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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 25 1987
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Lighthouses of Rhode Island: Thematic Group

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number Multiple ___ N.A. not for publication

city, town ___ N.A. vicinity of

state Rhode Island code 44 county Multiple code Multiple

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	_X_ unoccupied	___ commercial	_X_ park
___ structure	_X_ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	_X_ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
_X_ thematic group	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number

city, town ___ vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multiple

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Multiple has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description See individual entries.

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

The surviving lighthouses along the Rhode Island coast represent a diverse cross section of building types, architectural styles, station types, and site locations. The structures range from unique one-of-a-kind light towers, keeper's dwellings and out buildings, to those that were built from standardized plans. These include modest brick and wood-frame keeper's quarters built in the Greek Revival and Carpenter Gothic styles, as well as substantial Italianate and High Victorian Gothic dwellings constructed of brick and granite. While most of the light towers are plainly detailed stone structures, five are constructed in the Italianate style of prefabricated cast-iron components, and one is built from heavily rusticated granite block in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

The type of station also varies from one site to another. Some stations are large complexes where each structure has a separate, single function. Others are small compact stations comprised of two or three buildings, while a few consist of only a single tower in which all functions take place.

Finally, stations are placed in a variety of settings. The more important lights are located at prominent sites along the coast, and are visible to ships far offshore. Most of the lights on Narragansett Bay are situated at a harbor entrance, or on small offshore islands or rocks, marking heavily travelled shipping routes.

Between 1749, when Beavertail Light was constructed at the south end of Conanicut Island as the first in the state, and 1901, when the last newly established light was built off Bristol marking Hog Island Shoal, a total of thirty lights had been established in Rhode Island. At 10 of these site, the original light tower was taken down and replaced with a new tower because the earlier structure had either been destroyed, fallen into disrepair, or had become outmoded. In addition, at two of these ten stations, the second tower was later replaced by a third one. Thus, at the thirty Rhode Island stations a total of 42 towers have been built.

Today, only twenty-one of the thirty light stations still survive, and those surviving stations where more than one tower was constructed, only the most recent one is still standing. The other nine stations have either been destroyed by storms or fire, or have been taken down.

On the following pages are three lists of lighthouses, each

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arranged in chronological order of their establishment date. The first list is of all thirty lights that were established in the state. In parenthesis after each station's name, is the date of its establishment and the construction date of any later light towers that may have been built on the same site. The second list is of surviving stations, with the date of the surviving tower (not necessarily the station's establishment date) given after the station's name. The third list is of those stations which no longer survive.

RHODE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSES
Complete List

Beavertail (1749, 1856)
South end of Conanicut Island, Jamestown

Watch Hill (1808, 1856)
Watch Hill Point, Westerly

Point Judith (1810, 1815, 1857)
Point Judith, Narragansett

Dutch Island (1823, 1865)
South end of Dutch Island, off Jamestown

Newport Harbor (1823, 1865)
North end of Goat Island, Newport Harbor

Warwick (1826, 1932)
South end of Warwick Neck, Warwick

Nayatt Point (1828, 1856)
Nayatt Point, Barrington

Block Island North (1829, 1867)
Sandy Point, Block Island

Poplar Point (1831)
Poplar Point, Wickford

Prudence Island (1851)
Sandy Point, Prudence Island

Bristol Ferry (1855)
Bristol Point, Bristol

Ida Lewis Rock (1857)
(Originally named Lime Rock Light)
On Lime Rock, Newport Harbor

Conimicut (1868, 1883)
In Providence River, east of Conimicut Point, Warwick

Rose Island (1870)
Southwest end of Rose Island, off Newport

Pomham Rocks (1871)
In Providence River, East Providence

Bullock Point (1872)
In Providence River, west of Bullock Point, East Providence

Fuller Rock (1872)
On Fuller Rock in Providence River, northeast of Field Point, Providence

Sabin Point (1872)
In Providence River, west of Sabin Point, East Providence

Sassafras Point (1872)
In Providence River, east of Sassafras Point, Providence

Mussel Bed Shoal (1873, 1924)
North of Bristol Ferry, Portsmouth

Block Island Southeast (1874)
South East Point, Block Island

Wickford Harbor (1882)
On Old Gay Rock, Wickford Harbor

Whale Rock (1882)
On Whale Rock in west passage of Narragansett Bay, east of Narragansett Pier

Sakonnet (1884)
South of Sakonnet Point, Little Compton

Conanicut Island (1886)
North end of Conanicut Island, Jamestown

Gull Rocks (1887)
On Gull Rocks, at the north entrance to Newport Harbor

Gould Island (1889)
On east side of Gould Island, west of Middletown

Castle Hill (1890)
Western end of Newport Neck, Newport

Plum Beach (1897)
In west passage of Narragansett Bay, east of Plum Beach

Point, Saunderstown

Hog Island Shoal (1901)
Southeast of Hog Island, Portsmouth

LIGHTS NO LONGER STANDING

Bullock Point (1872)

Fuller Rock (18782)

Sabin Point (1872)

Sassafras Point (1872)

Mussel Bed Shoal (1872, 1924)

Whale Rock (1882)

Wickford Harbor (1882)

Gull Rocks (1887)

Gould Island (1889)

*Federally-owned
**Already listed in the National Register
***Nominated here to the National Register

LIGHT TYPES

Lighthouses in Rhode Island can be grouped into five architectural types: early freestanding towers with separate keeper's dwellings, early towers with attached dwellings, towers with attached dwellings built to standardized plans, and cast-iron towers built on caisson foundations. A fifth group includes unique, one-of-a-kind lights.

Following is a list of lighthouse types which include all lights built in Rhode Island. The date of a tower's construction is given after the station name, and an asterisk following the construction date indicates that the tower is no longer standing. The use of an asterisk does not necessarily mean that the station itself no longer survives, as a later tower may have been built at the station to replace an earlier tower. In these cases, the later tower is also included in the list of light types.

