

Peter N. Kyros

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine
COUNTY: Cumberland
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE: DEC 27 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Two Lights**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Cape Elizabeth** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: **1st**

STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23** COUNTY: **Cumberland** CODE: **005**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted
<input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**East Light - United States Coast Guard (See Continuance Sheet)**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**259 High St.**

CITY OR TOWN: **So. Portland** STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Cumberland County Registry of Deeds**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Federal Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Portland** STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

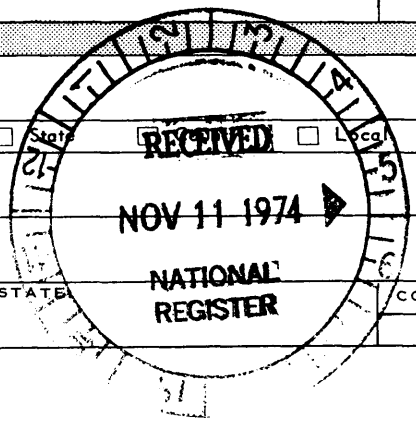
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: **Maine**

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two cast iron lighthouses on the Cape Elizabeth shore were erected a century ago in 1874. Located 300 yards apart, they were of identical design. Both lights stand 129 feet above sea level and are 65 feet high. While the west light became altered into an observation post during World War II, the east light retains the original appearance which both once had.

The east light has a square concrete base which appears to be a later addition. The entrance to the light is found on the west wall of the base. Located at the center of this wall, the door is cast iron and has a cast iron enframingent.

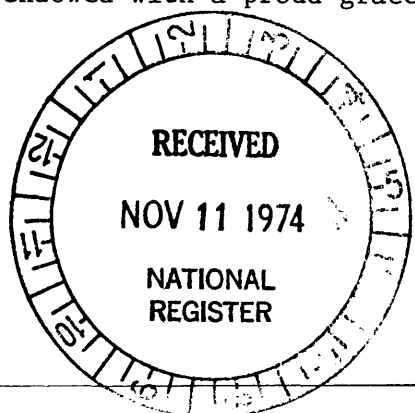
The main shaft of the lighthouse is comprised of six stages, each one divided by a projecting circular ridge at the top and bottom. The stages decrease slightly in size as the shaft rises. The first, third, and fifth stages each contain a window on the east and west sides of the light. Each window has a gabled pediment above it supported by a pair of brackets. This Italianate architectural detail is fashioned out of cast iron. Another handsome cast iron element is the circular balcony located at the sixth stage. Supported by a series of brackets, the balcony has a railing which features delicately turned posts.

The top of the lighthouse contains the beacon, originally kerosene but electric since 1925. The beacon is surrounded by glass and has a domed roof which is capped by a large ball. A second, less ornamental cast iron balcony encircles the base of the beacon area. The two balconies are joined by a cast iron ladder.

Except for the removal of the cast iron door and its enframingent, the west light remains basically identical to the east one up to the sixth stage. The first circular balcony survives, but its ornamental cast iron railing has been stripped of detail. The graceful glass beacon enclosure with its domed top has been replaced by a multi-sided box-like observation tower with two narrow tiers of horizontal windows and a flat roof. The major interior feature of both lights is the circular cast iron staircase which winds its way to the top of the shaft.

Cape Elizabeth's "Two Lights", as they are popularly known, stand as a graphic reminder of an era a century ago in which even the most functional of structures were endowed with a proud grace and dignity of design.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1874

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal                | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric               | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture              | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              |   |  | _____  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The location of this lighted beacon is one of the most important along the northeast coast of the United States. Not only does it mark the entrance to Portland Harbor but it is also a key landmark in coastal navigation. These twin towers also represent an era when the use of double lights for ranging purposes was adopted in several locations.

As early as 1811, a 50 ft. rubblestone and lime mortar tower was erected on the site of the present east light by Gen. Henry Dearborn of Revolutionary War fame. In the second decade of the 19th century a rapid growth in shipping occurred and in the spring of 1827, the Federal Government approved the erection of twin 65 ft. stone beacons 129 ft. above sea level. Located 300 yards apart, the eastern tower showed a fixed light and the western a flashing light 45 seconds on .45 off. In 1854, the new Fresnel lenses were added to both lights.

Suddenly on June 1, 1855, it was announced that the western light would be discontinued and on August 1, it was extinguished. Such a storm of protest followed, particularly on the part of fishermen who used the lights for triangulating the position of nets and traps, that on April 1, 1856 both lights were restored to their former state. It was not the last such episode.

In 1874, the stone towers were torn down and replaced by the cast iron structures remaining today. This reflects the extensive use of cast iron for heavy construction in the mid-19th century.

The Lighthouse Board, in an economy move in 1882 again eliminated the western light, and again there was a great public outcry. Through the influence of Maine's powerful congressman, Thomas B. Reed, this ruling was overturned.

Finally, despite more protests, the western light was permanently extinguished in 1924. During the Second World War, it was stripped of its lantern and used as an observation post. In 1959, the tower along with 10½ acres was sold to the highest bidder and acquired by the screen actor, Gary Merrill, the present owner.

