

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	SEP 2 1986
DATE ENTERED	OCT 9 1986

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Round Island Lighthouse

AND/OR COMMON Round Island Light

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

N.A.

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

N.A.

VICINITY OF Pascagoula, MS (Mississippi Sound)

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Jackson

CODE

59

**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"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
	N.A.	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: abandoned

**4 AGENCY**

Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

STREET & NUMBER

350 South Pickett Street

CITY, TOWN

Alexandria

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 22304

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Jackson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pascagoula

STATE

Mississippi

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

N.A.

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITIONS		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE 1859
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The Round Island Lighthouse is a brick conical-shaped tower erected in 1859 on the southwest side of Round Island to replace an earlier tower built in 1833. Various sources report that the light tower was 60 feet high, although the U.S. Coast Guard Report of Excess Property (1955) indicates the tower was only 50 feet in height and this latter figure will be used in this document.

Round Island is an approximately 110-acre island, of which roughly 50 acres are publicly owned. It is one of several coastal barrier islands located in the Mississippi Sound. The island is situated in the middle of the outlets for the East Pascagoula and West Pascagoula Rivers, three miles from the mainland. This position allows considerable erosion and accretion activity to take place on the north, east and west sides of the island. Littoral drift also contributes to this activity.

Round Island is inaptly named as it is actually a long, narrow island. The island is low-lying and subject to overwash during high-intensity storms. It is covered by saltwater marsh over approximately 20% of its surface. Coastal maritime forest, dominated by native slash pine and dense understory, and sand dunes and beaches characterize the rest of the island. The slash pine is not considered commercially valuable in view of the cost of cutting, loading on a barge and transporting to the mainland.

The tower on Round Island was constructed to warn shipping of the dangerous shoals which extend southerly from the island. It was no doubt useful as a beacon to mariners approaching Pascagoula Harbor as well as others navigating the coastal waterway located between Round Island and Horn Island to the southwest. The tower once housed a fourth order Fresnel lens whose focal plane stood 44 feet above sea level and was visible at a distance of 12 to 14 miles. At various times, sperm oil, rapeseed oil, lard and kerosene (mineral oil) were probably burned as illuminants. Around 1900, the Lighthouse Board began testing electricity and shortly thereafter began converting lights. However, since many lighthouses were not near power lines, the conversion was slow and many lighthouses had to await installation of generators. By the 1920's and 1930's the Lighthouse Board had converted the bulk of lighthouses to electricity (Holland 1972:22-23).

The Round Island Lighthouse was decommissioned as an operational unit on March 20, 1944. All personal property used in the operation at this station was removed immediately subsequent to decommissioning, including the lens in the tower. However, the U.S. Coast Guard at New Orleans maintained the light as a day beacon (non illuminated) until September 19, 1954 (Smith 1977). Finally, in 1955, the General Services Administration declared the property excess to the needs of the Coast Guard and determined that the land was suitable for return to the public domain for disposition under the general public land laws because it was not substantially changed in character by improvements.

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At the time that the U.S. Coast Guard relinquished authority to the Lighthouse Reservation in 1955, the Report Of Excess Real Property indicated the following improvements were present:

- 1) Tower, Lighthouse, Brick, Conical Shaped  
50 feet in height, 23 feet 2 inches in diameter at base
- 2) Building, Dwelling, Single Story Wood Frame  
1089 square feet floor space (33 feet by 33 feet)
- 3) Building, Fuel Storage, Brick  
80 square feet floor space (10 feet by 8 feet)
- 4) Building, Boat House, Wood Frame, on pilings  
at end of pier, 400 square feet
- 5) Pier, Wood Piling with Deck  
Size 6 feet by 340 feet

The following additional information is available on the improvements listed above:

- 1) Lighthouse, 1859, brick and concrete construction (reported to be in sound condition in June, 1955). Presently used as daymarker by vessels approaching Pascagoula harbor. The Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board in 1868 note that repairs had to be made to the gallery deck to render it water-tight due to the unequal expansion of the cast iron and the cement of which the deck was composed. The lantern and gallery are reported to have been cast in one; the gallery being found too small was widened by building out the brick cornice, and the portion outside of the iron gallery was cemented.
- 2) Lighthouse Keeper's Dwelling, 1859, Guttled by fire on February 24, 1951 and destroyed by subsequent fire on August 12, 1954. This structure was perched on five solid steel supports approximately 5 inches in diameter and 6 feet high.
- 3) Fuel Storage Building, 1891, Small brick structure used as storage for inflammables. Annual Reports state it was erected in 1891 and enlarged in 1902. Already reported in 1955 to have had bricks crumbling and mortar deteriorating.

