1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Montauk Point Lighthouse

Other Name/Site Number:

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior March 2, 2012

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 2000 Montauk Highway Not for publication:

City/Town: Montauk Vicinity:

State: New York County: Suffolk Code: 103 Zip Code: 11954

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):
District: X
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing		**Noncontributing**	
buildings	1	buildings	5
sites	0	sites	0
structures	0	structures	2
objects	0	objects	1
Total	1	Total	8

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Transportation Sub: water related

Current: Recreation and Culture Sub: museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Other: Lighthouse

Materials:
Foundation: Sandstone
Walls: Sandstone and brick
Roof: Iron lantern with copper dome
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Among extant seacoast lighthouses, the Montauk Point Lighthouse was the most important for the nation's foreign trade during the first eight decades of the United States lighthouse service. This was altogether the most important landfall light for the ships bound for New York from Europe during the period when New York's importation of European manufactured goods was the major component of American foreign trade. As such, the Montauk Point Lighthouse meets NHL Criterion 1.

The Montauk Point Lighthouse stands at the eastern tip of Long Island's South Fork looking out across the Atlantic Ocean. The port of New York is 125 miles to the west along Long Island's south shore. The lighthouse property of 3.6 acres is surrounded by Montauk Point State Park and the entire area retains its natural setting. The lighthouse stands on top of a headland known as Turtle Hill at an elevation of 71 feet. The sandstone lighthouse tower constructed in 1796 was 80 feet tall. The tower was renovated in 1860 to meet the new standard for a first-order seacoast light when a watch room, service room, and first-order lantern were added, increasing the height by fourteen feet. A new brick oil house attached to the lighthouse tower and a new frame keeper's dwelling attached to the oil house were also added in 1860 to centralize all functions at the top of Turtle Hill. The complex consisting of the interconnected lighthouse tower (1796 and 1860), keeper's dwelling (1860), and oil house (1860) is the contributing resource with national significance for the period 1797 to 1870. The noncontributing buildings, structures, and object on the property are: a brick building at the foot of Turtle Hill which was built in 1838 as part of a keeper's dwelling and was made into a barn in 1869 and into a garage in 1934; the 1897 brick fog signal house on the top of the hill; a small brick oil house built in 1904 as part of the 1902 to 1906 experimental naval wireless station; a six-story concrete fire control station built at the edge of the bluff in 1942 associated with the defense of Long Island Sound during World War II; a stone revetment at the base of the bluff built in 1945 and rebuilt in the 1990s; a small wood bandstand dating from 1996; a memorial sculpture placed on the site in 1999; and the 2004 Conway Visitor Center.

Evolution of the Montauk Point Lighthouse Property

Early in 1796 the United States purchased the high headland at the tip of Montauk Point known as Turtle Hill. John McComb Jr. began building the new lighthouse in May of that year and completed construction in November. McComb built the lighthouse tower on the top of Turtle Hill, an oil vault (not extant) set into the west slope of the hill, and a keeper's dwelling (not extant) at the foot of the hill to the west.[1]

The only changes to the property from 1796 to 1860, when the station was renovated by the Light-House Board, were associated with the lives of the lighthouse keepers. A small barn (not extant) was constructed about 1806 for the keeper's horse and to support his efforts at farming about four acres of the reservation. In 1838, a second house was built adjoining the 1796 house creating a double keeper's dwelling. During the summer, this large dwelling was a popular boarding house contributing to the lighthouse keeper's income.

The 1850s and 1860s was a period of significant change for all of the nation's lighthouses as the new administration of the Light-House Board brought stations up to their new standards. The Light-House Board renovated the Montauk Point Lighthouse to meet the new standard for first-order seacoast lighthouses. A watch room, service room, and first-order lantern were added to the top of the 1796 lighthouse tower. A new double keeper's dwelling and a new oil house were built on the top of Turtle Hill and connected to the lighthouse

[1] Information from historic structures reports by Robert J. Hefner on file with the Montauk Historical Society: "Montauk Point Light Station: Keeper's Dwelling," 1988; "Montauk Point Light Station: Tower, Oil House and Passage," 1989; and "Montauk Point Light Station: 1838 Keeper's Dwelling," 1994.

tower. With the 1860 renovation, all the important functions of the light station were centralized in the complex on top of Turtle Hill. The 1796 half of the former keeper's dwelling was demolished.

Minor structures, no longer standing, associated with the lives of the keepers were added to the property in the 1860s and 1870s: a privy, smoke house, and ice house. The 1806 barn was destroyed by a hurricane in 1869 and the 1838 half of the old keeper's dwelling was renovated to become the new barn at the station the same year.

The first fog signal was established at Montauk Point in 1873. The machinery and trumpet were contained in a fog signal house (not extant) built at the edge of the bluff east of the lighthouse tower. A new fog signal house for a new type of siren was constructed east of the tower in 1897. This later fog signal house remains on the property.

The installation of electricity and indoor plumbing in the 1930s allowed the old privy, smoke house, and ice house to be removed. Montauk Point Parkway, constructed in 1931, brought a paved roadway to the lighthouse. In 1934, a concrete driveway extended the pavement up Turtle Hill to the 1860 keeper's dwelling and to the lighthouse tower. A spur of the 1934 driveway ran to the 1838 half of the old keeper's dwelling at the foot of Turtle Hill. This structure, which had been the station's barn since 1869, was converted into a garage in 1937.

A military presence at the Montauk Point Lighthouse began during the Spanish-American War when the Naval Signal Corps established a station at Montauk Point in 1898. Signal flags run up a flagstaff (not extant) were part of a communications system extending along the coast. The station was discontinued later the same year when the war ended. In 1902, a Naval Wireless Telegraph Station was established at the lighthouse as part of a chain of coastal stations to test this new technology. A 180-foot-tall mast (not extant), an oil house, and a dwelling (not extant) for the navy personnel were constructed on top of the ridge north of the lighthouse. This radio operation was discontinued in 1906. The small oil house is all that remains of the wireless station. In 1942, a six-story fire control station was built east of the lighthouse to serve as the principal observation post of the army's fortifications for the Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound during World War II. Observation activities were discontinued following the war, but the 1942 structure remains at the lighthouse property today.

The lighthouse reservation has diminished in size since 1796. The area of the original lighthouse reservation of about ten acres is now 7.34 acres due to erosion of the bluff. In 1935, the lighthouse reservation was divided into three parcels, two of which were transferred to New York State to become part of Montauk Point State Park, which was established in 1924. New York State received a 1.54-acre parcel south of the lighthouse and another 2.19-acre parcel north of the lighthouse. These two parcels, now part of Montauk Point State Park, remain in their natural state. The center parcel of 3.61 acres was retained by the federal government as the Montauk Point Lighthouse reservation and is now owned by the Montauk Historical Society. Erosion is now held in check by a stone revetment at the base of the bluff (installed ca. 1945 and reconstructed in the 1990s) and planted terraces and a drainage system on the face of the bluff.

The last chapter in the evolution of the Montauk Point Lighthouse property began in 1987 when the light was fully automated and the U.S. Coast Guard removed all personnel. That year marks the beginning of the stewardship by the Montauk Historical Society which began operating the property as a historic site museum. The lighthouse property was transferred from the federal government to the Montauk Historical Society in 1996. The historical society has maintained all the structures on the property and has placed exhibits within the 1860 keeper's dwelling and oil house. In 2004, the Montauk Historical Society constructed the Conway Visitor Center, which was designed and sited to have minimal impact on the setting of the historic buildings.

Contributing Resource

The lighthouse tower (1796 and 1860), keeper's dwelling (1860), and oil house (1860) are interconnected, forming one resource.

Lighthouse Tower (1796 and 1860)

The lighthouse stands at the top of Turtle Hill, the rise at the very tip of Montauk Point. This distinctive headland had been the favored landfall for ships coming in from the Atlantic before the lighthouse was built. It was the logical location for the new lighthouse to guide ships during the night. The small plateau on top of Turtle Hill has an elevation of 71 feet. This elevation is a critical feature allowing the 80-foot tower built on Turtle Hill in 1796 to carry a light at an elevation of 156 feet above sea level, equal to the height of the most effective seacoast lighthouses in the world, at that time.

The lighthouse tower's sandstone rubble foundation is topped with a water table course of sandstone ashlar. Originally the walls of the octagonal tower rose 78 feet from the water table, giving the 1796 tower a total height of 80 feet. The 1796 tower is faced with brown sandstone ashlar. The blocks are 8 inches high and vary in length from 18 inches to 44 inches. The face of each block is dressed to the pitch of the tower walls and the grooves of the hammer finish remain visible. The 1796 tower tapers from a diameter of 27 feet at the water table to a diameter of 16′ 6″ at the original (80 foot) top of the tower. The thickness of the walls decreases from six feet at the water table to three feet at the top of the original tower. The arched opening to the tower is in the south wall. Four window openings are in the west face of the tower and three window openings are in the east face. The interior of the tower was divided into seven levels by floors laid on wood girders set into the masonry. Each level was illuminated by one of seven windows. A wood stairway connected each level and provided access to the iron lantern mounted on top of the tower.

In 1860, the Montauk Point Lighthouse was renovated to meet the Light-House Board's new standard of a first-order seacoast lighthouse. A watch room and a service room were constructed on top of the 1796 tower and a first-order balcony and lantern were installed. A brick wall rises from the top of the 1796 tower to the eight-foot height of the watch room within. This wall, referred to by the Light-House Board as the cornice wall, is three-feet thick where it bears on the sandstone and tapers in at the pitch of the 1796 tower. The cornice wall is decorated with a recessed panel in each face of the octagon. The north and south panels contain porthole windows that illuminate the watch room. The cornice wall supports the cast-iron lantern deck on the interior and the cast-iron main balcony around the exterior of the tower. The balcony overhang bears on eight cast-iron brackets bolted through the cornice wall at each corner. A brick cylindrical wall, called the parapet wall, rises six feet from the lantern deck and balcony to the lantern and contains the service room. A doorway leads from the service room out to the main balcony. The 1860 first-order lantern rises from the brick parapet wall. The lantern is an eighteen-sided structure with a wrought iron frame, glazed uprights and a domical room sheathed with copper. The lantern has a diameter of 12 feet and is 16 feet tall. The addition of the cornice wall and parapet wall raised the height of the masonry tower from 80 feet to 94 feet and increased the 156-foot focal-plane elevation of the 1796 tower to 169 feet.

In 1860, the tower interior was made fireproof with removal of the 1796 wood floors and wood stairway and the installation of a fire-proof brick stairwell and cast iron spiral stairway. The wood window sash of five windows were replaced by iron window sash and two of the original window openings were bricked over.

A first-order Fresnel lens was placed in the new lantern in 1860. The lens, manufactured by Henry LePaute in Paris, consisted of a fixed lens with a revolving lens panel which interrupted the steady light with a bright flash every two minutes. In 1903, the first-order lens was replaced by a revolving 3.5 order bivalve lens that produced

a flashing light. The 1903 lens was replaced in 1987 by an automated DCB 224. The 1903 lens is presently on display in the oil house. The current optic is a VRB-25 marine rotating beacon.

The only significant change to the tower made since 1860 is the brown band first painted midway up the tower in 1900 to make it more distinguishable as a daymark.

Keeper's Dwelling (1860) and Oil House (1860)

The Light-House Board's 1860 renovation of the Montauk Point Lighthouse included building a new oil house adjacent to the tower and a new keeper's dwelling with a passage connecting the two. The tower, the oil house and the dwelling were interconnected to encourage organization and efficiency at the light station.

The keeper's dwelling and oil house contribute to the national significance of the Montauk Point Lighthouse as requisite components of the 1860 renovation by which the lighthouse met all of the Light-House Board's new standards for a first-order seacoast lighthouse. The dwelling, which housed the three keepers, the oil house, and their interconnected configuration, were essential to the operation of a first-order lighthouse.

The one-story, brick oil house is built against the south wall of the lighthouse tower, enclosing the tower entrance. The oil house is 20 feet across and extends 24 feet south from the tower. A shingled gable roof runs on a north-south axis, intersecting with the tower wall. The east, south, and west façades each have a single window fitted with six-over-six light, double-hung sash. A brick wall divides the oil house into two rooms: the oil room to the north adjacent to the tower and the workroom to the south. An opening in the north wall of the oil room leads to the tower stairwell. The oil room, where the lamp oil was stored, was of fireproof construction with brick walls and an encaustic tile floor.

A one-story, gable-roofed, frame passage extends from the west wall of the oil house to connect with the keeper's dwelling. The passage is 19 feet long and 14 feet wide. The walls and roof are shingled. Equipment and supplies for maintaining the station were brought in through a double doorway in the north wall.

The Light-House Board required that a first-order lighthouse be manned by a keeper and two assistant keepers and specified a double dwelling to house them. The 1860 keeper's dwelling at Montauk Point follows the Board's standard plan for a *Double Dwelling for Keepers of First Order Lights*.[2] The dwelling is situated to the west of the lighthouse tower with the front wall facing west. The keeper's dwelling is a two-story, gable-roofed, frame building. The original part of the dwelling measures 28′ x 48′ in plan and has a center wall dividing it into two equal side-hall apartments, which in plan are mirror images of each other. The primary keeper occupied the south half and the two assistant keepers each occupied a floor of the north half. The dwelling was extended 14 feet to the north in 1912 to provide additional rooms for the assistant keepers, giving the dwelling its present dimensions of 28′ x 62′. A hip-roofed front porch shelters the side-by-side center entrances. The 1860 dwelling had a balanced six-bay front façade; the north half is now four bays wide because of the 1912 addition. The exterior walls, which were originally clapboard, were shingled in 1912. The roof is shingled as it was originally. Windows have six-over-six light, double-hung sash. The original room configuration of the 1860 dwelling remains intact. Hallways from the front doorways contain the stairways and have back doorways opening into the passage leading to the oil house and tower. Adjacent to the hallways are a front parlor and slightly smaller room to the rear. The north apartment has two additional small rooms in the 1912 addition. The plan of the second floor is identical to that of the first except that a small room is at the west end of the hallway. The only changes to the floor plan are that two doorways (between the front and rear rooms of the north apartment on both floors) were widened by three feet and one doorway (to the small room in the north hall) was relocated in

[2] U.S. Light-House Establishment, *Book of Lithographs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), plate 85V.

1962. The interior retains many original features including the stairways, baseboard moldings, window and door architraves, mantels, doors, and plaster walls.

Noncontributing Resources[3]

Keeper's Dwelling (1838)

This one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, brick building measures 38′ x 22′ in plan. The brick walls rise fourteen feet, providing a three-foot knee wall at the second-floor level.

This structure was built as part of a keeper's dwelling in 1838, transformed into a barn in 1869, and made into a garage in 1937. The building had a different physical appearance at each stage. When built in 1838, it was intended as a stand-alone house, but it was constructed directly adjoining the 1796 dwelling at the foot of Turtle Hill and became an addition to it. The side-by-side houses were referred to as a "double dwelling." The south wall contained the front door flanked on either side by a window, the east and west gable walls each had a single window, and the north wall, which adjoined the 1796 dwelling, had two doorways opening into the older house. The gable end walls incorporated a chimney at each end and extended as parapet walls above the slate roof. The south roof slope had three dormers and two dormers were on the north roof slope. The first floor had a center hall with one room to the east and one to the west. Four rooms were on the second floor.