(See Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

William B. Jordan, Jr. A History of Cape Elizabeth, Maine Portland, 1965  
 Robert Thayer Sterling, Lighthouses of the Maine Coast, Brattleboro, Vt., 1935  
 Francis Ross Holland, Jr., America's Lighthouses, Brattleboro, Vt., 1972  
 Chris Roerden, Collections from Cape Elizabeth, Maine, 1965

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

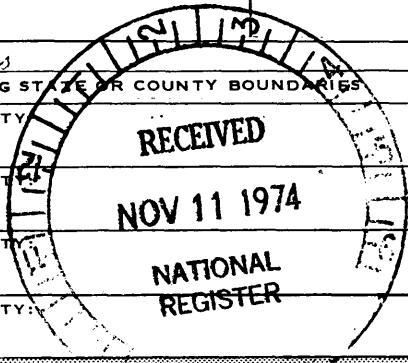
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43 ° 33 ' 55 "	70 ° 12 ' 02 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM  
 19/402980  
 4824070  
 HL

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 6 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Architectural Historian  
Frank A. Beard, Historic Preservationist

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE: 10-23-74

STREET AND NUMBER: 31 Western Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 23

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: James H. Mundy  
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer  
 Date: November 6, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AR... ..  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 12/27/74

ATTEST:  
Wm J. ...  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: DEC 26 1974

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maine	
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(Number all entries)

4. Owner of Property

West Light - Gary Merrill  
Cape Elizabeth,

Maine

code: 23



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7. Description

Keeper's House

Erected contemporaneously with the two cast iron towers, the Keeper's House is a modified Gothic Revival cottage dating from 1874. The house has a brick foundation, is of frame construction, and stands two stories high. It is L shaped with a cross gable roof. Each of the four major walls has a gable decorated with bargeboards. Windows on the first and second stories originally featured simple Gothic molding above them, much of which is no longer present. The Keeper's House is an integral part of the historic setting of Two Lights. Its picturesque vernacularism was recognized by Edward Hopper, who included the dwelling in his famous 1929 painting of the East Light.

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance

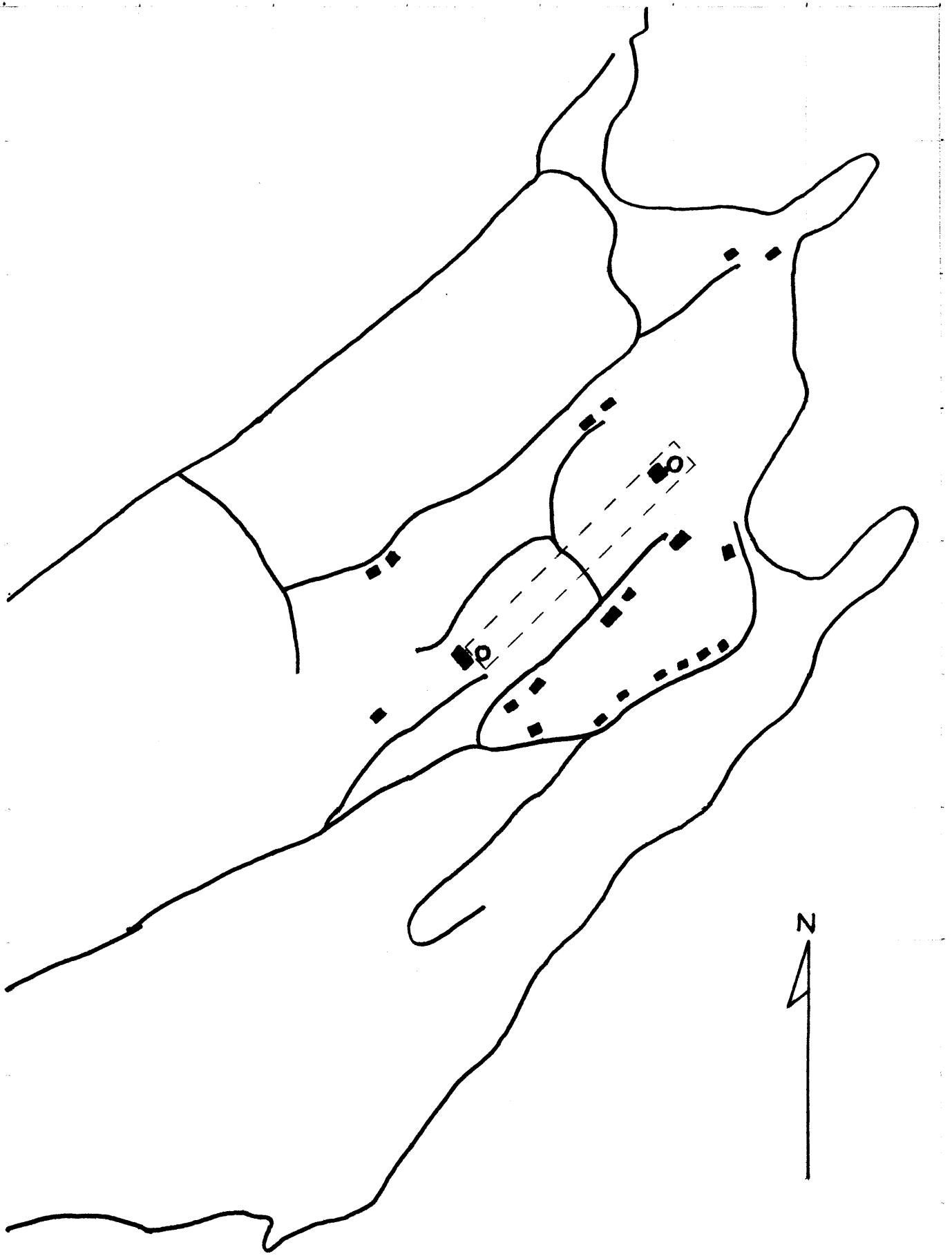
1.

In 1925, the eastern light was converted from kerosene to electricity and is one of the most brilliant beacons on the northeast coast.

Of added interest is the fact that the east light was the subject of a painting by the celebrated artist, Edward Hopper, which was used as the design for the 1970 Maine Sesquicentennial postage stamp.



# Two Lights



Scale: 1" = 1/10 mile