RHODE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE TYPES

1. Early Freestanding Towers with Separate Dwellings

Wooden Towers
- Beavertail (1749)*
- Watch Hill (1808)*
- Point Judith (1810)*

Stone Towers
- Beavertail (1755)*
- Point Judith (1815)*
- Newport Harbor (1823)
  (Moved to Prudence Island in 1851)
- Nayatt Point (1828)*

2. Early Towers with Attached Dwellings
   - Warwick (1826)*
   - Block Island North (1829)*
   - Poplar Point (1831)
   - Bristol Ferry (1855)
   - Nayatt Point (1828)

3. Lights Built to Standardized Plans

   Watch Hill Type
   - Watch Hill (1856)
   - Beavertail (1856)
   - Dutch Island (1857)
     (Variation of Watch Hill Type)
   - Ida Lewis Rock (1857)
     (Variation of Watch Hill type)

   Block Island Type
   - Block Island North (1867)

   Second Empire Type
   - Rose Island (1870)
   - Pomham Rocks (1871)
   - Sabin Point (1872)*

   Gothic Revival Type
   - Wickford Harbor (1882)*
   - Conanicut Island (1886)

4. Cast-Iron Towers on Caisson Foundations
   - Whale Rock (1882)*
   - Conimicut (1883)
   - Sakonnet (1884)
   - Plum Beach (1897)
   - Hog Island Shoal (1901)

   Variation of Tower Design, not on Caisson Foundation
   - Warwick (1932)

5. Unique Lights
   - Point Judith (1857)
   - Conimicut (1868)*
   - Newport Harbor (1865)
   - Bullock Point (1872)*
   - Fuller Rock (1872)*
   - Sassafras Point (1872)*
   - Mussel Bed Shoal (1873)*

Block Island Southeast (1874)
Gull Rocks (1887)*
Gould Island (1889)*
Castle Hill (1890)
Mussel Bed Shoal (1924)*
*no longer standing

Early Freestanding Towers with Separate Dwellings

The first lighthouse established in Rhode Island, and the third in this country, was constructed in 1749 at Beavertail Point at the south end of Conanicut Island. Like all colonial lights, it was a freestanding wooden tower. While its exact dimensions are not known, rough sketches of the tower show a gradually tapering round or octagonal structure, abut 60 feet high. The light itself was mounted at the top of the tower, enclosed by a surrounding glass lantern for protection from the weather. A balcony and railing around the lantern allowed the light keeper to regularly clean the outside of the glass.

The second and third lights established in the state, Watch Hill (1808) and Point Judith (1810), were also wooden towers, similar in appearance and construction to Beavertail. Although the wooden towers were relatively easy to build, they had the disadvantage of being susceptible to wind and fire damage. Beavertail Light was destroyed by fire just six years after its construction, and the Point Judith tower blew down in 1810. Only the wooden Watch Hill Light, built in 1808, lasted long enough to be demolished (in 1855).

Because of its strength and durability, stone soon became the preferred building material. After the original Beavertail Light was destroyed, it was replaced in 1755 by a 65-foot high, six-sided fieldstone tower. The second Point Judith tower, built in 1815, was also constructed of rubble although its outer surface had a coating of cement. The Point Judith tower was considerably shorter than the one at Beaver tail, measuring only 35 feet tall.

These early stone towers were relatively stronger than their wooden predecessors and, as a result, had substantially longer lifespans. The 1755 Beavertail tower stood until 1856, nearly 100 years longer than the one it had replaced. Although the stone tower at Point Judith lasted only 42 years, it too stood considerably longer than the first one.

The next improvement in construction techniques of the towers involved the use of cut stone blocks as the primary building material. The first tower of this type was built in 1823 at the north end of Goat Island in Newport Harbor. Still standing, but now located at Sandy Point on Prudence Island where it was moved in 1851, the tower is constructed of ten courses of

smoothly-faced granite blocks in the shape of a tapered octagon, 14 feet in diameter at the base, 7-1/2 feet wide at the top, with 20-foot-high walls. At the top of the tower is an 8-foot lantern, with its panes of glass held in place by a cast-iron framework. Above the lantern is a copper dome and ventilator cap, while a cast-iron balcony and railing surround the lantern's base.

In 1828, five years after the completion of the lighthouse at Newport, a second cut stone tower was built at Nayatt Point in Barrington on the east side of the entrance to the Providence River. Although it was slightly larger than the Newport Light, measuring 17 feet wide at the base, 12 feet at the top, and with 23-foot-high walls, the tower at Nayatt Point was similar in construction, materials, proportions, and appearance. It also had the same type of lantern as the one at Newport.

At all five of these sites, Beavertail, Watch Hill, Point Judith, Newport, and Nayatt Point, the light keeper lived in a separate dwelling, nearby, but not attached to, the tower. Although this arrangement required the keeper to go outside to tend the light, the two structures were separated in order to reduce the danger to the dwelling in the event that the tower caught fire or blew down.

A drawing of the 1749 Beavertail Light shows the dwelling to be a small, one-story, gambrel-roofed house, probably wood. This was later replaced by a more substantial two-story dwelling which appears to have been constructed of stone. Little is known of the early dwellings at Watch Hill and Point Judith, but it is assumed they were both small wood or stone houses.

Just as the two cut stone towers at Newport and Nayatt Point closely resembled each other, their dwellings were also similar to one another. Both dwellings were built at the time of construction of their respective towers; the Newport Harbor dwelling being completed in 1823, and the one at Nayatt Point in 1828. Both were one-and-a-half-story houses, 34-by-20-feet, with two rooms on the first floor and two rooms above with a front entry and center stairway in the middle. The main difference between the two was that the dwelling at Newport had a central chimney, while the one at Nayatt Point had a chimney at each end.

Of these early towers and dwellings, only one example of each survives. The 1823 tower of the Newport Harbor Light, which was moved to Prudence Island, is still an active Coast Guard-

maintained light. The 1828 dwelling at Nayatt Point is the only early keeper's quarters still standing. The station is no longer active and the lighthouse is now used as a private residence.

Early Towers with Attached Dwellings

After the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as confidence in the durability of lighthouse construction grew, and as the hazard from fire decreased, it became more common for the dwellings to be directly attached to the light tower. This arrangement was more convenient for the keeper as he could tend the light while staying out of the weather. In Rhode Island, five lighthouses of this type were constructed between 1826 and 1856. Although the earliest lights in this group were different from each other, the last three were similar in appearance, size, and layout.

The first light of this group represents a transition from the older wood and fieldstone construction. Built in 1826 at the southern end of Warwick Neck, the Warwick Light featured an 18-foot-high clapboarded wooden tower which rested on the hip roof of a long, one-story, fieldstone keeper's dwelling. The design of the square tower was unusual in that its four corners had been cut back at the top to form an octagon on which the lantern was mounted.

The 1829 Block Island North Light, built at the northern tip of the island, was also an unusual combination of stone and wood construction. The lighthouse consisted of a one-story dwelling 40-by-20-foot dwelling, built of rough-faced stone blocks, with an attached kitchen at the rear. Connected to each end of the dwelling was an octagonal wooden light tower, 10 feet in diameter, which projected 6 feet above the ridge of the house. At the top of each tower was an iron lantern with a copper ventilator dome.

