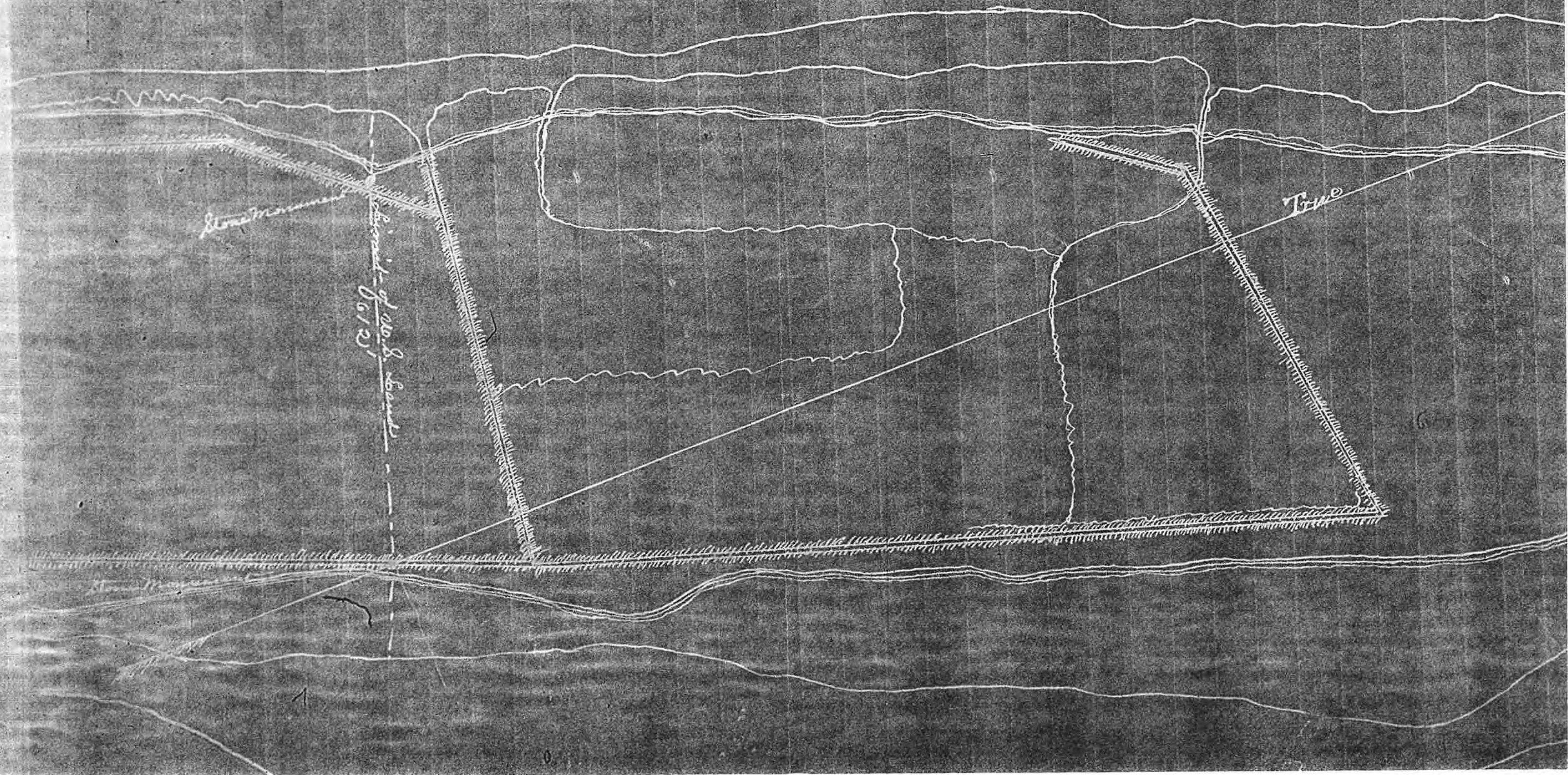