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4) Boathouse, Wood Frame construction located on wood piling at the seaward extremity of pier. Condition as of February 9, 1955 was already reported structurally unsound due to deterioration. The clippings from the Annual Reports, which end abruptly around 1907, indicate that new boathouses were built with frequency - in 1879, 1900, 1902 and again in 1907. Based on this, one can assume a short life span for such structures presumably because of the severity and commonness of damaging storms. The boathouse constructed in 1902 measured 16 by 25 feet.

5) Pier. Piers and wharves were replaced with a frequency rivalling replacement of boathouses. The various piers extended from 300 to 468 feet and were 6 feet wide.

A topographical plan of the Round Island Lighthouse Station made in 1892 or 1893 indicated a grave location of a former keeper. The records formerly kept at the U.S. Coast Guard office in New Orleans shed no light on the identity of the keeper. Some of the keepers of the lighthouse were Andrew Steiner, Harry Brewer, a man named Bailey of Pascagoula and Sam Maddox.

The biggest threat to the lighthouse reservation was reported to be vandals, rather than age or the elements (Cipra 1976:18) and time has borne this out. Smith (1977:195) reported, "While the 60-foot tower still stands and the exterior looks very much as it has over the years, the interior has suffered by a fire which scorched the spiral steps. The once-substantial pier, the keeper's and the assistant keeper's dwelling houses, and a warehouse have been picked to pieces by vandals." In fact, the only remaining evidence of auxiliary structures are two brick cisterns and four of the five steel posts that once supported the keeper's dwelling.

## 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 checked="" 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 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 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 1859

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In evaluating the significance of the Round Island Lighthouse in accordance with the criteria for listing a property in the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60.4), it is apparent that Criteria C is the most applicable i.e., structures that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. It is also apparent that essentially all lighthouses embody these distinctive characteristics and could conceivably be eligible for the National Register under Criteria C.

The archaeologist responsible for the preparation of this nomination believes listing of all lighthouses in the country would be inappropriate. Nonetheless, a strong case can be made for the eligibility of the Round Island Lighthouse. According to David L. Cipra, "...the first U.S. lighthouses on the northern Gulf Coast were apparently copies of the proven New England brick towers. In fact much of the brick used on the Gulf was shipped from New England, despite the availability locally of high-quality clay." (1976:2) Cipra also points out that "The Service soon found that the massive weight of a brick tower was too much for the softer soil on the Gulf Coast. Of the 40 or more brick lighthouses constructed, at least 25 sank into the bottom or blew down, having no solid footing." (1976:2) In this respect the Round Island Lighthouse is significant as it represents one of the oldest standing structures of its type on the Gulf Coast. Furthermore, the tower's remarkable state of preservation enhances its significance, even though interior features are no longer extant.

Round Island was a part of the land granted by the Spanish Governor Grimarest to Francisco Krebs on December 13, 1783 and recorded in translated records in the probate court at Mobile, Alabama. The northern half of Round Island, totalling 60.85 acres was patented to Francisco Krebs and his heirs and assignees on January 28, 1913 as a result of a Congressional Act approved February 17, 1909 (An Act for the Relief of Francisco Krebs and his heirs and assigns; 35 Stat. 1447). This Act specifically excepted from patent the 49.94 acres reserved for lighthouse purposes by Executive Order of September 3, 1900 Interestingly, the latter order was signed and the lighthouse reservation formally established many years after the first lighthouse was built on Round Island in 1833. Normally, lands were withdrawn from the public domain and reserved for lighthouse purposes prior to actual construction of the lighthouses. The long-standing claims of Francisco Krebs and his heirs and assignees to Round Island may explain why a lighthouse reservation was not formally established many years earlier.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 6	3 4 74, 1, 0	3, 3 52 99, 5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

St. Stephens Meridian, Township 9 South, Range 6 West, Section 4, Lot 1

Latitude: 88 35'12"  
Longitude: 30 17'30"

