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THE OLD CAPE HENRY LIGHT

A Survey Report

Department of
National Park Service
Southeast Regional Office

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The Old Cape Henry Light

The tower of the old Cape Henry Lighthouse still stands, gaunt and silent, perched atop a dominating sand dune at the edge of the sea at the junction of the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Though its light is gone and repairs would be helpful, it continues as a noted, familiar and ancient landmark. Such it has been since its construction was begun in 1791. As George R. Putnam relates in his Lighthouses and Lightships of the United States, "the lighthouse at Cape Henry at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay was the first one¹ built by the United States..."

Location:

Cape Henry is an area of windswept sand with stunted and twisted vegetation. It is just a few feet above sea level except for the dunes that build to ten to twenty feet and occasionally rise higher as at the site of the old tower. The tower dune, and some others in the vicinity, have low bushes and some wild grasses that act as a partially stabilizing influence. Winds from the sea (east) are predominant as the tree growth of the area (chiefly pine and live oak) show.

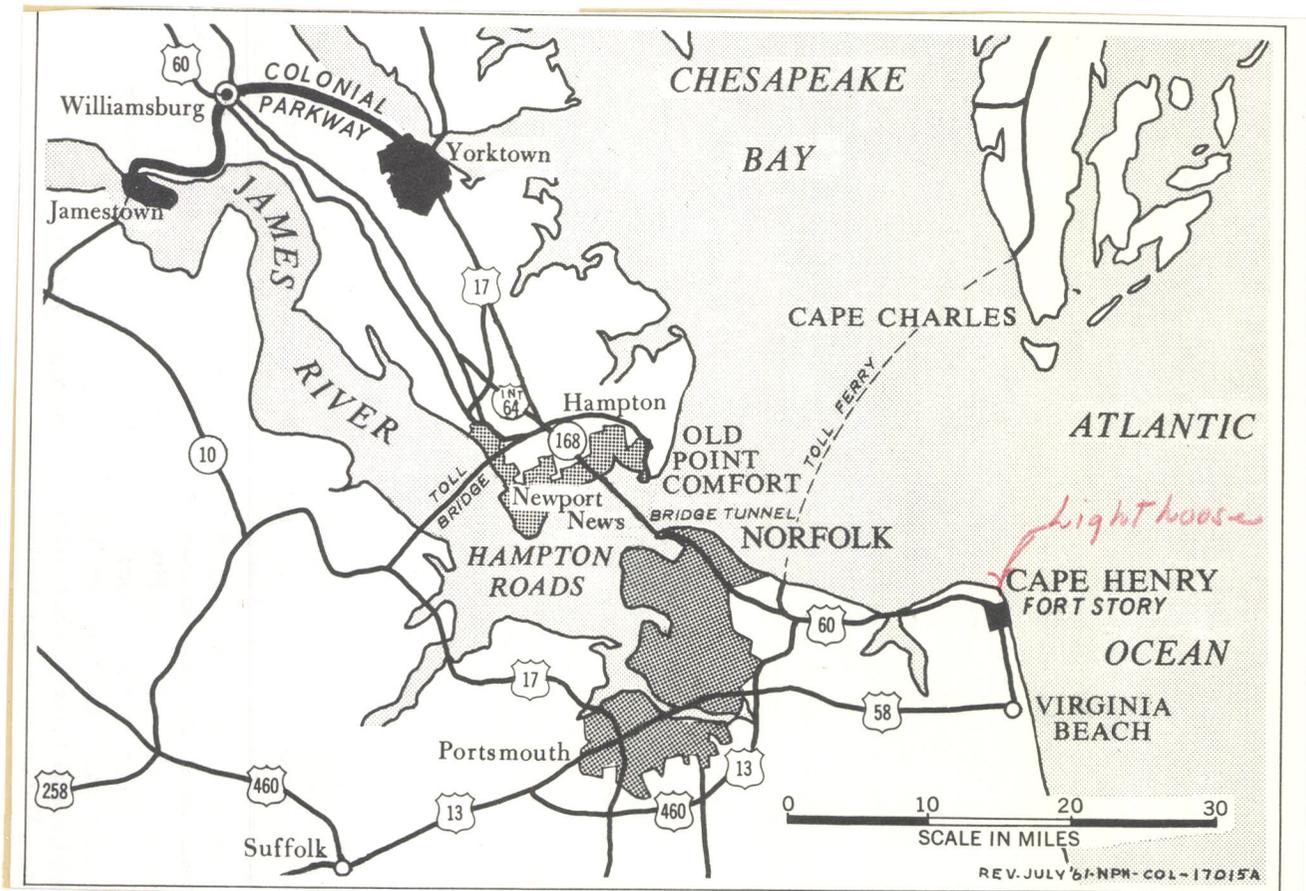
The location is at the south entrance to Chesapeake Bay some ten miles east from downtown Norfolk and only a mile, or two, north, up the Atlantic coast from the heart of Virginia Beach. Actually,

1. (Boston, 1917), pp. 20-1.



The Tower - November 13, 1961

This photograph was made during an inspection of the area by Superintendent Stanley W. Abbott (Colonial National Historical Park). Architect Edward W. Aschmann (National Park Service Region One Office) and Historians Frank E. Sarles and Charles E. Hatch, Jr. (Region One and Colonial Offices respectively).



Map of The Area

This map is that carried on the present Cape Henry Memorial folder issued by the National Park Service.

both cities and intervening Princess Anne County are growing urban areas (almost one-half million people now), and the future seems to be that the whole area will be a single metropolitan one.

Virginia Beach and surrounding Princess Anne County have acted, and are looking, toward merger as the city of greater Virginia Beach.

Fort Story Military Reservation encompasses the lighthouse grounds as it does the nearby (almost adjacent) Cape Henry Memorial, a part of Colonial National Historical Park. Fort Story, now assured of permanent status as a military post, will serve to hold the city at a distance.

Road access is by U. S. Highway 60 from the Norfolk area which in turn is served by various major highways such as Interstate 64, U. S. 17 and 58, Virginia 168 and others. The completion of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the southern terminus of which will be only several miles from Cape Henry, will open yet another artery (U. S. 13). There is air service to Norfolk's municipal airport some eight miles away. Major train and bus terminals in Norfolk are Chesapeake and Ohio, Norfolk and Western, Trailways, and Greyhound. Virginia's Seashore State Park, now largely a day use area, is almost adjacent to the site abutting Fort Story on the west.

Establishment of Lighthouse:

The construction of the Cape Henry light stemmed directly from the act which created the lighthouse service, one of the initial acts

of the First Session of the 1st Congress in 1789. This measure, approved on August 7, called for "the establishment and support of light-houses, beacons, buoys and public piers" and provided for the takeover of such facilities which had already been built and were being operated by the states. The second and third sections of the measure dealt specifically with the Cape Henry Lighthouse, the only specific structure, or facility, mentioned in the act. The second section directed that "a light-house shall be erected near the entrance of the Chesapeake-bay...at such place, when ceded to the United States...as the President of the United States shall direct." In the third section it was made the duty of the Secretary of the Treasury to see that the necessary contracts, to be "approved by the President," should be prepared.

It, also, became the duty of the Secretary to contract "for rebuilding, repairing, supplying and manning other light-houses, beacons, buoys, and public piers in the several states..." as they were transferred to the United States.²

This latter provision applied to the some 15 lighthouses³ that were were in operation, or under construction, at the time. The oldest

2. Laws of the United States Relating to the Establishment, Support and Management of the Light-Houses...August 7, 1789 to March 3, 1855, compiled by order of the Light-House Board (Washington, 1855), pp. 3-4.

3. See Appendix I for list with dates and brief notes.

of these had been initially built in 1715-1716 on "Great Brewster (called Beacon's Island) at the Entrance of the Harbour of Boston" and was first lighted on September 14, 1716.⁴

A few days after passage, Washington forwarded a copy of the new act along with two others, one dealing with the Northwest Territory and the other with the creation of the War Department, to Governor Beverly Randolph of Virginia.⁵

The Virginia authorities, long in pursuit of the Cape Henry Lighthouse project, moved rather quickly. On November 13, the Virginia General Assembly, by act, provided for the conveyance of land "to the United States for the purpose of building a light-house." This was public land, not exceeding two acres, "lying and being in the County of Princess-Anne, at a place commonly called the head land of Cape Henry." The Virginia authorization required construction

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4. From the Boston News Letter, September 17, 1716, as quoted in Putnam, Lighthouses and Lightships, p. 4.
Hans Christian Adamson has observed that; "The ninth bill passed by the First Congress during its first session-enacted on August 7, 1789-transferred the ten lighthouses, several fog-guns, and seven unlighted buoys then in service to the jurisdiction of the federal government and placed upon it the duty of expanding the nation's aids to navigation. To start the ball rolling, the bill provided for the immediate construction of a lighthouse on Cape Henry at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay." (Keepers of the Lights (New York, c. 1955), p. 25.)
 5. Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, Volume V (edited by William P. Palmer and Sherwin McRae, Richmond, 1885), pp. 19-20.

within seven years and reserved the right of "citizens" to continue to enjoy the "privileges they now enjoy of hauling seines and fishing on the shores of the said land."⁶ This act went to Washington who later, on January 5, 1790, passed it to the Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton.

The actual "deed of cession" from Virginia to the United States, mentioned by Washington in a letter of January 29 to Governor Randolph, was, after some delay, eventually forthcoming, under date of August 9, 1790.⁷

The new project moved along with some aid from Washington, for, on January 27, 1790, he entered in his diary that he "Did Business" with the Secretary of the Treasury "respecting the appointment of Superintendents of the Light Houses, Buoys, etc., and for building one at Cape Henry." The appropriations act, approved March 26, 1790,

6. William Waller Hening, The Statutes at Large...Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia..., XIII (Philadelphia, 1823), pp. 3-4.

7. The Writings of George Washington edited by John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, 1939), XXX, 489n and XXXI, 4-5: Copy of deed is in Records Group 26, Records of the United States Coast Guard, Lighthouse Site File Virginia No. 6 (Cape Henry) in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

It is an interesting note that the deed was not recorded in Princess Anne County until July 10, 1878.

8. The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1749 edited by John C. Fitzpatrick (Boston and New York, 1925), IV, 81.

based on Treasury Secretary Hamilton's report to the House of Representatives on March 1, contained funds for financing the new service and included "therein a provision for building a lighthouse on Cape Henry." Here again the only specific reference was to Cape Henry.⁹

It was not until August 10, 1790, that another lighthouse was mentioned specifically in Congressional legislation. This was a \$1,500. authority for "the purpose of finishing the light-house on Portland Head, in the district of Maine."¹⁰ The third light to draw specific mention in Congressional action was "Bald Head, at the mouth of the Cape Fear river...heretofore begun under the authority of the State of North Carolina..." This was on April 2, 1792, at which time \$4,000. was earmarked for the project.¹¹ Ten days later came the second authorization for a new lighthouse, the first having been that at Cape Henry. This called for "a light-house on Montauk Point in the State of New York" as soon as sufficient land for a site was transferred to the United States.¹²

9. Laws...Relating to...Light-Houses... (1855), p. 4

10. Ibid, pp. 4-5.

This project, undertaken in 1787, was completed with the tower being lighted on January 10, 1791.

11. Laws...Relating to...Light-Houses... (1855), p. 5.

An additional sum of \$2,000 was authorized on March 2, 1793, and the light-house was completed, it seems, in 1796.

12. Laws...Relating to...Light-Houses ... (1855), pp. 5-7.

The sum of \$20,000. was approved on March 2, 1793

The Colonial Story: 13

Chesapeake Bay early boasted of a substantial volume of shipping, but for decades it did not have the benefit of a lighthouse although the disadvantages of this situation are obvious. A system of pilots and beacons came into vogue and was regulated by law in 1660, however, this related more to the inner, lower Bay and river traffic than it did to entrance into the Bay from the Atlantic.¹⁴

It was Governor Alexander Spotswood who first gave official call for a lighthouse at the Bay's entrance when he sent to the Virginia House of Burgesses, on November 24, 1720, "a Petition which I lately received containing Some Proposals for Building and Keeping a Light House at Cape Henry." He indicated that he had word that "some considerable persons in the Government of Maryland" were also interested. The House acted, on December 5, with a resolve "That a lighthouse be built and maintained at Cape Henry at the Charge of the Colony of Virginia Provided the Province of Maryland will contribute...towards Building and...maintaining the Same forever."¹⁵

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13. This story is covered in some detail in Arthur Pierce Middleton, "The Struggle for the Cape Henry Lighthouse, 1721-1791" in American Neptune, VII (1948) No. 1, pp. 2-12. There is an account, too, in The Old Lighthouse at Cape Henry Virginia, a booklet issued by the Norfolk Branch, Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, c. 1947.
 14. Hening, Statutes, II, 35.
 15. Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia 1712 - 1726 edited by H. R. McIlwaine (Richmond, Va., 1912), pp. 279, 290.