The North Light at Block Island was the only light in Rhode Island with two towers. It is not known why two lights were used at this site, but they were usually called for when there was a need to distinguish one from another one nearby, or to distinguish it from another prominent onshore light. Neither the 1820 Block Island North Light nor the 1826 Warwick Light are standing. Each has been replaced by a later structure on the same site.

The next three lights in this group are all still standing, although each has been converted to a private residence and is no

longer active. The first of these, the Poplar Point Light, was built in 1831 at the southern entrance to Wickford Harbor. The lighthouse originally consisted of a one-and-a-half-story, gable-roofed dwelling with a kitchen ell, constructed of cut stone. The two rooms on the first floor are separated by a front entrance and a central chimney. Two bedrooms are found on the second floor. Rising through the dwelling's roof at the other end is a three-story, wooden, octagonal light tower sided with clapboards. An octagonal cast-iron lantern with a spherical ventilator caps the tower. This light was extensively altered and enlarged in 1894 when two wings were added to the kitchen end of the dwelling. Shortly there after, the light was deactivated and sold.

The 1855 Bristol Ferry Light, built on the south end of Bristol Point, is similar in size and proportions to the Poplar Point Light. The dwelling, which is constructed of brick instead of cut stone, is a plainly detailed one-and-a-half-story house with two rooms on the first floor and two rooms on the second. At one end is a small kitchen ell, while a three-story, square, brick light tower is attached to the dwelling at the other end. The lantern was removed in 1929 when the light was deactivated, and the property wassold for use as a private residence. Except for the removal of the lantern and the addition of a small ell off the kitchen, few changes have been made to the light since its active period.

The last light in this group was built in 1856 at Nayatt Point to replace the original 1828 tower. Originally, the station consisted of a separate dwelling and tower, but the first tower was later taken down and replaced with a new, three-story high, brick tower which closely resembled the one at Bristol Point. A new one-story brick addition built at the same time connected the tower with the original keeper's quarters. The dwelling was enlarged further with the lengthening and widening of the original kitchen ell. Other alterations, made after its sale in 1890 when it was converted to a private residence, include the addition of a second story on the connector, a second story on the kitchen ell, and two recently added one-story cement block sun rooms along the front of the house on either side of the tower.

Lights Built to Standardized Plans

The growth of the state's textile industry, which exported many of its products by ship, along with an increase in the number of passenger steamers travelling on Narragansett Bay and

between Rhode Island and other states, contributed to an increase in shipping on Rhode Island's waters during the second half of the nineteenth century. The expansion of Rhode Island's maritime economy was paralleled by a similar growth in man other coastal states. As a result, there was a need for more lighthouses.

As the need for more lighthouses grew, it became more cost effective to build lights from standardized plans. Typically, prototype designs were drawn by the U. S. Lighthouse Service. Although the lighthouses from any one design closely resembled each other, they were rarely identical; lights were modified slightly to meet the requirements of the site and the personnel manning it.

In Rhode Island, ten lighthouses constructed between 1856 and 1886 were built from standardized plans which consisted of a tower with an attached dwelling. These ten lights can be classified into four different design types.

The earliest lighthouses in the state known to have been built from standardized plans were constructed at Beavertail Point and Watch Hill in 1856. Both lights were built as replacements for earlier lights on the same sites, both are still standing, and both are still active lights. Although they are not identical, the two lights were built from the same basic plan that was modified for each station's individual requirements. At Watch Hill, the light is mounted on a three-story, square tower, made of roughly-cut granite blocks. On the top of the tower is an octagonal cast-iron lantern, capped with a cylindrical ventilator and lightning rod spike. An open gallery and balustrade surround the lantern. Attached to one side of the tower is a two-story, hipped-roof, brick keeper's dwelling, three bays wide, with six-over-six windows. A one-story, hipped-roof ell runs along the west side of the dwelling.

The Watch Hill plan was modified somewhat at the Beavertail Light. Although the tower is of the same type, it is not directly attached to the dwelling, but rather is connected by a small hyphen which runs between the two structures. Connected to the keeper's dwelling by a small passageway is a second dwelling of the same design, which served as quarters for an assistant keeper.

A variation of the Watch Hill plan was carried out in the 1857 Dutch Island Light off Jamestown. In this case the dwelling was slightly smaller, being only two bays wide instead of three,

and the tower was built of brick instead of stone. Otherwise, the towers and dwellings at both stations were nearly identical. At present, only the tower at Dutch Island is still standing, as the dwelling was torn down in the late 1940s. The station, which is no longer active, is now owned by the State of Rhode Island and is part of the Bay Islands State Park.

The 1857 light at Lime Rock in Newport Harbor (now named Ida Lewis Rock Light) features a dwelling that is nearly identical to the one at Dutch Island. The unusually small brick tower, however, is unlike any other in the state. Attached to one corner of the dwelling, it rises only to the height of the roof's eaves. The lantern, which does not have a surrounding gallery, consists only of three large sheets of glass topped with a hipped roof and a round ventilator. The light was sold in 1929, and it is used as the headquarters for the Ida Lewis Yacht Club.

A second design type was carried out in the 1867 Block Island North Light. Although no others like it were built in Rhode Island, at least five lights of this same design are known to have been constructed in other states. Constructed of heavily rusticated granite blocks, the two-story, gable-roofed rectangular building has relieving, round-arch windows. A small one-story, gable-roofed ell, also constructed of rusticated stone blocks, is attached to the back of the dwelling. An unusual feature of the lighthouse is the way in which the stone tower is mounted on top of the roof at the front of the building. Instead of the tower's base resting entirely on the roof of the dwelling, it projects forward from the building's front. The lower half of the short square tower contains a round arched window in each side, while a ten-sided cast-iron lantern with a gallery and surrounding balustrade sits on the top. This station is still standing, but it was deactivated and abandoned in 1970.

A third design type, from which numerous lights were built along the east coast in the 1870s, features elements of the Second Empire Style. The basic plan consists of a two-story, square dwelling with a mansard roof. Most lights of this design have three double hung windows in the front, and two or three in each side and in the back. One to three windows are found in each side of the Mansard roof.

The light tower and lantern closely resemble those used on the Block Island North type stations. The tower is of a similar style and is also mounted directly on the roof along the front side. The ten-sided lantern, with its square surrounding

gallery, is of exactly the same design as the Block Island one.

Lights of this design were either carried out in a wood-frame construction and sheathed with clapboards, or they were built of heavily rusticated cut stone blocks. The smaller stations consisted only of the basic square plan, while the larger ones often had a two-story, mansard ell projecting from the side or off the back.