When the new keeper's dwelling was constructed in 1860 the older dwelling was abandoned. The 1796 frame dwelling was demolished. The 1838 brick dwelling was made into a barn and stable in 1869 by removing the first-floor interior partitions and constructing a barn doorway in the center of the north wall. In 1897, the roof slates, roof frame, and parapets were removed and a new roof was built and covered with wood shingles. In 1937, the barn was made into a garage. Two garage doorways were cut into the north wall on either side of the center barn doorway, a concrete floor was poured, and the concrete driveway was extended to the building.

Today the building retains elements from each of its three uses. The original brick walls remain intact with the four original window openings. The front doorway opening in the south wall is intact, but filled in. Original interior features include the two end fireplaces and the second-floor frame and flooring. The 1869 arched barn doorway is intact but is now fitted with an overhead garage door as are the flanking 1937 garage doorways. With the concrete roadway leading to the garage, the concrete floor and the garage doors, this building reflects its use after 1937, but it does not retain integrity to the period of national significance.

Fog Signal House (1897)

This one-story, hip-roofed, brick building was constructed in 1897 to house the two oil engines and the two air compressors for the first-class siren fog signal established at Montauk Point that year. The building, which measures 21′ x 31′ in plan, contains one open room. The station's fog signal apparatus has been housed here ever since. In 1987, equipment for the automation of the light and fog signal was installed in this building. This equipment required a sealed environment and at that time the window sash were removed and the windows sealed. Existing doors were also removed and new doors installed. The historic windows and doors are stored at the site.

[3] For NHL purposes, resources are judged to be noncontributing if they were not present during the period of national significance, did not relate to the documented national significance, or no longer retain a high degree of integrity.

Oil House for the Naval Wireless Telegraph Station (1904)

This small brick building measures 8′ x 10′ in plan and is 12 feet high to the ridge of the gable roof. There is a single door in the south gable wall. This was constructed to store the fuel for the generator that powered the naval wireless telegraph station at Montauk Point. The building stands on the ridge north of the lighthouse tower near the location of the 180-foot-tall wireless telegraph mast that was raised in 1902. The Montauk Point Naval Wireless Station was one of the early experimental stations intended to establish a coast-wise chain of wireless telegraphy. The station west of Montauk Point was located at the Navesink Light Station in New Jersey, and the station to the northeast was at Newport, Rhode Island. The Montauk Point and Navesink stations were discontinued in 1906 and replaced with a new naval wireless telegraph station on Fire Island.

Fire Control Station (1942)

The Fire Control Station is a six-story observation tower of splinter-proof concrete that is 51 feet tall and 13 feet by 15 feet in plan. The upper three stories are observation rooms which each have a band of narrow windows that wrap around the tower. The windows are at the axis of the azimuth observing instrument which was mounted at the center of each observing room. The lower three floors are illuminated by small single windows. This was one of eighty-two fire control stations of the Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound which was active during the Second World War. The system included fortifications at Montauk Point, Fishers Island and Plum Island in New York and at Point Judith and Sakonnet Point in Rhode Island. The guns of these fortifications were intended to protect all entrances to Long Island Sound and Narragansett Bay. Observers in the fire control stations took bearings on targets which were relayed to the plotting rooms of the batteries and used in directing fire from the guns. The Montauk Point fire control station directed fire from batteries at Camp Hero at Montauk Point and from Fort H. G. Wright on Fishers Island. This station was also Harbor Entrance Observation Post 1, the most important surveillance station in the HDLIS.

Stone Revetment (ca. 1945–1990s)

About 1945, the US Army Corps of Engineers installed a stone revetment at the base of the bluff in an attempt to slow erosion. In the 1990s, a new boulder sea wall was built over the earlier revetment. The large boulders, averaging about 2′ x 4′ x 4′ in size, are arranged in two tiers rising about twenty feet above high tide to stabilize the toe of the bluff. (See Photograph 1) Only a small area of the stone revetment falls within the historic district, at the northeast and southeast corners of the boundary.

Bandstand (1996)

This is a low wood platform measuring 16′ x 25′ in plan and standing about one foot above grade. The bandstand, built for events marking the bicentennial of the lighthouse, stands in a depression forming a natural amphitheater north of the lighthouse tower.

Lost at Sea Memorial (1999)

This bronze sculpture of a man in a small boat sits atop a granite base. The memorial stands at the edge of the bluff east of the lighthouse tower.

Conway Visitor Center (2004)

This one-story visitor center was constructed in 2004 at the northwest corner of the property where the sloping topography allowed it to be set into the grade to minimize its impact on the setting of the lighthouse. The building has a flat roof and stucco walls. The visitor center has a floor area of 1400 square feet.

Previously Existing Resources

Keeper's Dwelling (1796)

John McComb designed and constructed a two-story, frame dwelling for the lighthouse keeper west of the lighthouse at the foot of Turtle Hill. The house measured 16′ x 34′ in plan and had two rooms on the first floor divided by the center chimney. In 1838, a brick house was built adjacent to the south wall of the 1796 house creating a double keeper's dwelling. The 1796 dwelling was demolished in 1860 when the new keeper's dwelling was built on top of Turtle Hill.

Oil Vault (1796)

John McComb constructed an oil vault in 1796 for storing the casks of lamp oil. The stone vault with a wood-frame roof was set into the slope of Turtle Hill to the south and west of the lighthouse tower. The oil vault was abandoned when the new oil house was constructed in 1860, and it was demolished in 1911.

Barn (ca. 1806)

A wood-frame barn and stable, measuring 20′ x 24′ in plan, was built about 1806 just west of the 1796 keeper's dwelling. This barn was destroyed by a hurricane in 1869.

Privy (ca. 1860)

A privy appears on the 1868 property survey. This small frame building was demolished after the station was equipped with electricity and indoor plumbing in the 1930s.

Fog Signal House (1873)

This frame, gable-roofed building was constructed in 1873 to house the two coal-fired engines, air compressor, and Daboll trumpet for the first fog signal at Montauk Point. The building measured 15′ x 30′ in plan and had a 36-foot-tall chimney centered on the west wall. A shed for storing coal was located just to the south. This fog signal house was discontinued when a new fog signal house was built in 1897. This building and the coal shed were demolished in 1911.

Oil House (1890)

This small oil house, measuring 10′ x 15′ in plan, was constructed in 1890 to store the galvanized cans containing mineral oil, which was the new lamp fuel. The frame building was taken down in the 1950s after the light was electrified.

Naval Signal Corps Flagstaff (1898)

During the Spanish-American War a Naval Signal Corp station was established at Montauk Point. A 150-foot-tall flagstaff was set up at the eastern edge of the bluff. The navy personnel were lodged in the 1873 fog signal house. The signal station was discontinued at the close of the war and the flagstaff was taken down.

Naval Wireless Telegraph Station Mast and Dwelling (1902)

The navy established a wireless telegraph station at Montauk Point in 1902 which was discontinued in 1906. A 180-foot-tall mast for transmitting the signal was set up in 1902 and taken down in 1912. A two-story dwelling

for navy personnel operating the station was built near the mast in 1902 and taken down in 1908. The wireless station's 1904 oil house still stands.

Radio Beacon Antenna Tower (1940)

A 60-foot-tall skeleton tower was constructed just south of the 1860 keeper's dwelling in 1940. This tower transmitted a radio beacon signal that allowed ships equipped with direction finders to determine their position. The radio beacon was active until at least 1977. The tower was taken down in the 1980s.

Integrity of Contributing Resource

The Montauk Point Lighthouse retains a high degree of integrity to convey its associations with the period of national significance from 1797 to 1870, despite the loss of some structures from that period and the construction of post-1870 structures. The location at the eastern tip of Long Island; the intact setting on the distinct headland of Turtle Hill with the Atlantic to the east; and the intact building complex which consists of the lighthouse tower, oil house, and keeper's dwelling, are the features essential to the property's integrity.

The Montauk Point Lighthouse has a high degree of integrity of location and setting. The location, 125 miles east of New York Port at the end of Long Island looking eastward over the Atlantic, conveys the lighthouse's function as a landfall light for ships coming in from the ocean bound for New York. Turtle Hill, on which the lighthouse stands, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south and east, are the setting for the lighthouse. The high elevation of Turtle Hill made this an effective seacoast lighthouse from the time it first carried a light in 1797. The ocean-facing bluff, which has receded approximately 200 feet since 1797 due to erosion, remains the impressive headland it always was.[4] The lighthouse property is surrounded by the 724-acre Montauk Point State Park, which helps maintain the natural setting of Montauk Point. There is an open view to the Atlantic Ocean from the top of Turtle Hill. The buildings and structures added to the property after the period of national significance do not appreciably detract from the setting.[5] The very small oil house (1904), the stone revetment (ca. 1945–1990s) at the foot of the bluff, the bandstand (1996) in a depression well north of the tower, and the Lost at Sea Memorial sculpture (1999), have little impact on the setting. The fog signal house (1897) and fire control station (1942) on the top of Turtle Hill are the most visible of the later structures. These buildings functioned to send a signal to or to observe ships at sea and therefore, although noncontributing, reinforce the historic role of this property in directing ships coming in from the Atlantic. The Conway Visitor Center (2004) was built to meet current administrative and interpretive needs. Its low design and placement in a depression at the northwestern corner of the reservation minimize its impact on the historic district.

The complex of the lighthouse tower (1796 and 1860), keeper's dwelling (1860), and oil house (1860) retain a high degree of integrity of design, materials and workmanship. The 1796 octagonal sandstone tower remains intact.[6] The original octagonal tower is the dominant feature of the property and the hand-wrought hammered finish of its large sandstone blocks conveys its eighteenth-century construction period. The 1860 changes, that occurred within the period of national significance and kept the status of the Montauk Point Lighthouse as a first-class seacoast light intact, are at the top of the tower and are all related to the upgrade in technology

[4] The erosion-control measures now in place have stabilized the bluff. Further erosion would only be caused by an extreme storm.

[5] Two later structures are on the southern parcel of the original lighthouse reservation that is now part of Montauk Point State Park. A "manhole" type fire control station (1942), once set into the bluff, is now lying on the beach. A small concrete guard house (1942) is extant. These are associated with a different historic context.

[6] All existing lighthouses that were renovated by the Light-House Board to meet their new standards were treated in similar ways. Wood interiors and windows were removed and replaced with brick stairwells, cast iron stairs, and iron window sash. Cast-iron lantern decks and new lanterns were installed on top of the towers. Watch rooms and service rooms were built on top of many existing towers. Because of these changes, all extant American lighthouses built before 1850 retain the original masonry walls but no other original fabric.

associated with installation of the first order lens; the new lantern for the lens; the watch room and service room for maintaining the lamp and lens; and the balcony for maintaining the lantern. Nearly all features of the 1860 renovation remain intact including the brick cornice wall, brick parapet wall, cast-iron main balcony, watch-room, service room, wrought-iron lantern, brick stairwell, cast-iron stairway and iron window sash. The only alterations to the lighthouse tower since 1860 are the brown band first painted on the tower in 1900, replacement of the main balcony railing with a pipe railing in 1930, and replacement of the 1930 pipe railing with a reconstruction of the original railing in 1990. Other than these changes, the lighthouse tower remains today as it was renovated by the Light-House Board in 1860. The 1860 oil house and keeper's dwelling connected to the lighthouse tower remain much as they were originally. The keeper's dwelling retains its exterior form and configuration except for the 14-foot extension to the north that dates from 1912. The walls, which were originally clapboard, were shingled in 1912 and remain shingled today. Shingles, rather than clapboards, were the locally preferred material for wood buildings at exposed sites. The "double" form of the keeper's dwelling and the interior floor plan, which convey its function, are key to the integrity of the keeper's dwelling. The floor plan and interior convey how the three keepers lived. The floor plan of the south apartment, which was the primary keeper's dwelling, is completely intact as are the interior finishes such as the woodwork and plaster walls. The north apartment, which housed the two assistant keepers, was renovated in 1962 with some minor changes to the floor plan (widening two doorways and relocating a door on the second floor) and removal of some original finishes. An interior restoration in 1990 included replacing woodwork removed in 1962 with accurate replicas of the original woodwork. The oil house remains as it was built in 1860 retaining all interior and exterior features. The first floor of the keepers' dwelling and oil house is now a museum with displays and exhibits.

The essential features of the design of the station as a whole from the period of national significance remain intact, despite the loss of some structures built before 1870. The complex, consisting of the lighthouse tower (1796 and 1860), keeper's dwelling (1860) and oil house (1860) at the top of Turtle Hill, contained the essential functions of the station as updated in 1860. Use of the keeper's dwelling (1796), keeper's dwelling (1838), and oil house (1796), which had previously supported the operation of the lighthouse, was discontinued in 1860. The first two buildings were removed and the keeper's dwelling (1838) has lost integrity as it was altered for new uses. These losses do not impact the integrity of design of this station as it evolved to maintain its first-class status during the period of national significance. The barn (ca. 1806) and privy (ca. 1860), which no longer exist, had minor functions and were not essential features of the design of the lighthouse station.[7]

The Montauk Point Lighthouse property has a high degree of integrity of association and feeling.

The dominant impression of the 1796 sandstone tower with its hand-wrought finish and the view over the Atlantic from the high elevation of Turtle Hill all clearly convey the feeling and associations of the property as a landfall light for ships coming in from the ocean from 1797 to 1870. These feelings and associations are especially strong from within the 1860 lantern looking out across the Atlantic below and are enhanced by the optic that continues to beam out a light. The keeper's dwelling (1860) and oil house (1860) convey a sense of the operation of this first-order seacoast lighthouse later in the period of national significance. Finally, the view of the lighthouse tower on top of the Turtle Hill headland on the approach from the sea remains today essentially as it was during the period of national significance and clearly conveys a sense of the historic role of the Montauk Point Lighthouse.