Since this project involved a duty on shipping to support construction, clearance from the home authorities was needed. Spotswood approached the Board of Trade in England. He urged that a lighthouse be built at Cape Henry for the "benefite of the trade" to Virginia and Maryland, pointing out that the need was "so obvious that I have often wondered why so useful a work has not been undertaken long ere now." He pointed out that vessels approaching the Virginia Capes in thick, heavy weather at night were afraid to venture in when they could see no landmark. Some, he related, have been "kept out 2 or 3 months, whereas if such a lighthouse were built ships might then boldly venture, there being water enough and a good channell within little more than a musquett shote of the place where this lighthouse may be placed."¹⁶

But nothing came of this. The Maryland authorities lacked the interest, or at least did not prove cooperative. The Board of Trade consulted with a group of prominent British merchants active in the trade with Virginia and Maryland. They were not sympathetic with the idea, contending that "the use of the lead is the best guide" and that "Ships that come within 8 or 10 leagues of the land in the night-time often discover great lights on the shoar, which cannot be distinguished whether it may be one of those great fires or the lighthouse."¹⁷

16. Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, American and West Indies, March, 1720 to December, 1721 edited by Cecil Headlam (London, 1933), pp. 265-6.

17. Calendar of State Papers, Col. Ser., Am. & W.I., 1722-23 (1934), p. 117.

In summary the principal obstacles to the success of the project were (1) the division of the Chesapeake Bay physical unit into two political entities, Virginia and Maryland, making unified action difficult, (2) the comparative regularity of the coastline off the Virginia Capes, and (3) the difficulty of getting agreement among so many interested, and often conflicting parties--the Upper and Lower Houses of the Virginia and Maryland assemblies, the British Government, Lord Baltimore, and the British merchants trading to the Chesapeake. It seems significant that the lighthouse was not erected until this situation had been simplified by the establishment of a Federal Government and that it was undertaken successfully so soon after it was established.¹⁸

Virginia's Governor Sir William Gooch raised the issue again in his message of February 1, 1727, to the House declaring it a "further security to your trade" and "much wanted for the preservation of shipping from the dangers of the Enemy as well as seas."¹⁹ Favorable action followed from the Virginia Assembly which again made Maryland cooperation a requirement. In presenting the matter to the Board of Trade, Gooch contended that "a flat coast for many leagues on each side of the Capes, and scarce discernible in the clearest weather

18. Middleton, "Struggle," pp. 2-4.

19. Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1727...1740 (1910), p. 5.

above five leagues off at sea, surely requires some noted landmark to guide the doubting mariner." He concluded, too, "for surely there is no place of trade where a lighthouse is more necessary."²⁰

Once again the proposal suffered defeat, as Gooch contended, from the "meer obstinacy in our neighbors and those merchants" trading there even though Maryland stood to gain as much, or more, than Virginia. The wreck of a vessel bound for Maryland in January, 1729, failed to alter the case.²¹

Another twenty years passed and, in 1750, Thomas Lee, President of the Virginia Council, brought the matter up once more. Again the Virginia Assembly acted favorably in its measure of 1752, but considerable delay ensued before the Board of Trade brought it up for review late in 1758. In the ensuing discussion it was established that the tobacco merchants were now of the opinion "that a Lighthouse there at Cape Henry would be a Security to all Ships & their Cargoes" bound for the Chesapeake and, consequently, would be "a publick benefit."²² They were, however, unwilling to bear any of the cost of construction and maintenance.

20. Calendar of State Papers, Col. Ser., Am. & W. I., 1728-1729 (1937), pp. 114-125.

21. Ibid, pp. 332-36.

22. Quoted in Middleton, "Struggle," p. 7.

It now appeared that all elements (Lord Baltimore, the Maryland and Virginia assemblies, and the British merchants) agreed on the worthwhileness of the lighthouse although there was not agreement on the method of funding. The Board recommended that the agents of the two colonies and the merchants get together to work out the details. Even though it might now be expected, prompt action did not follow.

Finally, in February 1772, the Virginia Assembly acted in response to a communication from the Lower House of the Maryland Assembly expressing willingness to cooperate in the project and to share the cost. The response was an act that laid a duty on vessels trading to the colony and providing for the appointment of eleven managers, or directors, for the construction of a lighthouse which "will greatly conduce to the safety and preservation of ships, and other vessels, coming into and going out of the bay..."²³ Maryland reciprocated with the necessary legislation and in March, 1773, a supplementary Virginia act added five directors, a group now authorized to select a plan, purchase materials and initiate construction.²⁴

On June 24, 1773, the Directors of the Lighthouse visited Cape Henry to view the grounds. They selected a site "as near the Inner Cape, as a convenient foundation can be made" and authorized William Byrd, III,

23. Hening, Statutes, VIII, pp. 539-41.

24. Hening, Statutes, VIII, pp. 652-3.

one of their own number, "to procure from the Northward proper Plann's for a Lighthouse."²⁵ He secured plans and estimates of the lighthouses recently built at Sandy Hook and at Cape Henlopen. Those of the latter were preferred and John Palmer, who constructed the facility at Cape Henlopen, was employed. He agreed to the site, recommended materials and visited quarries on the Potomac and the Rappahannock Rivers. Sandstone was ordered from James Tutt and Richard Brooks of the Rappahannock quarry and transportation was arranged. Meanwhile, the directors acted on another section of the Act of 1772, the placement of buoys to mark some of the dangerous shoals in the Bay--Middle Ground, the Horseshoe, Willoughby's Spit, the Wolf Trap and Smith's Point.

The Cape Henry lighthouse project was both difficult and costly. The sand offered a poor foundation, transportation of the heavy stone was a problem and its landing, with poor facilities, at Cape Henry was time consuming. It was necessary, for example, to erect a frame 60 by 20 foot house and a 15 foot square brick kitchen to accommodate the carters at the site and to build stables for their horses. By "memorial" of the directors to the Assembly, in June 1775, it was reported that in getting stone (more than 4,000 tons) and other materials to the Cape "for building a Light House as well as a dwelling house:

25. Proceedings of the Directors of the Lighthouse, 24 June 1773, quoted in Middleton, "Struggle", p. 8.

for the keeper" and for fixing "buoys on the Shoals "they had expended some 7,908 pounds of the 6,000 granted by the Virginia Assembly and the 3,600 granted by Maryland. According to "the best information they can obtain" an additional 5,000 pounds would be necessary.²⁶

Costs had far exceeded initial estimates and now the Revolution intervened to delay, and then to halt, the work despite the substantial progress that had been made. Actually, the work went almost to naught as the stone settled into the sand and drifts buried most of it even deeper, sometimes 20 to 50 feet deep.²⁷ The project was permanently abandoned in 1782 when the Virginia Assembly named six gentlemen "to make a settlement of the accounts and adjust the balances due to the several creditors."²⁸ It is interesting and significant, in giving continuity to the story, that at least some of this buried stone found its way into the lighthouse subsequently built by the Federal Government. The foundation was built of it.

An interim measure for Cape Henry was directed, in February, 1777, by the Council of State of Virginia:

26. Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1773 - 1776 (1915), pp. 242-3.

27. Calendar of Virginia State Papers, V, pp. 98-99, 265, 352, 424.

28. Hening, Statutes, XI, 58.

that for the Safety of the Trade of this Commonwealth there be immediately set upon the point of Land at Cape Henry on a staff fifty feet high at least, a white flag striped with Red to be constantly kept hoisted in the day when no enemy is within the Capes and taken down when an enemy appears; that there be also hoisted on the said staff a proper light to be kept constantly burning in the night Time when no Enemy is within the Capes and taken down on the approach of the enemy...²⁹

A detail from the Portsmouth garrison was to be given this assignment.

With this background"...it is more than a mere coincidence that in later years the first lighthouse erected by the Federal Government was that at Cape Henry."³⁰

Construction and Completion:

A year lapsed between the initial Congressional appropriation, and the letting of the contract for the Cape Henry Lighthouse. It was ready and duly signed on March 31, 1791, by Alexander Hamilton, representing the government, and John McComb, Jr., "of the State of New York, Bricklayer," as builder and "undertaker." Edward Rowe Snow has called this "the first contract for the construction of a lighthouse ever entered into by the Federal Government..." The modest appellation of the contractor, "Bricklayer" belies the fame that he would ultimately achieve

29. Journals of the Council of the State of Virginia edited by H. R. McIlwaine, Volume I (July 12, 1776-October 2, 1777 ((Richmond, 1931)), pp. 350-1.

30. Middleton, "Struggle", p. 12

as builder, architect, and designer.³¹

This contract is an interesting document and rather rich in descriptive detail. It called for McComb, with "all convenient speed, ~~to~~ build and finish in a good and workman like manner a Light House of Stone, Faced with hewn or hammer dressed Stone... from the bottom of the Water Table up to the top of the Stone Work." It was to have the shape of "an OCTAGON, having three Windows in the East & four in the West." The stone foundation was to be sunk 13 feet below the water table and "the pavement" was to be laid on it. The diameter of the foundation was to be 27 feet, 6 inches with a 19 foot vacancy in the center. The base was to be 26 feet in diameter and the walls, at that point, 6 feet thick. There were to be 72 feet from the water table to the top of the stone work where the diameter would reduce to 16 feet, 6 inches, and the wall thickness to 3 feet. "On top of the Stone work shall be a floor of Joist, bedded therein planked over and covered with Copper." This was to project over the wall some 2 feet, 8 inches to form "an Eve"

31. Famous Lighthouses of America (New York, 1955), p. 161. This was the first of three lighthouses that would bear McComb's imprint. He designed and built Castle Garden in the Battery and was one of two designers for New York City Hall completed in 1814. He built, too, a substantial private and organization practice after he became independent of his architect-builder father about 1790. (Dictionary of American Biography edited by Dumas Malone, XI (New York, 1933), pp. 599-600)

and "finished with a Cornice sufficient to throw off the Water."³²

The lantern description is of particular note. It was recorded that it:

shall be supported by eight Posts of wrought Iron of three inches square and twenty feet in length, ten feet of which shall be wrought into the wall in the inner part at each corner. The Diameter thereof shall be ten feet, leaving a platform on the outside thereof of about six feet in width. All the work above the Lantern shall be Iron & Copper. The Lantern shall be ten feet high, and have a semicircular roof of five feet more, with Iron rafters covered with Copper. The whole space between the posts supporting the Lantern shall be occupied by the sashes, which shall be made of Iron, and each sash shall have twenty eight panes of glass, twelve by fourteen inches. The sash on the South west side shall ~~be~~ hung with hinges for a door to go out upon the platform, from the outer part of which to the roof of the Lantern, shall be a frame of Iron, covered with a net work of strong brass wire so as to preserve the Glass in the lantern from injuries by Hail, or flights of Birds in the Night...the rafters of the Lantern shall be well fastened to an Iron hoop, over which shall be a copper funnel, through which the smoke may pass into a large Copper ventilator to be made in the form of a Man's Head, capable of containing one hundred gallons. The Head shall be so placed, as to be turned by a large Vane which shall be fixed on the spire above it so that the hole for venting the smoke may always be to leeward, and eight dormant ventilators of six inches diameter shall be fixed to the roof of the Lantern.³³

It was further stated that there should be: "A close Stove... provided and fixed in the Lantern, which shall be furnished with eight lamps, each capable of containing six quarts, and shall be hung in two tiers over each other transversely." It would require

32. Copy of the contract in Coast Guard Records, Lighthouse Site File Virginia No. 6 (Cape Henry).

33. Ibid.

"six flights of stairs to ascend to the Lantern the entrance to which shall be by a door covered with Copper." In view of persisting prejudices, it is of note that "Electrical conductors to secure it from the effects of Lightning" were a contract provision. Further provisions called for a "frame House", 20 feet square, being "two stories high, with a frame Kitchen" and to have "Lath & plaister." This was "for the occupation & residence of the keeper of the said Light House." There was provision, too, for oil storage. McComb was to construct at "a convenient distance from the said Light House a Vault, twelve feet wide and twenty feet in length, for the storage & safe keeping of the Oil belonging to the said Light House, which vault shall be arched and covered over with Sand or Earth, also shall and will erect, build, and finish over the said Vault, a Shed and furnish the said vault with eight strong Cedar Cisterns with Covers, each capable of containing two hundred gallons of Oil, and secure the entrance thereto by a strong Door."³⁴ McComb was to provide and furnish all materials for this and the other items for which he contracted.