Three stations of this type were established in Rhode Island, the first of which was built on Rose Island off Newport in 1870. The largest of the three Rhode Island lights of this design, the wood-frame clapboarded station features the characteristic two-story, mansard-roof ell off the back. A smaller wood-frame light of this design, consisting of only the basic square plan, was built in 1871 on Pomham Rocks in the Providence River. Both of these lights are still standing, although neither is active. The Rose Island Light was abandoned in 1971, while the Pomham Rocks Light was replaced by a skeletal tower light built adjacent to the original station in 1974.

The 1872 Sabin Point Light was the only one in the state of this design to be constructed of rusticated granite block. Located in the Providence River off Sabin Point, this was the first manned light in Rhode Island established offshore on a foundation that had been built up from the floor of the bay. Its successful completion was a result of advances in construction techniques which made it possible to place lights in locations that had previously been difficult to mark, such as offshore reefs and sandbars.

The last two lights in Rhode Island built from standardized plans in which the tower was attached to the keeper's dwelling, were both Gothic Revival cottages. The design for the 1882 Wickford Harbor Light, located on Old Gay Rock in the middle of the harbor entrance, and the 1886 Conanicut Island Light at the north end of the island, consists of a two- story, wood-frame clapboarded dwelling with a square light tower attached at one corner. The dwelling features a steeply pitched cross-gable roof outlined in vergeboard trim, wide eaves, and single and triple sash compound windows topped with drip moulding crowns. The only significant difference between the two lights is the height of their attached towers. Wickford Harbor Light was four stories high, while Conanicut Island Light is only three stories. Otherwise the two towers, with their clapboard siding, wide bracketed eaves, and double hung windows in the lower level and

round windows in the top floor, were the same. The Wickford Harbor Light was torn down in 1930, while the Conanicut Island Light has been used as a summer residence since 1933 when it was deactivated and sold.

Cast-Iron towers on Caisson Foundations

Of all lights built to standardized plans, the cast-iron towers built on caisson foundations were the most numerous, and from an engineering standpoint, one of the most complex. At least forty-six lights of this type are known to have been constructed along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, most of which were completed in the 1880s and 1890s.

Nearly all lights of this type were built offshore on sandbars or reefs. The tower rests on a complex foundation system in which a cylinder, 20-to-35-feet in diameter and made of built-up cast-iron plates, is sunk into the ocean floor by dredging or by pneumatic process, until a firm footing is attained. Depending on the stability characteristics of the footing, the bottom of the cylinder usually penetrates into the ocean floor for a depth of 10 to 30 feet, while the top usually extends about 10 feet above the high water level. Once in place, the cylinder is filled with poured concrete. For additional stability, and to deflect the full force of currents or winter ice floes, riprap stone is often placed around the cylinder.

Most towers stand 50 to 60 feet above the high water mark, and contain five levels of different diameters, plus the lantern. The top of the foundation cylinder, which protrudes above the water level and contains the basement, is the widest part of the structure. The next three levels, containing keeper's quarters, are approximately 20 feet in diameter, while the diameter of the top floor is generally 10 to 12 feet. Most lanterns used with this type of tower are approximately 7 feet in diameter.

Surrounding the outside are three galleries. The bottom gallery, which is 8 feet wide, surrounds the first floor and provides protection from the weather. Around the watchroom at the fifth level just below the lantern is a 6-foot wide open overhanging gallery surrounded by an iron railing and supported underneath by cast-iron brackets. The third gallery, which surrounds the lantern, is also open. Round portholes light the first and fourth levels, while two-over-two sashes with arched casings are used on the two levels in between.

Inside, a spiral staircase along the outside walls of the

tower connects the first five levels. The basement is used for storage of provisions, water, and fuel for the light, heating and cooking. On the first floor is a kitchen, with a living room and bedroom on the next two levels. The fifth floor serves as a watch room. A straight metal ladder leads from this floor to the lantern room.

Five lights of this type were built in Rhode Island, the first of which was constructed in 1882 on Whale Rock off Narragansett Pier. This tower is the only one of the five which is not standing, as it was toppled during the 1938 hurricane. The Conimicut Light was constructed in 1883 on a shoal in the Providence River off Conimicut Point in Warwick to replace an earlier tower on the same site. It is one of two caisson lights in the state that is still active. A year after its completion, the Sakonnet Light was established off Little Compton at the mouth of the Sakonnet River. This light was deactivated and abandoned in 1954, but is now privately owned and undergoing restoration. The last two caisson-type lights were both placed on shoals in Narragansett Bay. The 1897 Plum Beach Light guided ships up the Bay's west passage until 1941 when it was abandoned, while the Hog Island Shoal Light replaced a lightship at the entrance to Mount Hope Bay. Completed in 1901, Hog Island Shoal Light was the last one to be established in the state, and it is still active.

After the turn of the twentieth century, numerous prefabricated free-standing cast-iron towers were constructed along the east coast from a standardized plan that resembled the caisson-type towers. This more recent design differed from the earlier one in that the towers were built on land, rather than on an offshore caisson foundation, and the towers were shorter and had a smaller diameter. In addition, they were surrounded by only a single open gallery, at the lantern level, instead of the three used in the earlier design. Finally, because they were located onshore, they had no living quarters as the keepers lived in a separate dwelling nearby. The interior of the towers was one large open space with an open spiral staircase leading to the lantern. Otherwise, the exterior of the two designs were remarkably similar. Both towers were constructed with cast-iron plates laid up in courses to form the tower cylinder. They both featured many of the same prefabricated components, such as the cast-iron bracketing underneath the galleries, and the same lantern type was often used on the two designs.

The 1932 tower at Warwick Neck in Warwick was the only one

of this design to be built in Rhode Island. Constructed to take the place of the earlier tower at one of the state's oldest stations, this was the last traditional lighthouse to be built in Rhode Island. It is still active, and along with Block Island Southeast and Watch Hill Lights, is one of three stations in the state that is still manned by a keeper.

Lights of Unique Designs

Not all lights built during the second half of the nineteenth century were constructed from standardized plans. In Rhode Island, twelve unique lights were built. Only four of these still survive and each is active. Those surviving lights are discussed below.

The earliest light in this group was built in 1857 at Point Judith to replace an earlier tower. The free-standing octagonal granite block tower is 51 feet high with a diameter at the base of 24 feet which tapers to 13 feet at the top. A single fixed window is located in four of the tower's five stories. At the top is a ten-sided cast-iron lantern, surrounded by an open gallery and balustrade. When the tower was completed, it was originally connected by a short enclosed passageway to a one-and-a-half-story brick keeper's dwelling. The dwelling was torn down in 1954, and the light is now maintained by personnel at the nearby Point Judith Coast Guard Station.