[7] The smoke house (ca. 1860), ice house (1871), and boat house (1854), which no longer exist, stood on land that is outside the boundary of this nomination. The first two were minor structures and the U.S. Life-Saving Service boat house was associated with a different historic context.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A X B__ C__ D__
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__
NHL Criteria:	1
NHL Theme(s):	V. Developing the American Economy 3. transportation and communication 6. exchange and trade
Areas of Significance:	Maritime History Commerce Transportation
Period(s) of Significance:	1797 to 1870
Significant Dates:	1797, 1860
Significant Person(s):	N/A
Cultural Affiliation:	N/A
Architect/Builder:	McComb, John Jr. Smith, Captain William F. (Engineer Secretary of the Light-House Board)
Historic Contexts:	V. Political and Military Affairs, 1783–1860 C. Early Federal Period (1789–1800) XII. Business D. Trade 1. Export-Import 2. Shipping and Transportation XIV. Transportation B. Ships, Boats, Lighthouses, and Other Structures

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

Among extant seacoast lighthouses, the Montauk Point Lighthouse was the most important for the nation's foreign trade during the first eight decades of the United States lighthouse service. Seacoast lighthouses, which aided the foreign trade upon which the federal government relied for revenue, were the priority of the national lighthouse system established by Congress in 1789. The Montauk Point Lighthouse was authorized in 1792 and built in 1796 specifically to promote New York as the receiving port for British manufactured goods in America. The Montauk Point Lighthouse was constructed at the east end of Long Island, where ships bound from Europe made landfall after their transatlantic journey and took bearings for navigation along the Long Island shore to New York Harbor, 125 miles to the west. As New York's trade with Great Britain flourished, New York became the nation's premier seaport where raw American products were exchanged for manufactured goods from Great Britain. In 1797, when the Montauk Point Lighthouse first carried a light, New York's foreign commerce exceeded that of other American port cities for the first time, and by 1815 New York was well established as America's leading port. By about 1820, an industrializing France also became a significant trading partner. By 1825, the value of goods imported into New York amounted to 51 percent of all US imports, a share that grew to 64 percent by 1870, with the majority of imports coming from Great Britain and France. When the Montauk Point Lighthouse was renovated in 1860, to meet all of the Light-House Board's new standards for first-order seacoast lighthouses, New York's foreign trade with Great Britain and France was at its peak and was, according to one historian, "the most impressive part of world commerce" at the time.[8] The Montauk Point Lighthouse meets NHL Criterion 1 because it was altogether the most important landfall light for ships bound for New York from Great Britain and France throughout the entire period from 1797 to 1870 when the sea lane from Liverpool, London, and Le Havre to New York was overall the most important route in the foreign trade of the United States. After the Civil War, America invested heavily in industry and not only became less dependent on Europe for manufactured goods but began to rival her in providing manufactured goods to the world. But it was not until the 1870s that America's foreign trade became dominated by exports rather than by imports and that the particular trade which the Montauk Point Lighthouse was built to serve, shipping manufactured goods from Europe to New York, ceased to be the dominant part of America's foreign trade.[9]

Seacoast lighthouses and America's foreign trade, 1789 to 1870

The creation of the United States lighthouse service in the first session of Congress was directly related to foreign trade. The Tonnage Act of July 1789 established a consistent national duty and collections system on imports providing the Treasury with its most significant source of funding. The Lighthouse Act of August 1789 enabled the creation of a coordinated national system of aids-to-navigation to be administered by the Treasury Department. Foreign trade and the associated duties collected on imports were essential to the stability of the new federal government. Seacoast lights, which promoted the safety of the foreign trade upon which the federal government relied for revenue, were the pinnacle of this new national lighthouse system.

[8] Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *The Rise of New York Port* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 75.

[9] The year 1870 is the terminal date of the national significance for the Montauk Point Lighthouse because it marks the end of a period when importation of manufactured goods from Europe via New York constituted the major part of America's foreign trade, followed by a period of transition to a new foreign trade dominated by US exports.

The federal government turned first to building new seacoast lighthouses to aid foreign trade.[10] The Cape Henry Lighthouse (Virginia), built in 1792, served as a landfall lighthouse for ships bound from the Atlantic into the Chesapeake Bay and the port city of Baltimore. The Montauk Point Lighthouse, which was authorized in 1792, but not built until 1796, became the second federal seacoast lighthouse, and was intended to be a landfall light for ships bound from Great Britain to the port of New York. The 1797 Sequin Island Lighthouse (Maine) was a seacoast light for navigation to Portland and the 1798 Cape Cod Lighthouse (Massachusetts) was a landfall light for navigation to Boston.[11]

Seacoast lighthouses were intended to aid ships arriving from foreign countries to make landfall and proceed safely to their destination port. The importance of seacoast lighthouses to the developing economy of the United States was both in the promotion of the foreign trade of the port cities and in the associated federal revenue collected on imported goods.

From the establishment of the federal government in 1789[12] to about 1870, New York was America's overall leading seaport where the greatest value of the nation's imported goods were received. The major part of America's foreign trade during this period was the importation of manufactured goods from Great Britain and France, which entered through New York's harbor. Because of its associations with New York Port from 1797 to 1870, the Montauk Point Lighthouse best represents the importance of America's seacoast lighthouses in aiding and promoting the nation's foreign trade during this critical period.

Context for Constructing New York Port's First Seacoast Lighthouse at Montauk Point to Aid Trade with Great Britain

New York's trade relationship with Great Britain had its roots in the American Revolution. During the Revolutionary War, New York was occupied by the British from 1776 to 1783. New York served as the headquarters for the British army and navy in America and depended upon large quantities of imports from Great Britain. Many of New York's prominent merchants were Tories who remained in the city and prospered from this business. The New York Chamber of Commerce continued to meet during the Revolution and "informally advised the commander-in-chief and commandant on economic matters."[13]

Many of the people and facilities that handled imports from Great Britain during the war, remained in place after the British evacuated New York in the fall of 1783. Alexander Hamilton recognized the importance of retaining the "old Anglo-Dutch merchant families, newly arrived exporters and importers, [and] resident agents of British trading firms" in New York's economy.[14] The reconciliation with New York's Tories and the many prominent merchants among them, which Hamilton promoted, is described by historians as "perhaps the most decisive event in the city's postwar history."[15]

[10] The Lighthouse Act of 1789 gave the federal government jurisdiction of the eleven existing lighthouses built during the Colonial era. These were primarily harbor lighthouses with the Cape Henlopen Lighthouse, Delaware, and the Cape Ann Light Station, Massachusetts, being the only remote seacoast lighthouses. In 1791, the federal government completed a lighthouse begun by Massachusetts at Portland Head, marking the entrance to Portland Harbor, Maine (The District of Maine was part of the State of Massachusetts until 1820.).

[11] Philadelphia, the other major port city, already had a seacoast lighthouse, the 1767 Cape Henlopen Lighthouse marking the entrance to Delaware Bay.

[12] Marked by the establishment of the new government under the United States Constitution.

[13] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 249.

[14] Ibid., 278.

[15] Ibid.

With such little disruption among those who handled trade with Great Britain during the occupation, New York was the logical destination for the large quantities of manufactured goods which that country shipped to America soon after peace was declared. Historians Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace wrote that in the years following the Revolution, New York remained "dependent on Great Britain," noting that in "1786 almost twice as much tonnage had entered the port from the former mother county than from all other foreign nations combined."[16] New Yorkers saw Great Britain's favoring of their port as an opportunity for this trade relationship to be the basis for their maritime economy. Through the importation of manufactured goods from Great Britain, New York rose to become America's premier seaport.

Three years after the new federal government was seated, New Yorkers were planning a lighthouse at Montauk Point to aid their developing trade with Great Britain. Early in 1792, the New York Chamber of Commerce asked their Congressional delegation to submit a bill for constructing a lighthouse at Montauk Point to serve as the primary seacoast light for ships bound from Great Britain to New York. The bill was approved by Congress and signed by President Washington in April 1792.

Members of the New York Chamber of Commerce committee appointed to plan the lighthouse and work with the Congressional delegation to see it constructed were involved in the commercial activity of the port and had an interest in a lighthouse that would benefit trade between Great Britain and New York. Committee members who worked on the Montauk Point Lighthouse proposal included: Charles Smith who was a director of the Bank of New York in 1792;[17] the merchant David Gelston who in 1792 was also state's attorney for New York County and a member of the New York Senate;[18] Paschal N. Smith, a merchant and president of the Columbia Insurance Company, a shipping underwriter;[19] Daniel Phoenix, a merchant, operator of an auction house for selling imports and secretary of the New York Insurance Company, described as "the first regularly organized corporation for underwriting shipping;"[20] and shipbuilder John Jackson.[21]

New York Senator Rufus King and Congressman John Watts participated actively in the process of planning the Montauk Point Lighthouse. These men were also involved in promoting relations between New York and Great Britain. Rufus King was a director of the Bank of New York and was married to the daughter of the Tory merchant John Alsop, who became president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1786. King made his greatest contribution to promoting New York's trade with Great Britain when he served as Minister to the Court of St. James from 1796 to 1803. Congressman John Watts was one of New York's leading Tory merchants and has been described as a man of "wealth and power, long identified with British high culture."[22]

Correspondence of the New York Chamber of Commerce in reference to their proposal to build a lighthouse at Montauk Point reveals their intent to increase the safety of navigation for vessels bound from Great Britain and Europe across the Atlantic to New York. The Committee wrote that the lighthouse was intended for "Merchants Engaged in Sea Navigation" and for "the Security of an Extended foreign Commerce" in providing a landfall light for vessels bound in from the sea for the benefit of "their Coming in with the Land they may have the

[16] Ibid., 279, 334.
[17] Henry Williams Donnett, *A History of the Bank of New York* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1884), 117.
[18] David Gelston Collection, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Connecticut.
[19] Maritime insurance policy for Brig *Neptune* from Bordeaux to New York, 1805. Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America notice of sale.
[20] James Sullivan, ed., *The History of the State of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933-1937); and James Grant Wilson, ed., *The Memorial History of the City of New York* (New York: New York History Company, 1893), 535.
[21] Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 343.
[22] Ibid., 220, 224.

advantage of a Light to Direct them in the Night, and to Prevent their Running too near the Shore before they Can be Sensible of any danger."[23]

The 1764 Sandy Hook Lighthouse stood at the entrance to New York Harbor, but New York had no seacoast lighthouse to aid navigation on the approach to the harbor along the dangerous Long Island shore. By making navigation safer and easier the Montauk Point Lighthouse made an important contribution to promoting trade between New York and Great Britain.

Construction of the Montauk Point Lighthouse in 1796 and its Renovation in 1860

1796 Construction

Once Congress authorized construction of a lighthouse at Montauk Point it became the job of Tench Coxe, Commissioner of Revenue, to implement the legislation. Coxe's responsibilities included identifying a site for the lighthouse, arranging for New York State to cede jurisdiction over the site to the federal government, acquiring the property from the Montauk Proprietors, determining a design for the lighthouse, and selecting a contractor.

Congress appropriated $20,000 on March 2, 1793, to purchase a site and build the lighthouse. Tench Coxe experienced great difficulty in negotiating a purchase with the Montauk Proprietors, the owners of the proposed site. In September 1793, Tench Coxe wrote to the New York delegation in Congress explaining the delay in building the lighthouse and asked that they relay his letter to the New York Chamber of Commerce "in order that the merchants and commanders of vessels may know that all possible attention has been paid to an establishment of so much importance to their port."[24] It was not until August 1795 that President George Washington authorized a contract with John McComb Jr. for constructing the Montauk Point Lighthouse for $22,300. The reluctant Montauk Proprietors finally deeded a site to the federal government in January 1796 clearing the way for McComb to begin work in the spring.

John McComb Jr., supervising a crew of approximately fifty workmen, began construction in May 1796 and completed the lighthouse in November. The lantern was not illuminated until early in 1797. Because the Montauk Point Lighthouse is nationally significant for its role as a seacoast lighthouse, the period of significance begins in 1797 when it first carried a light.

John McComb's masonry tower was 80 feet tall and the focal plane of the lantern was 85 feet above the base of the tower. Standing on the bluff at an elevation of 71 feet, the Montauk Point Lighthouse carried a light at an elevation of 156 feet above sea level.[25] With a light at this elevation, the Montauk Point Lighthouse became one of the most effective seacoast lighthouses in America. Only six other east coast lighthouses built before 1850 carried a light at a similar height. The Montauk Point Lighthouse is the only one of these six to survive today.[26]

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[23] New York Chamber of Commerce, Montauk Point Lighthouse Committee Report, February 21, 1793, L'Hommedieu Papers, Montauk Historical Society.

[24] Tench Coxe to Members of the United States Senate & House of Representatives for New York, September 7, 1793, Correspondence of Tench Coxe, M63, roll 1, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

[25] Information on the Montauk Point Lighthouse from Robert J. Hefner, "Montauk Point Light Station, Tower, Oil House and Passage: A Historic Structures Report," 1989, The Montauk Historical Society.

[26] This group of lighthouses includes: Sequin Island, Maine, 1797-1857, 165 feet; Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 1798-1857, 160 feet; Gay Head, Massachusetts, 1799-1856, 160 feet; Monhegan Island, Maine, 1824-1851, 155 feet; and Navesink, New Jersey, 1828-1862, 220 feet. These lighthouses carried a light at an elevation that was at least 30 feet higher than any other pre-1850 seacoast lighthouses: Charleston, South Carolina, 1830, 125 feet; Cape Henlopen, Delaware, 1767, 120 feet; and Cape Henry, Virginia, 120 feet.

1860 renovation

By the middle of the nineteenth century, a consensus had developed among members of Congress and the maritime community that the quality of the lights maintained by the United States lighthouse service lagged far behind the aids to navigation of Europe. In March 1851 Congress took the pivotal step in resurrecting America's lighthouses when the Light-House Board was created to investigate all aspects of the country's aids to navigation and recommend improvements. Much of the testimony provided by sea captains, many of them New York packet-ship captains, and much of the investigation by the Board focused on two factors: the much greater height of European seacoast lighthouses compared to those in America and the superiority of the Fresnel lens employed in many European lighthouses.

In their 1852 report to Congress, the Light-House Board proposed new standards for the nation's lighthouses and with the approval of Congress began to implement those standards with an intensive building program. One of the important new standards was that primary seacoast lighthouses be equipped with the most powerful optic available—the first-order Fresnel lens—and that the focal plane of the lens have an elevation of at least 150 feet above sea level.[27] The Light-House Board's evaluation of the existing seacoast lighthouses centered almost completely on their inadequate elevations. For this reason almost all the existing towers were replaced with new towers. Of the existing seacoast towers that the Light-House Board intended to be first-order stations, only five carried a light at an elevation of 150 feet or more: Sequin Island, Maine, 165 feet; Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 160 feet; Gay Head, Massachusetts, 160 feet; Montauk Point, New York, 156 feet and Navesink, New Jersey, 220 feet. All except the Montauk Point tower were in such poor condition that they were replaced with new first-order towers from 1856 to 1862.

The Montauk Point Lighthouse became the only seacoast lighthouse to be renovated by the Light-House Board to meet every new standard for a first-order seacoast lighthouse.[28] In 1860, the tower was renovated with the addition of a first-order lantern for the Fresnel lens along with a watch room, service room, and balcony for servicing and maintaining the lantern and lens. The tower was made fireproof with the addition of a brick stairwell, cast iron stair, and metal windows. The most powerful first-order Fresnel lens was installed: a fixed first-order lens with a revolving lens panel that produced a flash that could be seen three to five miles farther than the twenty-mile range of the fixed lens.[29] The renovated lighthouse had a focal-plane elevation of 169 feet above sea level. The Montauk Point Light Station was also equipped with a first-order oil house and double dwelling for the keepers.

How the Montauk Point Lighthouse Aided the Approach from the Sea to New York Harbor

Robert Albion in *The Rise of New York Port* described the approach to New York Harbor from the Atlantic:

[27] The Light-House Board adopted the European system of classifying lighthouses based upon the order of the Fresnel lens they carried. There were six orders or sizes of Fresnel lenses. The largest first order lens had the greatest range and was intended for primary seacoast lighthouses. The second order lens was intended for secondary seacoast lighthouses. Third, fourth, fifth and sixth order lenses were selected for sound, bay, and harbor lighthouses depending upon the importance of the station and the range required.

