

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89001478 Date Listed: 05/29/90

Tongue Point Lighthouse New Haven CT  
Property Name County State

Operating Lighthouses in Connecticut  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

05/29/90  
Date of Action

-----  
Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Level of Significance

All properties included in the multiple property nomination Operating Lighthouses in Connecticut were considered to meet the criteria within a statewide context.

10. Geographical Data: Acreage

The acreage is <1.

This information has been confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHP, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

1478

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	AUG 24 1989
DATE ENTERED	

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Tongue Point Lighthouse, Bridgeport Breakwater Light, The Buglight, The Inner Harbor Light  
AND/OR COMMON  
The Bug Light

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Eastern tip of Welle's Tongue Point, west side of Bridgeport Harbor.

CITY, TOWN  
Bridgeport

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE  
Connecticut

VICINITY OF  
CODE

COUNTY  
Fairfield

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

U.S. Coast Guard Third District, Governors Island

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
New York

VICINITY OF

STATE  
New York 10004

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

U.S. Coast Guard Third District, Legal Dept., Governors Island

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
New York

STATE  
New York 10004

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE                    see thematic form

DATE

FEDERAL     STATE     COUNTY     LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1919</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Tongue Point Lighthouse, (Light List #1163/5), also known as the Bridgeport Breakwater Lighthouse or "The Bug Light," was established in 1894 and marks the eastern end of a point of land, Tongue or Wells Point, which extends into Bridgeport Harbor from the western shore. This small, conical cast-iron lighthouse, presently painted black, supports an octagonal lantern with a peaked roof and rests on a concrete foundation, surrounded by riprap. The lighthouse originally stood 350 feet east of its present location on a breakwater constructed in 1891. In 1919 the breakwater was demolished as a hazard to shipping, and the lighthouse moved to its present location.

The present foundation, measuring 10 feet in height, is 21 feet square at the base and 15 feet square at the top. The tower, measuring 12 feet 3 inches in diameter at the base, rises 22 feet to the lantern deck. A segmentally-arched entrance opening is located on the west side, its metal plate door sheltered by an unornamented cast-iron hood. Other architectural detail is minimal, concentrated at the upper end of the tower where the only window openings are located. Simple cast-iron brackets with open triangular centers support a lantern gallery and cover the vertical seams in the top course of cast-iron plates. At their outer edge, the brackets are joined to stanchions of the gallery railing by rods threaded through sleeves and anchored by bulbous pendants. Four evenly-spaced porthole windows are located at the level of the molded joint between the upper and middle courses of cast-iron plates; the joint itself serves as trim around the upper half of the windows. Painted or stenciled numbers which aided in on-site assembly are visible on the inside of cast-iron plates, on deck plates, and on brass or bronze lantern fittings. There is no brick lining within the cast-iron shell. A winding cast-iron stair around the outer periphery leads to the hatch door in the watchroom floor, while a curved ship's ladder provides access to the lantern from the watchroom. Through the center of the tower rises a cast-iron column which supports the floor of the watchroom. The watchroom floor is made of wedge-shaped iron segments, bolted together. The floor of the lantern, of similar construction, contains eight porthole windows to the watchroom below. Eight glass panes occupy the upper half of the lantern walls, while metal wall panels, containing two kinds of circular ventilators, occupy the lower half. A double-leafed, double-walled metal door opens onto the west side of the lantern deck directly above the lighthouse entrance. The octagonal peaked lantern roof rests on a two-part stepped

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Tongue Point Lighthouse

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metal cornice and supports a spherical ventilator on a beak molding, topped by a lightning rod. Presently, the lantern houses an automated flashing green electric light with a plastic Fresnel-type lens. It replaced the original fourth order lantern of 1894.