When the Federal Government enacted its lighthouse service act of 1789, quite naturally, the Virginia authorities thought of the considerable quantity of stone that lay at Cape Henry, albeit now

34. Ibid.

under the sand--a residue of the effort at lighthouse building in the 1770's. The quantity of this was considerable, some 4,036 tons.³⁵ The ownership of this was reserved in the act of November 13 that allowed the transfer of land to the United States. There was early correspondence with Washington relative to this and Washington seemed interested, as when he wrote Thomas Newton, Jr., the Virginia spokesman for the disposal of the stone, on October 12, 1789, in response to a query from Newton. He asked for the offered statement of the quantity there and the cost of the materials. A month later, on November 23, Washington wrote again and thanked Newton for having supplied him with "an estimate of the cost of a Light-house which was to have been erected on Cape Henry; a draft of the same, and an account of the materials placed upon the spot for the purpose of building...." Washington wrote to the Governor of Virginia on January 29, 1790, that he had referred his report on the materials deposited earlier at Cape Henry to the Secretary of the Treasury for consideration. Hamilton would bring it to the attention of the contractor.³⁶

Word of the availability of this stone was, also, duly passed on to the contractor by Thomas Newton, Jr. McComb showed an interest in it and agreed to use it. He ran into difficulty, however, as it was buried so deeply in the sand and, in the end,

35. Calendar of Virginia State Papers, V, 98-99, 265.

36. Writings of Washington, XXX, 433n. and XXXI, 4-5.

was able to use it only in part. He wrote to the Governor of Virginia, on July 22, that he had been deceived as to the depth of the stone in the sand. Instead of 8 to 10 feet down it was actually 10 to 25.

He reported:

I have raised about 100 perch, which has cost £ 187,10's; being informed that [it] might be raised at a lower rate than new ones would be brought for, I made no contract to get them from elsewhere. So that I shall be obliged to raise as many as will lay the foundation of the Light-House, and will then stop, unless I find them nearer the surface, as I can have stone brought at lower terms.

Actually, Virginia and Maryland realized nothing from the stone and on January 9, 1792, it was officially adjudged that raising the stone had cost McComb more than the same amount would have "delivered on the Spott."³⁷

A report of Thomas Newton, Jr., dated August 8, 1791, stated that "on Monday last the foundation of the lighthouse was laid on Cape Henry." Newton had been secured by Hamilton "to Superintend the laying of the Foundation."³⁸ The shifting sand of Cape Henry gave trouble from the start. At one point some "fifty cart loads at least" poured down into the excavation after it

37. Calendar of Virginia State Papers, V, 352, 425.

38. Lighthouse Contract of March 31, 1791

had been cleared for laying the Stone. McComb evidently took this philosophically with "great patience." On August 8 he had "fifty hands" at work.³⁹

It was necessary to revise the foundation plans and to go 20 feet, rather than the specified 13 feet, below the water table since at the 13-foot level there was only loose sand. The base diameter was increased to 33 feet with an 11-foot thick wall and "laid circular for four feet high." The foundation wall would then taper to 10 feet and "diminish to eight feet at the bottom of the water table" where the diameter would revert to 27 feet. This required a contract adjustment of \$2,500, a sum to be added to the original contract price of \$15,200.⁴⁰

Newton was very complimentary of McComb observing that "he appears desirous of giving satisfaction in his work" and that "he is persevering and merits much for his industry." Evidently McComb had some ideas for changing the vault plans, but it was decided that it would "be built for the oil agreeable to the contract" since Newton "was apprehensive of danger from fire in the mode he proposed."

39. Copy of letter of August 8, 1791, written by Newton from Norfolk, Va., in Coast Guard Records, small series.

40. Lighthouse contract of March 31, 1791.
The revised estimate was dated July 29, 1791.

Newton added that: "The elder Mr. McComb has been at the Cape and approved of the foundation. His son had prepared logs to lay it on, as kerb but he would not let him lay them."⁴¹

In his letter of August 8, Newton mentioned "the pavement" which evidently was planned for the area around the lighthouse. This was to be 20 feet "from the house" and he added "I imagine the walls should be five feet deep as at Cape Henlopen."⁴² This suggests that the Cape Henlopen plans, secured by William Byrd for the earlier Directors of the Lighthouse and favored by them, may have continued to influence the project. Actually the plan of 1791 may well have been the plan of that proposed by the Colonial authorities since the shape, measurements and details of the former are essentially the same as those for which the contract called.⁴³ Newton would have been a sufficient link to foster this continuity since he had been one of the directors named in 1782 to "make a settlement of the account and adjust the balances" of the colonial project, and it is of record that he sent "a draft" of the earlier lighthouse plan to Washington on October 24, 1789.⁴⁴

41. Newton's letter of August 8, 1791.

42. Ibid.

43. Calendar of Virginia State Papers, V, 98-99.

The former, however, mentions seven stories besides the lantern but the contract calls for six flights of stairs to the lantern.

44. Writings of Washington, XXX, 433: Hening, Statutes, XI, 58.

On August 8, 1791, McComb estimated that he would complete the project in October, 1792, and this appears to have been a sound estimate. It was on October 1, 1792, that Washington took a personal interest in the appointment of a keeper. He prepared two letters, one to Tobias Lear in Philadelphia and one to Alexander Hamilton. He requested that Lear get out the "List of Applicants," "if my memory serves me many have offered," and that he look into their character. Evidently he had had a personal recommendation for one applicant and, also, word that he was a heavy drinker. His position in this was positive, for if, the man was "intemperate in drinking, it is immaterial whether you can recall his name or not; for, with me this would be an insuperable objection, let his pretensions and promises of reformation be what they may." Washington was frank to state that once before he had "been taken in by the fair promises."⁴⁵ It is reported that the first keeper was one Laban Goffigan, very probably a Norfolk area man, and that the fish oil burning lamps of Cape Henry were first lighted late in October, 1792.⁴⁶

45. Writings of Washington, XXXII, 172-74.

46. Snow, Famous Lighthouses, pp. 161 ff.: George P. Tucker in "Tidewater Landfalls," Norfolk - Portsmouth Virginian Pilot, January 11, 1962, The Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary edited by Edward Wilson James (New York, Peter Smith reprint, 1951), IV, 173, and V, 19 and 48. William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, 2nd Series, edited by Earl G. Swem, VIII (1928), 100 and 109.

Eighty Years of Service

From all indications and reports the lantern of the Cape Henry lighthouse continued to burn with regularity through the years. The fish oil first used was replaced in time with better burning fluids--sperm oil, colza oil, lard oil, and kerosene. The initial lamps were, of course, without lens or reflectors.⁴⁷

Benjamin Latrobe was at Cape Henry in 1798 and fortunately, as natural for an engineer, was interested in the topography and nature of the area. He made two sketches. One dated November, 1798, was of the lighthouse showing it much as the contract had specified complete with weather vane and ventilator as well as lightning rods. The latter closely resemble those which are now in place rusting and broken. He sketched, too, the keepers house although this is in part obscured by sand. A low structure shown on the left may be the "vault" which had been prescribed. Latrobe, also, on December 19 of the same year, penned a "Memoir on the Sand Hills of Cape Henry in Virginia."⁴⁸ Of the lighthouse, he wrote, in a note to Samuel Harrison, "one of the Secretaries of

47. A brief "History of the Cape Henry Light Virginia" in Coast Guard Records, small series, Cape Henry "Clippings File."

48. Published in William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, 1st Series, XIV, No. 4 (April 1906), pp. 254-58.

the American Philosophical Society:" "It is a good solid building of Rappahannock freestone, but has the unpardonable fault of a wooden staircase, which being necessarily soaked with oil, exposes the light to the perpetual risk of destruction by fire." Evidently the calamity which he predicted never came although the staircase was destined to serve another 60 years.

Latrobe spoke of the lighthouse as "an octangular truncated pyramid of eight sides, rising 90 feet to the light" and being "6 or 7 hundred yards from the beach." Both the tower and "the keeper's dwelling, a wooden building of two stories" were "surrounded by a platform of plank, and without any such design in the architect, this platform has preserved both these buildings from being buried in the sand." Having been "placed upon the highest sand hill at the Cape" the lighthouse caught the wind as it swept in and created "a perpetual whirl around it, which licks up the sand from the smooth surface of the timber ["pavement"]⁷, and heaps it around in the form of a basin. Where the platform ceases, the sand accumulates. The sandy rim, while it protects the keeper from the storms, renders his habitation one of the dreariest abodes imaginable." The peak of the rim fluctuated with the wind, but, in 1798, he estimated that it had built up some 20 feet.⁴⁹ This

49. Ibid.

same force is active today and probably explains the moat around the tower. With no "pavement," wooden or otherwise, it is going deeper and has seriously exposed the foundation.

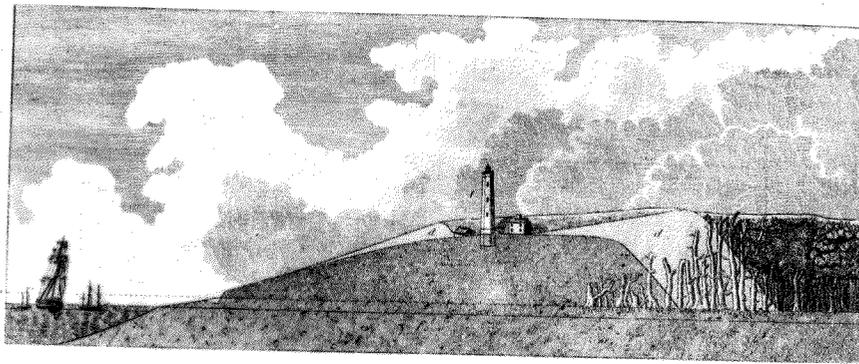
As the years passed, repairs, replacements, and additions were made as deemed necessary. In 1835, between June and October, the Cape Henry Lighthouse keeper got new quarters--a \$2,325.00, 25 by 26 foot weatherboarded house of two stories with a shingled roof, two porches, four fireplaces, and painted white with green shutters. The contract carefully spelled out materials and described many of the details of the house which was reported "substantially complied with" in October, 1835.⁵⁰ Some 34 years later it was noted that the "bridge extending from the tower to the keeper's dwelling is broken down and requires rebuilding." Perhaps, it can be assumed that this was taken care of in the next round of repairs.⁵¹

The lantern at Cape Henry was completely reworked in 1841 at a cost of \$4,000 by Winslow Lewis of Boston. The work, described in detail in the agreement, with it appended completion endorsement,⁵² included replacement of the wooden deck by "a brick arch on which

50. Contract in Deeds and Contracts, Book E, pages 392-4, Coast Guard Records.

51. A printed and annotated compilation of excerpts from the Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board entitled "Cape Henry light-station, Va." in Coast Guard Records, small series, Cape Henry "Clippings File."

52. Deeds and Contracts, Book G. pp. 136-8, Records of the Coast Guard.



Section of the coast of Virginia at Cape Henry

Reproduced from an engraving by B. Henry Latrobe, accompanying his 'Memoir on the Sand-hills of Cape Henry in Virginia,' Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, IV (1799), 439-444.

This view after Latrobe evidently stemmed from his visit to Cape Henry in 1798. He, also, did a sketch on which this was based as well as a closer view of the tower giving considerably more in detail.

is laid a soapstone deck and the placement of a new lantern with the same diameter as the old." The lantern was glazed with plate glass (each octagon containing 12 panes of 24 by 16 inches). It was of "the same manner...as the one now at Cape Henlopen Lighthouse." The lantern was equipped with "18 lamps with brass burners and fitted with oil Heaters, & eighteen full twenty one inch reflectors on three tiers or circles." It is of report that about 1812 "new lamps with magnifying glasses giving more brilliant light and using only one half the amount of oil" were introduced for the first time.⁵³ The reflectors, placed as a part of the 1841 improvements, brought the lighthouse in line with equipment used "in the principal seacoast lights of the United States." "On July 13, 1855, a fog bell worked by machinery was installed." Again, in 1857, the light was improved when equipped with "a dioptric Fresnel lens."⁵⁴

In the summer of 1844 a \$4,000 contract was executed at the lighthouse to secure and stabilize the area around its base. The work, performed by Jeffers Wilkinson of Norfolk, consisted of a

53. The Old Lighthouse at Cape Henry (APVA), p. 10: Feature story by Frank Blackford in Norfolk Virginian Pilot, July 2, 1950.