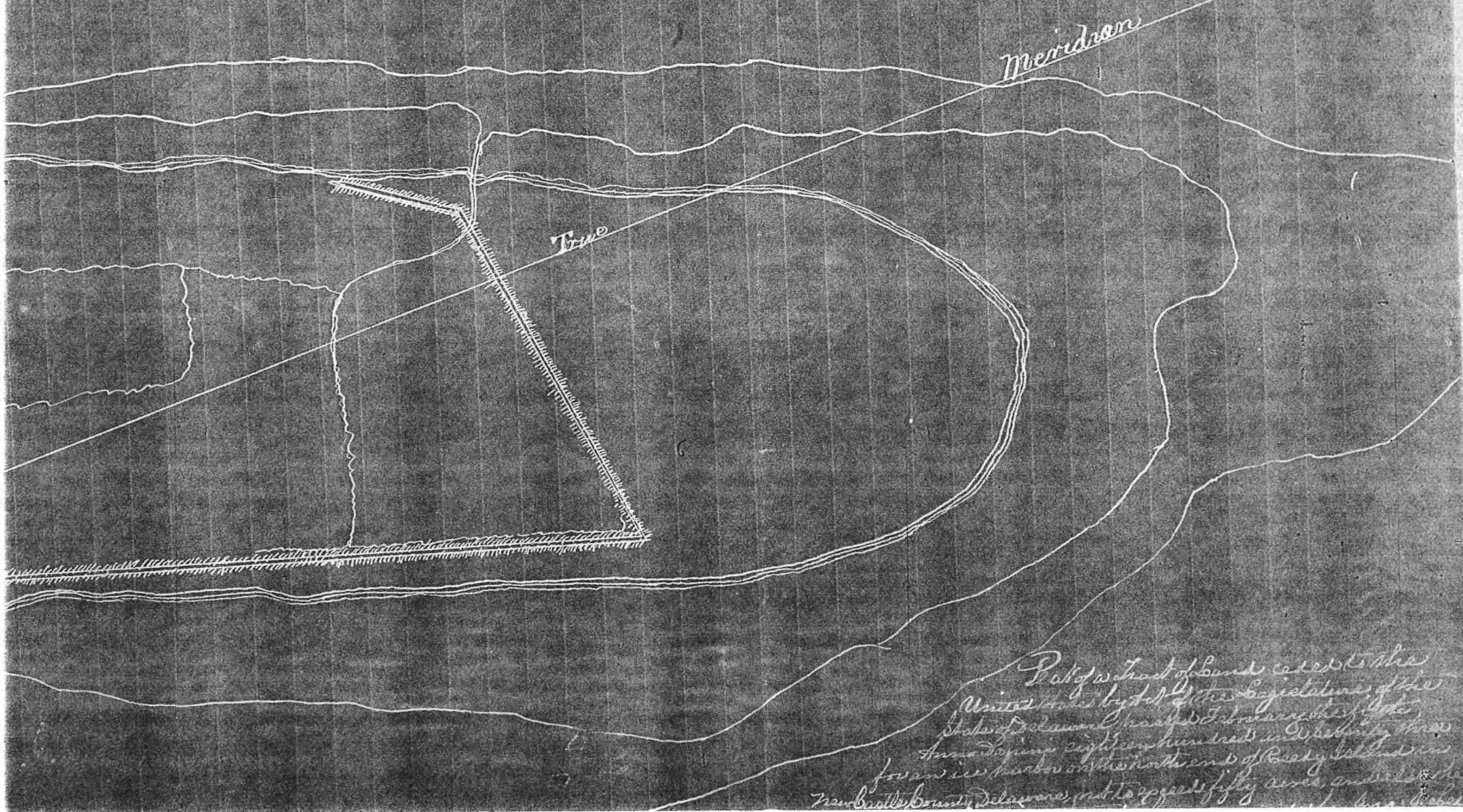