Some rare survivors of aids to navigation apparatus remain on site. The fog-bell stands outside the east wall of the tower. Inscribed "1881/U.S. Lighthouse Establishment," it predates the lighthouse, and most likely was brought from another location in 1899. An early fog whistle had proved inadequate and was replaced with an electric motor gong fog apparatus which had been tested at the General Lighthouse Depot in 1897. It too proved unsatisfactory and was discontinued for repair on March 30, 1898. Described as an electric bell-striker which operated every 30 seconds, this system finally was discontinued on October 5, 1898 and was replaced on March 15, 1899 with a 10,000 blow machine which struck every 8 seconds with a 160 pound bell. The bell-striking mechanism remains on the east side of the ground floor, while 15 of the 150 pound weights used to activate the clockwork mechanism remain within the hollow cast-iron central column or in a stack nearby. Attachments for pulleys and holes for the cords remain as well. Moreover, a large rack for the acetylene fuel tanks stands against the south wall of the tower on the ground floor. Some of its tubing remains in place.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input 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 built 1894

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Tongue Point Lighthouse is significant for its associations with the nineteenth century program of improvements for navigation in the Bridgeport Harbor area. These improvements were crucial to the development of the industrial base of the city. Tongue Point Lighthouse is also significant as a typical example of the smaller version of the Lighthouse Board's standard design of the later nineteenth century pre-fabricated cast-iron tower, which could be mass produced in standard units, yet adapted to individual sites. This lighthouse also played a role in the development of fog signal devices, one of the major technical frontiers remaining in the lighthouse service in the late nineteenth century. In addition, a rare assemblage of fog-signal apparatus remains on this site: the fog bell, the clockwork striking mechanism, and the weights within the center column.

Until the 1840s Bridgeport's Harbor development lagged behind that of neighboring cities with better natural harbors. With the advent of the railroad era, Bridgeport businessmen were awarded federal contracts to dredge a ship channel and build breakwaters so that freight and passenger vessels could connect with rail lines at Bridgeport. As a transshipment location, development of the Bridgeport waterfront was assured. In the 1870s the channel in the inner harbor was widened; in 1891 a harbor of refuge was created there behind a breakwater, constructed by Brown and Flemming of New York, extending eastward 11,000 feet from Welles or Tongue Point to the site of an inner beacon. Local lobbying efforts succeeded in obtaining federal appropriations in 1893 and 1894, totalling \$4,500.00 to build a special foundation on the east end of the breakwater for the construction of a cast-iron lighthouse.

Lt. Col. D. P. Heap of the Lighthouse Board supervised the installation of a 31 feet high conical lighthouse, made up of flanged, curved sections bolted together to form rings. This was a standard design used by the Lighthouse Board between 1873 and ca. 1910. Of two stories surmounted by a lantern, the tower's lower story was used for storage and the second story for a watchroom and record storage. Unlike many of the water-surrounded lighthouses, this smaller version of the type had no living-quarters within. Perhaps because of its short profile, it acquired the nickname of "The Bug" or the "The Buglight".

On March 1, 1895 a lantern light was removed and a sixth order lens lantern established in the completed lighthouse. In 1896 a landing

See Continuation Sheet

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.02 acre

UTM REFERENCES see location map

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

see site plan

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

STATE	<u>see thematic form</u>	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dorothy B. Templeton/Historian

ORGANIZATION

John Milner Associates, Inc.

DATE

October 22, 1985

STREET & NUMBER

309 North Matlack Street

TELEPHONE

(215) 436-9000

CITY OR TOWN

West Chester

STATE

Pennsylvania 19380

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

[Signature]  
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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

5/29/90

[Signature]  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

[Signature]  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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wharf for small boats was built on the breakwater, since the keeper had to row out to perform his daily tasks.

In 1897, a Congressional appropriation of \$1200 was made to establish an electrically operated gong fog-signal. This fog-signal was being developed in the General Lighthouse Depot on Staten Island. However, the invention proved unreliable. Discontinued for repair on March 30, 1898, it was decommissioned seven months later and replaced in March 1899 with a 160 pound fog-bell. During fog conditions the bell was struck every eight seconds by a system of clockwork and weights. Although the mechanism was a 10,000 blow machine, it required attendance for starting and ending operation, as well as for rewinding during extended periods of fog. This clockwork mechanism along with the fog bell and the 150 pound weights, remains in place at Tongue Point Lighthouse.