54. "Cape Henry light-station, Va." and "History of the Cape Henry Lighthouse Virginia," Coast Guard Records, small series, Cape Henry "Clippings File."

15 foot high, 150 foot long, wall supported at 30 foot intervals "by pilasters" around the tower laid "of granite in Hydraulic cement." The space between wall and tower was filled with sand overlaid with loose stone graduated from the bottom up and topped with a stone pavement also laid in hydraulic cement."⁵⁵ Sections of this wall, now broken, are still present and visible on the site today although the pavement is non-existent. This evidently is the platform remembered in 1934 by Capt. John H. Drew of Norfolk who was Assistant Keeper in 1862-1863. He reported that at the time of his duty the top of the hill was covered by a platform of cemented stone and brick some four feet below the door sill. In 1947, it was related that the "top of the hill had been lowered some six to eight feet by the winds, exposing that much of the foundation. The stones lying about the hill appear to have been part of this platform."⁵⁶ It was during the 1857 renovation that the old tower was brick lined as it continues at the present time. Captain Drew's recollection of conditions in 1862-1863 was that the whale oil which he used when he was Assistant Keeper was stored in copper tanks which fitted into the recesses in the base which exist just inside the entrance. He recalled, too, that

55. Copy of the agreement, with completion endorsement, in Deeds and Contracts, Book G, pp. 320-321, Coast Guard Records,

56. The Old Lighthouse at Cape Henry (APVA), pp. 10-11.

then the lamp had three concentric wicks each of which was fed by a clock driven pump. Evidently the clock ran down at rather short intervals and allowed little time for sleeping on the job.⁵⁷

The cryptically written report covering a special inspection of the Cape Henry Lighthouse on June 10, 1851, is both interesting and rich in operational items as of that time.⁵⁸ It covered a wide range of detail as a few excerpts can illustrate:

Main sea-light...on sand-hills near point of cape, and 600 to 800 yards from beach; site preserved by open board fence. Basement of stone around lighthouse...James Atkinson, only keeper--appointed five years ago; hires an assistant himself...Tower built in 1791, of sandstone...outside; soapstone coping; rubblestone inside; common masonry; mortar pretty good; two iron conductors...whitewashed once in two years; no other repairs; none on keeper's house, except such as he puts on himself...ducks sometimes break glasses of lantern...no regular lamp scissors for trimming...lime for whitewashing from collector; white paint for sashes; dome red inside, black outside...Interior of lantern painted with Spanish brown...Soapstone floor to lantern; very dirty with oil; warm in lantern...tower whitewashed inside and out; steps also, but now worn off... Supplied by oil, &c. once a year...Trims when they [burners] get cool; does not wait until sunrise to put out lights, Trims when he thinks it necessary; can tell from the window of the chamber where he sleeps; goes to bed at 10 o'clock; trims twice before 10 o'clock; sometimes afterwards. Frequently wakes assistant, and sends him up to trim, &c.; no regular watch kept. Have one copy of printed instructions at home; none hung up...keeper's house fenced in; fences by present keeper; some of them six feet high. Six hundred gallons of oil consumed last year.

57. The Old Lighthouse at Cape Henry (APVA), p. 10.

58. Report of the Officers Constituting the Light House Board convened Under Instructions from the Secretary to Inquire into the Condition of the Light-House Establishment of the United States Under Act of March 3, 1851 (Washington, 1852), pp. 183-4.

The Civil War reached the Cape Henry Light early, when Confederates out of Princess Anne County, before their evacuation of Norfolk, mounted the tower, broke the protecting glass and damaged the lamps. Union officials, as a temporary expedient, anchored a "light vessel placed at the tail of the horseshoe" to facilitate entrance into the Chesapeake Bay. This was removed, in 1863, after the light had been repaired and returned to service with, it was noted, "the important light at Cape Henry being protected by a military guard detailed by the commanding general at Fortress Monroe." Evidently there had been no damage 50 years earlier when, during the War of 1812, the British put "watering parties" ashore and briefly had "two companies of Marines encamped at the Light House" to cover them.⁵⁹

At long last, in 1864, the inspector complained of the "old fashioned wooden staircase" which was "greatly decayed and insecure" and deemed it advisable to provide "a cast-iron spiral stairway for the tower." "Step-ladders for inside and outside of lantern" were, also, needed. It was not until 1867, however, that it could be reported that the iron stairway was in use, Congress having appropriated \$12,000 for the purpose the year before.⁶⁰

59. "Cape Henry light-station (Coast Guard Records): The Old Lighthouse at Cape Henry (APVA), p. 10: Calendar of Virginia State Papers, X (edited by H. W. Flournoy, Richmond, 1892), 246.

60. "Cape Henry light-station, Va.", Coast Guard Records.

It was during an inspection in 1872 that the stability and safety of the old tower was first questioned. Eight years earlier it had been described as a "fine cut-stone tower...in excellent order..." Nonetheless it was now observed that there were "large cracks or openings" in the original masonry of six of the eight faces. On the north and south faces, where the windows were located, this was considered serious. "At present the tower is in an unsafe condition, and there is no way of repairing the damage satisfactorily, and a new one must be built. This old tower has done good service, having been built in 1791, and is now the oldest tower on the coast south of Cape Henlopen." The additional comment clearly indicates that the inspectors, also, were of the view that larger and better facilities for Cape Henry were of prime need. They pointed out that "The light is of second order, and cannot be seen as far at sea as its importance in respect to location demands. It is undoubtedly one of the first lights, in importance on the coast." Besides, the keeper's house was much "dilapidated" and much too small to accommodate "the number of keepers at this station."⁶¹

The observations of Edward Rowe Snow, writing in 1955, seem pertinent at this point. "It is interesting to note that the old

61. "Cape Henry light-station, Va."

tower was eighty years old when the 1872 report was made, and is now still standing at the age of one hundred and sixty-three. In other words, the so-called decrepit tower has stood longer since the adverse report than it had at the time it was condemned."⁶²

These recommendations of 1872 did not get immediate attention, or at least approval, and were repeated yearly. Finally, an initial appropriation of \$75,000, on June 20, 1878, paved the way for the start of a new tower and its associated facilities. These were completed at a site some 350 feet southeast from the old tower late in 1881. The last keeper of the old light and the first of the new facility, Jay D. Edwards, lighted the new beam on December 15, 1881.⁶³

The New Light:

The new Cape Henry Light was designed as a modern structure to make the Cape Henry facility one of first rank and order and to allow improvements which the old tower rendered difficult. A contract was let for the new tower which was to be "an iron tower, 150 feet in height, from base to focal plane" set on a concrete mass. It was found that more space was needed and to this end six acres were purchased on June 10, 1880, for \$3,185.80 from Allen A. McCullough and his wife Marion of Norfolk." "Rights of

62. Famous Lighthouses of America, p. 163

63. "Cape Henry light-station, Va.": Snow, Famous Lighthouses of America, pp.163-7



The Old and the New--an 1881
view of the New Tower under
construction against the
backdrop of the Old Lighthouse.

fishery" were excluded from the deed. Other arrangements were made to continue the leased use which the Signal Service was enjoying for its "signal telegraph station." In an abstract of title study it was noted that the tract was sold initially by the state in 1869 and that it "had remained from the date of the settlement of the state until that date a part of the public domain known as 'Waste and unappropriated lands,'"⁶⁴ This and the "fishery" rights raise an interesting land use concept.

Between 1770 and 1772 a petition from 52 inhabitants of Princess Anne was filed with William Nelson, president of the Council. It was "in behalf of themselves and the other inhabitants of this Colony" and called for reserving "the point of Land called Cape Henry" bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the east and Chesapeake Bay on the north. The other bounds were Lynnhaven River and Long Creek and their branches. The area was described as "chiefly Desart Banks of Sand and unfit for Tillage or Cultivation and contains several thousand Acres." The objective was

64. Deed, abstract of title and a study of April 2, 1880, in Lighthouse Site File, Virginia No. 6 (Cape Henry), Coast Guard Records.

to protect a "Common Fishery" that had grown up on the shores of the Ocean and Bay. It was related "that during the Fishing Season the Fishermen usually encamp amongst the said Sand Hills and get Wood for Fuel and Stages from the Desert.

And that very considerable quantities of Fish are annually taken by such Fishery." The petition had been prompted by a land patent application, and this was a plea that it "remain a Common for the Benefit of the Inhabitants of the Colony in General for carrying on a Fishery and for such other publick Uses as the same premises shall be found convenient." Evidently this petition was respected since the great body of land in this area remained ungranted, with only a few exceptions, until 1869. At that time, on October 1, some 3,118 acres of the "Desert" went to John P. Hale, and interestingly, the deed cites a survey of 1809.⁶⁵

65. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography published by the Virginia Historical Society, XVIII (1910), 57-9.

In an 1880 report the construction work on the new Lighthouse was described as "fairly underway." The contract for the metal work went to Morris, Tucker & Company of Philadelphia. Delay ensued when it was discovered that there was no authority to purchase the extra land. This was remedied when Congress, on June 16, 1880, passed the enabling act. The necessary equipment for "the steam fog-signal" and materials for its building were arranged. There was some delay when the temporary landing pier collapsed in the fall of 1880. In 1881, however, especially in the summer and fall, real progress was possible. The cut granite course was laid in the concrete and the assembly of the iron sections got underway.

Finally it could be reported that:

On November 27 the illuminating apparatus was tested by lighting and found to work admirably. The painting and finishing work of the tower, which had been meanwhile carried on, was completed on December 14, and on the following day the light-house was turned over to the light-keeper.⁶⁶

It was 165 feet high with a lighting distance potential of 19 miles. Its first order lens consisted of "a central belt of reflectors forming a hollow cylinder six feet in diameter and 30 inches high: below it...~~were~~ six triangular rings of glass, arranged in a cylindrical form, and above a crown of 13 rings of glass forming by their union a hollow cage of polished glass, 10 feet high and 6 feet in diameter." It was equipped with a first class Argand

66. "Cape Henry Light-station, Va."

burner with five concentric wicks burning kerosene. It gave a fixed white light of 6,000 candlepower.⁶⁷ The cost of the new facility was within the appropriated amount of \$125,000 which had come in three installments.

The installation included a 3,500 gallon water cistern and a "sand pump or drive well" for emergency use. In 1883 an "electric call bell apparatus" was placed to connect the tower with the keeper's dwellings, there being two of them, one for the keeper and one for an assistant. Other improvements followed and in 1903 "a wire fence 670 by 520 feet, with 4 gates, was built enclosing the light-house tract." In 1929 the facility was described as consisting of a lighthouse, three dwellings, and two summer kitchens, an oil house, a workshop, a storehouse and eight acres of land with a total evaluation of \$124,930.⁶⁸

In 1910 an oil vapor lamp consuming vaporized kerosene in a mantle was substituted for the wick burners and the brilliance of the light increased from 6,000 to 22,000 candlepower. It was not until 1922, with the use of an incandescent electric lamp, that it was possible to meet a need, discerned almost a century earlier, of

67. A brief paper "Cape Henry Light Station," Coast Guard Records.

68. "Cape Henry light-station, Va.": "Questionnaire Covering Real Estate owned by the United States" in Lighthouse Site File, Virginia No. 6 (Cape Henry), Coast Guard Records.

changing the characteristic of the Cape Henry light. It was now changed from a fixed white light to a group flashing light of distinctive character.⁶⁹

The twentieth century has continued to produce mechanical, electrical, and electronic improvements in various directions. The pertinent of these have found expression in the Cape Henry installation--fog radio signals and the like.⁷⁰

