

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 APR 8 1980  
DATE ENTERED MAY 19 1980

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Jones Point Lighthouse and District of Columbia South Cornerstone

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Jones Point Park

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Alexandria

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th (Herbert E. Harris, II)

STATE

Virginia

VICINITY OF

CODE

51

COUNTY

(in City)

CODE

510

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

(independent city)

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER: Survey marker

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, National Capital Region

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20242

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Alexandria

STATE

Virginia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1963

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jones Point Lighthouse is a simple 19-by-38-foot rectangular frame structure on the south shore of Jones Point in Alexandria. The building is one and one-half stories high atop a brick foundation. A cylindrical cast-iron lantern surrounded by a railing protrudes from the center of its gabled roof; it is approximately seven feet in diameter and rises some ten feet. The roof of the lantern is supported by angled struts forming trapezoidal <sup>glazed</sup> openings through which the beacon light shone.

The south facade of the building is broken by a central door with sidelights and two flanking windows originally containing six-over-six sash but now boarded over. The north elevation mirrors the south but without the door. A door on the right of the west elevation is reached via a full-width covered porch postdating the basic structure. Above the shed roof of the porch in the gable end are two windows (originally four-over-four, now boarded) lighting the second floor; these windows are repeated on the otherwise-unbroken east elevation. The thin corner pilasters, eaves, and hood over the front (south) door are of a simple Greek Revival character. The building is sided with clapboard, most of which was replaced in the 1960s. The wooden exterior shutters originally on the first-floor windows are absent. Basement windows and an areaway to the basement on the north side have been bricked in.

On the interior, each floor contained a central stair hall flanked by two square rooms. A straight stairway ran from the first floor to the basement, a 180° winder stair ran between the first and second floors, and a ship's ladder from the second floor hall gave access to the lantern. Interior chimneys at either end of the building served first-floor fireplaces. The chimneys are now gone, and little else remains on the interior beyond some flooring and open stud partitions.

The lantern originally contained a fixed fifth order Fresnel lens illuminated by an oil lamp. By 1866 the lamp had been converted to gas. It was reconverted to oil in 1900 and fitted with a red chimney. In 1919 an automatic flashing white light of 390 candlepower fueled by acetylene gas replaced the manually tended light. The lighthouse operated in this manner until 1926, when a 200-candlepower flashing acetylene light on a 60-foot steel skeleton tower 100 yards to the east put it out of service. No lamp or lens remains in the lighthouse today, nor is the replacement tower extant.

The lighthouse sits on filled ground bordered by a stone retaining wall about five feet high and 30 by 80 feet in plan. A well and several small frame outbuildings, one containing a privy, formerly stood to the west of the lighthouse, and a wooden picket fence atop the retaining wall enclosed the grounds. Of these features only the retaining wall stands.

A recess in the retaining wall at the river's edge aligned with the front door of the lighthouse and about 15 feet from it contains the historic south cornerstone of the District of Columbia. The stone ceremonially installed in 1791 was temporary and was replaced in 1794 with a permanent stone inscribed "The Beginning of the Territory of Columbia." This stone was covered when the retaining wall was built in

(continued)  
(Sheet #1)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1791-1926

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The south cornerstone of the District of Columbia is significant as marking the beginning point of the 1791 survey that carved this unique Federal jurisdiction from the states of Virginia and Maryland. Along with the other surviving stones that were set each mile around the District's 40-mile perimeter, this is one of the oldest artifacts related to the Nation's Capital. The Jones Point Lighthouse, built adjacent to the south cornerstone in 1855, aided Potomac River shipping for 70 years and is significant in illustrating Federal concern for the improvement of inland navigation in the 19th century.

The Residence Act of July 16, 1790, as amended March 3, 1791, authorized President George Washington to select a 100-square-mile site for the national capital at some point on the Potomac River between Alexandria, Virginia, and Williamsport, Maryland. Washington selected the southernmost location within these limits. Acting upon instructions from Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Major Andrew Ellicott of Philadelphia began surveying the ten mile square on February 12, 1791. Ellicott, a prominent professional surveyor and member of the American Philosophical Society, hired Benjamin Banneker, a free black astronomer and mathematician from Maryland, to make the astronomical observations and calculations necessary to establish the location of the south corner of the square at Jones Point. From here Ellicott surveyed ten-mile lines in sequence northwesterly, northeasterly, southeasterly, and southwesterly to the point of beginning, thus forming the 100-square-mile District of Columbia.