In 1904 a reservation to contain a keeper's dwelling and garden was proposed in a sketch by the Third District's Engineer. The reservation was to be located at the inland end of the plank walk which had been installed in 1900. In 1906 the Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board reported that the keeper had, at his own expense, erected a small shanty in which he slept nightly "so as to start the fog signal at short notice." An appropriation of \$5,000 was requested for erecting a dwelling, but no such action was taken, and within a decade, plans were underway to move "The Bug" (or "The Buglight") to a new location on shore.

Ships' captains had complained about the sharp turn they had to make around the Tongue Point or Inner Breakwater on their way into Bridgeport's Inner Harbor. In 1919, 350 feet of the inner breakwater was removed and added to the outer breakwaters. A Lighthouse Department derrick was employed to move the Tongue Point Lighthouse to a new reinforced concrete foundation, located 275 feet closer to shore. As an additional accommodation to large vessels, the 18 feet deep channel was dredged to a depth of 22 feet and a width of 300 feet.

The significance of "The Bug Light" at Tongue Point in the local maritime situation was demonstrated in 1967, when the possible discontinuance of the light and fog signal was vigorously protested.

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Tongue Point Lighthouse

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"A New Lighthouse," Bridgeport Standard, January 16, 1891.

"Harbor: Lighthouses and Bells of Warning,"  
Scrapbooks/Clipping File, Local History Room,  
Bridgeport Public Library.

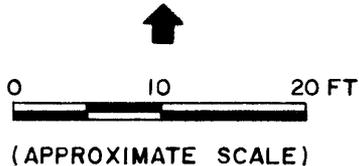
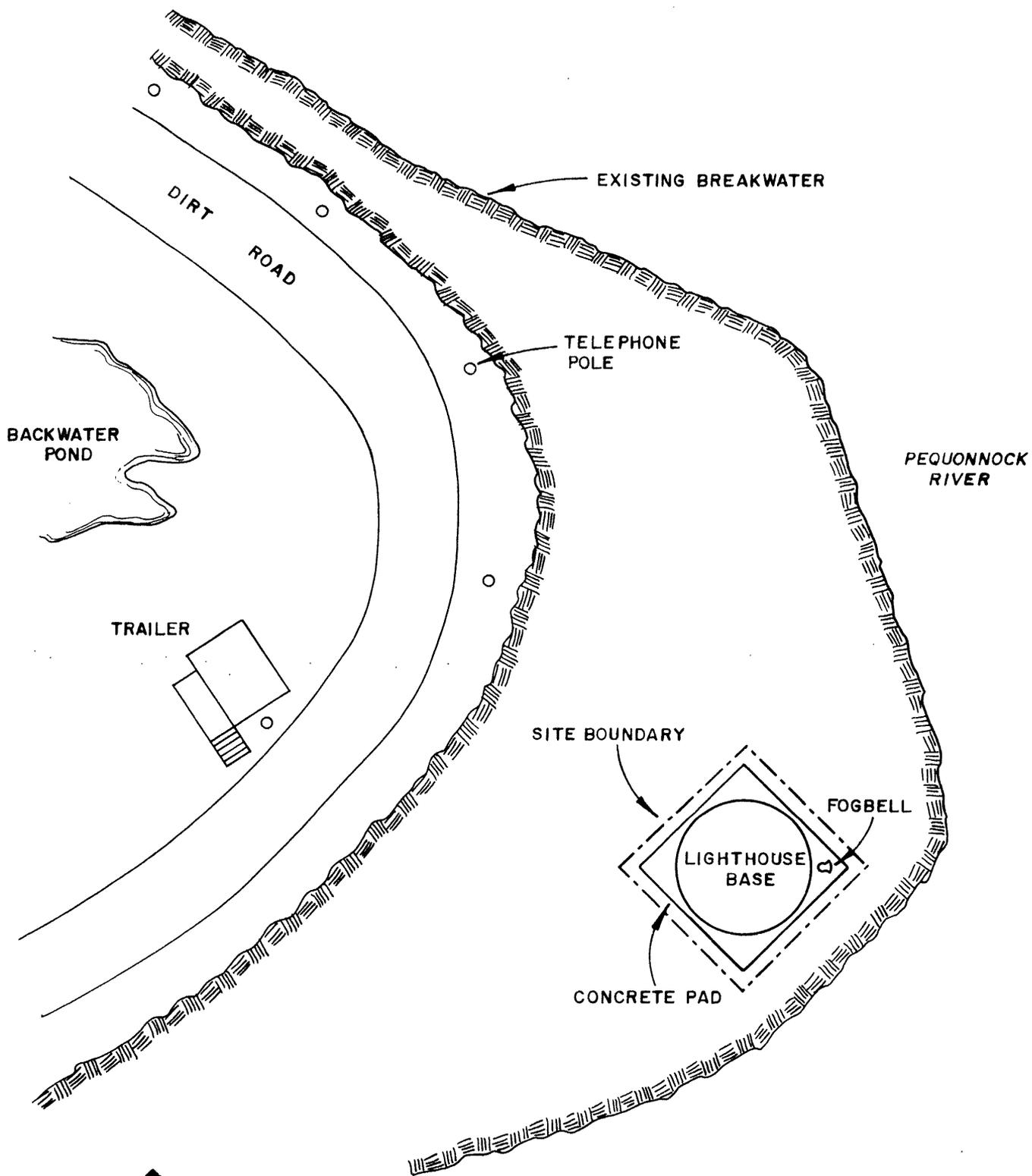
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1892, 1894-1900, 1905.