[28] Two other seacoast lighthouses were renovated by the Light-House Board, but did not meet all the new standards for first-order lighthouses. In 1856, the 1767 Cape Henlopen Lighthouse, Delaware, received a new watch room and lantern which had a focal-plane elevation of 128 feet. The Cape Henlopen Lighthouse became the secondary seacoast light for the entrance to the Delaware Bay when the Cape May Lighthouse, New Jersey, was built in 1859 with a focal-plane elevation of 159 feet. In 1857, a first order lens was installed in the existing 1841 lantern of the 1792 Cape Henry Lighthouse, Virginia, which had a focal-plane elevation of 120 feet. This was intended to be a "temporary" installation, but it was not until 1881 that a new Cape Henry Lighthouse was built with a focal-plane elevation of 157 feet. The 1792 Cape Henry Lighthouse became the secondary seacoast lighthouse for the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay when the Cape Charles Lighthouse, Virginia, was built in 1864 with a focal-plane elevation of 157 feet.

[29] Light-House Board, *List of Light-Houses* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1863), 26.

> As approached from the sea, the beautiful harbor of New York lies at the apex of a large sandy angle, interminable stretches of beach upon which the surf pounds incessantly. One arm of this is the outer shore of Long Island, stretching eastward 104 miles from Coney Island to Montauk Point. The other arm is the New Jersey coast, extending 110 miles from Sandy Hook to Cape May. Along the former ran the main sea lane to Europe; the latter was skirted by shipping for the southern and Caribbean ports. In normal weather vessels were usually in sight of those endless beaches. In bad weather, those sandy arms formed menacing lee shores for New York shipping. All the way to Montauk and Cape May, there was not a single harbor of refuge for anything larger than schooners. Year after year, vessels by the dozen would pile up on the sands of that desolate angle.[30]

The Long Island shore was the arm of this sandy angle that merchants and ship captains were most concerned with in the approach from the sea bound for New York Port. The Long Island coast extends from New York in an east-northeast direction for 125 miles to Montauk Point, which is only 35 miles north of New York in latitude. Along much of the coast a dangerous sand bar is about a quarter mile offshore. The Montauk Point Lighthouse greatly increased the safety of this approach by providing a landfall light at the eastern point of this shore allowing a ship coming in from the sea to ascertain her position, take her bearings, and safely navigate along the shore to New York Harbor.

Albion's description of the route taken by ships sailing from Liverpool and London to New York is consistent with the information in guides for navigating the North Atlantic published in Great Britain and the United States from 1853 to 1895.[31] The route across the Atlantic was designed to bring the ship north of the Gulf Stream, which flowed northeasterly and would retard its progress, and to avoid the obstacles of Sable Island and Nantucket Shoals, a vast shoals extending 38 miles south from Nantucket Island where, at its southern extremity, previous to a lightship being established there in 1854, no land or lighthouse was visible.[32] This course across the Atlantic also took advantage of the shorter distance of a northern arcing route. Sailing on this recommended course a vessel would be too far south of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Sable Island to see land and would be too far seaward to see a signal from the lighthouses of New England or Nantucket. Captain W. R. Bradish, captain of the New York packet *Yorktown*, wrote to the Light-House Board in 1851: "I have sailed between this port [New York] and London three voyages a year, for the last eighteen years, and during that time have seen the lights only in the vicinity of this port—say from Montauk Point to Barnegat."[33] After it was introduced in 1854, the Nantucket Shoals Lightship, which had a range of 11 miles, became the first light

[30] Albion, Rise of New York Port, 16.

[31] Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *Square Riggers on Schedule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), 191; Matthew Fontaine Maury, LL. D., Lt., USN, *Explanations and Sailing Directions* (Washington, DC: C. Alexander, Printer, 1853); *The Atlantic Ocean (North and South) Considered with reference to the wants of seamen*. *Reprinted from the Nautical Magazine* (London: J. D. Potter, 1856); A. B. Becher, Capt., RN, *Navigation of the Atlantic Ocean* (London: J. D. Potter, 1859). W. H. Rosser & J. F. Imray, FRGS, *North Atlantic Directory* (London: James Imray and Son, 1869); F. Labosse, *The Navigation of the Atlantic Ocean*, translated at the United States Hydrographic Office by Lt. Cdr. J. B. Coghlan, USN (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1873); A. B. Becher, Capt., RN, *Navigation of the Atlantic Ocean* (London: J. D. Potter, 1883); Alexander George Findlay, FRGS, *Directory for the North Atlantic Ocean* (London: Richard Holmes Laurie, 1895).

[32] The average route across the Atlantic recommended in these guides was to sail a westerly course from Europe within 46° to 50° north latitude until reaching the meridian of about 37° west longitude and then to edge south to about 43° north latitude in order to pass sixty miles south of Sable Island, about 100 miles south of Nova Scotia, and then to set a course to bring the ship twenty miles south of Nantucket Shoals.

[33] Captain W. R. Bradish to the Light-House Board, September 28, 1851, published in Report of the Officers Constituting the Light-House Board convened under instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire into the condition of the Light House Establishment of the United States, under the act of March 3, 1851 (Washington: A. Boyd Hamilton, 1852), 237.

seen by some mariners who came close to the shoals. Ships passing twenty miles south of Nantucket Shoals, the recommended route, would continue to New York without yet seeing land or a light since leaving England.[34]

During their 1851 investigation the Light-House Board wrote to a number of New York packet-ship captains asking for information on transatlantic navigation and lighthouses.[35] The response by Captain Oliver R. Mumford, who had commanded New York packet ships for fifteen years and at the time was captain of the Liverpool packet-ship *Wisconsin*, provides one of the few descriptions of the approach by a sailing ship from the Atlantic to New York: "After I clear Nantucket,[36] if the wind is to the northward I endeavor to close in with the east end of Long Island; and with this wind there is a strong south current (say 1 ½ knots) prevailing; which is the cause of our endeavor to get hold of the Long Island shore; if the wind is southward and east we run for the Highland lights."[37]

During the seven months of the winter season (October to April) the wind along the Long Island shore is primarily from the north. During the summer months the wind is primarily from the south.[38] With a northerly wind a ship would sail toward eastern Long Island after clearing Nantucket Shoals, discover the Montauk Point Lighthouse, take bearings for New York Harbor, and sail along the windward Long Island shore at a safe distance out to sea to avoid the bar.[39] With a northerly wind the ship would not be in danger of being driven on shore. Captain Mumford's 1851 letter echoed Ezra L'Hommedieu's 1793 letter to Congressman John Watts, written fifty-eight years earlier, in which he recalls the advice given him by "Captains Rogers, Post and Franks experienced mariners" recommending a lighthouse on Montauk Point: "they observed that Vessels from Sea generally (in the bad season of the year) endeavour to fall in to the westward of Muntock [*sic*] Point and the sooner they can discover the Light the less dangerous would be their situation."[40] A ship would attempt to make landfall "to the westward of Muntuck [*sic*] Point" because the Montauk Point headland, extending about three miles west from the point at an elevation of about 80 feet, was the highest and most distinct landform along Long Island's south shore. The lighthouse made the Montauk Point headland the best landfall objective at night as well as during the day.

During the summer months with a prevailing southerly wind, Long Island became a dangerous lee shore.[41] With the wind in this direction a ship would sail further to the south to avoid the Long Island shore and make for the New Jersey shore. Captain Mumford wrote in 1851 that with the wind from the southeast his packet ship would make the Navesink Light Station his objective. Before the Navesink Light Station was built in 1828 there was no seacoast light for this approach. The New Jersey shore south of Navesink did not have an effective seacoast light until the Barnegat Lighthouse was built in 1859. Conditions in the summer were much less treacherous than in the winter and therefore a lighthouse at Montauk Point, the favored landfall of that season, was of greater importance than a seacoast lighthouse at Navesink or the New Jersey coast, the favored landfall during

[34] During the nineteenth century mariners used the compass, the sextant, the marine chronometer, the sounding lead, and nautical charts to navigate and often knew their position with some accuracy.

[35] New York had multiple lines of packet ships which sailed on a regular schedule between that port and Liverpool, London, and Le Havre beginning in 1817 through 1878. These were generally the best-built and fastest sailing merchantmen on the Atlantic route during this period and played an important role in New York's foreign commerce.

[36] Captain Mumford is referring to sailing south of Nantucket Shoals, not Nantucket Island.

[37] Report of the Officers Constituting the Light-House Board convened under instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire into the condition of the Light House Establishment of the United States, under the act of March 3, 1851, 225.

[38] Richard G. Hendrickson, *Winds of the Fish's Tail* (Mattituck, NY: Ameron House, 1996), 17, 27, and statistics for Montauk Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport compiled by Windfinder.com.

[39] Bearings from Montauk Point to Sandy Hook were provided by editions of Blunt's *The American Coast Pilot* beginning in 1798. *The American Coast Pilot* (Newburyport, MA: Edmund M. Blunt, 1798), 89, 96. G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.

[40] Ezra L'Hommedieu to John Watts, January 14, 1793, L'Hommedieu Papers, Montauk Historical Society.

[41] A lee shore is one onto which the wind is blowing. It is dangerous because a ship sailing along a lee shore makes leeway or drifts toward it and because it is difficult for a square-rigged ship, discovering it is too close to a lee shore, to sail away from it. The terminology for sailing clear of a lee shore, "clawing off," aptly describes the danger.

the summer. The Chamber of Commerce was aware of the importance of the lighthouse for "the bad season of the year."

A ship sailing out from New York Harbor could take good bearings upon leaving Sandy Hook and did not rely on the Montauk Point Lighthouse as did the ship bound in from the Atlantic to New York. The importance of the Montauk Point Lighthouse was consistently stated as aiding the ship arriving from Europe beginning with the 1793 Chamber of Commerce report stating that the Montauk Point Lighthouse was intended to "afford direction and Security to Vessels Coming in from Sea."[42]

The virtue of a lighthouse at Montauk Point was obvious to the sea captains, merchants, insurance underwriters, and other members of the New York Chamber of Commerce who were involved in planning and lobbying for it in order to increase the safety of navigation from Great Britain to their port. The Montauk Point headland, 125 miles east of New York Harbor, was already the favored landfall during the day and was the only place on this stretch of treacherous beach that a lighthouse could have the elevation necessary to be an effective seacoast light.

In 1848, the English Cunard line of ocean steamships sailing on a regular schedule between Liverpool and New York began a period of competition with sailing ships which lasted until the 1870s when the steamship finally eclipsed the sailing ship on the transatlantic route.[43] From 1848 to 1870, more and more of the textiles and other valuable cargo arriving in New York from Great Britain was brought by steamship. The early steamships carried square-rigged auxiliary sails and the captains, many of whom had transferred from sailing ships, did not change their practice in making landfall and navigation to New York Harbor.[44] The continued importance of the sailing rig in steamships is noted in the 1873 *The Navigation of the Atlantic Ocean* which recommends the northern route across the Atlantic in summer only "for strong sailing vessels of good speed, as well as for auxiliary steamers which are able to stand up well under canvas," both having the ability to "work rapidly to windward" if necessary to avoid an iceberg. The Montauk Point Lighthouse was a primary landfall light for steamships as well as sailing ships through 1870, and beyond. The "Marine Intelligence" column in *The New York Times* from 1853 to 1889 includes notices of foreign and American steamships from British and other European ports bound for New York being reported in the vicinity of Montauk Point as well as reports of New York pilot boats being stationed off Montauk Point to provide pilots for the steamships.[45] It was not until the late-nineteenth century that steamships outfitted with multiple reliable steam engines abandoned the auxiliary sailing rig. A sense of confidence in the steamship's engines also eventually brought a change to navigation on the approach to New York Harbor. By the late-nineteenth century steamships often took a more direct route, making landfall at the Fire Island Lighthouse rather than at the Montauk Point Lighthouse.[46]

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[42] New York Chamber of Commerce, Montauk Point Lighthouse Committee Report, February 21, 1793, L'Hommedieu Papers, Montauk Historical Society.

[43] Albion, Rise of New York Port, 333; and Annual Statements of the Chief of the Bureau of Statistics on the Commerce and Navigation of the United States, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1880 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), XLII–XLIII.

[44] K. T. Rowland, *Steam at Sea*: *A History of Steam Navigation* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 69, 86. Albion, *Square Riggers on Schedule*, 165, 169-171.

[45] *The New York Times* [digital archive], over 100 references from 1853 to 1889 including February 1, 1853; March 24, 1858; October 18, 1860; February 1, 1862; April 23, 1862; July 12, 1862; March 3, 1864; June 24, 1864; November 29, 1865; March 25, 1866; June 4, 1866; October 29, 1866; July 3, 1883; March 16, 1889.

[46] The 1894 Light-House Board report noted of the Fire Island Lighthouse: "This is the most important light for transatlantic steamers bound for New York. It is generally the first one they make and from which they lay their course." Quoted in Carole L. Perrault, "Historic Structures Report, Fire Island Lighthouse" (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983), 16.

The Role of New York in the Nation's Foreign Trade, 1789 to 1870

From the first years of the establishment of the new federal government in 1789, New York began to actively promote the trade with Great Britain which would become the main part of her maritime economy and the most important aspect of American foreign trade during this period. Lobbying for a lighthouse at Montauk Point by the Chamber of Commerce was one of several important efforts. In 1794, New Yorker John Jay traveled to Great Britain to negotiate the Jay Treaty to resolve issues remaining after the Revolution. One aspect of that treaty was granting Great Britain most-favored-nation status in trade with the United States.[47] Rufus King, who as Senator handled correspondence and planning of the Montauk Point Lighthouse, served as Minister to the Court of St. James from 1796 to 1803. The historians Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace have argued that John Jay's Treaty and Rufus King's appointment "all but sanctified this special neocolonial relationship" between New York and Great Britain.[48]

In 1797, the year the Montauk Lighthouse was commissioned, New York had reached primacy among American ports in the volume of its foreign commerce; by 1799 New York handled one-third of the nation's overseas trade.[49] In 1806, the value of New York's imports was twice that of Philadelphia, which followed in the volume of foreign commerce.[50] The vast majority of New York's imports came from Great Britain, particularly from Liverpool which had become the port for the country's principal manufacturing district developed in the early years of the Industrial Revolution. The historian Norman Sydney Buck wrote that:

> the expansion of the commerce of Liverpool is largely associated with the American trade, both exporting and importing. In 1808 Mr. Alexander Baring, an English merchant of wide experience in American trade, stated that Liverpool was the principal centre of the American commerce… Not only was Liverpool important as the centre of American trade in Great Britain, but the American trade was probably the most important single trade which the merchants of Liverpool carried on.[51]

The bulk of Liverpool's American trade was with New York. Burrows and Wallace wrote that "By the early 1790s more ships were leaving Liverpool for New York than for any other American port."[52] When this trade was interrupted by the Embargo Act of December 22, 1807, and by the War of 1812, New York was well established as America's entrepôt port for distributing British manufactured goods.