State Plane Coordinates  
Miss, East Zone  
577,870 E.  
227,400 N.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N.A.			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Richard Brook, Archaeologist

ORGANIZATION: Bureau of Land Management      DATE: April, 1986

STREET & NUMBER: 350 South Pickett Street      TELEPHONE: (703) 274 0067

CITY OR TOWN: Alexandria      STATE: Virginia 22304

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

*Kenneth H. P. Pool*  
DEPUTY 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: *John G. Douglas* Preservation Officer

DATE: 7/17/86

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

*Amy Schlager*

DATE: 10/9/86

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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In 1831, Congress authorized \$7000 for construction of "...a lighthouse on St. Joseph's Island, or some other suitable place off Pascagoula Bay."

In 1833, the Lighthouse Board contracted with a Marshall Lincoln of Hingham, Massachusetts for construction of the Round Island Lighthouse. In the same year, a lighthouse was built on the southwest end of Round Island to warn shipping of the dangerous shoals which made out southerly from the island.

Excerpts from the Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board indicate that the Round Island Lighthouse was poorly constructed and badly placed. In 1854, the Lighthouse Board noted: "The tower at this place was badly built originally and is now liable to be undermined in a heavy storm." In the same year, the Lighthouse Board observed with respect to the Biloxi and Round Island Lighthouses that "Both here and at Round Island the towers, when originally built, should have been retired 100 yards from the edge of the bank where they would have been equally efficient and perfectly safe." Once again, in 1855, the Lighthouse Board reported that "The existing light at Round Island, Mississippi...is exhibited from an old and badly built tower, which is, besides, exposed to destruction from the sea in any easterly storm. The keeper's dwelling is old, not in good order, and is also being encroached by the sea." The Board went on to recommend "...that the whole establishment be rebuilt of bricks, in a position withdrawn from the present site - the tower and dwelling to be combined, as in the plan originally for East Pascagoula. I estimate for building tower and keeper's dwelling at Round Island, Mississippi, and providing it with a 5th order lens, \$8000."

In 1856, Congress authorized the \$8000 for the reconstruction of a lighthouse on Round Island, although it is evident that the Lighthouse Board's recommendations were not strictly followed. Although the tower was rebuilt from bricks in 1859, the tower and keeper's dwelling were not combined and apparently a fourth order lens was installed in the facility. As to whether the Lighthouse Board's recommendation that the tower be placed further from the edge of the bank was heeded, there is no indication, although it makes sense to assume it was considering the observed erosion problem.

Evidence, however, suggests that the Round Island Lighthouse was never a very important beacon. Cipra(1976:18), for example, notes "The Round Island Lighthouse either had few problems in its 150 years of existence, or it was never considered an important enough light to report on." (This writer can confirm the paucity of information and references to this light.) The installation of a fourth-order lens on the tower confirms indirectly the relative status of the Round Island Light, since the Lighthouse Board

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apparently used this lens only for harbor lights, reserving the more powerful higher order lenses (i.e. third-, second- and first-order lenses) for the important coastal lights (Holland 1972:12). Probably this lens marked the approach to Pascagoula Harbor. Other indirect evidence to suggest that the Round Island Light served a limited purpose is the height of the structure and the effective focal plane of the lens. Although the tower stands 50 feet tall, the three-foot high fourth order lens at Round Island had a focal plane of only 44 feet above sea level, visible at a distance of 12 to 14 miles (Cipra 1976:18). Holland(1972:105) aptly points out that the southern shore of the United States was for the most part a low, sandy coast without the cragginess of the New England shore. Because of this, the southern shore required tall light towers to put the light at such a height that the mariner could see it sufficiently far at sea, certainly taller than the Round Island Light. Coastal lights are estimated to have had an effective range of closer to 20 miles (Cipra 1976:6).

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Cipra, David L.

- 1976 Lighthouses and Lightships of the Northern Gulf of Mexico.  
Department of Transportation, United States Coast Guard.  
Available from the Public Affairs Office, Eighth Coast Guard  
District, New Orleans.

Higginbotham, Jay

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Holland, Francis Ross Jr.

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Pascagoula Woman's Club. Pages 110-115.

Smith, Donald V.

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Lewis Printing Service. Pascagoula, Mississippi.

Waddell, Carol

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Mississippi.

The following light district and light station clipping files in Record  
Group 26, National Archives:  
Round Island