The 1865 Newport Harbor Light, built on the north end of Goat Island, also replaced an earlier light on a nearby site. The station consists of a free-standing, 33-foot tapered tower, constructed of rusticated granite block, and topped with a cast-iron lantern with a surrounding gallery and balustrade. Originally, a plainly detailed two-story granite block Greek Revival keeper's dwelling, three bays wide and four bays long, was attached to the tower at the middle of the dwelling's west side. Although the tower still survives, the dwelling was torn down in 1921 after its foundation was struck by a submarine en route to Newport. The light is now automated.

Of all the lights built in Rhode Island, the 1874 Block Island Southeast Light is the most substantial and possibly the most interesting architecturally. Designed in the Victorian Gothic Style, the light consists of a large two story brick dwelling, 52-by-48-feet, with a steeply pitched cross gable roof. Two large exterior chimneys are set at the back of the dwelling, while a massive octagonal brick tower is attached to the house at the other end. The tower stands 52 feet high, with a diameter

that tapers from 27 feet at the base to 23 feet at the top. The building has red brick walls, white sandstone window sills and shoulder arches, black slate roofing, black iron railing around the light tower's lantern gallery, and a wooden porch. Still occupied by a keeper, it is one of only two lights in the state which continue to be manned.

The last surviving unique light was established in 1890 at Castle Hill on Newport Neck, south of the city at the entrance to Narragansett Bay's east passage. Built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style (and possibly designed by H. H. Richardson), the Castle Hill Light is a 42-foot high, free-standing conical tower made of rusticated granite block. The walls of the tower are pierced by three deep-set narrow windows, while a small projecting doorway at the base provides an entrance to the tower. At the top is an octagonal cast-iron lantern surrounded by an open gallery with an iron balustrade. A wood frame keeper's dwelling was destroyed in the 1938 hurricane. The light is now automated.

The survey of Rhode Island lighthouses was conducted in 1985 by Eugene Wick York, an historian specializing in the history of lighthouses, other aids to navigation, Coast Guard stations, and the like. Survey results were reviewed by William McKenzie Woodward, an architectural historian on the staff of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

All surviving lighthouses in Rhode Island were surveyed. No archaeological testing was conducted. The Rhode Island Review Board examined nomination materials for all surviving lighthouses, except those already listed, and concluded that each met the National Register criteria.

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	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian	
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	X transportation	
X 1900– 1937	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates see individual entries **Builder/Architect** see individual entries

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Rhode Island's lighthouses are significant for their architectural quallity and for their role in the state's maritime transport history. Individually, they embody the distinctive characteristics of several types, periods, and methods of lighthouse construction (Criterion C). In addition, they are each associated with a long history of efforts to protect shipping in and out of Narragansett Bay, and with the development of transport routes which have played a major role in the development of Rhode Island (Criterion A).

LIGHTHOUSE ESTABLISHMENT

From early Colonial times, the history and economy of Rhode Island has been closely associated with the sea. As a source of food, the waters of Narragansett Bay and those off the coast provided a plentiful harvest for local fishermen. The sea also served as an important transportation route over which were carried agricultural products, and later manufactured goods, to other parts of America as well as the rest of the world. Lighthouses and other navigational aids, such as fog horns, played an important role in maintaining the state's maritime economy by helping to safely guide ships into port at night and during foggy weather, and to warn of offshore reefs and sandbars.

The first lighthouse in Rhode Island, and the third in this country, was built in 1749 at Beavertail Point at the southern end of Conanicut Island. Like other early lighthouses established in this country, its location was determined by maritime trade routes, and its construction came about as a result of appeals from local merchants to the colonial government. Beavertail Light was built in response to the shipping activity to Newport, which during colonial times was the colony's most prosperous city due to its shipbuilding, export of agricultural products, and the lucrative trade with the West Indies. Strategically located at the entrance to Narragansett Bay along the main route to Newport, the light served as an important mark for ships approaching the city from offshore.

After the Revolution, Providence emerged as the state's major port with trade routes to other states,as well as South America, the East Indies and China. The need to more effectively mark Rhode Island waters for merchant ships approaching from

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet #92.

10. Geographical Data See individual entries.

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____ **Quadrangle scale** _____

UTM References

A	Zone	Easting	Northing	B	Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual entries.

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 Eugene Wick York, Consultant

organization **date** March, 1987

street & number Box 334 **telephone** 203-535-1489

city or town Stonington **state** Connecticut 06378

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___X___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Edward F. Sanderson Deputy SHPO for

title Frederick C. Williamson, SHPO **date** August 28, 1987

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

offshore resulted in the establishment of the state's second and third lighthouses along the southern coast. The 1808 Watch Hill Light in Westerly served vessels traveling from Connecticut, New York and southern ports. Two years later, a light was established at Point Judith on the western side of the entrance to Narragansett Bay to mark one of the most dangerous and exposed spots on the coast.

Although Providence's trade with foreign markets declined after the first decade of the nineteenth century, due in part to the growing dominance of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, many of the smaller cities and towns on Narragansett Bay began to experience an increase in economic activity. Shipbuilding, whaling, coastal freighting and fishing, as well as the region's small but growing textile industry, all contributed to the development of towns such as Newport, Warren, Bristol, Warwick and Wickford.

In addition to the shipping associated with these activities, a number of ferry routes had been established on the Bay. Ferries ran from Jamestown to Newport and Saunderstown, from Prudence Island to Portsmouth and Warwick, and between Bristol and Portsmouth. In 1822 the first regular steamship service was founded when service began between New York City and Providence with a stop at Newport.

The rise of shipping on Rhode Island waters led to the construction of five new lights on the Bay between 1823 and 1831. In 1823 the Newport Harbor Light was established on Goat Island at the harbor's northern entrance, and the Dutch Island Light was placed at the island's southern end along the Bay's west passage. Further up the Bay, the 1825 Warwick Light marked the strait separating Warwick Neck from Patience Island, while the 1828 Nayatt Point Light in Barrington stood at the mouth of the Providence River. Three years later, a light was completed at Poplar Point in Wickford to mark the harbor's entrance. The first light built off the coast, and the first on Block Island, Block Island North Light, was also established during this period in 1829.

The increase in Rhode Island lighthouses during the first half of the nineteenth century was paralleled by a similar increase in lights on the coast of other eastern seaboard states. However, due to a poorly run administrative body, the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment, most American lighthouses were poorly built and equipped with inferior lighting systems.