News of the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812 arrived in New York in February 1815. The succeeding months of peace saw a dramatic revival in trade as Great Britain shipped great quantities of manufactured goods into the war-starved American market by way of New York as she had done following the American Revolution. These imports from Great Britain gave New York a head start over other ports in rebuilding her maritime economy. The value of duties paid on New York's imports for 1815 was $14.6 million. New York remained well ahead of Philadelphia where import duties amounted to $7.1 million for 1815, and the ports of Massachusetts (Boston, Salem, and Portland[53]) where import duties were $5.9 million.[54]

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[47] Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 321.
[48] Ibid., 334.
[49] Ibid., 333, 334; Albion, *Square Riggers on Schedule*, 2.
[50] Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 333, 334.
[51] Norman Sydney Buck, *The Development of the Organization of Anglo-American Trade 1800-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), 32. The quote from Mr. Baring states the situation just before the embargo act of December 22, 1807.
[52] Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 333, 334.
[53] This is a reference to Portland, Maine. The District of Maine was part of the State of Massachusetts until 1820.
[54] Albion, Rise of New York Port, 13.

New Yorkers built upon this early lead with a continual expansion of port institutions, facilities, and services. According to the historian of New York Port, Robert Albion, the innovation most responsible for the dramatic rise of New York's foreign trade following the war was the beginning of a transatlantic packet service in 1817. What became known as the Black Ball line was established that year with four ships that made regularly-scheduled voyages between New York and Liverpool. According to Albion: "The new regularity of service, as anticipated, attracted shippers almost at once and helped to clinch New York's leadership as the chief receiving port for the offerings of European markets."[55]

In 1822, the Black Ball line added four more ships and the Red Star and Blue Swallowtail packet lines were formed, also sailing the route between New York and Liverpool. The same year two lines of packets were initiated between New York and Le Havre, France, and in 1824 the Black X and Red Swallowtail packet lines were established to London. The number of packet ships on the three routes running from Liverpool, London and Le Havre to New York rose from four in 1818 to twenty-eight by 1825, thirty-six by 1830, forty-eight by 1840, fifty-two by 1845, and fifty-six by 1855 when twenty-four packets sailed between New York and Liverpool, sixteen ships sailed between New York and London, and sixteen ships serviced the Le Havre route.

In 1825, the value of imports into New York amounted to more than half the total US imports for the first time. Liverpool, as the port city for the world's most extensive manufacturing district, continued to be New York's primary trading partner.[56] The packet-ship route from Liverpool to New York always had the greatest number of ships, the largest ships, and the fastest passages.[57] Robert Albion wrote that "The cargoes which traveled the Liverpool-New York shuttle in the course of a year were doubtless the most valuable on any route of the seven seas."[58] More diversified imports came from London, which imported goods from all around the world. Beginning in the 1820s manufactured goods also flowed from Le Havre, the port for France's manufacturing district. The value of imports from France to New York during the period from 1825 to 1870 was about a quarter to a third of the value of imports from Great Britain.

In 1835, a total of 282 ships arrived in New York from Liverpool, London, and Le Havre, more than half of the total of 519 ships that arrived in New York that year from foreign ports.[59] In 1835, there were forty New York packet ships sailing to Liverpool, London, and Le Havre. Each ship averaged 3.5 round trips annually for a total of about 140 trips, indicating that about half of the 282 ships that arrived in New York from Liverpool, London, and Le Havre in 1835 were New York packet ships.[60]

New York also developed coastal packet lines to distribute goods imported from Europe and to gather raw materials for export from New York. By 1820, the total coastal tonnage owned by New York merchants and shippers equaled that owned in the ports of Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore combined.[61] The combination of transatlantic packets and coastal packets furthered New York's position as the nation's importer. According to Albion "Even for shipments from Liverpool, say to Boston, Philadelphia or Charleston, it was easier and generally quicker to send them to New York by packet and have them distributed by the coastal steam or sailing

[55] Ibid.
[56] Albion, Square Riggers on Schedule, 30.
[57] Albion, Rise of New York Port, 45.
[58] Albion, Square Riggers on Schedule, 30.
[59] Albion, *Rise of New York Port*, 394-396. These statistics are based on extensive research by Robert Albion in customs records and the *Shipping and Commercial List*. Albion's tables indicate that 125 ships arrived in Boston from foreign ports in 1835 with forty-seven sailing from Liverpool, London, and Le Havre, and that sixty-four ships arrived in Philadelphia from foreign ports that year with thirty-five sailing from the above three ports.
[60] Captain Alfred B. Lowber to the Light-House Board, October 8, 1851, published in Report of the Officers Constituting the Light-House Board convened under instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire into the condition of the Light House Establishment of the United States, under the act of March 3, 1851, 226-229; and Albion, Square Riggers on Schedule, 46.
[61] David T. Gilchrist, ed., *The Growth of the Seaport Cities, 1790-1825* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), 69.

lines from that port."[62] The coastal packets collected raw materials at the southern ports that were transferred in New York to the ocean packets for shipment to Europe. In 1822, 55 percent of the total exports from New York were the southern products of cotton, tobacco, naval stores, and rice.[63]

As the foreign trade of New York Port grew and the coastal packets distributed imported goods up and down the East Coast, the foreign trade of other port cities diminished. New York's share of the nation's imports grew from 51 percent in 1825 to 64 percent in 1870 and averaged 59 percent from 1825 to 1870. In contrast, Boston had 16 percent of US imports in 1825 and 10 percent in 1870 and averaged 14 percent through that period. Philadelphia's share of US imports fell from 16 percent in 1825 to 3 percent in 1870 with an average of 8 percent through those years. Baltimore's share was 4 percent at the beginning and at the end of this period and also averaged 4 percent from 1825 to 1870.[64]

In 1860, when the Montauk Point Lighthouse was renovated, European imports dominated America's foreign trade with most of the goods being brought from Great Britain to New York. That year Great Britain and France supplied 50 percent of the value of all goods imported into the United States and New York received 65 percent of the nation's imports.[65] Robert Albion wrote that in 1860 the trade route from Liverpool, London, and Le Havre to New York was "the most impressive part of world commerce" when "904 vessels, totaling some 975,000 tons, arrived at New York from the ports of Europe, about two-thirds of them from England" and that "the distribution of a considerable part of those imported wares throughout the nation was doing more than anything else to clinch New York's position as the greatest seaport in America and one of the greatest in the world."[66] Historians summarized the trade with Great Britain from 1815 to 1860, which was centered in New York, as being "so important throughout the era that it dominated the American economy."[67]

During the Civil War, imports continued to flow from Europe into New York. Imports from Great Britain and France accounted for 50 percent of the value of all US imports in 1863 and New York received 66 percent of the nation's imports. In 1863, the tonnage entering New York from Great Britain and France amounted to 51 percent of all tonnage entering from a foreign country.[68]

Five years after the Civil War the nature of America's foreign trade had not yet changed. The 1870 *Commerce and Navigation* report, which provides more detailed statistics than previous reports, gives a clear picture of the role of New York in America's foreign trade. In 1870, the value of goods imported from Great Britain and France amounted to 44 percent of all US imports. In that year, New York received 64 percent of the nation's imports which included 75 percent of all goods imported from Great Britain into America and 89 percent of all French goods imported into the United States.[69] The sea lane from Europe to New York, bringing manufactured goods into the country, continued to be the major route of New York's, and America's, foreign trade.

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[62] Albion, Rise of New York Port, 54.

[63] Albion, Square Riggers on Schedule, 53.

[64] Statistics for 1821 and 1825 from Albion, *The Rise of New York Port*, 390-391, other years from annual Treasury Department *Commerce and Navigation* reports, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.

[65] Report of the Secretary of the Treasury of the Commerce and Navigation of the United States for the year ending June 30, 1860 (Washington: William A. Harris, Printer, 1860).

[66] Albion, Rise of New York Port, 75.

[67] Frank C. Munson Institute of American Maritime Studies, *America and the Sea: A Maritime History* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport, 1998), 317.

[68] Report of the Secretary of the Treasury of the Commerce and Navigation of the United States for the year ending June 30, 1863 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1865).

[69] Annual Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Statistics on the Commerce and Navigation of the United States for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1870 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1871), New York Chamber of Commerce, Montauk Point Lighthouse Committee Report, February 21, 1793, L'Hommedieu Papers, Montauk Historical Society.

But the decade of the 1870s brought to a close the period when American foreign trade was dominated by imported manufactured goods from Europe, primarily through New York Port. Following the Civil War, a heavy investment in industry began a new economic trend. In less than a decade the growth of American industry greatly diminished the need to import manufactured products from Europe, and by 1894, the United States produced more manufactured goods than any other country.[70] The Panic of 1873—which affected industrial development in Great Britain more than in America—also contributed to this transition. The 1878 *Commerce and Navigation* report in a special section entitled "Commerce of the United States with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland" noted a marked decline in imports from Great Britain, especially in textiles and manufactured goods of tin, iron, and steel that had long been the staple of New York's trade relationship with Great Britain. The report also noted a dramatic rise in exports to Great Britain, which in 1878 were three times greater than imports from that country. Over the previous eight decades, trade with Great Britain was characterized by imports exceeding exports. The 1878 report referred to Great Britain as a competitor with American industry in exporting manufactured goods to the countries of the world. The authors of this special report concluded that "a radical change has taken place in the commerce between the United States and the United Kingdom."[71] This "radical change" occurred principally in New York. The 1880 *Commerce and Navigation* report indicates the value of exports from New York to Great Britain exceeding the value of imports from that country by fifty percent.[72] New York continued to be America's premier seaport after 1870, but its role in importing manufactured goods from Great Britain and France was no longer the major part of America's foreign trade.

Montauk Point Lighthouse Compared to Other Seacoast Lighthouses, 1789 to 1870

Montauk Point Lighthouse Compared to Other Lighthouses that Aided the Approach from the Atlantic to New York Harbor, 1789 to 1870

During the period 1789 to 1870, a total of nine New York and New Jersey lighthouses played different roles during different periods with varying degrees of effectiveness in aiding the approach to New York Harbor. Beginning with the Montauk Point Lighthouse and proceeding westward these lighthouses are: Montauk Point (1797); Shinnecock (1858); Fire Island (1826); Fire Island (1858); Sandy Hook (1764); Navesink (1828); Navesink (1862); Barnegat (1835); and Barnegat (1859).[73]

Beginning with the first of these lighthouses, the 1764 Sandy Hook Lighthouse was New York's harbor light early in this period. With a focal-plane elevation of 90 feet, the Sandy Hook Lighthouse was not intended as a seacoast lighthouse for transatlantic voyages, but as a guide into New York Harbor after a ship had made landfall.

[70] Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, *A New Economic View of American History: From Colonial Times to 1940* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 458.

[71] Annual Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Statistics on the Commerce and Navigation of the United States, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1878 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1878), LXXXIV–LXXXVIII.

[72] Annual Statements of the Chief of the Bureau of Statistics on the Commerce and Navigation of the United States, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1880 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880).

[73] The Nantucket Shoals Lightship, first established in 1854, also played a role in aiding the approach to New York Harbor. The lightship was moored at the southern edge of Nantucket Shoals, about 40 miles south of Nantucket Island. Previous to this no land or light was visible when attempting to pass south of these shoals on route to New York. The signal from this ship, which had a range of eleven miles, warned vessels sailing too close to Nantucket Shoals. The 1854 lightship was blown ashore in 1855 and replaced with a new lightship in 1855. New lightships were moored at Nantucket Shoals in 1892, 1894, 1896, 1907, 1934, 1936, and 1950. This last lightship, LV-612, served until 1983 when it was replaced with a large navigational buoy.

In 1797, the Montauk Point Lighthouse, with a focal-plane elevation of 156 feet, became New York's first seacoast lighthouse intended as a landfall light for ships coming in from the Atlantic and bound for New York.

In 1828, a twin light station was established on the Navesink Highlands above the entrance to New York Harbor. With a focal-plane elevation of 220 feet, the Navesink Light Station replaced the Sandy Hook Lighthouse as the primary guide for the entrance to New York Harbor. The Navesink Station had the elevation to also be an effective seacoast light. As noted above, packet-ship captain Oliver R. Mumford wrote in 1851 that he would "run for the Highland lights" when the wind was from the southeast.

In 1826, a second lighthouse was built on Long Island's south shore at Fire Island and in 1835 a lighthouse was built at Barnegat on the New Jersey coast. The Fire Island Inlet Lighthouse had a focal-plane elevation of only 89 feet. In 1835, a lighthouse was built on the New Jersey shore at the entrance to Barnegat Bay, 37 miles south from the Navesink Light Station. With a focal-plane elevation of only 45 feet this was strictly a harbor light for Barnegat Bay. In his 1851 letter to the Light-House Board assessing the aids-to-navigation to New York, Captain Alfred B. Lowber, who had sailed New York packet ships on the Liverpool route for eighteen years, wrote: "Barnegat and Fire Island lights are miserable."[74] Captain Mumford's 1851 letter to the Light-House Board stated: "This last light [Fire Island Inlet Lighthouse] is but a very indifferent one, and at a distance of ten miles, shows about as large as some of the fourth or fifth magnitude."[75] Captain Mumford compared the 1826 Fire Island Lighthouse to fourth and fifth order lighthouses appropriate for harbor entrances but not for seacoast navigation. *The American Coast Pilot* recommended keeping a distance of twelve miles from the Long Island coast when sailing from Montauk Point to New York Harbor, at this distance, the 1826 Fire Island Lighthouse was not an effective guide.

One of the Light-House Board's priorities in revamping America's lighthouse system was to improve navigation to New York. When the board was established in 1851, New York Port had two effective seacoast lighthouses: the 1797 Montauk Point Lighthouse and the 1828 Navesink Light Station. Testimony received from packet-ship captains recommended establishing additional seacoast lighthouses on Long Island to aid navigation along the shore after a vessel made landfall at Montauk Point. Captain Hale Knight of the New York packet-ship *New World* on the Liverpool line, wrote to the Light-House Board in 1851 that seacoast lights west of Montauk Point would assist the mariner "when they are at all doubtful of their position"[76] while navigating along the shore from Montauk Point to New York Harbor.

In 1858, the Light-House Board built two new first order lighthouses on Long Island at Shinnecock and Fire Island, and in 1860 they renovated the Montauk Point Lighthouse to meet the new standards for a first-order lighthouse. These three lighthouses had focal-plane elevations between 168 feet and 169 feet. The 1852 Light-House Board's report to Congress noted of the Montauk Point Lighthouse and the new system for the Long Island coast: "This [Montauk Point] is a very important light, especially for navigators bound from Europe to New York… By erecting a light in the vicinity of Great West Bay [Shinnecock], midway between Montauk Point and Fire Island lights, the trade between New York and all ports eastward, including the whole of Europe, would be greatly benefited."[77]

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[74] Report of the Officers Constituting the Light-House Board convened under instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire into the condition of the Light House Establishment of the United States, under the act of March 3, 1851, 225.

[75] Ibid., 228.

[76] Captain Hale Knight to the Light-House Board, October 13, 1851, published in Report of the Officers Constituting the Light-House Board convened under instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire into the condition of the Light House Establishment of the United States, under the act of March 3, 1851, 229-230.

