of national significance.

1875

Washington, D.C. 20540
The National Register of Historic Places is a program of the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. It is a list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Properties listed on the Register are those having historic or prehistoric significance and are considered to be of national significance.

1875

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

1875

30 JANUARY 1980



WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF HISTORIC PLACES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

3.26.80

Palmer II House
Bristol Co

436

MAR 6 1980

Harrison 3/3/80

Mr. Roger R. Guay
Chairman
City of New Bedford
Historical Commission
133 William Street
New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740

Dear Mr. Guay:

Thank you for your comments in support of the nomination of Palmer Island Light Station, Bristol County, Massachusetts, to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination is currently being reviewed by the National Register staff.

If we can be of further assistance to you, please let us know. We appreciate your interest in the National Register.

Sincerely,

Sally G. Oldham

FOR Carol D. Shull
Acting Keeper of the National
Register

cc: Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski, SHPO, Massachusetts

bcc: National Register Files

FHR: S Harrison:ts:343-6401:3/5/80

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered MAR 26 1980

Name

Location

Palmer Island Light Station

New Bedford
Bristol County

Also Notified

Honorable Paul Tsongas

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Honorable Gerry E. Studds
Mr. Richard Leverty,
Corps of Engineers

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director, Massachusetts
Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NR Byers/bjr 4/1/80

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

NUMBER 32

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

See National Register form listed 3/26/80

PHOTOGRAPH KEY

HISTORIC NAME: Palmer Island Light Station

TOWN: New Bedford

LOCATION: New Bedford Harbor

COUNTY: Bristol CODE: 005

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: _____

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Refer to National Register nomination.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

SKETCH MAP

LAT./LONG.: N/A

UTM COORDINATE: 19/340/800/4609/800

USGS QUADRANGLE: Prov., RI., Mass., Conn.

SCALE: 1:250,000

ACREAGE: _____

OWNER(S): _____

STATUS: _____

RECORDED BY: J. Wilson/R. Batt /Anne Tait

ORGANIZATION: Army Corps of Engineers

DATE: 1979 /1986

Palmer Island Light Station, New Bedford

Historical Description: Built between June 9 and September 22, 1849 by Charles M. Pierce, Masonry, under contract to the Superintendent of Lights, at a cost of \$1951. Though original specified to be octagonal, the tower appears to have always been circular in plan, as it is today. Pertinent dimensions are as follows: (U.S. Coast Guard RG-26(a)).

Foundation - 3 ft. high rubble masonry

Tower - Rubble masonry 24 ft high with 18 ft. 4 inch diameter and 3 ft. thick walls at base, and 10 ft. diameter and 18 inch thick walls at top (Exhs. A-D).

Floor - Brick

Stairs - Three flights of wooden stairs spiraling the inner face of the wall, and an upper flight of iron steps.

Entry - Two 6 ft. 10 in. X 3 ft. doors.

Windows - Three 19 in. X 21 1/2 in. windows of twelve 8 in. X 6 in. lights (Exhs. A-D).

Lantern - Deck - 10 ft. diameter, of copper sheathed wood with iron railing, and tower access via scuffle.

Lantern - Specified as octagonal, iron with 6 plate glass lights of 24 in. X 15 in. on each face; 4 ft. X 2 ft. copper sheathed door in ventilator in dome top 15 in. high X 12 in. diameter with 2 ft. X 1 ft. copper sheathed vane above. The light may have been fueled by whale oil produced at this time, and was probably of the fixed white form noted in 1889.

Note - The 9 sided lantern now present (1979) may be original.

Lightning Rod - On tower exterior, from ledge to 1 ft. above vane on lantern.

A keeper's dwelling was built, and other buildings constructed on the island in later years. Their history and present condition are assessed in the attached Archaeological Reconnaissance Report. Various alterations were made to the structure during its use (U.S. Coast Guard RG 26(b)).

1857: The lenses of the light were replaced.

1863: A new "lantern" was installed. This may refer to either a new lamp in the structure, or replacement of the supposed octagonal lantern described above, with the 9 sided one now on the structure (Exhs. A-D). As noted above, the lantern may have not been built in octagonal form as described in the original construction specifications. By 1931, the lantern had a single large pane of glass in each face, measuring 36 in. X 28 in. X 1/4 in., rather than the small panes of mid 19th century form. The ventilator was in the parapet. Lantern door has dimensions of 6 ft. 8 in. X 2 ft. 8 in. located on tower's N side.

1883: The iron hand rail on the dike to the tower was renewed (Exhs. A-D). If the island's form on Deer's map 1871 is accurate (see Archaeological Reconnaissance, attached) this dike may not have been built until after 1871.

By 1889: The light is a fixed white type.

5/31/1900: A fog bell was installed in a frame pyramidal tower adjoining the island end of the dike (Exh. A). New stairs and deck were built.

1902: A frame covered way was built on the dike (Exh. B). The 1900 bell tower was apparently destroyed by storms or removed at about this time.