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Reel 3 (microfilm), "Proposed reservation for keeper,"  
United States Coast Guard Academy Library.





SITE PLAN  
 TONGUE POINT LIGHTHOUSE  
 Fairfield County, Connecticut

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number 7 Page Amendment

Tongue Point Lighthouse  
Bridgeport, CT

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Description (continued):

In 1989, Tongue Point Lighthouse was re-photographed and examined in the field in order to bring the National Register documentation fully up to date. Following are the features or characteristics of the lighthouse that differ from its condition and appearance as described in the National Register Inventory/Nomination form prepared in 1985:

The watchroom floor, described in 1985 as "made of wedge-shaped iron segments, bolted together," is made of reinforced concrete. Spalling of the concrete and corrosion of the exposed reinforcement indicate that this floor was probably in place in 1985 as well.

The fog bell that once stood outside the east wall of the tower has been removed; the only signs of it are the twisted and broken-off brackets that once supported the bell.

The bell-striking mechanism and the rack for acetylene tanks have been removed from the first-floor interior.

Tongue Point Lighthouse still retains the requisite degree of integrity for National Register eligibility.

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National Park Service

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Tongue Point Lighthouse  
Bridgeport, CT

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All photographs:

1. TONGUE POINT LIGHTHOUSE
2. Bridgeport, CT
3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
4. March 1989
5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission,  
Hartford, CT

West elevation, camera facing east  
Photograph 1 of 7

Watch deck and lantern, camera facing east  
Photograph 2 of 7

Iron door, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 3 of 7

Broken-off brackets for fog bell, camera facing northeast  
Photograph 4 of 7

Concrete watchroom floor; ladder to lantern at left, central  
structural column to right; the hole in the floor allows  
passage of the rope that operating the bell-striking  
mechanism.  
Photograph 5 of 7

Watchroom ceiling (lantern floor)  
Photograph 6 of 7

Floor of lower level, showing hollow structural column with  
weights for the pulley mechanism that actuated the bell-  
striker.  
Photograph 7 of 7