[77] Report of the Officers Constituting the Light-House Board convened under instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire into the condition of the Light House Establishment of the United States, under the act of March 3, 1851, 134.

The Light-House Board also built a new station at Navesink in 1862 where its two towers had focal-plane elevations of 248 feet. The ranges of the 1796 Montauk Point Lighthouse, the 1858 Shinnecock Lighthouse, the 1858 Fire Island Lighthouse, and the 1862 Navesink Light Station intersected one another so that the mariner was constantly within range of one of their signals while navigating from Montauk Point to New York Harbor.

In 1859, the Light-House Board replaced the harbor light at Barnegat Bay with a new seacoast lighthouse with a focal-plane elevation of 165 feet. This became the first seacoast light on the New Jersey shore south of Navesink for navigation to New York.

Following is an evaluation of the Montauk Point Lighthouse in comparison to each of the other eight lighthouses and the Nantucket Shoals Lightship associated with navigation to New York during the period 1789 to 1870.

1828 Navesink Light Station. The 1828 Navesink Light Station, a twin-light station with a focal-plane elevation of 220 feet, replaced the Sandy Hook Lighthouse as the principal guide to the entrance to New York Harbor and also served as a seacoast lighthouse for ships coming in from the Atlantic when the wind was from the south. The Montauk Point Lighthouse and the Navesink Light Station were the two most important lighthouses for navigation from Europe to New York, with the Montauk Point Lighthouse favored when the wind was from the north during the winter season, and the Navesink Light Station favored during the summer when the wind was from the south. They were both primary landfall lights for navigation from the Atlantic to New York Harbor. The Montauk Point Lighthouse was built in the first decade of the new federal government and served for seventy-three years during this period. It was New York's only seacoast lighthouse until 1828 when New York first achieved dominance as America's premier seaport. The 1828 Navesink Light Station served for thirty-four years during this period. The Montauk Point Lighthouse was the favored landfall light during the winter season when there are more storms and when the nights are longer, while the Navesink Light Station was favored during the summer. Throughout the period 1789 to 1870, the Montauk Point Lighthouse was overall the more important seacoast light for its length of service and for its role during the more dangerous winter season. The 1828 Navesink Light Station was demolished in 1862.

1862 Navesink Light Station. In 1862, the Light-House Board built a new station at Navesink, also with two towers. The 1862 Navesink Light Station is a National Historic Landmark (2006) with a period of significance dating from 1862 to 1949. Together, the 1796 Montauk Point Lighthouse and the 1862 Navesink Light Station represent over 150 years of New York's importance to America's maritime history, from 1797 to 1949. Their periods of significance overlap for only eight years, from 1862 to 1870, which are the closing years of an era when shipping manufactured goods from Europe to New York was the dominant part of America's foreign trade. Because of its later date, the Navesink Light Station is more representative of the foreign trade of an industrialized America which exported manufactured goods to the world.

1764 Sandy Hook Light. The Sandy Hook Light was designated a National Historic Landmark (1964) as the oldest lighthouse in America. The period of significance is its date of construction. The Sandy Hook lighthouse guided ships into New York Harbor and was not a seacoast lighthouse. The 1828 Navesink Light Station replaced the Sandy Hook lighthouse as New York's principal harbor light. For the period after 1828, Sandy Hook Light played a minor role in the aids-to-navigation of New York Harbor. While the Sandy Hook lighthouse was significant as a guide into New York Harbor until 1828, it was secondary to the Navesink Light Station from 1828 to 1870, when New York's foreign trade was the main part of the nation's foreign commerce.

1858 Shinnecock Lighthouse. As intended by the Light-House Board, the Shinnecock Lighthouse provided a reference to reassure the ship's captain while proceeding along the course he had set for New York Harbor upon making landfall at Montauk Point. The Shinnecock Lighthouse played a secondary role in confirming a course

while the Montauk Point Lighthouse provided the first landfall and known position when coming in from the ocean. The Shinnecock Lighthouse represents only the final years of the era when shipping manufactured goods from Europe to New York was the dominant part of America's foreign trade. It was demolished in 1948.

1826 Fire Island Inlet Lighthouse. The 1826 Fire Island Inlet Lighthouse, with an elevation of only 89 feet, was not an effective seacoast lighthouse in aiding navigation along the Long Island coast from Montauk Point to New York Harbor. The 1826 Fire Island Lighthouse was replaced in 1858 by a new lighthouse with an elevation of 168 feet.

1858 Fire Island Lighthouse. The 1858 Fire Island Lighthouse was, like the 1858 Shinnecock Lighthouse, intended by the Light-House Board to provide reference for a ship sailing along the Long Island coast from Montauk Point to New York Harbor. Because of its location close to the entrance to New York Harbor, the Fire Island Lighthouse began to play a more important role later in the nineteenth century as steamships, now equipped with reliable engines and having abandoned the auxiliary sailing rig, navigated from Nantucket Shoals directly for the Fire Island Lighthouse. By this time, the function of the Fire Island Lighthouse was supplemented by the Fire Island Lightship established in 1896 about nine miles south of the lighthouse. While during the period from 1858 to 1870, the Fire Island Lighthouse most often functioned as the Light-House Board intended, confirming a course along the coast from Montauk Point, and it may also have been the first lighthouse seen by some steamships. The Fire Island Lighthouse represents only the final years of the period when shipping manufactured goods from Europe to New York was the dominant part of an agrarian America's foreign trade. The period of greatest significance for the Fire Island Lighthouse is at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century when steamships navigated directly toward it to bring them to the entrance of New York Harbor.

1835 Barnegat Lighthouse. The 1835 Barnegat Lighthouse was a harbor lighthouse and not an effective seacoast lighthouse. Erosion caused the 1835 tower to fall in 1857, the same year that construction began on a new tower that was completed in 1859.

1859 Barnegat Lighthouse. The 1859 Barnegat Lighthouse was a landfall light for ships avoiding the Long Island shore when the wind was from the south and coming in further south than the Navesink Light Station. Like the Shinnecock, Fire Island, and Navesink light stations, the Barnegat Lighthouse represents only the final years of the era when shipping manufactured goods from Europe to New York was the dominant part of America's foreign trade.

In conclusion, the Montauk Point Lighthouse was overall the most important seacoast lighthouse for New York's foreign trade during the period from 1789 to 1870 when imports from Europe brought across the Atlantic made New York America's preeminent seaport. It is the only seacoast lighthouse to serve through nearly the entire period; it was the landfall light for more transatlantic voyages to New York Port through this period than any other lighthouse; and it was the favored landfall lighthouse during the more dangerous winter season. Second in overall importance to the Montauk Point Lighthouse during this period was the 1828 Navesink Lighthouse, which is no longer standing.

The Montauk Point Lighthouse Compared to the Seacoast Lighthouses of Other East Coast Port Cities, 1789 to 1870

During this period, America's foreign trade was dominated by the importation of manufactured goods from Europe, the majority of which were shipped to New York Port. With the foreign trade of the United States centered in New York through most of this period, the seacoast lighthouses of the other ports rank second in importance to those of New York Port.

Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia were the principal port cities at the beginning of the Federal period. No city had a commanding lead over the others in their share of foreign commerce.[78] Although New York first took the lead in imports in 1797, that port did not establish clear dominance until after 1815. The foreign trade of each of the other East Coast port cities was far less important to the nation's commerce after 1825 when New York received more than half of the goods imported into the country. The seacoast lighthouses associated with Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore became more important for coastal navigation than as seacoast lights for foreign trade. New York's packet ships, which distributed imported goods up and down the coast, were partly responsible for the rise of coastal trade and the decline of overseas trade in these other ports.

During the period from 1789 to 1870, Boston's seacoast lighthouses were the ca. 1790 Cape Ann Light Station, the 1861 Cape Ann Light Station, the 1798 Cape Cod Lighthouse, and the 1857 Cape Cod Lighthouse. These lighthouses marked the north and south approaches to Massachusetts Bay. Philadelphia's seacoast lighthouses were the 1767 Cape Henlopen Lighthouse, the 1823 Cape May Lighthouse, and the 1859 Cape May Lighthouse. The Cape Henlopen Lighthouse in Delaware marked the entrance to Delaware Bay to the south and the Cape May Lighthouse in New Jersey marked the entrance to the north. Baltimore's seacoast lighthouses were the 1792 Cape Henry Lighthouse, the 1828 Cape Charles Lighthouse, and the 1864 Cape Charles Lighthouse. Four of the Virginia lighthouses that marked the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay are extent: the 1861 Cape Ann Light Station; the 1857 Cape Cod Lighthouse; the 1859 Cape May Lighthouse, and the 1792 Cape Henry Lighthouse.

The Cape Ann, Cape Cod, and Cape May lighthouses were built between 1857 and 1861. In 1860, the port cities they served received from 3 percent to 12 percent of the nation's imports while New York received 65 percent. In 1870, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore received from 3 percent to 10 percent of the goods imported into America and New York received 64 percent. The coasting trade was more important to Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore at this time than was foreign trade. These three seacoast lighthouses were not as important to the nation's foreign trade as the Montauk Point Lighthouse.

The Cape Henry Lighthouse is a National Historic Landmark (1964) with 1792 as the period of significance. It is historically significant as the first lighthouse completed by the new federal government and is architecturally significant as a representative of an early federal lighthouse. Along with the 1796 Montauk Point Lighthouse, the 1792 Cape Henry Lighthouse represents the eight decades after the founding of the federal lighthouse system. The Montauk Point Lighthouse is a far better representative of the seacoast lighthouse as an aid to the nation's foreign trade during this period than is the Cape Henry Lighthouse. When it was built, the Cape Henry Lighthouse was an essential seacoast light for the new nation's foreign trade. It was the seacoast light for the Chesapeake Bay ports of Virginia and Baltimore, the latter an important and growing port city. According to historian Rhoda Dorsey, beginning in 1785 Baltimore "developed rapidly until the Embargo of 1807" but after the War of 1812 it was left "far behind New York, Philadelphia and Boston."[79] The historian Herman E. Krooss attributed Baltimore's decline to "the fact that its foreign trade evaporated."[80] By 1815, the value of goods imported into Baltimore amounted to only 9 percent of the value of goods imported into New York.[81] From 1825 to 1860 New York received an average of 59 percent of all US imports while Baltimore received an average of 4 percent.[82] After the War of 1812, Baltimore's primary maritime activity became coastal trade in

[78] American State Papers. Documents, Legislative and Executive of the United States. Vol. 7. Commencing March 3, 1789, and ending March 3, 1815 (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832), 140, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport. The 1791 statistics, for example, indicate that Philadelphia had 23 percent of the nation's imports, New York had 20 percent, Boston had 15 percent, and Baltimore had 11 percent.

[79] Rhoda M. Dorsey, "Baltimore Foreign Trade," in Gilchrist, *Growth of the Seaport Cities*, 62.

[80] Herman E. Krooss, "Financial Institutions," in Gilchrist, *Growth of the Seaport Cities*, 105.

[81] Albion, Rise of New York Port, 13.

[82] Ibid., 389.

marketing fish, flour, and coal.[83] The Cape Henry Lighthouse was an important seacoast light for the nation's foreign trade for about the first fifteen years after its construction and thereafter was of primary importance for coastal navigation. Serving as a landfall lighthouse for only a minor part of the nation's foreign trade the Cape Henry Lighthouse is not comparable in importance to the Montauk Point Lighthouse which served as a primary landfall lighthouse on the most important and most active transatlantic trade route for the first eight decades of the US lighthouse establishment.

Summary of the Montauk Point Lighthouse Compared to Other Seacoast Lighthouses, 1789 to 1870

From the early years of the federal government to about 1815, the Montauk Point Lighthouse was one of five seacoast lighthouses of great importance to the nation's foreign trade. The other four lighthouses served the ports of Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. From about 1815, when New York first established clear dominance in foreign trade, to 1828, the Montauk Point Lighthouse was the most important seacoast lighthouse in the United States. During that period the New York packet ship lines were established and New York strengthened its position as America's premier seaport. From 1828 to 1858, the Montauk Point Lighthouse shared its first-tier status with the Navesink Light Station (1828–1862) which was also a landfall light for New York Port. From 1858 to 1870, the Montauk Point Lighthouse and the new Navesink Light Station (1862) were joined by new first-order lighthouses at Shinnecock and Fire Island which collectively aided the approach to New York Port, with the Montauk Point Lighthouse and the Navesink Light Station remaining the primary landfall lighthouses. The Montauk Point Lighthouse is the only seacoast lighthouse that was continually important to the nation's foreign trade through the first eight decades of the Federal lighthouse service.

[83] Benjamin W. Labaree, et al., *America and the Sea: A Maritime History* (Mystic: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1998), 256.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register. NR#69000142, Listed July 07, 1969
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
__ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

__ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
__ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 3.61 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	19	259960	4550580

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries are indicated on the accompanying property survey guaranteed to Montauk Historical Society, drawn by William J. Walsh, licensed land surveyor and dated revised December 16, 2004. The property boundaries of the 2004 survey are shown unchanged from the property boundaries established in 1935 when this parcel was divided off from a larger lighthouse reservation. Due to erosion of the ocean bluff since 1935, the property boundaries to the east now extend to the stone revetment and even into the ocean.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property is the 3.61-acre parcel upon which all the extant buildings and structures associated with the Montauk Point Lighthouse stand. The original lighthouse reservation of approximately ten acres had been diminished by erosion to 7.34 acres by 1935 when the northernmost 2.19 acres and the southernmost 1.54 acres were transferred to the Montauk Point State Park. Even though this was previously part of a larger property, the boundary is drawn around the present 3.61-acre lot as the unit of land which is owned, maintained, and operated by the Montauk Historical Society for the purpose of preserving the Montauk Point Lighthouse and interpreting it to the public.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Robert Hefner, Historic Preservation Consultant