The Alexandria Masonic Lodge placed a stone at the south corner on April 15, 1791, in ceremonies attended by Ellicott, federal district commissioners Daniel Carroll and David Stuart, and other dignitaries. Other stones were subsequently placed at approximately one-mile intervals along the District boundary with Virginia in 1791 and along the District-Maryland line in 1792. In 1794 a permanent south cornerstone replaced that laid originally; only a portion of its inscription, "The Beginning of the Territory of Columbia," remains legible today. (Most of the other original stones survive in varying states of preservation.)

In 1846 the portion of the District of Columbia south and west of the Potomac, including Jones Point, was retroceded to Virginia. As a result, the Jones Point stone no longer marks a corner of the District but is a point on the Maryland-Virginia line along the Virginia bank of the river.

(continued)  
(Sheet #2)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Wilhelmus B. Bryan. A History of the National Capital, Vol. I. New York: Macmillan, 1914.
- Steven Lewis. "Jones Point Lighthouse Historic Structures Report, Historical Data." Typescript. Washington: National Park Service Div. of Historical Studies, 1966.
- Donald B. Myer. "Jones Point Lighthouse." Historic American Buildings Survey type-script narrative. Washington: National Park Service, 1963.

(see Continuation Sheet 2)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the base of the retaining wall recess enclosing the south cornerstone, westerly along the base of the retaining wall 100 feet; thence northerly 200 feet; thence easterly 200 feet; thence southerly 200 feet; thence westerly 100 feet to the point of beginning.

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

Barry Mackintosh, Regional Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Capital Region, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

DATE

January 24, 1980

TELEPHONE

(202) 426-6660

STATE

D.C. 20242

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Tucker Hill, Executive Director

Vs. Historic Landmarks Commission and

[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

Assistant Director, Cultural Resources

DATE

3-28-80

MAR 18 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

5-19-80

ATTEST: [Signature]  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
Regional Coordinator

[Signature] KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
DATE 5-8-80

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 7

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1861, six years after the lighthouse was erected, and was not reexposed until 1912 when the present concrete recess was inserted in the wall. Badly worn but bearing what appears to be the remnants of the quoted inscription, the stone stands today in its apparent original location. It is about a foot square and rises about three feet above ground. When the Potomac rises to the edge of and occasionally into the recess at high tide, the stone is viewable from land only through a small hole in the concrete cover above it. A semicircular iron picket fence installed over the vertical recess opening about 1916 is no longer present.

A bronze plaque honoring Margaret Brent, who owned this land in the early 17th century and was the first woman landholder in Virginia, was placed on the ground west of the lighthouse by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1979.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 8

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The Jones Point Lighthouse protected Potomac shipping to and from the ports of Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington from 1856 to 1926. Federal involvement in the improvement of inland navigation began under President James Monroe in 1823 and increased significantly with congressional establishment of the Light-House Board in 1852. The Jones Point Lighthouse was one of many built by this agency in the 1850s along the major navigable rivers in the country. This installation was doubtless influenced by the presence of the Washington Navy Yard, subsequently active during the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I.

The Jones Point light was tended by a keeper living in the lighthouse building until 1919, when an automatic beacon was installed in the lantern. The beacon was relocated to a tower on the extended east corner of Jones Point in 1926, rendering the lighthouse obsolete. The replacement light was removed in the 1940s, ending the era of navigation lights on Jones Point.

In 1912, prodded by the Columbia Historical Society and the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Army Corps of Engineers uncovered the south cornerstone from the lighthouse retaining wall in which it had been buried since 1861 and built a concrete recess in which the stone could be viewed. On April 15, 1921, a program marking the 130th anniversary of the District of Columbia was held at the site. When the lighthouse reservation was declared surplus Federal property in 1926, an act of Congress transferred it to the Mount Vernon Chapter of the D.A.R. with the understanding that the chapter would maintain the site for historical purposes. The National Park Service acquired the area from the D.A.R. in 1964 as a part of Jones Point Park, administered by the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

ITEM NUMBER 9 (continued)

National Capital Planning Commission. Boundary Markers of the Nation's Capital.  
Washington: National Capital Planning Commission, 1976.