Plan of United States Land and Freshwater at north end of Peedy Island Delaware, ceded to the United States
Surveyed by Jno. J. Lee U.S. Asst. Surgeon May 9th 1874

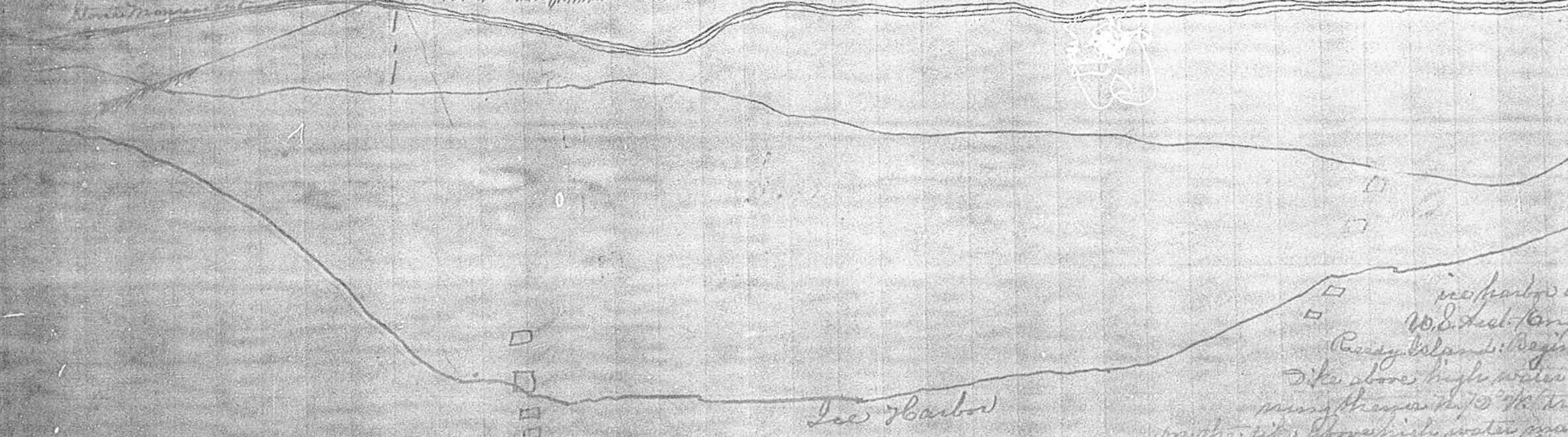
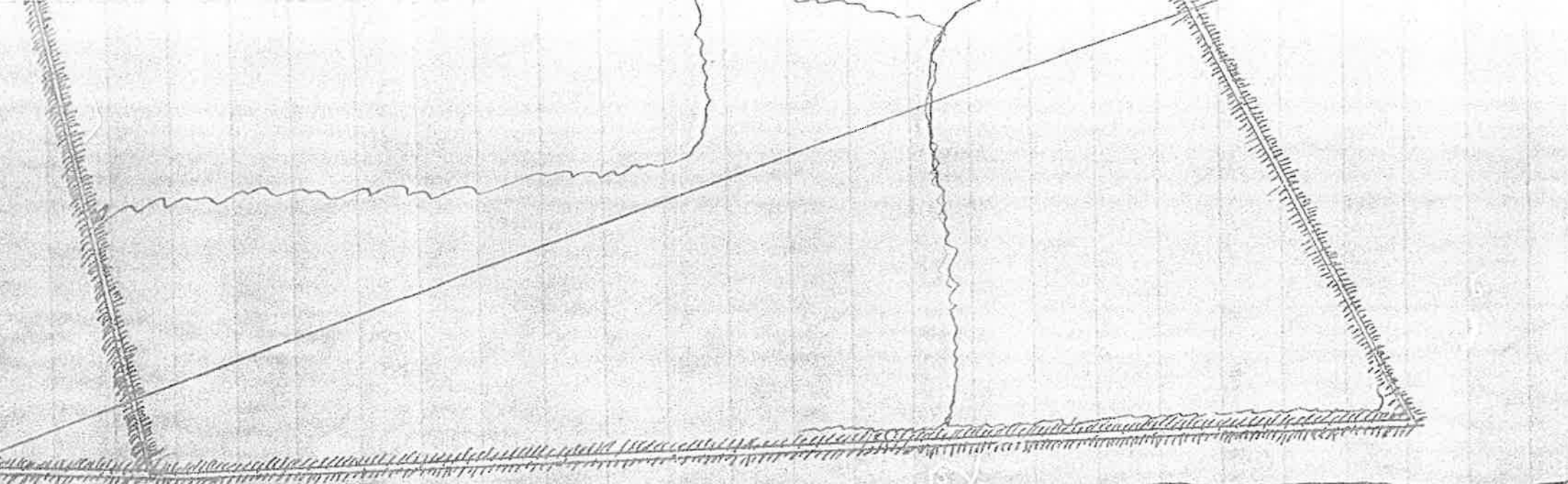


Part of a Tract of Land ceded to the United States by the State of Delaware
9th 1874



Part of a Tract of Land ceded to the
United States by the Legislature of the
State of Delaware, passed February 27th 1874,
amounting to eight hundred and thirty three
four and a half acres on the north end of Beedy Island in
New Castle County, Delaware, and to approximately fifty acres on the
south end of the same island.

1- of 10.8, bands
6123



Ice Harbor

ice harbor
W. S. Seal-fang
Pasey Island: Begin
Dike above high water
many the same as 10 1/2 ft. in
width the dike above high water

... along low water line in a north by direction to the north end of the island
... along low water line in a north by direction to a point on low water line opposite to
... place of beginning

Scale 1 inch to 200

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

A copy of this List will be sent free of charge to any shipmaster on application to the Office of the Light-House Board, Washington, D. C., or to the Inspector of the Fourth Light-House District, at Philadelphia, Pa.

LIST
OF
BEACONS, BUOYS,
AND
DAY-MARKS.
FOURTH LIGHT-HOUSE DISTRICT,

EMBRACING THE

SEACOASTS, BAYS, HARBORS, AND RIVERS FROM A POINT ON THE COAST
OPPOSITE THE MOUTH OF THE SHREWSBURY RIVER, NEW
JERSEY, TO INCLUDE METOMKIN INLET, VIRGINIA.

CORRECTED TO DECEMBER 1, 1893.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1893.

DELAWARE BAY AND RIVER.

Main Ship-Channel of the Delaware Entrance, Bay, and River to Philadelphia—Continued.

Coast and Geodetic Survey Charts 379, 123, 127, 124, 125, 126, 380, 381, 8, 9, and 376.

Continued.
d 376.

Notes:
Bearings are magnetic,
(nautical miles.)

1. Bombay Hook
Cohansey Light
marks the edge of
Bombay Hook

1/2 N. through west-
ward); fixed red
light 12 miles. On the
side of entrance to
river. From points
west W. 1/2 S. and
only.

1/2 and marks the
starboard side of

1/2 miles. On the
Baker Island and S.
only.

1/2 main ship-chan-
nel.