Address: 18 Sag Harbor Road
East Hampton, NY 11937

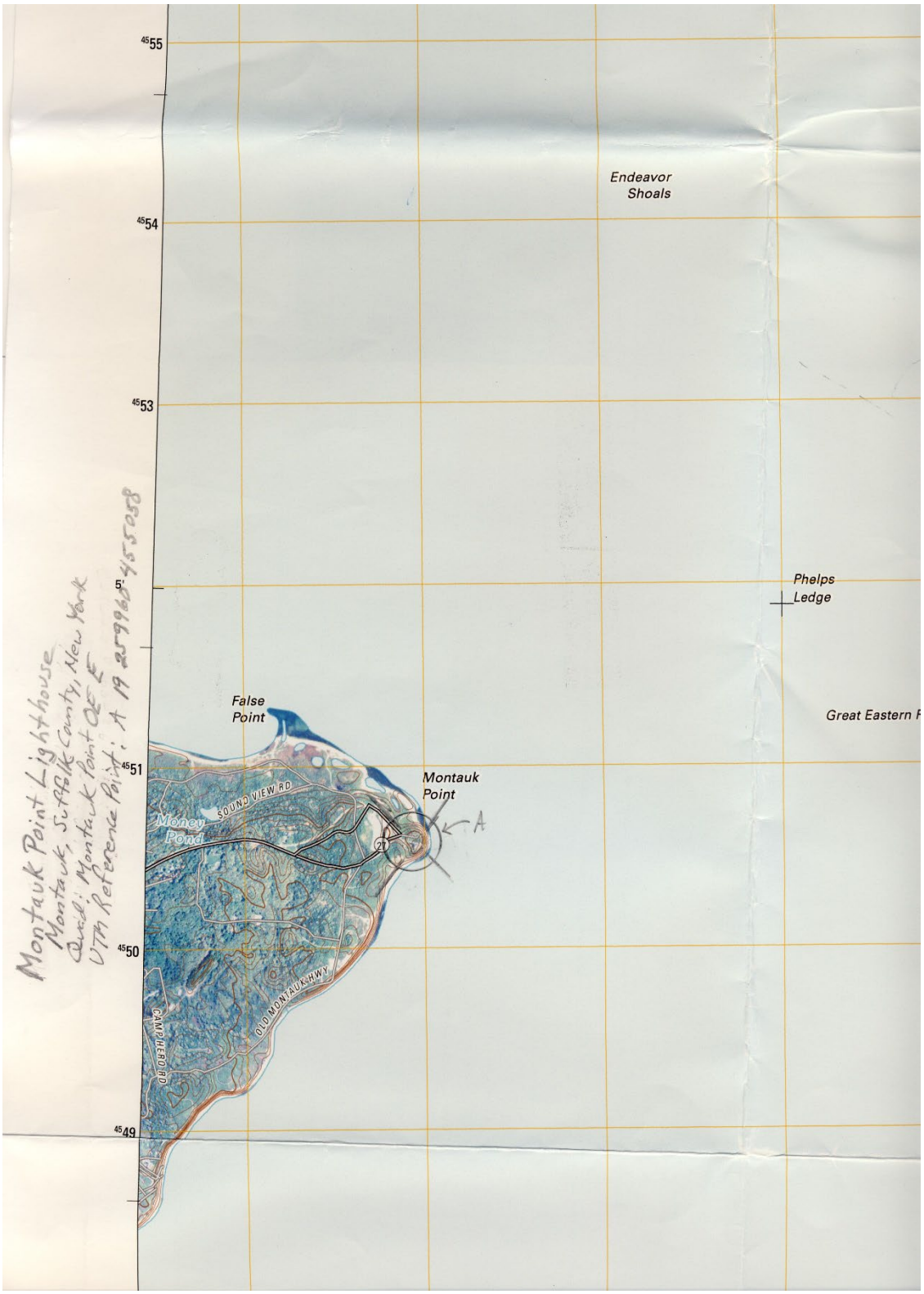
Telephone: 631-324-0393

Date: March 15, 2011

Edited by: Robie Lange
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program
1201 I St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington, DC 20005

Telephone: (202) 354-2257

DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
March 2, 2012


4555
4554
4553
4551
4550
4549
Endeavor Shoals
Phelps Ledge
False Point
Montauk Point
Great Eastern
SOUND VIEW RD
Money Pond
OLD MONTAUK HWY
CAMP HERO RD
A
Montauk Point Lighthouse
Montauk, Suffolk County, New York
Quad: Montauk Point QE E
UTM Reference Point: A 19 2799625 4555058

USGS Map

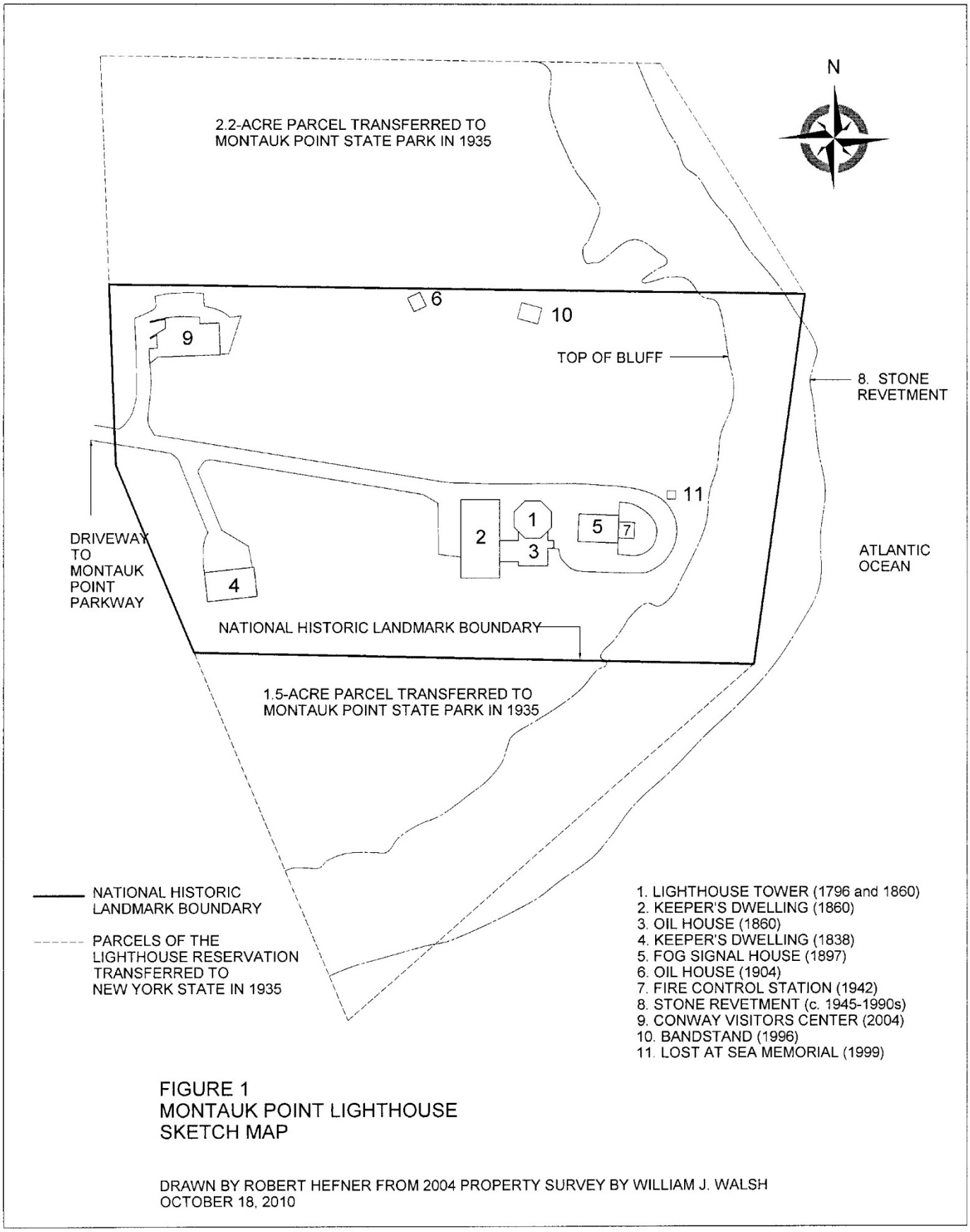


FIGURE 1
MONTAUK POINT LIGHTHOUSE
SKETCH MAP

DRAWN BY ROBERT HEFNER FROM 2004 PROPERTY SURVEY BY WILLIAM J. WALSH
OCTOBER 18, 2010

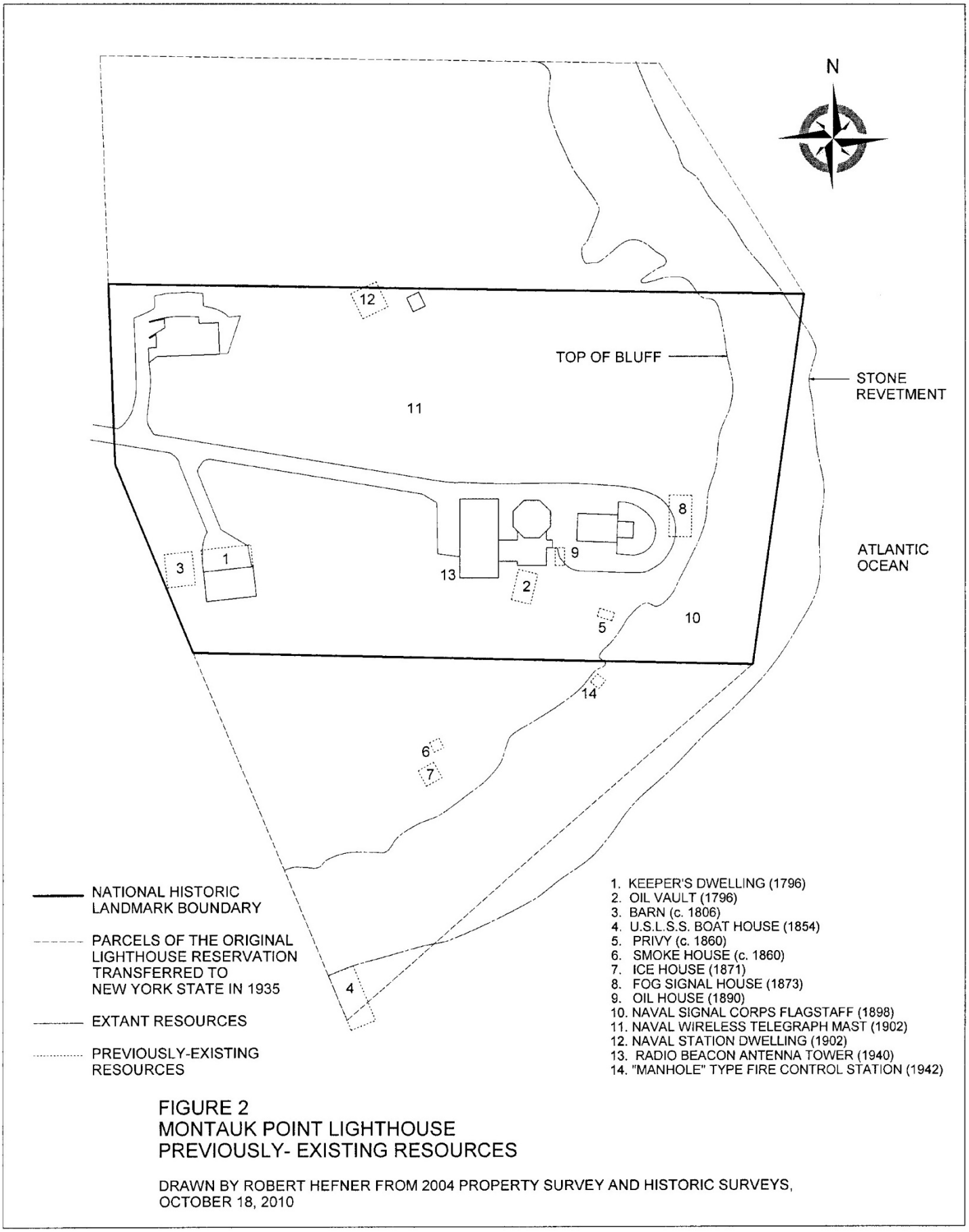


FIGURE 2
MONTAUK POINT LIGHTHOUSE
PREVIOUSLY- EXISTING RESOURCES

DRAWN BY ROBERT HEFNER FROM 2004 PROPERTY SURVEY AND HISTORIC SURVEYS, OCTOBER 18, 2010

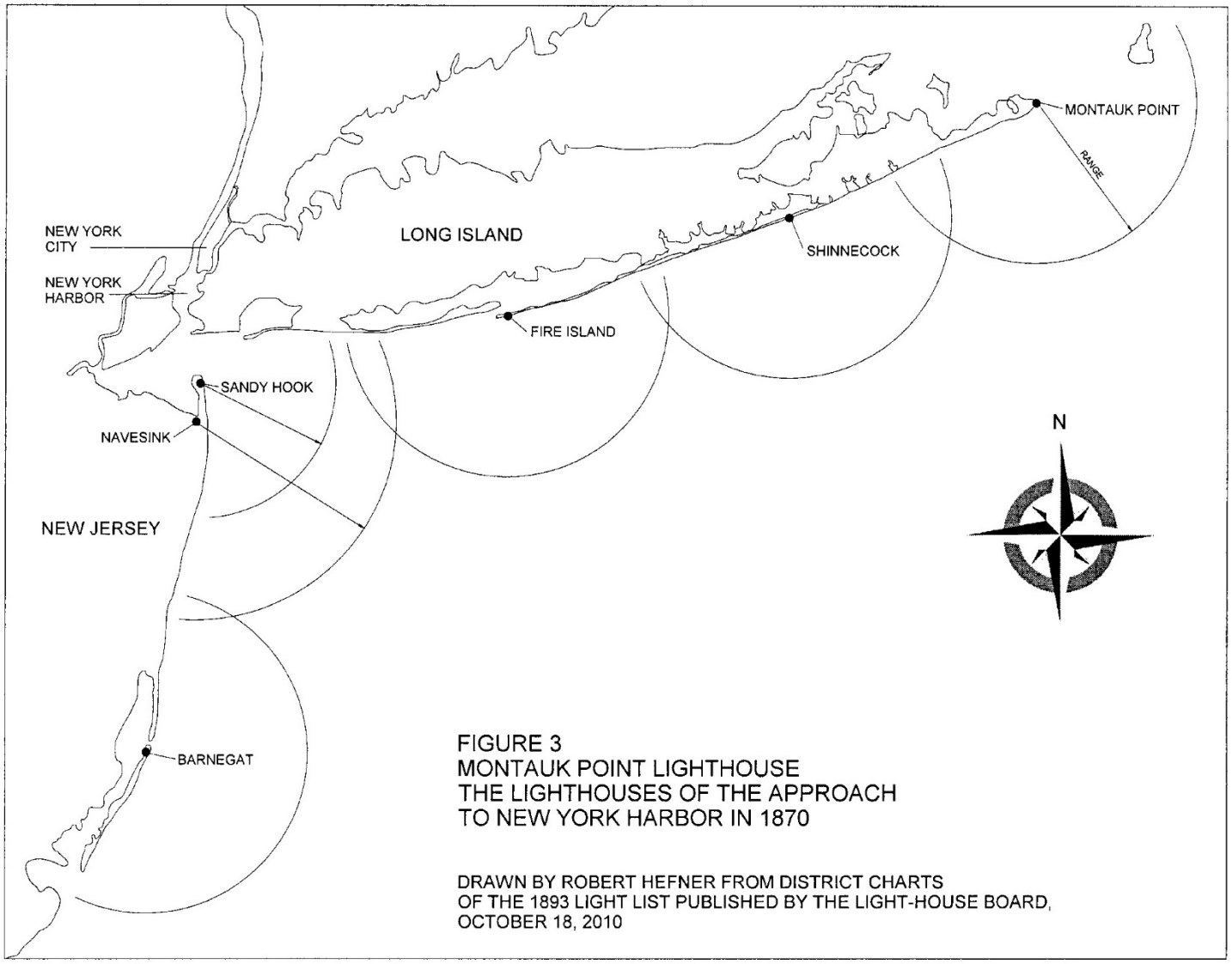


FIGURE 3
MONTAUK POINT LIGHTHOUSE
THE LIGHTHOUSES OF THE APPROACH
TO NEW YORK HARBOR IN 1870

DRAWN BY ROBERT HEFNER FROM DISTRICT CHARTS
OF THE 1893 LIGHT LIST PUBLISHED BY THE LIGHT-HOUSE BOARD,
OCTOBER 18, 2010

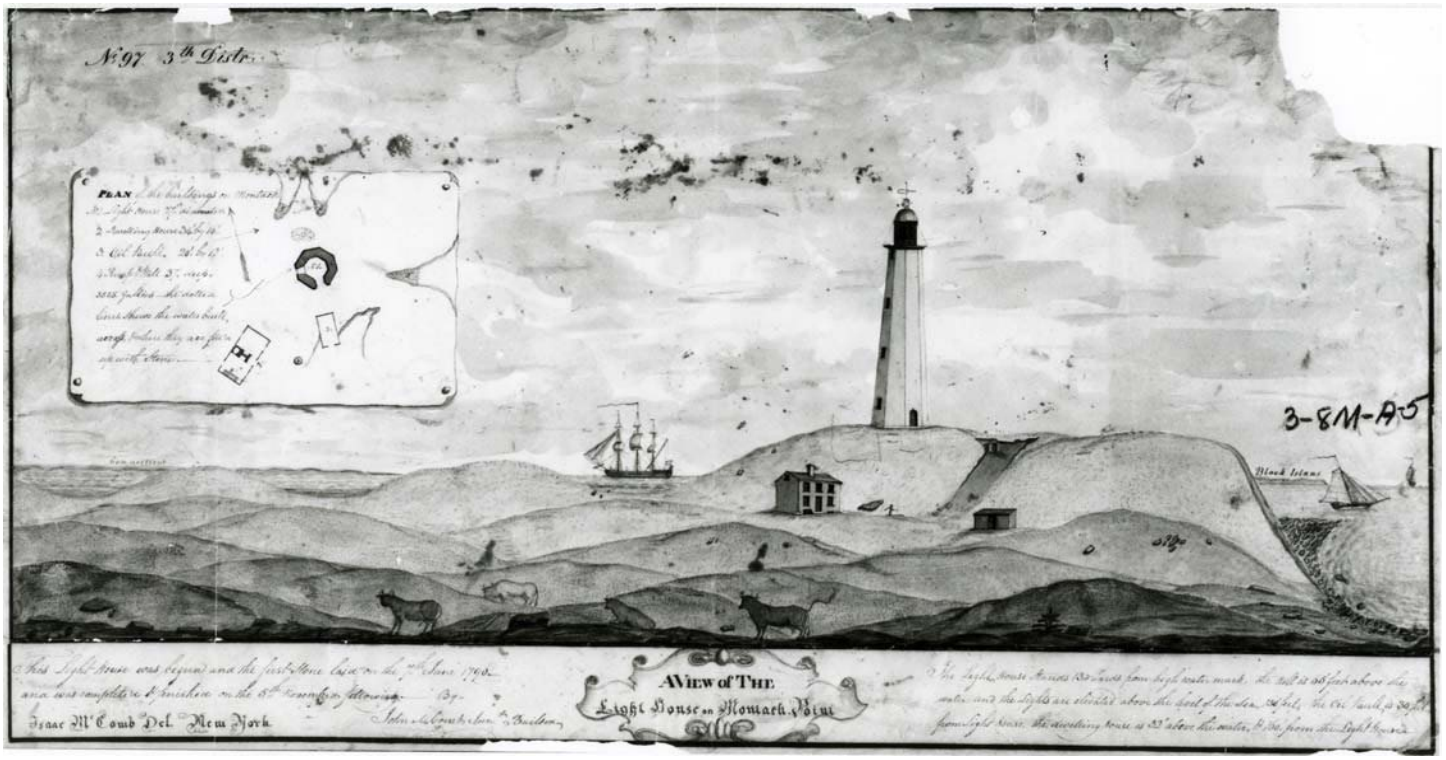


Figure 4. "A view of the Light House on Montack Point," by Isaac McComb, 1796. John McComb submitted this watercolor by his brother to Tench Coxe as part of his request for payment. The original keeper's dwelling is at the foot of Turtle Hill. Record Group 26, National Archives.

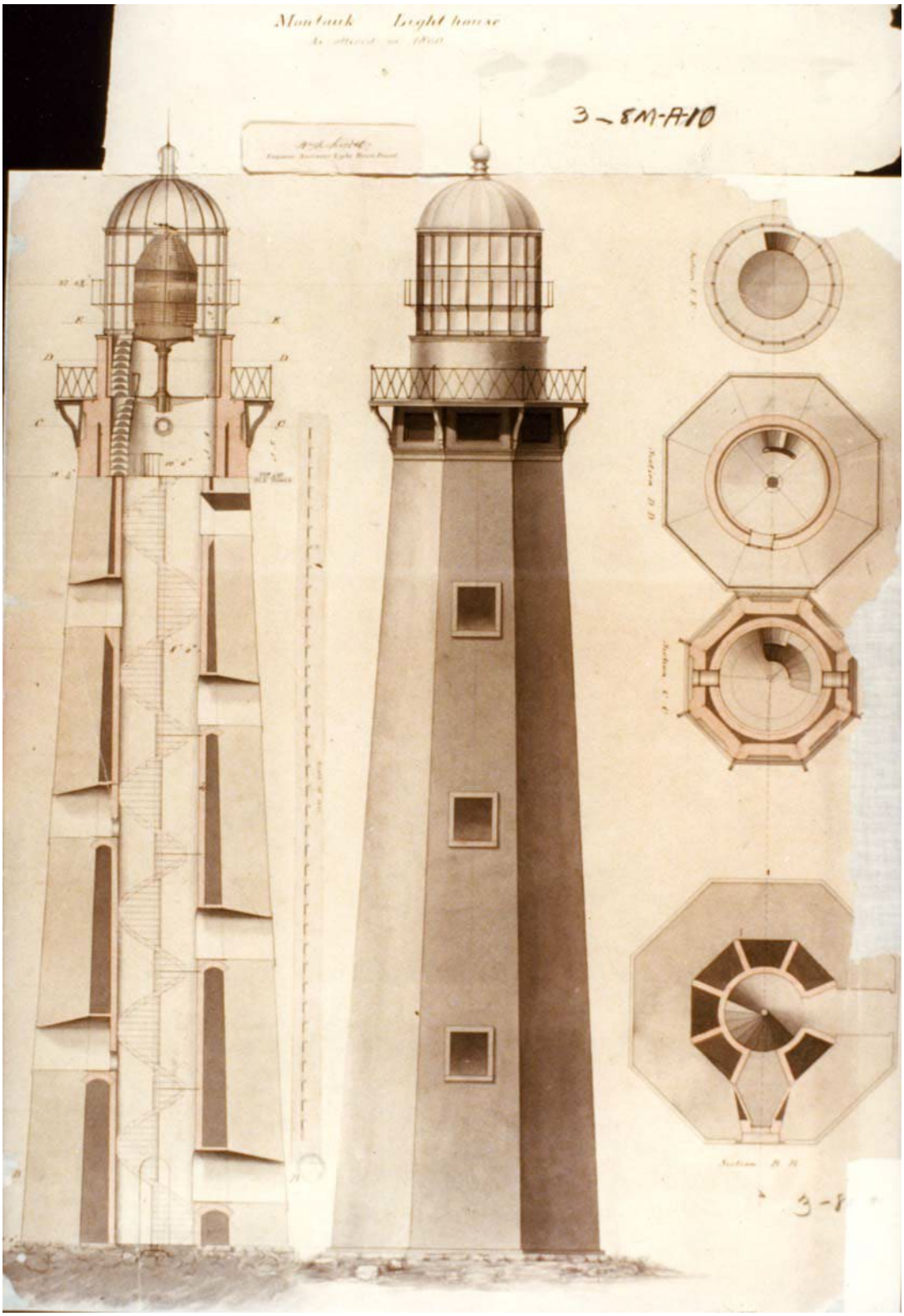


Figure 5. "Montauk Light house As altered in 1860." Plans for the 1860 renovation drawn by Captain William Smith, Engineer Secretary of the Light-House Board, showing the new iron spiral stairway in the tower, the watch room and service room built on top of the 1796 tower and the new first-order lantern. Record Group 26, National Archives.



Figure 6. Aerial view taken in 1977 from the south showing the connections between the keeper's dwelling, passage, oil house and lighthouse tower. To the right are the fog signal house (1897) and the fire control station (1942). Record Group 26, National Archives.



Photograph 1. General view facing north. From left to right: Keeper's Dwelling (1838); Keeper's Dwelling (1860); Oil House and Tower; Fog Signal House; and Fire Control Station. Photograph by Greg Zwirko, October 2010.



Photograph 2. The complex of keeper's dwelling (left), passage, oil house and lighthouse tower on top of Turtle Hill. The camera is facing north. Photograph by Robert Hefner, October 2010.



Photograph 3. Left to right: fire control station (1942); fog signal house (1897); lighthouse tower; and keeper's dwelling. The camera is facing southeast. Photograph by Robert Hefner, June 2010.



Photograph 4. The view from the top of Turtle Hill, west of the keeper's dwelling, looking west. The roof of the Conway Visitor Center (2004) is near the center of the photograph, just above the bench that is half-way up the driveway. Photograph by Robert Hefner, June 2010.



Photograph 5. View of the keeper's dwelling (1838) from Turtle Hill. The camera is facing southwest. Photograph by Robert Hefner, June 2010.



Photograph 6. The oil house for the Naval Wireless Telegraph Station (1904). The camera is facing northeast. Photograph by Robert Hefner, June 2010.



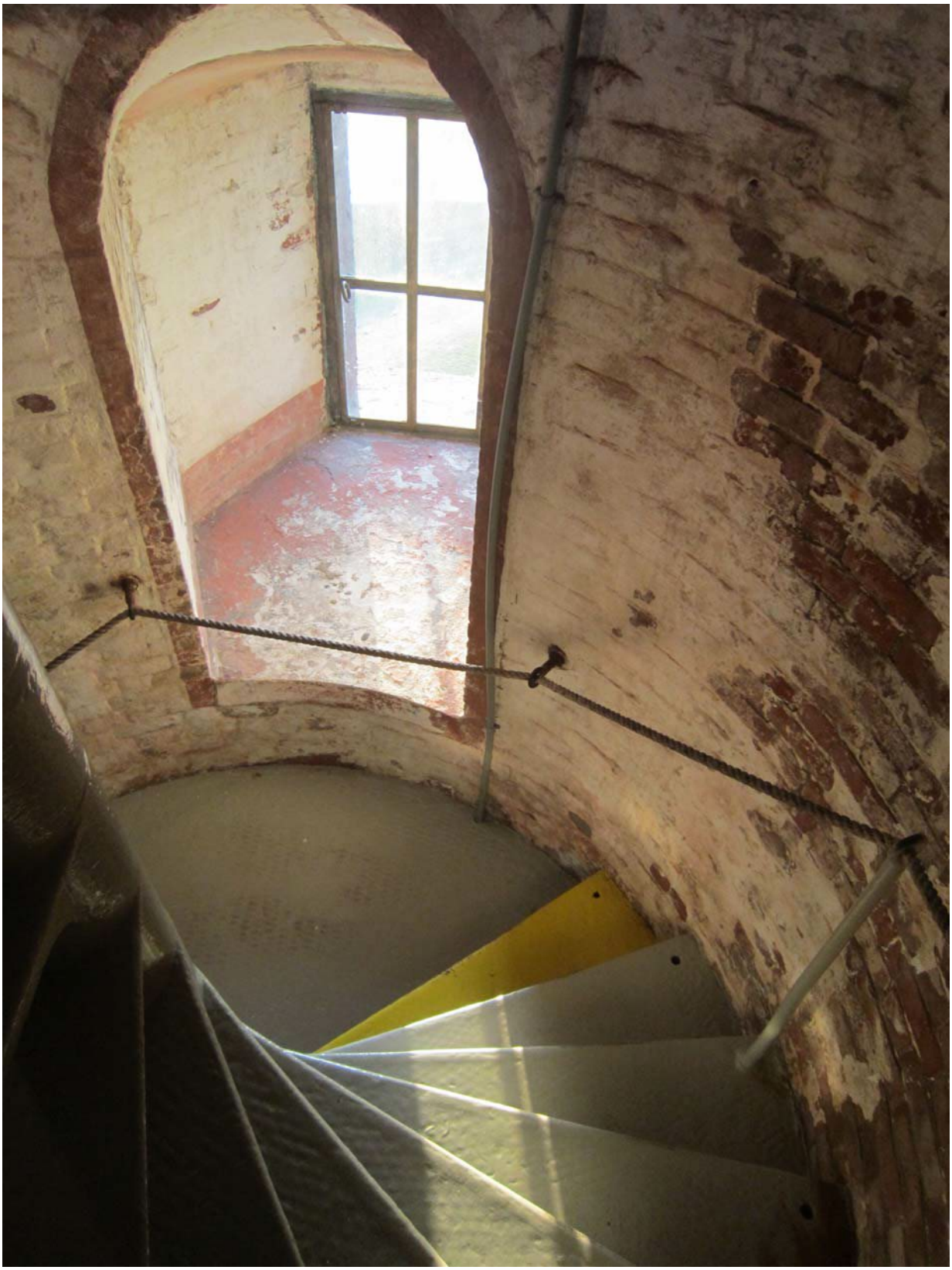
Photograph 7. The hallway of the primary keeper's residence in the south half of the keeper's dwelling (1860). The doorways to the right open to the front parlor and rear bedroom. The doorway in the far wall opens to the passage to the oil house. The camera is facing east. Photograph by Robert Hefner, October 2010.



Photograph 8. The front parlor of the primary keeper's residence in the south half of the keeper's dwelling (1860). The camera is facing south. Photograph by Robert Hefner, October 2010.



Photograph 9. The oil room of the oil house (1860). The arched doorway to the right leads to the stairwell of the lighthouse tower. The 3 ½ order bivalve lens to the left operated in the lantern of the Montauk Point Lighthouse from 1903 to 1987. The encaustic tile floor is original. The camera is facing west. Photograph by Robert Hefner, October 2010.



Photograph 10. The stairwell of the lighthouse tower. Photograph by Marge Winski, October 2010.



Photograph 11. The interior of the service room. In the foreground is the lens pedestal and on the far wall are the wood inner doors and cast-iron outer doors that open to the main balcony. The camera is facing west. Photograph by Robert Hefner, October 2010.



Photograph 12. The interior of the service room showing the lens pedestal and the iron stairway up to the lantern. Photograph by Robert Hefner, October 2010.



Photograph 13. Looking southeast from inside the lantern showing the wrought iron lantern frame and the stanchions and railing of the lantern gallery. The present optic is a VRB-25 marine rotating beacon. Photograph by Robert Hefner, October 2010.



Photograph 14. General view of the lighthouse, facing southeast, showing the Conway Visitor Center (2004) in the foreground, and the Lost at Sea Memorial (1999) to the left of the Fire Control Station (1942). Photograph by Marge Winski, March 15, 2011.