During the first thirty years after lighthouses came under federal control within the Treasury Department in 1789, their numbers grew from 12 to 55. In 1820 Stephen Pleasanton, the Fifth Auditor of the Treasury, was appointed General Superintendent of lighthouses with overall responsibility for running the service. Although Pleasanton was considered capable and conscientious, during the thirty-three years of his tenure he showed neither the administrative nor engineering skills needed for the job. He was severely criticized for failing to keep pace with technological improvements made by foreign countries in lighthouse construction which would have allowed lights to be better built and placed in more strategic locations, and for his reluctance to outfit lighthouses with the vastly superior illuminating system which centered around the French Fresnel lens.

After a highly critical investigation of United States lights was undertaken in 1843, the Lighthouse Establishment was eventually reorganized in 1851 with the creation of the Lighthouse Board. Composed for the first time of engineers and scientists, the Board brought extensive changes and improvements to the Service. At the time of the Board's creation, only five lighthouses in the United States had been equipped with Fresnel lenses, but by 1859 every light had been changed over to this more advanced system. In 1857 Beavertail became the first U. S. station to have a mechanical fog signal, and six years later it was the first station equipped with a steam fog signal. After its successful testing, installation of fog steam signals at other stations soon followed.

Improvements in illuminants were later in coming. Early fuels such as whale oil and rapeseed oil were gradually replaced by kerosene after 1877, which because of its low cost and reliability, continued to be used at some lighthouses through the 1950s. Because many stations were located in remote areas or offshore, a widespread conversion to electricity did not take place until the 1920s and 1930s when generators became readily available. In 1960 Conimicut Light on the Providence River became the last lighthouse in the country to be converted from kerosene to electricity.

By 1850 nine lighthouses had been established in Rhode Island, but by the end of the century this number had grown to twenty-nine. The increase in the number of lighthouses resulted from the state's expanding industrial economy which depended

heavily on maritime transportation. However, many of these lights could not have been completed if it were not for advances in lighthouse construction techniques during this period which made it possible to place lights at sites that had been previously unbuildable.

The first three lighthouses to be established in the second half of the nineteenth century were built primarily for the steamship traffic to New York City. Although the Fall River Line, which began service between Fall River, Newport and New York in 1847, was the most active, it faced strong competition from three Providence lines begun in the 1850s and 1860s. The Prudence Island Light, established at Sandy Point in 1851, served as an important mark for steamers traveling up the east passage of the Bay. The 1855 Bristol Ferry Light at the entrance to Mount Hope Bay in Bristol, primarily aided ships en route to Fall River. An increase in steamship traffic in Newport created the need for the city's second light, which was built in 1857 at the southern entrance to the harbor. Originally called Lime Rock Light, its name was later changed to Ida Lewis Rock Light in 1912 in honor of its woman keeper who became nationally known for her heroic rescues of stranded sailors near the light.

The light tower that was constructed on Prudence Island in 1851 was originally built on Goat Island at Newport Harbor in 1823 where it served for fifteen years before being replaced by a new light at a nearby location. In 1851 the old unused tower was taken down, moved and rebuilt in its original form at Prudence Island. This tower was the only one in Rhode Island to be moved to another station.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Providence had become the center of a regional industrial expansion which revolved around the cotton and woolen industries. The cotton trade reached its height during the 1850s and 1860s with 139 factories employing over 17,000 people. The woolen industry experienced its greatest growth during the Civil War and by 1890 Providence was the second largest woolen manufacturing city in the country.

Both of these trades relied heavily on shipping to bring in raw materials and to export finished products. To safely accommodate this traffic, improvements were continually being made throughout the second half of the nineteenth century in a channel leading through the Upper Bay and the Providence River, and to Providence Harbor itself. In addition, eight new

lighthouses were established along this route between 1868 and 1873.

The first of these, Conimicut Light, was placed in the middle of the entrance to the Providence River between Conimicut Point in Warwick and Nayatt Point in Barrington in 1868. With its establishment, the nearby Nayatt Point Light was discontinued because Conimicut Light served as a more effective marker. However, since the new light had no overnight accommodations, the dwelling at Nayatt Point was kept by the Service as quarters for the keeper.

To the south, the 1870 Rose Island Light off Newport served ships approaching the lower end of the channel along the east passage of Narragansett Bay. During the following year, the first light to be established north of the mouth of the Providence River was built at Pomham Rocks in East Providence. In 1872, four additional river lights were constructed, one at Bullock Point and one at Sabin Point in East Providence, and one on Fuller Rock and Sassafras Point in Providence. These last two lights, like Conimicut Light, did not have keeper's quarters and were not traditional lighthouses in that they consisted only of a beacon mounted on a relatively short 14-foot high wooden tower. They were each tended by a keeper who lived onshore.

With the large number of steamers entering Mount Hope Sound, the Fall River Line maintained its own private lightship marking a reef off Hog Island at the Sound's entrance. Because of the expense of replacing the lightship with an offshore lighthouse on the reef, the Lighthouse Service instead established a light nearby on Mussel Bed Shoal in 1873 off Portsmouth opposite the Bristol Ferry Light.

In 1874 a second light was established on Block Island. Placed high on a cliff overlooking the ocean to the south, Southeast Light has served as a major east coast landfall light for oceangoing ships approaching New England from the south. At 201 feet above sea level, it is the highest light in New England, and its range of over 20 miles makes it one of the most powerful on the east coast.

The pace of construction which took place during the 1870s with the completion of eight new lighthouses, the most to be established in any one decade, was nearly equalled by the following decade which saw the establishment of seven more lights. The 1882 Wickford Harbor Light, located in the middle of

the harbor entrance, replaced Poplar Point Light which had served since 1831. With the completion of the new tower, Poplar Point Light was discontinued.

Between 1882 and 1884, two lights were established on offshore rocks that had previously been difficult to mark. Built from the same design which featured a five story cylindrical tower in which the keeper lived, the lights were anchored to the rock by their caisson foundations. The 1882 Whale Rock Light warned steamers of a dangerous ledge between Narragansett Pier and Beavertail Point. Another dangerous offshore ledge, Little Cormorant Rock, south of Little Compton at the mouth of the Sakonnet River, was the site of the Sakonnet Light, built in 1884. A third light of this same design was built in more protected waters on a sandbar off Conimicut Point in 1883 to replace the original 1863 Conimicut Light that had been heavily damaged by ice floes on the Providence River.