1/2 of 18-foot ridge,
western side of

1/2 Baker Shoal, lying
1/2 narrow channel
1/2 east side of the

1/2 Baker Island, Dela-

Name of station or locality of aid.	Color of aid.	Number, if a buoy.	Description of mark or aid.	Compass bearings and distances of prominent objects from the aid.	Depth at low-est tides, in ft.	GENERAL REMARKS. (NOTE.—Bearings and courses are magnetic and distances expressed in nautical miles.)										
PORT PENN RANGE (front).	White		Light 40 feet above sea level, on white dwelling, with lead-colored trimmings and green shutters.			Two fixed white lights on the Delaware side of the river, about 1 1/2 miles below Port Penn. They are about 1 1/2 miles apart, N.W. by N. and S.E. by S., and form a range which, in connection with the Finns Point Range, marks the channel from below Bombay Hook to Reedy Point, where the New Castle Range is reached. The illuminating apparatus in each is a range lens.										
PORT PENN RANGE (rear).	Brown		Iron tower 120 feet high, showing above trees, dwelling near, painted white with lead-colored trimmings and green shutters, but not visible in the range.													
REEDY ISLAND LIGHT-STATION.	White; lantern, black.		Light 36 feet above sea level, on white dwelling, with lead-colored trimmings and green shutters. Old tower, white, remains near.			Fixed light on the lower end of Reedy Island, illuminating 270 degrees of the horizon extending from SSE. through northward, eastward, and southward to ENE., visible 11 miles. The light shows white from SSE. through northward and eastward to N. by E. 1/2 E., except in the narrow sector between N. by W. and N. 1/2 E., in which the light shows red. From N. by E. 1/2 E. to ENE. the light shows red (from seaward). To vessels bound down the bay, with the Finns Point Ranges on, or up the bay with the Port Penn Ranges on, the changes of this light from white to red will indicate that the turning point has been reached. Fog signal is a bell struck by machinery, at intervals of 15 seconds— Thus: <table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-right: 10px;">1 blow,</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Silent</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-left: 10px;">1 blow,</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Silent</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">interval,</td> <td style="text-align: center;">interval,</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">15 sec.</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">15 sec.</td> </tr> </table> The dike extending to the southward from the S. end of Reedy Island, Delaware River, is covered by a narrow sector in this light (dividing the red sector into two), in which the light shows white. The sector lies between N. by E. 1/2 E. and N. 1/2 E. (from seaward). Vessels bound into Reedy Island Harbor from the southward will keep the Port Penn Ranges on, passing through the white cut in this light until reaching a second red cut, when they will be clear of the end of the dike, and are free to stand up the harbor.	1 blow,	Silent	1 blow,	Silent	interval,	interval,		15 sec.		15 sec.
1 blow,	Silent	1 blow,	Silent													
	interval,		interval,													
	15 sec.		15 sec.													
Reedy Island Flats.	Black	19	1st-class spar buoy.	Reedy Island Light-House, SSW. 1/2 W. Port Penn Range (rear) Light-House, SW. by W. 1/2 W.	19	Marks the western side of the main ship-channel; also, the Bulkhead Shoal channel, off Reedy Island Flats.										
FINNS POINT RANGE (front).	White		Light on a tower, 30 feet above sea level, attached to dwelling; day-mark on top of tower; lattice-work of wood, with white horizontal stripes.			Two fixed lights on the New Jersey side of the river, about 1/2 mile below Finns Point. They are about 1 1/2 miles apart, ranging N. by E. 1/2 E. and S. by W. 1/2 W., and form a range which, in connection with the Port Penn Range, marks the channel from below Bombay Hook to Reedy Point, where the New Castle Range is reached. Baker Shoal is not more than 200 yards to the eastward of this range. A red cut in the rear light marks the Bulkhead Shoals, and will assist vessels in judging of the proper point at which to commence the turn at this locality. Vessels running on the ranges established here, when nearing the buoys next above or below the turning buoy, will see a faint reddish light; when abreast of either of these buoys the light will appear a bright red. The red light indicates the points at which the turn should commence.										
FINNS POINT RANGE (rear).	Brown		Iron tower, 95 feet high, showing above trees.													

RG 0775

1893

US Lighthouses Records
US Coast Guard

338475 L40331 02

"List of Beacons, Buoys & Daymarks - 4th Lighthouse District

Lighthouse Digest®

International Lighthouse Magazine

October 2003

\$3.95 U.S. \$4.95 Canada



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A Lightkeeper's Grandson Helps Establish The First Historic

Marker for a Delaware Lighthouse

By Bob Trapani, Jr.

Like many coastal states, Delaware boasts a proud lighthouse heritage that dates back to 1767 when colonial merchants raised monies from a lottery to establish the legendary Cape Henlopen Lighthouse at the mouth of the Delaware Bay. The Lighthouse Service would later construct another 26 manned light stations in Delaware before the golden age of lighthouses came to a close. Sadly, only nine of Delaware's historic lighthouses survive today.

Despite such a rich lighthouse legacy, none of the Delaware light stations have ever been honored with a historic marker. That all changed on June 14, 2003 when Delaware Public Archives established the first historic marker for a Delaware lighthouse at the former site of the Port Penn Range Front Light, near Port Penn, Delaware. A passionate roadside ceremony commemorated this historic occasion by paying tribute to not only Port Penn Range Front Light, but also the state's lighthouse heritage and the persistence of one individual who worked nearly two years to make this proud moment a reality.

"The Port Penn project was a first of sorts, this being the first marker concerning lighthouse history that has been requested," said Russ McCabe of Delaware's Public Archives. "In this case,

the request for the marker was made by Dr. Bill Duncan of Wilmington, Delaware, whose grandfather was one of the two keepers of the light."

For Dr. Duncan, the satisfaction for all his hard work and dedication was derived from the fact that the history of Port Penn Range Front Light was finally being recognized and honored. Dr. Duncan simply said the occasion for establishing the historic marker was "recognition long overdue."

"Recognition long overdue."

The Port Penn Range Front Light was built in 1876 as part of the first set of range lights established in Delaware on the Delaware River. The 1878 Description of Lighthouse Sites of the Fourth Lighthouse District states the lighthouse was situated about 900 feet southwest of the mouth of St. Augustine Creek, and about 2.5 miles southwest of the Port Penn wharf along the public road. As with many of the range front lights along the Delaware River, the light at Port Penn sat close to the water - some 500 feet off the river bank behind an embankment of mud to protect it from the daily ebb and flow of the tides.

The lighthouse had a focal plane of 41.5 feet and exhibited a white light from a 26-inch diameter lens with a silvered reflector. The wooden structure was a two-story

building built atop a stone foundation and painted white with green shutters and lead-colored trim.

"Naturally a mechanical genius, possessing a personal knowledge of the dangers that are always near those who go down to the sea in ships."

By 1879-80, the Lighthouse Service decided to make the lighthouse stand out



Lightkeeper George Washington Duncan
Photo courtesy of Dr. Bill Duncan.



L to R: Dr. Bill Duncan, Bob Trapani, Jr. and Harry Spencer with the newly unveiled historic marker. Photo by Ann-Marie Trapani.



more as a daymark along the river and therefore altered the color scheme by painting the frontal view of the lantern room, roof and structure a bright red.

*... merely a sign
of things to come.*

Within less than two years following its construction, the Port Penn Range Front Light suffered serious damage from a vicious tempest on October 23, 1878 that wreaked havoc upon many other Delaware River and Bay lighthouses as well. High winds powered storm surge that inundated the marshland around Port Penn Range Front Light, destroying the mud embankment designed to protect the lighthouse. The force of the wind and water damaged the light structure, secondary buildings and the grounds. Though the damage was repairable, the event was merely a sign of things to come and the perpetual struggle the lighthouse would face with Mother Nature throughout its existence. In 1896, the USLHS annual report stated that "about 300 running feet of the river bank was repaired and strengthened" at the Port Penn Range Front Light. Again in 1897, a similar report recorded, "The attached kitchen was raised, re-leveled, and its foundation strengthened. The grounds around the house and barn were graded up to above storm-tide overflow, and the outbuildings were arranged in accordance."

The Port Penn Range Front Light had only two lightkeepers during its 27 years of operation. The first lighthouse keeper was Henry C. Walter who served at the light station from December 21, 1876 to October 1, 1885. Following Walter's tenure, George Washington Duncan was appointed the light's last

keeper. Duncan's service to the light and the U.S. Lighthouse Service was highly respected as evidence by the comments gleaned from a State of Delaware Biographical Encyclopedia of the 1880s. According to the account, "... (George Duncan) was appointed by Charles S. Fairchild, Secretary of the Treasury, as keeper of the front range light-house at Port Penn. He still retains that position, which he has filled to the greatest satisfac-

tion of the government and sea-faring people." The excerpt further states that, "Naturally a mechanical genius, possessing a personal knowledge of the dangers that are always near those who 'go down to the sea in ships,' an energetic and conscientious employee, he takes keenest pleasure in making improvements to his station and in having his beacon burning brightly when it is needed for the guidance of mariners."

In all, the venerable George W. Duncan served 34 years as a lightkeeper for the U.S. Lighthouse Service before retiring in 1919 at the New Castle Range Rear Light in Delaware.

The 1900s hardly took hold before the Port Penn Range Light was of no further use as an aid to navigation. Changes to the Delaware River brought about by dredging a safer and deeper shipping channel spelled doom for the lighthouse. With shipping traffic now rerouted in the river, the lights of the Port Penn Range were no longer able to show mariners center channel, and therefore were decommissioned on October 24, 1904. The federal government eventually sold the buildings and property at public auction on April 20, 1911. In his book *Guiding Lights of the Delaware River & Bay*, lighthouse historian Jim Gowdy states, "After the former lighthouse was sold it soon became a rental property. The condition of the dwelling went downhill over time, and later the building was destroyed by fire. Exact details about the demise of the former lighthouse are not known."

Not only was the demise of the lighthouse a mystery, even its former location was shrouded by the passage of time. Thanks to the dedication and persever-



Port Penn Range Front Light
circa 1900
Courtesy of Dr. Bill Duncan

ance of Dr. Bill Duncan, the site where the former lighthouse stood has been rediscovered. Dr. Duncan located the site, which is situated in an area heavily overgrown with vegetation and phragmites reeds on Delaware Route 9 between Augustine Beach and Bayview, back in 1998. Dr. Duncan's research and detective work not only solved a Delaware lighthouse mystery, but also uncovered the stone foundation that once supported the Port Penn Range Front Light and the broken remains of the former brick oil house.