- By 1929:(New Bedford Stan card Times) A frame bell tower on a concrete platform was attached to the lighthouse side opposite the dike. Access was provided by a small door and two rung ladder in the lighthouse (Exhs. C & D). The bell was mechanically rung at 10 second intervals and hung in an upper window of the tower. It was 3 ft. 4 in. diameter X 2 ft. 6 in. high, weighed 1160 lbs. and was made by Henry McShane in 1901. Though a vestibule remained, the covered way on the dike was gone by this time (Exh. C). A revolving red light may have replaced the fixed white one by this time, to be replaced by a fixed green one during the tenure of Captain Arthur Small.
- By 1931: The following additional features are noted as existing by this time (U.S. Coast Guard RG-26(c)).
- In Lantern: A fixed light with green shade (replacing the revolving one noted above), of 870 candle power operated off a kerosene mantle of 1-1/4 in. diameter. The drum had 4 panels of 5 elements each with 5 upper and 3 lower prisms in each panel, all mounted on an iron pedestal. Focal plane was at 35.66 ft. m.s.l. and the light was classified as 5th order.
- Tower: Contains a closet with shelves, for spare lamp parts. Tower is whitewashed.
- 1941: The lighthouse was automated to operate from Butler's Flat Lighthouse.
- 1962: Purchased by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- 1966: Vandals set fire to the building, gutting the interior. The bell tower may have been destroyed on this date or some time after 1939.

Present Condition:

- Tower - Intact in 1849 form with pre 1929 concrete base at bell tower (Exhs. E-K).
- Stairs - Charred ends of supports are present in notches within the interior masonry (Exh. F).
- Floor - Sand covered, concrete post in center probably stair support 1900 (Exh. G).
- Entry - Doors missing, evidence at door frame and roof of former covered way are visible around doorway. (Exh. E). Entry to bell tower site remains, with rungs (Exhs. G, I, and J).
- Windows - Lower window, on S side is bricked closed (Exh. H). No window frames remain (Exh. F).
- Lantern - Iron frame remains, slightly displaced; roofing and ventilator gone (Exhs. E, F, I, and K). Floor of tower is littered with 3/8 in. thick broken glass, probably from lantern windows; doorway is bricked shut (Exh I); platform gone, railing has slid down tower sides (Exhs. E, H, I and K).
- Dike - Made of rubble stone with quarried block upper course, island end washed away (Exhs. E, I and K). Bases of iron railing visible, railing fragments remain in water in water to either side of the dike.

Statement of Significance

The significance of Palmer Island Light lies in two factors, its historic association and its architecture.

At the time of the light's construction, New Bedford was the major home port of the world's whaling fleet, supplying nearly 50% of the American oil supply. This prosperity was probably a major impetus for the lighthouse construction.

The whaling industry collapsed during the second half of the century, but considerable commercial and fishing traffic continued to operate out of the harbor through out the late 19th and 20th century. The light was kept during nor nearly 100 years, through several major storms, including a gale which damaged the plank walk from the keeper's house to the tower on September 8, 1869, and the 1938 hurricane which destroyed the keeper's house. The keeper, Captain Arthur A. Small, was injured and his wife was drowned while attempting to reach the light.

An 1851 representation of the lighthouse is a prominent feature of the seal of the City of New Bedford (Fig. 3 of attached Archaeological Report).

The remaining features of the lighthouse are primarily those which date from its original construction in 1849, as the 1966 fire destroyed the wooden additions and modifications of the late 19th and early 20th century.

The tower, itself, has only been modified by the bricking of one window and the parapet door and cutting of the early 20th century bell tower door. Remains of the latter feature also include the concrete platform which supported it.

The iron lantern frame and parapet railing appear to date from at least 1863, and possibly from 1849.

The dike, though damaged, is substantially as built in the 19th century, with most of the railings remaining in broken condition nearby.

The hurricane damaged and fire gutted condition of the structure, though destroying much evidence of the 20th century interior and light mechanism, provides potential from restoration of the structure to any of the earlier periods of operation. As records of the structure appear to be fairly complete, a fairly accurate reconstruction to 19th century condition may be possible. The City of New Bedford has expressed strong interest in acquiring the property with the intention of performing such a restoration as a major component of a proposed park on Palmer's Island.

As one of the few early 19th century lighthouses remaining in the United States, this structure is representative of its type. Its present overall appearance suggests the 1849 form, due to loss of later additions. Further, the lighthouse has important historical associations as an important local feature of the local "made" landscape, reflected by its appearance on the city seal and in numerous photo essays in local newspapers. Because of these factors, Palmer's Island Light appears eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The potential restoration of the structure to operating condition would provide the modern visitor with a highly visible link to New Bedford's maritime past.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service 80000433

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

(Lighthouses of MA. Them. Res.)

Property: Palmer Island Light Station
State, County: MA, Bristol
Federal Agency: _____Working No. 425/82-1263
Fed. Reg. Date: _____
Date Due: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Action: ☐ ACCEPT
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECTphotos ☐
maps ☐Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
☐ see continuation sheetNomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below
☐ substantive reasons discussed below1. Name2. Location3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property5. Location of Legal Description6. Representation in Existing Surveyshas this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no7. Description

Condition:		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance:

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UNIT References:

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

Title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 35

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet