

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

NUMBER 3

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

PHOTOGRAPH KEY

Jack Clarke - MHC October 1980

1. Close up of Tower and
appended cottage

HISTORIC NAME: "Three Sisters of Nauset";
known as "The Beacon

TOWN: Eastham

LOCATION: 5 miles west of Nauset Beach, on
north side of Cable Road

COUNTY: Barnstable CODE: 001

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 10th

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

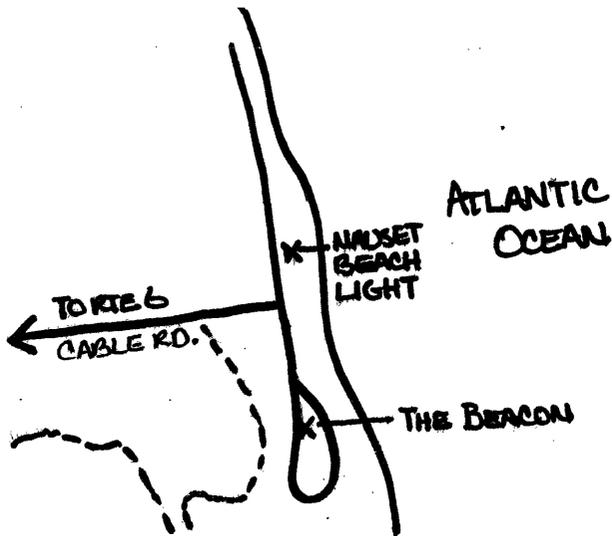
Barnstable County Courthouse, bk. 16,

National Park Service 2/7/1975 p. 264

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Please refer to the attached assessor's map
~~nomination confined to structure.~~

SKETCH MAP



LAT./LONG.: N/A

UTM COORDINATE: 19/421/000/4632/800

USGS QUADRANGLE: Prov. RI., Mass, Conn.

SCALE: 1:250,000

ACREAGE: less than 1 acre

OWNER(S): U.S. Park Service/Department of
the Interior

STATUS: Inactive/Unmanned

RECORDED BY: N. Salzman/J. Clarke

ORGANIZATION: MHC/Cape Cod Planning

DATE: July 22, 1981

Site Description

The Beacon (Eastham) is presently located .5 mile west of Nauset Beach on the north side of Cable Road. It now stands on a lot with the two other towers that, with The Beacon, comprised the Three Sisters of Nauset. The National Park Service plans to relocate the three structures in their approximate original configuration and to restore them but these plans are not finalized. Currently all three structures lack their lantern houses.

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

MAJOR ELEMENTS DESCRIPTION

A wood frame, shingled, cylindrical two story tower (1892) with an attached one story structure (1923).

EXTERIOR: Entry is on the east side, opposite attached structure. Wood frame diagonal lapstrake construction with shingles (painted white). Two 6/6 windows at Level 1, one 2/2 window at Level 2. Nine Italianate wooden brackets support the balcony, which is a projecting platform of wood.

The lens room, or lantern house, has been removed. It is now stored or located in TK. !!!!!!! The original cast iron lens room had nine windows in the upper portion and nine iron panels in the lower with a scuttle door to the balcony; the railing consisted of simple posts and single iron rail. The ball ventilator and lightning rod were intact and surmounted the standard iron roof.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

8/18/1837 - Benjamin H.A. and Sally Collins sell land for \$150.

1838 - a "curious trio, badly built, three brick towers in a line 15' high, 150' apart" on the Bluff at Nauset; 2 keeper's houses. The light had three stationary and alternating lights; each had ten lamps with 13" reflectors (\$7050.01 cost, \$4949.99 of appropriation returned).

1892 - three portable wooden towers built further back from cliffs. Brick towers washed away (foundations are still visible on beach).

1911 - two of three towers sold and removed. Light now revolving, 3 flashes approximately.

1923 - Beacon Light moved to new location in the parking lot at Nauset Beach, attached to one story cottage. Twin Light at Chatham moved approximately 1/4 mile to Nauset to replace the Beacon.

2/7/1975 - purchased by Department of the Interior (National Park Service); included in Cape Cod National Seashore.

ca. 1985 - moved to current location off Cable Road to await relocation and restoration by NPS.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Beacon at Nauset (Eastham) possesses integrity of materials and workmanship as well as associations with the development of aids to navigation in Massachusetts. It was constructed in 1892 as part of a trio of wooden towers which replaced an earlier 1838 trio of brick towers and which were purposely designed to be portable due to the shifting nature of the Nauset bluffs. Although currently inactive, The Beacon remains significant as a component of the only example of a triple light (along with the Twin Lights of Nauset) illustrating an early simple technological effort to distinguish between lights which are geographically close. As technology progressed, it became possible to incorporate all three signal lights within this tower through the use of a revolving mechanism. The Beacon meets criteria A and C and Criteria Consideration exception B (for its architectural and technological value) of the National Register of Historic Places. It also meets survey criteria 1a, 4a.



THE BEACON
EASTHAM, MA #3

PHOTO #1 OF 1
Lighthouses of Ma. R

The Beacon"

Cable Rd.

No. Eastham, MA

10/80

Jack Clarke

CAPE COD PLANNING
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
1st DISTRICT COURT HOUSE
BARNSTABLE, MASS. 02630