Following his discovery of the former lighthouse site, Dr. Duncan initiated a crusade of sorts to obtain a historic marker to commemorate the site of the former lighthouse and historical importance of the vanished Port Penn Range Front Light. With the support of Delaware Representatives Joseph DiPinto and Richard Cathcart, and the help of Russ McCabe of Delaware Public Archives, Dr. Duncan's dream became a reality after advocating for a historic marker for two years. "With the completion of this project, an important chapter in Delaware's maritime history has been documented for all to see. Much work remains, however, to educate the public about this important but often forgotten part of our state's past," says Russ McCabe.

"With the completion of this project, an important chapter in Delaware's maritime history has been documented for all to see."

In many ways, the story of the Port Penn Range Front Light didn't end with its demise back in the 1930s. In fact, the connections derived from the heritage of this historic light continue to bloom. Dr. Bill Duncan's search for the Port Penn Lighthouse was followed by having the opportunity to purchase the Liston Range Front Light in 1998 — the light that replaced the Port Penn Range Front Light. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was made extra special since his grandfather's next assignment for the U.S. Lighthouse Service following his tenure at Port Penn Range Front Light was to

tend the temporary light at Liston Range Front Light from 1904 to 1906. After the purchase, Dr. Duncan had the good fortune of meeting a new friend by the name of Harry Spencer, Jr., who had grown up as a teenager in the lighthouse. Harry's father, Harry, Sr., served as the lightkeeper of Liston Range Front Light from 1927 to 1943 and was one of the most decorated lighthouse keepers in the history of the Fourth Lighthouse District.

Today, Dr. Bill Duncan and Harry Spencer keep the memories of Delaware's lighthouse heritage burning bright by teaching others about a way of life we won't see again. "It is very commendable that a historic marker has been obtained for the site of the former Port Penn Range Front Light. I'm very pleased that Bill Duncan's efforts were successful in helping to recognize the importance of Delaware lighthouse history," says Spencer. Though obtaining a historic marker for Port Penn Range Front Light was one of Dr. Duncan's last contributions to our lighthouse heritage, it may be his humble sense of duty that will serve as a greater teacher for tomorrow's lighthouse preservationists. "It was just something I thought should be done," says Dr. Duncan. You almost get the feeling that somewhere lightkeeper George Washington Duncan is smiling down on his grandson for continuing the family tradition of keeping a good "light."

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B & B All Decked Out

Our long time readers may recall the story on this lighthouse in the March



1998 issue. Now known as the Valley View Light it is all now part of the Lighthouse Valley View Bed & Breakfast in Dubuque, Iowa. The lighthouse is shown here decked out in its patriotic best. For more information you can visit their web site at www.lighthousevalleyview.com



Researching Lighthouses?

Check out the Lighthouse Depot Database Explorer.
LighthouseDepot.com — Click on the Explorer

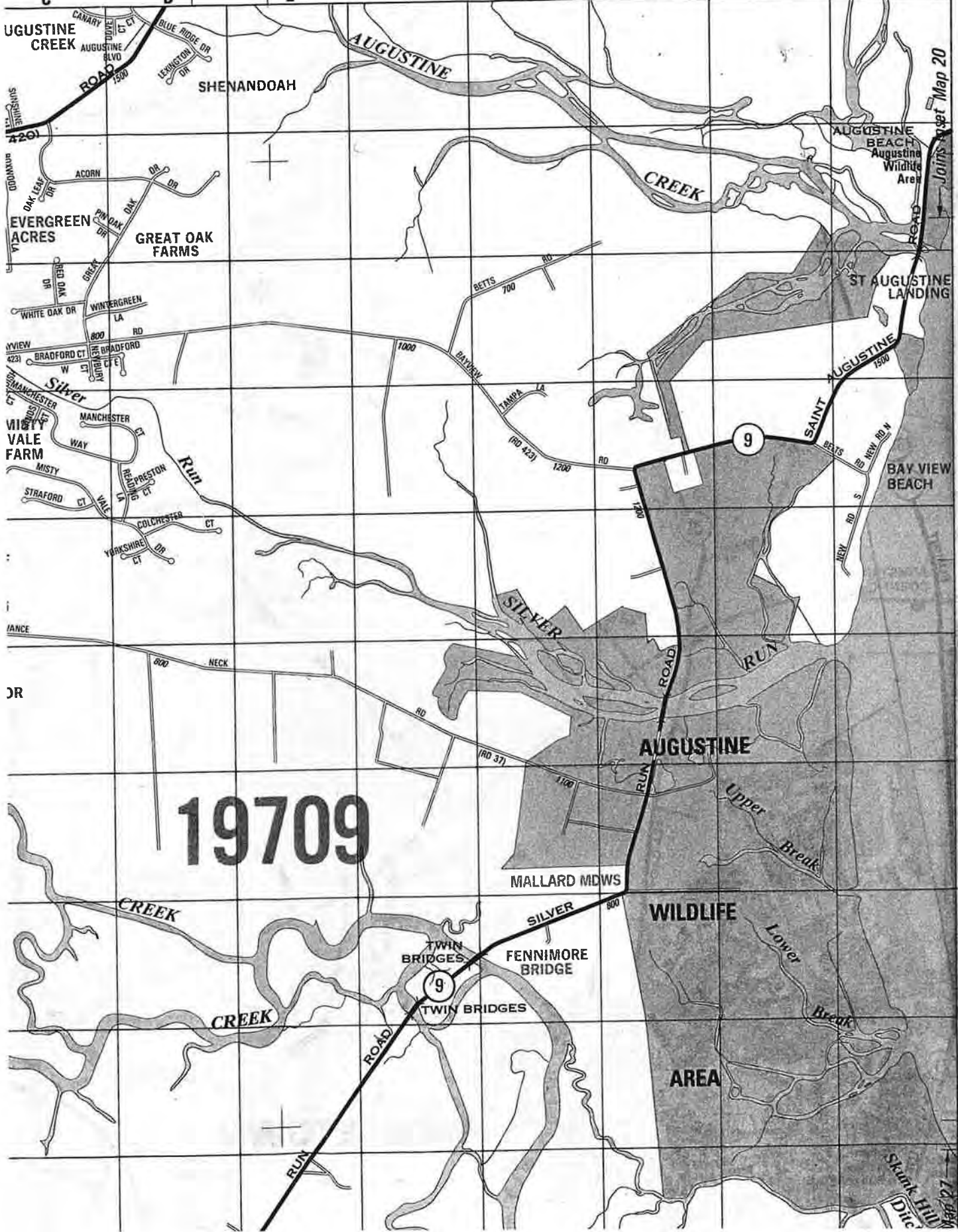
440,000 FT

75°37'30"

Joins Map 19

450,000 FT

C D E F G H J K



19709

Joins Map 20

Joins Map 7



Delaware Public Archives

[Home](#) > [Collections](#)

[Hours](#)

< PAGE TOC > PAGE

RG 9015 PRIVATE COLLECTIONS, PHOTOGRAPHS

Short Coastal land Company Aerial Photographs

Earliest Date of Material:

1930's - 1980's

cubic feet

Genealogical and historical description:

Scope and Contents:

Arrangement of Material:

Delaware Public Archives
121 Duke of York Street
Dover, DE 19901
(302) 744-5000

[E-mail: archives@state.de.us](mailto:archives@state.de.us)



Delaware Public Archives

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[Hours](#)

< PAGE TOC > PAGE

Maps, Ditch Papers and Plots

Earliest Date of Material:

ca. 1799-1973

15.84 cubic feet (12 map boxes @ 30.5X44X1.5; 12x38x4 box; and 11x17x3 box)

Genealogical and historical description:

Primarily aerial views and plots of tax ditches, and plots entered as case exhibits.

Scope and Contents:

Tax ditch maps are prepared by the Soil Conservation Commission and show drainage areas, length of channel, index of sheets, signature of approval of state drainage engineer, date approved, copies of aerial photographs of ditch drainage area, elevation drawings, and plots of the ditch. Case exhibit plots show property boundaries and landmarks, names of plaintiff and defendant, type of case, date, signatures of commissioners or surveyor and may contain narrative description of the case or property boundaries.

Arrangement of Material:

Numerically by number assigned to each set of plots.

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(302) 744-5000

E-mail: archives@state.de.us

#35A checklist



Delaware Public Archives

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☰ TOC > PAGE

RG1540 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Department of Transportation Aerial Photograph Collection

Earliest Date of Material:

1932-1972

31.78 cubic feet; fourteen 0.47 boxes, one 0.65 box, eleven 0.72 boxes, ten 1.38 boxes, one 1.97 box, one 0.38 box, one roll and one 1.36 drawer.

Genealogical and historical description:

Aerial photographs used by the State Highway Department for road planning studies.

Scope and Contents:

Individual surveys cover specific areas, such as the shoreline, the Dover area, New Castle County, U.S. Routes 13, 113, and 301, and adjacent areas. The 1937-1938 survey, the only state-wide survey, was taken originally by the U.S. Agricultural Adjustment Administration to prove compliance with crop reduction programs. Although all areas of the state are covered in the collection, New Castle County predominates.

Arrangement of Material:

Arranged chronologically by survey date, thereunder by original number (i.e., key number).