The last three lights built in the 1880s were all new stations on Narragansett Bay. The 1886 Conanicut Island Light in Jamestown at the north end of the island, served traffic on the west passage as well as ships traveling between Newport and Wickford or Warwick. Newport received its fourth light in 1887 with the establishment of Gull Rocks Light at the harbor's northern entrance. Two years after its completion, a light was built on Gould Island in East Passage.

By 1890 nearly every dangerous spot in Rhode Island waters had been marked with a lighthouse, and only three additional new lights would be established in the state. The first was built in 1890 on Castle Hill in Newport at the entrance to the East Passage opposite Beavertail Light. The remaining two lights were both constructed offshore primarily for the benefit of steamer traffic. The 1897 Plum Beach Light off Saunderstown was built in response to the number of steamers that had grounded on Plum Beach Shoal in trying to avoid Dutch Island while traveling up the west passage. The Hog Island Shoal Light off Portsmouth replaced the private lightship at the entrance to Mount Hope Bay. Completed in 1901, it was the last lighthouse established in the state.

After the completion of Hog Island Shoal Light, there were two additional Rhode Island lighthouses built at existing stations to replace earlier structures. In 1924, the original 1873 Mussel Bed Shoal Light off Portsmouth was torn down and replaced with a new and larger structure. The original 1826

light at Warwick, which at the time of its replacement in 1932 was the oldest light in the state, was torn down shortly after the completion of a new tower next to it.

Rebuilding of earlier obsolete lighthouses at existing stations had become a fairly common practice. Because lighthouses were placed at exposed locations and continually subject to severe weathering, many of the earlier, less well-built towers had a relatively short lifespan. The original 1749 wooden tower at Beavertail had to be replaced in 1755 after it caught fire, while the first Point Judith tower blew down only five years after its completion. Although both were replaced with more substantial, though crude, stone towers, by the 1850s their condition had deteriorated to the point where they had to be rebuilt once again. With the completion of the new tower at Warwick Light in 1932, a total of twelve towers had been rebuilt at ten stations. All but two of these new towers replaced earlier ones that had been constructed before 1830. A list of those lights which have been rebuilt is found in Section #7.

DEACTIVATION AND AUTOMATION

The first two light stations in Rhode Island to be taken out of service were both discontinued after the construction of more strategically located nearby lights to take their places. The 1828 Nayatt Point Light at the entrance to the Providence River in Barrington was the first light in the state to be deactivated when it was replaced in 1868 by the newly established Conimicut Light in the middle of the river only a mile away. Because Conimicut Light initially had no quarters, the dwelling at Nayatt Point was kept for the keeper of the new light until 1883 when the Conimicut tower was rebuilt with accommodations. In 1890 the Nayatt Point Light was sold and converted to a private residence.

The deactivation of the 1831 Poplar Point Light in Wickford occurred for a similar reason. Located at the entrance to the harbor, it was taken out of service in 1882 with the completion of the nearby Wickford Harbor Light and sold in 1894 for use as a private residence. The Sassafras Point Light, established on the west side of the Providence River Channel in 1872 off Fields Point, was taken down during a harbor improvement project when the cove in which the light stood was filled in.

In an effort to reduce the high cost of operating and

maintaining traditional, manned lighthouses, the Lighthouse Service began installing automatically controlled beacons at many smaller stations throughout the country in the 1920s and 1930s. In Rhode Island, the keepers at eight stations were removed during this period and the lights were replaced by acetylene-fueled automatic beacons mounted on steel skeletal towers built on the stations' grounds. At offshore sites the old lighthouses were taken down because they were unnecessary and difficult to maintain, while at onshore stations the dwelling and most of the property was sold except for a small piece of land on which the new tower was constructed.

The first Rhode Island station to undergo this change was Fuller Rock, located in the middle of the Providence River Channel. In 1923, the wooden tower was torn down and replaced by an automatic beacon on a skeletal tower mounted on the foundation of the old light. A skeletal tower with an automatic beacon was installed in front of the Ida Lewis Lighthouse in newport in 1927. After its completion, the station was sold to the Ida Lewis Yacht Club for use as their headquarters. With the construction in 1928 of the well-lit Mount Hope Bridge directly over the Bristol Ferry Light, the importance of the station declined, and it was sold for use as a residence after a skeletal tower was built next to the old lighthouse. A skeletal tower replaced the demolished Wickford Harbor Light in 1932, while the Conanicut Island station in Jamestown was sold in 1933 and converted to a residence after the construction of a nearby skeletal tower.

The remaining three stations to be equipped with automatic beacons were all changed over after being damaged by the 1938 hurricane, but the separate freestanding towers survived relatively unharmed. Rather than rebuilding the dwellings or constructing a skeletal tower to replace the old lights, both towers were equipped with automatically operated electric lights. Like the automatic acetylene beacons, the electric mechanisms did not require the presence of a keeper as each had to be checked only occasionally.

Since 1940 more Rhode Island lights have been automated with electrically controlled mechanisms installed in the old towers, rather than being replaced with skeletal towers. At Dutch Island Light in 1947 and at Point Judith Light in 1957, the lights were electrified and automated after both keeper's dwellings were torn down. The keepers were removed from Block Island North Light in 1955 and from Sabin Point Light the following year after both

were automated. Newport Harbor Light, which had been maintained by personnel from the nearby U. S. Naval Torpedo Station on Goat Island since 1922 when the keeper's dwelling was torn down, became automated in 1963. Two offshore towers, Conimicut and Hog Island Shoal Lights were automated in 1963 and 1964 respectively. During this period, four lights were replaced with skeletal towers. One was built at Gould Island Light in 1947, another in 1963 at Gull Rocks Light off Newport, and a third at Pomham Rocks in 1974. Block Island North Light, which had been automated in 1955, was replaced by a skeletal tower and abandoned in 1970.

A number of stations not automated during this period were instead deactivated and taken out of service. Like the two lights which were discontinued in the 1880s, the first two lights to be deactivated in this century were both taken out of service after the completion of nearly more effective lights. The Bristol Ferry Station, which had been automated in 1928 with the construction of a skeletal tower in front of the old lighthouse, was deactivated in 1934 after the establishment of the Bristol Harbor Light. With the completion of the nearby well-lit bridge between Jamestown and Saunderstown in 1941, the Plum Beach Light was deactivated and the station abandoned.

Since the 1940s, a more significant factor in the deactivation of lights has been the development of marine electronic communication equipment, which allows ships to navigate more safely without having to rely on a visible light or an audible fog signal. The first radio transmitter in a lighthouse was installed on an experimental basis near New York Harbor in 1921, while Point Judith Light received the first radio beacon at a Rhode Island station in 1931. By 1950, nearly all commercial ships were equipped with the more advanced system of radar, which had been developed during the previous decade.