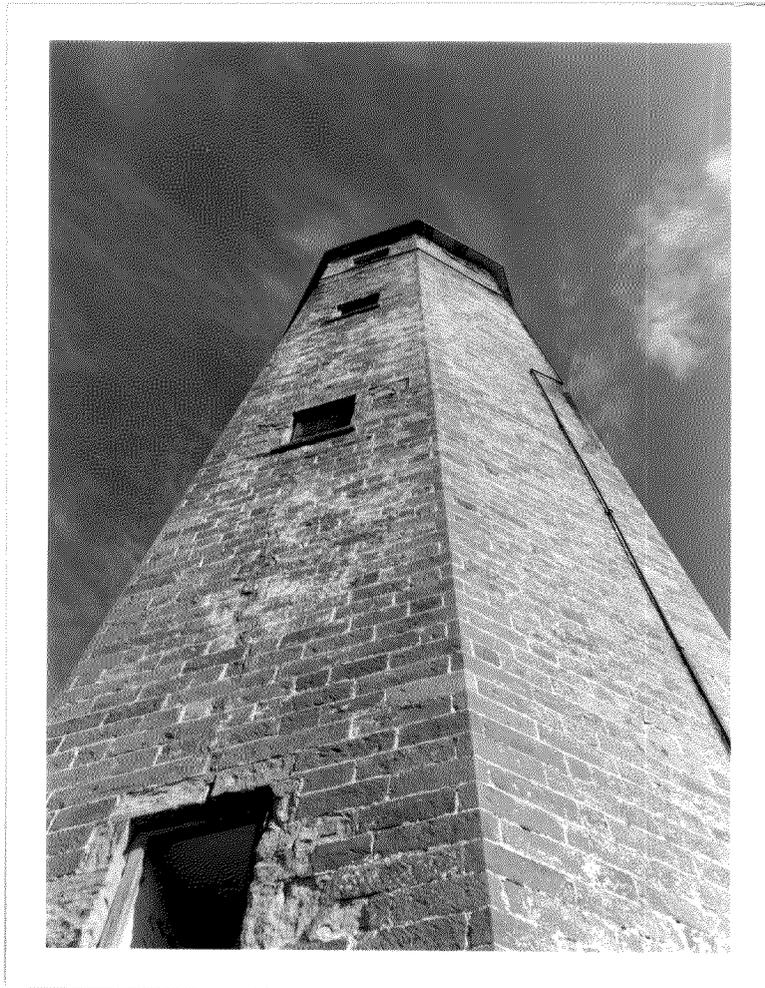
Abandonment and Commemoration

After the new light was placed in operation at Cape Henry, it was duly reported, in 1882, that: "The old tower remains a day-mark, and is also used as a basis for coast survey triangulation."⁷¹ It ceases to be noted otherwise for any lighthouse purpose. It did continue as a landmark and, on April 29, 1896, the president and other officers of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities journeyed from Richmond "down to Cape Henry and, placed upon an old lighthouse, the use of which had been granted us by the United States government, a tablet marking the first landing of the English colonists on Virginia's soil..." Thus, the old tower became

69. "Cape Henry light-station, Va," and other items in Cape Henry "Clippings File," Coast Guard Records.

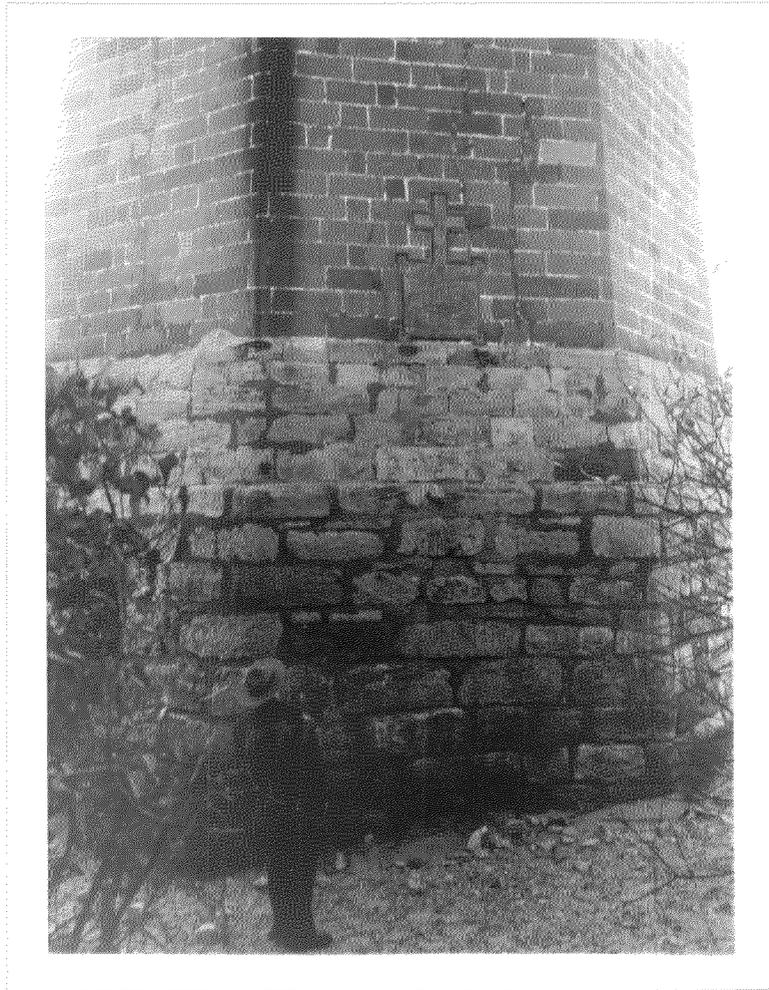
70. A brief paper "Cape Henry Light Station," Coast Guard Records.

71. "Cape Henry light-station, Va.," Coast Guard Records.



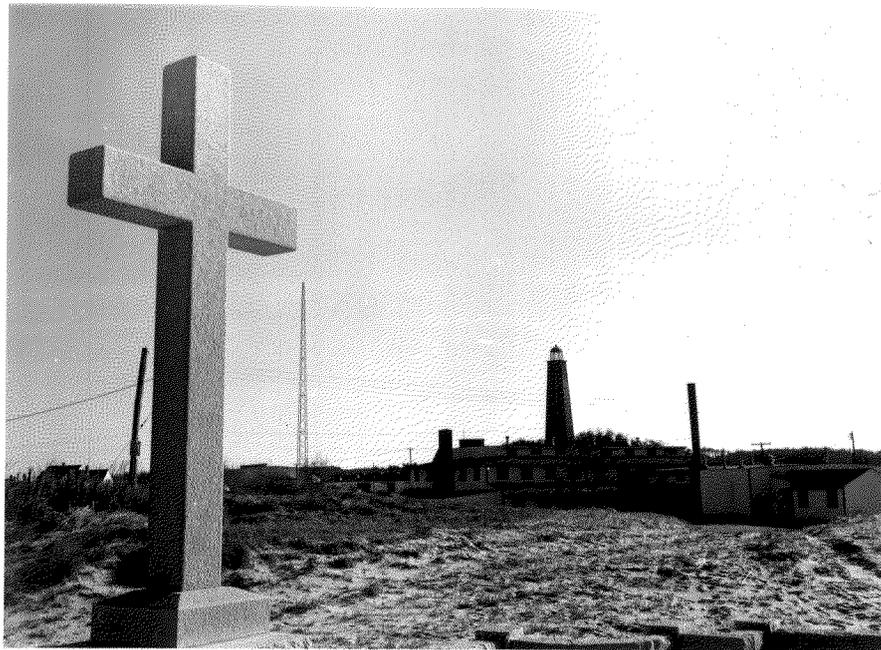
West Face of Tower

The exposed rods may be a part of the original lightning protection afforded the structure.



The Wind Eroded Moat

The extent of foundation exposure here is glaringly evident. The plaque affixed to the wall is that placed in 1896 to commemorate the first landing place in Virginia by the colonists who founded Jamestown



The Old Light Tower from the Cross

The temporary NCO club building is between the Cape Henry Memorial and The Old Light Tower. The parking area that serves the Memorial is just out of view on the right. The road is between and adjacent to the far side of the club building and the near side of the base of the tower dune.

a forerunner of the Cape Henry Memorial to which its shadow will reach on a late summer afternoon. It is reported that there was assistance from the Norfolk supporters, especially in affixing the tablet to the tower walls, and that the "ceremonies connected with the unveiling were beautiful and impressive." The tablet even now remains attached.⁷²

The Association maintained its interest in the old lighthouse and this interest led to the transfer, by the United States, of the old tower and 1.77 acres of ground associated with it. The authority came from an act of Congress of June 18, 1930, which was implemented by deed of August 1 the same year, reserving only a water main route and access to it. The act described the area as "the site for the Old Light Tower at Cape Henry," including the "abandoned lighthouse tower," and gave metes and bounds which were reported in the deed. Clearly, the Congress recognized the "historic interest" of the structure and sought to insure "public" use. The concluding paragraph reads:

The property herein authorized to be conveyed shall be preserved by such association solely for its historic interest, and shall be open to the public at reasonable times and on reasonable terms. The deed executed by the Secretary of Commerce under the provisions of this section shall contain the express condition that if such association shall at any time cease to carry out the

72. Year Book of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities for 1896 and 1897 (Richmond, 1898), pp. 23, 29, and 59.

provisions of this section, or shall at any time use such property or permit its use for other purposes, or shall attempt to alienate such property, title thereto shall revert to the United States.⁷³

In 1939 the old Lighthouse fittingly was the scene of ceremonies during the week of August 7 commemorating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Lighthouse Service. It was in 1939 that this Service was combined with, and became a part of, the United States Coast Guard.⁷⁴ A Coast Guard publication issued in 1939, in connection with the Lighthouse Service sesquicentennial, recorded that the Cape Henry tower was of such excellent workmanship: "that it stands even today, no longer used for lighthouse purposes, but little the worse for the 147 years of its existence. The lighthouse incidentally, marks the approximate spot at which the earliest settlers of Virginia first landed."⁷⁵

The Norfolk Branch of the Association, as well as the City of Norfolk, has remained proud of the old lighthouse tower although this has not always been accompanied through the years by close attention, good, prompt repair, or good measures for presentation,

73. Public Law No. 388--71st Congress (H.R. 11679), copy of statute and deed in Lighthouse Site File, Virginia No. 6 (Cape Henry), Coast Guard Records.

74. Lighthouses and Lightships (bound clippings from newspapers) in archives of Mariners Museum (Newport News, Va.), I (to June 30, 1959) and II (1949-1956).

75. Guide to Historically Famous Lighthouses in the United States (Washington, D. C.)

ready availability, or visitor safety. Often the chief hindrance has involved lack of funds but not lack of cooperation for the Fort Story post officials as the annual reports of the Association show.

On August 13-14, 1953, for example, hurricane Barbara blew into Cape Henry and partially ripped off the tower's copper canopy and heavily damaged the lantern from which all lighting apparatus had long been removed. It left the top of the tower unsightly and dangerously exposed. Some five years passed before the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities could engineer its full repair. At one point, in 1954, when an unfounded rumor started that the disassembly of the tower was eminent, the Norfolk press and the public were quick to the defense of this ancient landmark.⁷⁶

In 1959 nonetheless, it could be reported by the Chairman of the Norfolk Branch's Lighthouse Committee that, after completion of the repairs the year before, the old tower "is now in perfect order except for the grounds," and that all bills for it had been paid. It was recognized, however, that the windblown moat that is laying bare the foundation of the structure still poses a problem that has not been solved financially or otherwise. The

76. Lighthouses and Lightships, I, 64: as reported in The Tidewater Trail, VI, No. 12, August-September, 1939.

same was true of regular availability to, and interpretation for, visitors to the area.⁷⁷

77. Year Book of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities Including the Association Years 1951 through 1959 (Richmond, Va., 1959), pp. 102-6.

At the Present Time:

Today the old lighthouse at Cape Henry stands silently while the activity of Fort Story surrounds, but largely ignores, it. It is rather unkept and obviously the victim of some inattention and a lack of regular, on-the-spot, care. Its entrance door remains unlocked and ajar while visitors and post personnel can, and do, come and go at will. Its open windows invite some careless mishap that could result in fatality. There is no evidence of interpretation or presentation. Attention is drawn to it publicly largely through occasional repairs and on special times such as Garden Week in Virginia, Cape Henry Day and the like.

The structure appears solid and the lantern housing and its canopy have been returned to good repair in recent years. The wind erosion at the base of the tower is seemingly threatening serious damage to the tower itself and it may be near emergency condition. New windows are needed and some repointing of the masonry is indicated. A thorough study of the structure would need to precede further comment in this direction, both as to extent of need and cost. Unstudied, or stopgap, action could be damaging to this historic structure. There is reason, too, to believe that such could occur under existing arrangements.

The Cape Henry Memorial stimulates some visitation to the lighthouse. This small area marks the approximate site of the first

landing of the Jamestown settlers in Virginia on April 26, 1607. It is several hundred yards from the tower, toward the sea, and separated from it by the principal road through Fort Story. By Special Use Permit army officials have cooperated with Colonial National Historical Park in improving the environment of the Memorial by removal of temporary and intruding structures and seem sympathetic to further improvements and relocations. A principal intrusion now is the temporary noncommissioned officers' club building. In view of the changing status of Fort Story, from a temporary to a permanent post, conditions may be such as to hasten improvement of the Memorial environment which in effect would carry to the lighthouse area. A parking area, built in 1957 with army cooperation as to site, lies between the Memorial and the highway in the direction of the tower which it could, at least in part, serve.

A recent development in the Cape Henry Lighthouse situation has been the tentative offer, by a leading Norfolk citizen, Henry Clay Hofheimer, to arrange a donation of \$50,000 for restoration if a way could be found to place the custody of the old landmark in the hands of the National Park Service. An even later development is that the City of Norfolk has appropriated \$5,000 and Virginia Beach and Princess Anne County another \$10,000 for work at the old Cape Henry Lighthouse, presumably through the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The Cape Henry Lighthouse was the first new undertaking of the infant lighthouse service being a project that was, in a real sense, born with the service itself. Since it is the first lighthouse authorized and carried to completion, it represents the successful launching of federal aid and direction in support of safety in sea commerce and maritime activity.⁷⁸

It, also, systematically concluded a matter that two separate colonies and states had found it difficult to agree upon in a manner that retained a tie with the past. Consequently, the Cape Henry Light is distinctive from the colonial lighthouses which the

78. These statements, unsigned, in miscellaneous papers of the Coast Guard, which have been previously cited, may be of interest here: "The lighthouse at Cape Henry, at the Entrance to Chesapeake Bay, was the first lighthouse built by the United States, after the federal government was established. "(a brief "History of Cape Henry Light Virginia"). "The first light-house erected by the General Government was that upon Cape Henry, in 1791" with marginal notation "The 1st Lt.-ho..approd for & built under the Gov. of the United States of America." (Cape Henry light-station, Va."). And "...this lighthouse has the distinction of being the first public works undertaken by the United States, the appropriation being made by Congress on March 26th, 1790." (A brief paper "Cape Henry Light Station.")

There are similar expressions in various typewritten and duplicated papers in the bound volumes of Lighthouse Miscellaney: U. S. Lighthouse Service, I and II (1930 - 1939) and III (1961) in the archives of the Mariners Museum (Newport News, Va.).

new service acquired by cession and from those which, unfinished and needing completion, were taken over in the same manner. In the first category are the Sandy Hook and Boston (earliest of the colonial lighthouses) towers and, in the second, Portland Head (first of the unfinished ones, lighted on January 10, 1791) and Tybee lights all of which retain today at least some element of the original in them.

In the case of surviving structure, Cape Henry and Sandy Hook stand out above the rest with their original towers. The sandstone tower of Cape Henry is essentially unchanged although brick-lining and iron stairway have been fitted on the interior, as in modernization in other towers including Sandy Hook which continues in use, meaning that modernization has continued longer here than at Cape Henry. Both towers have their original height although the lantern has changed with evolving light systems.

The Portland Head tower has been raised and lowered as in 1868 when it was lowered 20 feet only to be raised again the next year. The Tybee light has suffered considerable damage and seen considerable rebuilding and repair. In the case of the Boston Light, the original was blown up by the British in 1776. Rebuilt in 1783 some of the old foundation is said to have been incorporated in the new. The new tower was strengthened by hoops in 1809 and raised some 23 feet in height in 1856.

Aside from priority and surviving condition, association with the earlier colonization story seems to merit comment. More than half a century ago, the old Cape Henry lighthouse became the convenient and suitable location for the memorialization of the place where the first Jamestown colonists touched the American mainland enroute to their destination.

In view of these conclusions it is recommended that every method be explored to insure proper repair, preservation, and use (with an attendant) of the old Cape Henry Lighthouse. It surely deserves historic landmark status and its inclusion in the National Park System would seem neither undesirable nor inappropriate.

APPENDIX A

Below is a thumbnail summary of some pertinent data relative to colonial lighthouses and those in use, or under construction, at the time of the initial federal lighthouse legislation in 1789. This data is based primarily on the works of Snow, Putnam, and Stevenson^a and on several publications issued by the United States Coast Guard and Lighthouse Service.^b Although there are occasional discrepancies in facts and dates, the accounts are generally complementary of each other. The Boston, Sandy Hook, Portland Head, and Tyb^o lights are of particular interest to this study.

1. *Boston Lighthouse on Little Brewster Island in Boston Harbor - 1716

This was the first lighthouse erected in the colonies, very probably in the western hemisphere. The original tower was blown up by the British in 1776. Seven years later, in 1783, a new tower was erected at the direction of the Massachusetts legislature. It is believed to incorporate, although opinions vary, some of the walls of the first tower. It occupied the old site and still stands having been strengthened by hoops in 1809. A circular stairway was installed in 1844 as was a cast iron deck. In 1856 it was raised from a 75 to a 98 foot height and lined with brick. It was ceded to the Federal Government on June 10, 1790. Among its equipment is an ancient fog cannon with the date of 1700.

a. D. Allan Stevenson, The World's Lighthouses Before 1820 (London, 1959)

b. The 1939 Guide to Historically Famous Lighthouses previously cited and Historically Famous Lighthouses (Washington, 1950).

2. Brant Point Lighthouse in Nantucket Harbor
in Massachusetts - 1746

The evidence is that the lighthouse here has been rebuilt seven times since established in 1746. Fire destroyed the first structure in 1758. The second stood from 1759 until 1774 when it went down before a "violent Gust of Wind." The third burned to the ground in 1783. The next two lights were more beacon than lighthouse. The next structure, a lighthouse, was erected between 1788 and 1795 and, having grown old with the years, was condemned in 1825.

3. Beavertail Lighthouse at the entrance to Narragansett Bay on the south end of Conanicut Island in Rhode Island - 1748

This is said to be the third lighthouse built in what is now the United States. The original tower, authorized in 1738, was constructed in 1748. The original tower is gone, and in its place is a granite structure built in 1856.

4. New London Harbor Lighthouse on the west side of the entrance to New London Harbor - 1761

The old tower, probably of masonry, seemingly was completely removed when the present stone tower of 1801 was constructed. The original lighthouse was ceded to the United States in May, 1790. The first tower seems to have been lighted in 1761,

5. *Sandy Hook Lighthouse in New Jersey at the entrance to New York Harbor - 1764

"The Sandy Hook Light tower is the oldest original tower still standing and in use in the United States." It was originally lighted on June 11, 1764, and was known as the "New York Lighthouse." New Jersey ceded it, and four acres, to the United States on November 16, 1790. A thumbnail sketch of 1764 describes it as "an Octagon Figure having eight equal sides...Lantern is Iron; the top covered with Copper...48 Oil Blazes..."

Nine Stories; the whole from Bottom to Top 103 Feet." A second beacon was put on the north point of Sandy Hook in the 1804-7 period. Damaged twice in the Revolution by American forces, it was repaired and restored to use by the British. Renovated in 1817, the old tower was reported in 1852 to have "neither leaks nor cracks" with mortar in good shape. In short, the rubblestone structure was in good shape. It had been equipped with reflectors and Argand lamps about 10 years earlier.

6. Cape Henlopen Lighthouse in Delaware marking the entrance to Delaware Bay - 1767

Completed in 1767 with lottery funds, it replaced a temporary structure that stood as early as 1765. The lighthouse was burned by the British in 1777. After repairs, it was relighted in 1784. Transfer to the United States came on September 28, 1789. Wind erosion in the sandy area led to damage and periodic repair. It carried a light until 1924 and finally, on April 13, 1926, the tower fell toward the sea.

7. Charleston Lighthouse on Morris Island at the entrance to Charleston Harbor in South Carolina - 1767

This was a brick towered lighthouse built in 1767. In 1800 Congress appropriated some \$5,000 for repairing it. In 1873 it was necessary to construct a new lighthouse. The new structure was located approximately at the site of the old and was completed in 1876.

8. Plymouth (Gurnet) Lighthouse on Gurnet Head Point west of Plymouth in Massachusetts - 1768

The lighthouse was first established in 1768. In 1783 damage suffered in the Revolution was repaired and on June 10, 1790, it was ceded to the United States. On July 2, 1801, the original structure was completely destroyed by fire and, through Congressional action in a year or two was replaced with twin lights.

9. Portsmouth Harbor Lighthouse in
New Hampshire - 1771

A wooden tower was erected in 1777 and this was that turned over to the Federal Government. This was replaced with another wooden tower in 1804. In 1877 a cast iron beacon, located some thousand yards away, took the place of this tower. Washington is reported to have visited this lighthouse in 1789 when he was in Portsmouth,

10. Cape Ann Lighthouse on Thatcher's Island
in Massachusetts - 1771

The Province of Massachusetts Bay Council authorized the erection of twin lighthouses here on April 22, 1771, and a keeper was named on December 21 of the same year. The lights were dark during most of the Revolution. The lighthouses were among those turned over to the Federal Government under the act of 1789. Congress authorized the rebuilding of the two towers, and this was done in cut granite in 1860-61.

11. Nantucket (Great Point) Lighthouse on Great Point
of Nantucket Island in Massachusetts - 1784

Erected in 1784 the lighthouse was transferred to the United States on June 10, 1790. It was entirely destroyed by fire in November, 1816, and in 1818 the present stone tower was built to take its place.

12. Newburyport Harbor Lighthouse at north end of
Plumb Island in Massachusetts - 1788

The Massachusetts Assembly authorized the construction of two lighthouses here late in 1787, and they were ceded to the United States on June 10, 1790. These lights have been moved many times. "Today /1950/ only one white conical tower built in 1788, and rebuilt in 1898, remains on Plum Island."

13. *Portland Head Lighthouse on a promontory on
Cape Elizabeth in Maine - 1791

Begun in 1787, this lighthouse was completed in 1790, and lighted by the Federal Government on January 10, 1791. Some tradition says that Washington engaged two masons of Portland in 1787 and instructed them to take charge of the construction of a lighthouse there. The indices for his diaries and writing show no reference to this or to any lighthouse in these years except Cape Henry. In any case it seems to have been under construction in 1789 at the time of the national government's assumption of lighthouse responsibility. The rubblestone tower has been raised and lowered through the years. It was reduced by 20 feet in 1868 only to be raised again in 1869, "but the old structure was retained as a base."

14. *Tybee Lighthouse at the entrance to the
Savannah River in Georgia - 1791

The lighthouse was under construction when Georgia entered the Union in 1788. It is believed that it was ceded to the Federal Government in December, 1791, and that it was in commission at the time. There were light improvements in 1841 and 1857. In 1862 the interior of the tower and lantern were destroyed by fire and the Confederates went on to destroy most of the tower. When rebuilt in 1866-67, "a considerable part" of the old tower was used. It was "torn down to the proper point, and the new masonry carried up from there to the requisite height." Gales in 1871 and 1878 greatly damaged the tower and, by report, rendered it unsafe. Repeated requests for a new tower were denied and "Nothing, however, was ever done to replace the structure and it stands today as it was rebuilt in 1867." There is a claim for a Tybee beacon of some sort as early as 1740.

15. Bald Head Light (Cape Fear Lighthouse) at the entrance
to the Cape Fear River in North Carolina - 1796

North Carolina ceded 10 acres on Cape Fear Island on December 14, 1790, for lighthouse purposes. On April 2, 1792 Congress acted "to cause to be finished in such

manner as shall appear advisable, the lighthouse heretofore begun under authority of the State of North Carolina, on Bald Head, at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in the State." The light was completed and first shown in 1796. In the 1813 - 1817 period it was necessary to take measures "for rebuilding Bald Head Lighthouse." After various changes of fortune the station was discontinued in 1935.

Other lighthouses which came before 1800 were Sequin, Me. - 1795, Montauk, N.Y. - 1797, Baker's Island, Mass. - 1798, Cape Cod, Mass. - 1798, Hatteras, N. C. - 1798, Ocracoke, N. C. - 1798, Gay Head, Mass. - 1799, and Eaton's Neck, N. Y. - 1759.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

May 8, 1939.

Mrs. Francis Naylor,
General Chairman, Cape Henry Pilgrimage Committee,
611 Boissier Avenue,
Norfolk, Virginia.