As a result, the need for lighthouses began to decline and some of the smaller, less important stations were deactivated without being replaced by nearby new ones. Sakonnet Light off Little Compton, which had been damaged in the 1954 hurricane, was deactivated and torn down in 1970, while nearby Rose Island Light was abandoned the following year. Dutch Island Light, which had been automated in 1947, was taken out of service in 1975 and turned over to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management which had responsibility for managing the rest of the state-owned island. Finally, Conanicut Island Light in Jamestown was the last station to be deactivated when the automated skeletal tower was discontinued in 1983.

Of the thirty Rhode Island stations established between 1749 and 1901, only seventeen are still active. However, at five of these active stations (Bullock Point, Fuller Rock, Gould Island, Mussel Bed Shoal and Wickford Harbor) the old towers have been torn down and replaced with skeletal towers, while at Pomham Rocks and Block Island North Stations, the original lights still stands but there functions have been taken over by nearby skeletal towers. At the other ten active stations (Beavertail, Block Island Southeast, Castle Hill, Conimicut, Hog Island Shoal, Newport Harbor, Point Judith, Prudence Island, Warwick and Watch Hill) the traditional towers continue to perform in their original capacities.

THE PRESERVATION OF SURVIVING LIGHTHOUSES

Today, twenty-one traditional lighthouses are still standing, ten of which are active lights maintained by the Coat Guard. These are listed in the Description. The ten active lights will probably continue to remain in service for at least the foreseeable future as there are no present plans to replace, rebuild or deactivate any additional ones.

Several preservation issues face the lights that are still active. Hog Island Shoal Light, which has been automated, has numerous stress cracks in its cast-iron caisson foundation which threaten the tower's structural integrity. Conimicut Light, another automated offshore tower, is in good condition on the outside, but moisture problems caused by its windows and doors being boarded over have led to interior peeling paint, warped woodwork and some masonry deterioration.

The situation is better for the automated onshore towers where inspection and maintenance have been easier. Castle Hill, Newport Harbor, Point Judith and Prudence Island Lights are all in good condition. Although some alterations have been made to each of these towers, none has significantly changed their historic appearance.

Three active lights, Block Island Southeast, Watch Hill and Warwick are still manned by keepers who live on the grounds, but each is scheduled to be automated before 1990. In the past the standard practice when automating a station has been to "site harden" all of the structures on the grounds by boarding over the windows and doors after the keeper has been removed so as to keep out the weather and vandals. However, the Coast Guard has

recently adopted a policy for automated stations which involves putting the keeper's quarters in good condition and then leasing them to the town in which the light is located, or to a local nonprofit group. The town or group then agrees to assume responsibility for future maintenance of the building and to look after the station in exchange for free occupancy. The Block Island Historical Society would like to take over responsibility for the lighthouse at Southeast Light after it is automated, and it is hoped that a similar group will be found to occupy Watch Hill and Warwick Lights when they are automated.

Perhaps the most innovative and successful approach to the automation of an active station has been carried out at Beavertail Light. The Coast Guard continues to maintain the light tower, while the rest of the buildings on the grounds have been given to the state of Rhode Island and restored for use as a visitors' center for beavertail State Park. A resident overseer lives in the assistant keeper's quarters, while the head keeper's dwelling will eventually house an exhibit on Rhode Island lighthouses.

The eleven surviving inactive lights have been used in a variety of ways. Four of the five lights taken out of service before 1930, Bristol Ferry, Conanicut Island, Nayatt Point and Poplar Point, were all sold and converted to residences. The other early light to be discontinued, Ida Lewis Rock Light, was sold for use as a yacht club headquarters. More recently, Pomham Rocks Light was sold in 1980 to Mobil Oil Corporation which owns the nearby East Providence Terminal and Refinery. It too is used as a residence by a caretaker who looks after the small island on which the light stands.

The preservation of the remaining five inactive lighthouses has been more of a problem primarily because they are located in remote areas. Plum Beach Light, which stands offshore with no land surrounding the tower, has been abandoned since 1941. The future for the other three lights appears to be brighter. The privately owned Sakonnet Light, abandoned since 1954, is currently undergoing restoration. Block Island North Light, abandoned since 1970, has recently been turned over to the Block Island Historical Society, and funds are now being raised for the building's restoration and reopening as a local history museum. Finally, a similar project is also planned for Rose Island Light, which was given to the City of Newport last summer. The city, in turn, will be leasing the station to the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation, a non-profit group formed to maintain and occupy the station.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The period of significance for this thematic group extends from 1828, when the earliest eligible lighthouse (Poplar Point) was constructed, to 1937, during which span these lighthouses served as navigational aids to maritime transportation on Narragansett Bay. For each light, the period of significance is defined as extending from the date of construction to the date when active service as a light ceased. Alterations and additions to each light which occurred in this span of years resulted from changes in technology, changes in lighthouse construction techniques, or changes in the systemic relationships of various lights, and are thus alterations and additions which have significance in their own right. Alterations and additions which may have occurred after deactivation are defined as non-significant.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Lighthouses of Rhode Island TR
State Bristol County and others, RI

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
Cover	Administrative Review Accept	for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/25/88
1. Bristol Ferry Lighthouse	Administrative Review ✓	for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/25/88 Attest Beth L. Savage 2/25/88
2. Conanicut Island Lighthouse	Administrative Review ✓	for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/25/88 Attest Beth L. Savage 2/25/88
3. Dutch Island Lighthouse	Administrative Review ✓	for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/25/88 Attest Beth L. Savage 2/25/88
4. Ida Lewis Rock Lighthouse	Administrative Review ✓	for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/25/88 Attest Beth L. Savage 2/25/88
5. Nayatt Point Lighthouse	Administrative Review ✓	for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/25/88 Attest Beth L. Savage 2/25/88
6. Poplar Point Lighthouse	Administrative Review ✓	for Keeper Patrick Andrus 2/25/88 Attest Beth L. Savage 2/25/88
7. Hog Island Shoal Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88 Attest _____
8. Conimicut Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88 Attest _____
9. Warwick Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88 Attest _____
10. Castle Hill Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88 Attest _____

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Lighthouses of Rhode Island TR
State Bristol County and others, RI

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
11. Newport Harbor Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88
		Attest _____
12. Prudence Island Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88
		Attest _____
13. Point Judith Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88
		Attest _____
14. Plum Beach Lighthouse	Entered in the National Register	Keeper Helen Byrne 3/30/88
		Attest _____
15.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____
16.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____
17.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____
18.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____
19.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____
20.		Keeper _____
		Attest _____