My dear Mrs. Naylor:

I believe you will be interested in having the enclosed photographs (our Nos. 7727, 7728, 7729, 7730, 7731, 7732, 7733) of the exercises which were held at Cape Henry. I send them to you with my compliments and with the hope that they will, in some measure, atone for my remarks when you introduced me Sunday afternoon!

Permit me, again, to congratulate you on the excellent arrangements which you made and carried out for the Pilgrimage. I am sure it must be a source of real satisfaction to you to have completed so admirably again this annual task. I thought the Governor's remarks and Judge Koore's and Mr. Tillotson's addresses were excellent, and that all of the participants in the program complied completely and fully with the spirit of the occasion.

As I explained to you briefly on Sunday, we have just prepared material for a new booklet of information on Colonial National Historical Park which includes information concerning Cape Henry. This will insure bringing the Cape Henry site to the attention of visitors who come first to Jamestown or Yorktown.

With assurances of my esteem, I am,

Sincerely yours,

(Sgt) Robert COX

Robert Cox,
Acting Superintendent.

RC/A

CC: Director
Mr. M.R. Tillotson, in Washington, with prints of photographs
Regional Director (2)
Historical Division

IN VIRGINIA

Rites at Cape Henry For New Park

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—The first landing of colonists in Virginia will be celebrated here in dramatic style today, when the Cape Henry unit of the Colonial National Historical Park is officially dedicated by the National Park Service in the presence of Governor James H. Price of Virginia and personal representatives of President Roosevelt.

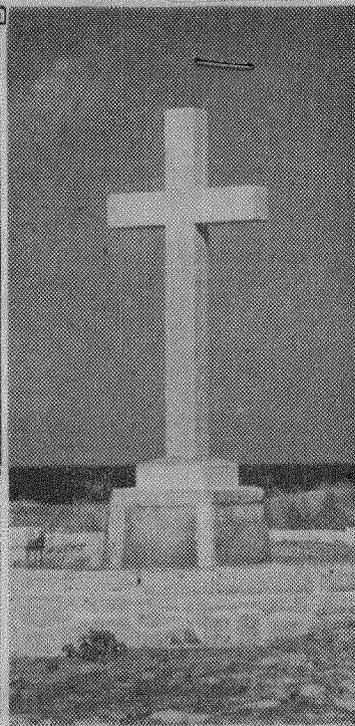
It was at Cape Henry, 332 years ago on April 26, that the London Company's colonists, sent out from England in the three small ships, the Sarah Constant, Goodspeed and Discovery, disembarked and claimed the New World for God and King James I, naming the land Virginia. First official action of the colonists was the holding of a religious service of thanksgiving, presided over by Robert Hunt, chaplain. Later, at Cape Henry, the seal was broken on the royal charter.

A memorial granite cross today marks the spot where the first crudely constructed religious symbol was planted.

Golf, tennis and horseback riding are favorite pastimes with colonists here.

Final arrangements are being completed for the tenth annual Cavalier Horse Show, which will be held next Saturday and Sunday in the ring at the Cavalier Hotel. Other Spring shows follow in quick succession in various parts of the Old Dominion.

* * *



Memorial cross at Cape Henry, near Virginia Beach, Va.

that evening there will be dinner dancing at the Cloister. During the early part of the week a group horseback ride, a putting tournament, and on Wednesday evening a truckin' contest in the Palm Patio will be of interest.

Particularly crowded will be Friday's calendar, with a miniature golf tournament, a tennis round-robin on the Cloister courts and in the evening a fresco dinner dancing on the deck of the Beach Casino swimming pool.

* * *

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

March 17, 1939.

Cape Henry Dune

Memorandum for Mr. Tillotson:

In accordance with your memorandum of March 11, there is outlined below a brief history of Federal ownership of the First Landing Dune at the Fort Story Military Reservation:

This reservation was acquired by the War Department for military purposes by condemnation, under date of June 26, 1914. The Secretary of War, by letter dated January 21, 1936, to Mrs. Lillian Webb Naylor, Speaker of the Assembly Tidewater Virginia Women, granted permission to erect the memorial on the reservation while reserving title to the land in the War Department. The memorial, as you know, was erected by the Daughters of the American Colonies and is in the form of a large granite cross.

Congress enacted legislation providing for the transfer of that part of Fort Story on which the memorial is located from the War Department to the Department of the Interior by Act approved June 15, 1938. In accordance with the provisions of that Act, the Secretary of War transferred twenty-three hundredths of an acre of land containing the memorial to the Department of the Interior, under date of January 19, 1939.

There are attached hereto copy of the Act of Congress and copy of the deed transferring title to this Department.

C. G. Jaquette,
Assistant Attorney.

Enclosure 1526557

cc: Mr. Appleman

COPY
Public Resolution No. 110 75th Congress
(Chapter 404 - 5d session)
S. J. Res. 243
JOINT RESOLUTION

To provide for the transfer of the Cape Henry Memorial site in Fort Story, Virginia, to the Department of the Interior.

Whereas the Colonial National Historical Park (formerly the Colonial National Monument) established under the Act of Congress approved July 3, 1950, includes Jamestown, Yorktown, and Williamsburg; and

Whereas the Jamestown colonists who established the first permanent English settlement in America first landed and set up a cross on April 26, 1607, at the First Landing Dune in Fort Story, Cape Henry, Virginia, which is now a shrine marked by a cross memorial; Therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War is authorized in his discretion, subject to such terms and conditions as he may deem essential for the protection of military interests, to transfer to the Secretary of the Interior, such part of the Fort Story Military Reservation, Cape Henry, Virginia, as the Secretary of War may select, but not to exceed an area of one hundred feet square, as a proposed site for the Cape Henry Memorial (First Landing Dune), including the site on which the Daughters of the American Colonies have heretofore erected a monument under authority of the War Department. The Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, shall exercise jurisdiction over and maintain such site and memorial as a part of the Colonial National Historical Park under the provisions of the Act establishing the National Park Service, approved August 25, 1916, as amended and supplemented; Provided, That the use of any property transferred under the provisions of this Act shall be subject to the paramount needs of national defense.

Approved, June 15, 1938.

COPY

WHEREAS, by Joint Resolution approved June 15, 1938 (Public Resolution No. 110 75th Congress), the Secretary of War is authorized in his discretion, subject to such terms and conditions as he may deem essential for the protection of military interests, to transfer to the Secretary of the Interior such part of the Fort Story Military Reservation, Virginia, as the Secretary of War may select, but not to exceed an area of one hundred (100) feet square, as a proposed site for the Cape Henry Memorial (First Landing Dune), including the site on which the Daughters of the American Colonies have heretofore erected a monument under authority of the War Department, and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of War has determined that there is no objection to the transfer to the Secretary of the Interior of that portion of the Fort Story Military Reservation hereinafter described and under the terms and conditions herein contained.

NOW, THEREFORE, in accordance with and pursuant to authority contained in the above mentioned Joint Resolution approved June 15, 1938, there is hereby transferred to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior that portion of the Fort Story Military Reservation, Princess Anne County, State of Virginia, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the southwest corner of the tract in the westerly boundary line of the military reservation, from which bearing and distance to a U. S. monument in said boundary line near the northwest corner of the Norfolk Southern Railroad Depot is South twenty-three degrees thirty-seven minutes west (S. 23° 37' W.) seven hundred seventy-five (775) feet, and running thence:

- (1) North twenty-three degrees thirty-seven minutes east (N. 23° 37' E) one hundred (100) feet, along said boundary line, to a point; thence:
- (2) South sixty-six degrees twenty-three minutes east (S. 66° 23' E), one hundred (100) feet, to a point; thence:
- (3) South twenty-three degrees thirty-seven minutes west (S. 23° 37' W), one hundred (100) feet to a point; thence:
- (4) North sixty-six degrees twenty-three minutes west (N. 66° 23' W.), One hundred feet, to the point of beginning.

The tract as described contains an area of twenty-three hundredths (0.23) of an acre, more or less, and is shown on Map No. 6562-110 entitled "Portion of Fort Story, Virginia, area to be transferred to the Department of the Interior," scale 1" = 100', dated October 1938, on file in the Office of the Quartermaster General, War Department, Washington, D. C., a copy being attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof.

This transfer is made subject to the conditions that no buildings or structures shall be erected on said site without written permission of the Secretary of War and that the use of the property hereby transferred shall be subject to the paramount needs of national defense.

Dated this 19th day of January 1939

Harry H. Woodring,
Secretary of War.

Cape Henry

"Landing Dune" Bill Is Reported

Inclusion in Park System Assured, Byrd Says

The inclusion of the "Landing Dune" at Cape Henry in the Colonial National Historical Park system is assured, according to word received this afternoon.

Senator Harry Flood Byrd telegraphed the Ledger-Dispatch: "My bill establishing Cape Henry as a part of the Colonial National Historical Park unanimously reported today by the Senate Public Lands Committee, and expect prompt passage by the Senate."

If the Senate acts promptly on this bill, the ceremonies incident to the transfer of the landing dune from the War Department to the Department of the Interior, which has charge of national parks, will be incorporated in the annual exercises conducted at Cape Henry by the Assembly of Tidewater Virginia Women. These exercises will be held Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock at Cape Henry.

\$157,000 Paid by Virginia For Seashore Park Acreage

NORFOLK, (AP)—The Commonwealth of Virginia yesterday became the fee simple owner of 3,377 acres in its Seashore State Park at Cape Henry when a check for \$157,000 was presented the Cape Henry Syndicate, Inc., for 2,377 of the acres.

The transaction took place in the office of Braden VanDeventer, vice-chairman of the Virginia Conservation Commission, in the presence of Chairman Wilbur C. Hall and Attorney - General Staples. The check was accepted by Alvah H. Martin, attorney for the syndicate.

By taking up its option at this time, the State saved \$1,000 in cash and was assured of the establishment of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in the park early in June.

The last General Assembly appropriated \$158,000 for the purchase, but funds for the project ordinarily would not become available until July 1. in the mean-

time, however, CCC officials stated that the State had to have fee simple title to the 3,377 acres by June 1, before a work camp could be established there. Funds for the purchase prior to July 1 were released by Governor Price. Because of the early payment, the syndicate agreed to reduce its price by \$1,000.

The original 1,000 acres already developed in the park were acquired August 8, 1933, when the syndicate donated this acreage and gave an option for the purchase of the remainder at a price of \$260,000. The Conservation Commission had the property re-appraised, however, and the lower figure of \$158,000 was agreed upon.

The CCC workers, Chairman Hall said, will be instrumental this summer in building roadways and clearing trails through the park. Further extensive improvements, including the erection of more cabins, are projected over the next few years.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REGION ONE

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

April 28, 1938.

Cur 4/29

The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

On April 25 Mrs. Russell and I drove to Virginia Beach where we attended the Cape Henry Day Luncheon at the Cavalier Hotel and participated in the Sixteenth Cape Henry Pilgrimage memorializing the landing of the English colonists in 1607. Both the luncheon and the services at the First Landing Dunes were well planned and appropriately conducted under the brilliant leadership of Mrs. Francis Taylor.

About 2,000 people assembled at the First Landing Dunes where troops from Ft. Story provided fitting atmosphere and music for the religious services and patriotic observances conducted from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. James H. Price, Governor of Virginia, gave the principal address. Six other speakers appeared on the program. A copy of the brief paper which I gave as the last speaker is attached.

I made a number of interesting and valuable contacts on the occasion of this Cape Henry Day observance which will be reported upon in my April report. The attitude of the members of the National Society Daughters of the American Colonists, the Assembly of Tidewater Virginia Women and the Cape Henry Memorial Commission is most friendly.

Late in the afternoon of the 26th, in company with Mr. Wilbur G. Hall, Chairman of the Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development, and Mr. Wright, Custodian, I inspected Seaboard State Park. This State Park is a most important unit in the Virginia park system. Governor Price preceded his Cape Henry address by the announcement that Virginia has appropriated \$155,000.00 with which to purchase 2,300 acres of land to be added to Seaboard State Park. This appropriation was made in anticipation of reestablishment of a CCC camp at Seaboard. Mr. Huppuch's telegram of yesterday assures us that a camp will be available to Seaboard in the October program. Such work as may be necessary on the Cape Henry Shrine, expected to become a part of Colonial National Historical Park, can, I believe, be taken care of by the CCC forces to be assigned to Seaboard.

Sincerely yours,

Inclosure 1555173

CC Capt. Flickinger
Mr. Roberts
Mr. Lohmar
Mr. Parker

Carl P. Russell,
Regional Director.

Mr. Naylor

Governor Price and other honored guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The National Park Service has a particularly great pleasure in joining ~~us~~ today in memorializing Cape Henry Day. We take a special pride and pleasure on this, the three hundred and thirty-first anniversary of the First Landing of the Jamestown settlers, because the 1938 Pilgrimage brings us to what we hope may become a new part of Colonial National Historical Park.

Three hundred and thirty-one years ago today the English-speaking population of the New World was exactly 105 souls. Their possessions included three ships -- not very good ones, perhaps, -- and a few weapons and personal effects.

These 105 men (there were no women), that modest total of physical materials, and finally, the sum of the ideas of the little band, altogether constituted the entire Anglo-Saxon civilization of the Western Hemisphere.

I do not intend to exhibit a penchant for dimensions, numbers and percentages because we all know, without benefit of higher mathematics, the fabulous story of how the courageous works of those pioneers have been multiplied in the three and one-third centuries which have elapsed. That story, so much stranger than fiction, describing a people's climb to heights from the humblest of origins, far over-reaches the scriptural phrase: "Ten thousand times ten thousand."

The scene which meets our eyes here today apparently has remained virtually unchanged since that early observer, William Strachey, Virginia's first historian, made the simple notation: "The cape of this bay on the south side we call Cape Henry. . . where the land shewes white hilly sand, like unto the Downes, and all along the shoare great plenty of pines and firrs."

We well may be gratified that the spot where we stand has preserved its primitive appearance throughout the years, because it is a natural and real, if not spectacular, monument to the first step of a mighty human endeavor-- an endeavor of which the final magnitude awes the most adventurous imagination.

The dramatic stages through which that early enterprise now has passed, in the evolution of a new and powerful civilization, have endowed this country with many hallowed spots, physical sites associated with the multitudinous ramifications of the idea which brought these 105 men to this shore.

Among the most significant of these physical sites are those of Tidewater Virginia, where American representative government was born and out of which has sprung an amazing number of its greatest stewards, soldiers, and intellectual and moral leaders.

The National Park Service, charged with the responsibility of preserving for future Americans such evidences of our development, has been entrusted with care of the fields of war, the birthplaces of leaders, monuments to our growing culture-- in short, almost every type of shrine which reflects the spirit of our national history. One of these, Colonial National Historical Park, under the guidance of Superintendent Flickinger, already is being developed with a careful regard for every detail which may be considered as illuminating the colonial chapter of the country's record.

The privations at Jamestown, where inexperienced, unacclimated men fought against the forces of the wilderness, were but a preliminary phase of the epochal events destined to follow many years later at Yorktown. But even the struggle on Jamestown Island itself had an anterior phase when the men of Christopher Newport's three little ships set foot on the sand of Cape Henry and erected a cross. The addition of this Cape Henry site to the

unique Colonial park consequently may well serve to enrich and proportion a 351-year-long history of American achievement.

This landing dune, upon which permanent English colonization first planted its banner, is to be placed in the custodianship of the Service which I represent. The ownership and responsibility for its care will repose in the Department of the Interior. I rejoice with the Cape Henry Memorial Commission and the National Society of the Daughters of the American Colonists in knowing that their foresight and initiative have brought this about, for this shrine is completely linked in history with the Jamestown Colony and should be linked, actually, with the present-day Colonial National Historical Park.

You may be assured that the National Park Service will spare no effort *properly* to integrate the Cape Henry story with those of Yorktown and Jamestown, and that we shall strive conscientiously to give adequate and respectful care to the Cape Henry shrine.

On behalf of Secretary Ickes and Director Cammerer I express heartfelt appreciation of the patriotic work which has made an institution of the Cape Henry Pilgrimage, and on behalf of those gentlemen, too, I express thanks to the members of the Cape Henry Memorial Commission, the National Society of the Daughters of the American Colonists, and to the other civic and patriotic *that have sponsored the Cape Henry Memorial idea. These organizations* organizations are to be congratulated for their activity in arousing public interest in historic events of significance both to Virginia and to the Nation.

In conclusion I wish to assure you of my appreciation of the opportunity to participate in the 1938 Pilgrimage. I thank you most sincerely for the friendliness and courtesy ~~shown~~ invariably shown me and other representatives of my Service.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

March 18, 1938

Dr. A. R. Kelly,
Associate Archeologist, National Park Service,
Ocmulgee National Monument,
Macon, Georgia.

Dear Sir:

We have forwarded to you two collections of Indian pottery found at Cape Henry, Virginia, by Mr. O. B. Taylor, Associate Wildlife Technician, March 3, 1938.

One of the Indian sites is at the confluence of Long Creek; the other is at the "Narrows". Both places are without protection and the Indian remains are likely to disappear before many years have passed.

Sincerely yours,

Carl P. Russell,
Regional Director.

By

CC:
Washington-Branch of Hist.
Sites and Buildings

Dr. Porter

H. K. Roberts,
Acting Assistant
Regional Director.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ECW REGION ONE
801 GRACE SECURITIES BUILDING
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

February 9, 1938

The Superintendent,
Colonial National Historical Park,
Yorktown, Virginia.

Subject: Proposed Addition of Cape Henry
Memorial Site to Colonial National
Historical Park.

Dear Sir:

We are transmitting a copy of Dr. Porter's recent report on the Cape Henry Memorial Site, Port Story, Virginia. The report was made in connection with the proposal to annex this area to Colonial National Historical Park.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert Evison,
Acting Regional Director.

Enclosure
No. 1551238
CC:
Washington-Branch of Hist.
Sites and Buildings
Dr. Porter

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ECW REGION ONE
801 GRACE SECURITIES BUILDING
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

February 8, 1938

The Director,
National Park Service,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Acting Assistant Director
Branch of Historic Sites and Buildings

Subject: Cape Henry Memorial Site,
Fort Story, Virginia.

Dear Sir:

We are transmitting photographs and maps which have been mounted to accompany Dr. Porter's report on the Cape Henry Memorial Site, Fort Story, Virginia.

You will perhaps recall that the text of the report was transmitted to you some days ago while Dr. Porter was in South Carolina. He wishes to call attention to the fact that there were two typographical errors on page one, where in "recreating" was twice used in place of "recreating."

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure
No. 1551232
CC:
Dr. Porter

H. K. Roberts,
Acting Associate
Regional Director.

C N H P.

Age Herby

Va.

Jan. 24, 1938

The Director
etc

Dear Mr. Director:

Ref. is made to Acting Assistant Director Mullady's letter of January 15 enclosing copies of S. J. Res. 243 and H. J. Res. 557, both proposing the transfer of the Lee Henry Memorial site in Fort Story, Virginia, to the Department of the Interior. This question was discussed with Mr. T. A. Sullivan last week while I was in Washington. Mr. Sullivan informed me that the proposal concerns only the transfer of a plot 100' square. I am familiar with the site and the memorial, having been present at its dedication several years ago. Historically, it is logical that this site be added to this park. This addition would enable us to have the beginning of our Jamestown story in our custody. In view of the historical interest of the site and because of the small area involved, I recommend that the Department report favorably on the resolutions.

Sincerely yours.

B. Floyd Flickinger

Supt.

cc Regional Office

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

September 29, 1936

Regional Officer,
Region I, National Park Service,
801 Grace Securities Building,
Richmond, Virginia.

Attention: Mr. Appleman

Dear Sir:

There are attached copies of correspondence and a memorandum, dealing with the Cape Henry area and Seashore State Park in Virginia.

In view of the course which this project has taken, it is believed advisable to have available in this office an historical report on the Cape Henry Lighthouse and adjacent historical points, as well as information on the relationship of that Lighthouse to the general area.

It is understood that the Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation is requesting a general study of this area. We would like to have this historical study incorporated in that, with an advance copy made available for our use here. What we need, briefly, are photographs and a map and information that will permit us to visualize the administrative problems that will be involved should this area be established. It will be possible to carry out in Washington any detailed research on the history of the Lighthouse which may be necessary.

Sincerely yours,

Branch Spalding,
Acting Assistant Director.

by _____
Ronald F. Lee,
Field Coordinator.

cc - Regional Office ✓
Enclosure 968298

Cape Henry Lighthouse

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

C
O
P
Y

July 29, 1936

Memorandum for the Secretary:

In response to your memorandum of July 22, regarding the proposed addition of the Cape Henry area to Colonial National Historical Park, some general study has been made of this possibility.

The proposed addition includes the Seashore State Park, which has had an ECW camp supervised by this Service. This park area contains 3,437 acres of which 1,064 acres are owned outright by the State and an additional 2,373 acres, upon which there is a lien of \$260,000, is held conditionally. Approximately \$13,000 soon will be due on this lien if it is to be reserved for two years beyond August 8, 1936.

Adjacent to the Seashore State Park is Fort Story under the War Department. In this latter area, but belonging to the Society for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, is the Cape Henry Lighthouse, an historic structure of the first land overlooking Hampton Roads, and also a small plot with a monument commemorating what is approximately the location of the first landing place of the Jamestown colonists on American shores. This plot still is a part of the Fort grounds, as we understand it, but the right to place the monument was given to a local patriotic women's group. During the Civil War period the famous battle between the Merrimac and Monitor took place nearby in Hampton Roads.

It is felt that if a project could be worked out for obtaining these historic areas in the Fort Story reservation along with the Seashore State Park area, including both the area which is now owned in fee simple, that which is held by lien and sufficient additional land to effect proper control, it would be desirable to consider the possibility of designating a national historic site to include the combined area. The financial difficulties to which reference has been made, however, are considerable. It may be difficult, also, to secure the historic areas already mentioned at Fort Story from the War Department and the Society for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

The region has fine recreational and scenic assets, such as unusual sand dune formation, cypress swamps, and seashore beach possibilities, in addition to the historic considerations. The Virginia Beach, nationally famous seaside resort, is in this vicinity. There

is, however, a difficult pollution problem which would have to be remedied if a further development of the Seashore should be undertaken.

It is believed that this project should not be considered as an integral part of Colonial National Historical Park because of the somewhat different character which it possesses. It might well be administered, however, as a separate area by the Superintendent of the Colonial National Historical Park as a part of his administrative group, if designated a national historic site.

Acting Director.

Commonwealth of Virginia

STATE COMMISSION ON CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Richmond

August 19th, 1936.

Honorable A. E. Demaray, Acting Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Demaray:

I have before me your memorandum of August 3rd of the Secretary of the Interior regarding the Cape Henry area.

It is correct that we have recently had an appraisal made of that part of the Seashore State Park to which the State does not have a fee simple interest, that is to say, the 2300 acre area on which there was a vendor's lien of \$260,000.00. The Cape Henry Syndicate has agreed to accept from the State \$158,000.00, which was the appraisal price of the 2300 acres, and has also agreed to extend the option for a period of two years from August 8th, 1936. You understand that the State does have a fee simple ownership of the 1,000 acres on which all the improvements have been made at the Seashore State Park and the State, of course, has spent some money in the development of this 1000 acre area.

Of course, the matter will ultimately have to be acted on by the General Assembly of Virginia and no one knows their attitude with respect to the matter. It may be that they will impose some conditions upon the localities with respect to acquiring the 2300 acre tract.

I think Governor Peery had hoped that there would be some way whereby we could turn over to the Government the 1000 acres with improvements and that the Federal Government could acquire the 2300 acres. I know that this was in his mind when he talked with the Secretary on the occasion of a conference in Washington when I was present.

Of course, I would like to see a National Seashore Park at Cape Henry and I am wondering if the matter could be worked out on the basis which I have suggested. Frankly, it might be that the General Assembly would hesitate to appropriate money to acquire the property if it was to be turned over to the Federal Government as suggested.

Very sincerely yours,

(SGD.) WILBUR C. HALL
Chairman.

P.S. I hope to talk with you some time further about the matter.

OLDER LIGHTHOUSES, SOUTH ATLANTIC

Cape Henry	1791	1861		
Currituck Beach	1875		lat. 36 22	long 75 50
Bodie Is.	1848	1872		
C. Hatteras	1798	1870	1935	
Caraacole	1798	1825	lat. N. 35° 06.5'	long. W 75° 59.2'
			light 75	above water
			visible 14	nautical miles
			7000	candles
			flash 5	secs, eclipse 25

Diamond Shoal Lightship 14 Miles from lighthouse 1897 red ball

Charleston	1787	1876
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OLDER LIGHTHOUSES, NORTH ATLANTIC

Libby Islands	Maine	1817
Portland Head	"	1797
Nantucket	(Mass.)	1754-1818
Newbank Pt.	N. Y.	1797