Delaware Public Archives
121 Duke of York Street
Dover, DE 19901
(302) 744-5000

E-mail: archives@state.de.us

000 RG 0775
001 000
002 001
003
004 U.S. Coast Guard
005 U. S. Lighthouse Board
140 Lighthouse Records
200 1891
210 1902
220
240 1.26 cf
241 47 volumes (booklets) in a cfb.
261 Primarily copies of "List of Beacons, Buoys and Day-Marks" and "List of Light and Fog Signals", publications describing these mariners aids for the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.
270 The forty-one "List of Beacons, Buoys and Day-Marks", 1891-1902, are for the first through the eighth Lighthouse Districts. There is only one booklet for the Fourth Lighthouse District, the district which includes Delaware. Each booklet shows the year of publication by the government Printing Office, location of the district, explanation of the list, laws for the protection of aids to navigation, and lists of the beacons and buoys in the lighthouse district. The lists show the area covered, number of the Coast and Geodetic Survey charts, sailing directions, name of station or locality of aid, color of aid, number if a buoy, description of mark or aid, compass bearings and distances of prominent objects from the aid, depth at lowest tides, and general remarks.
The four "List of Lights and Fog Signals o the Atlantic and Gulf Coast", 1893-1902, show the year of publication by the Government Printing Office, a list of lighthouse districts which includes a geographical description and names of the district inspector and engineer, notes to mariners, federal and state laws for the protection of aids to navigation, and lists of the lights and fog signals. The lists are arranged by district number and then by lighthouse number. The lists show light number and name, location, latitude and longitude, characteristic of light, order of light, height of light above sea level, distance visible, color and peculiarity of lighthouse or vessel, height from base of structure to center of lantern, when established, when last rebuilt, fog signal, and remarks. Illustrations of some lighthouses are also given. Those for Delaware and the Delaware Bay include Cape Henlopen, Brandywine Shoal, Cross Ledge Light Station, Fourteen-Foot Bank, Ship John Shoal, Delaware Breakwater, Fenwick Island Shoal Light Vessel, and Fenwick Island Light.
This series also includes two "Notice to Mariners" publications, for 1898 and 1901. These describe changes to Coast and Geodetic Survey charts and note the replacement of the Cornfield Point Light Vessel (Long Island).
290 Type of list, areas covered and dated.
310 "List of Beacons" arranged by district number and then chronologically by date of publication. "Lists of Lights" arranged chronologically by date of publication.
329 Booklets in fragile condition.
330
331 Alphabetical by names of bodies of water and waterways.
332 Typed.
360 Poor condition with water, acid, light, storage, insect and dirt damage.
370
390
420
430
990 12/30/1986
995 April 24, 1987; November 22, 1988; September 6, 1995; January 26, 1999; June 8, 2001; November 7, 2002
rlg

James Duffel
A copy of this List will be sent free of charge to any shipmaster on application to the Office of the
Light-House Board, Washington, D. C.

James Duffel
LIST

James Duffel
OF

James Duffel
LIGHTS AND FOG SIGNALS

James Duffel
ON THE

James Duffel
ATLANTIC AND GULF COASTS

James R. Ferguson
OF THE

James R. Ferguson
UNITED STATES.

James R. Ferguson
CORRECTED TO JANUARY 1, 1893.

James R. Ferguson
**WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.**

James R. Ferguson
1893.

Subject	Title	Date	Box	Barcode
Cities and Towns	Port Penn Yesterday	1977	12	391657
Port Penn	The Wetlands of Port Penn Interpretive Trail	1993		
Cities and Towns	The Wetlands of Port Penn - Interpretive Trail	n.d.	12	391657
Cities and Towns	17th and 18th Century Dutch in the Port Penn Area	1988	12	391657
Cities and Towns	A Brief History of Port Penn and Augustine Beach	n.d.	12	391657
Cities and Towns	Port Penn, Delaware	n.d.	12	391657

State News

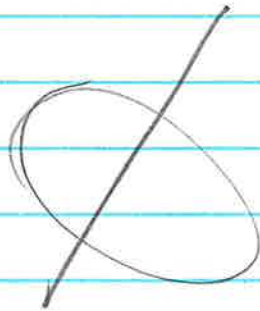
News Journal (burnt down _____)

1932-1947

Tax Assessment of

H. C. Walter

(1893 - owned 237 acres Baist)



Newspaper Clippings

Port Penn

Lighthouses



Pamphlets - port Penn/Augustine Beach



LA Lighthouse Society (1989) Wayne Wheeler

State Del to U.S. G10 p233 1874

Ø

1911

America, US of Star Stables Co. G 23 525 1911 Ø

United State
Federal
Delaware
State of
America

Ø

1911 Buyer - Walter Ø

- 1903 TAX Assess. original
St George's Hd.

- Newspapers 1932-1947

Seller 1911 US

newspapers
port penn museum
U.S. Coast Guard

Dec. 21, 1876 - Oct. 1, 1885 Henry C. Walter
1885 - Oct 24, 1904 George W. Duncan } linn keepers

Port Penn Lighthouse
St. George's Hd. NCC
4th US District

Front
Range

1883 → site boundaries marked by stones

US Gov. sold to _____ April 20, 1911
barn, oil house, dwellings

Gen Ref. 668 ∅

US Lighthouse
Records

Jax Assess. 2535

Reel 41 1911

Reel 26 1876-1884

Reel 28 1903

45 1912

49 1914

} ∅

1893 - Baist
H.C. Walter
owned 2370
Reedy Neck Island
Neck

St Augustine Light 1915 map it's there

~~Combined~~ AKA: Front
Range

1932

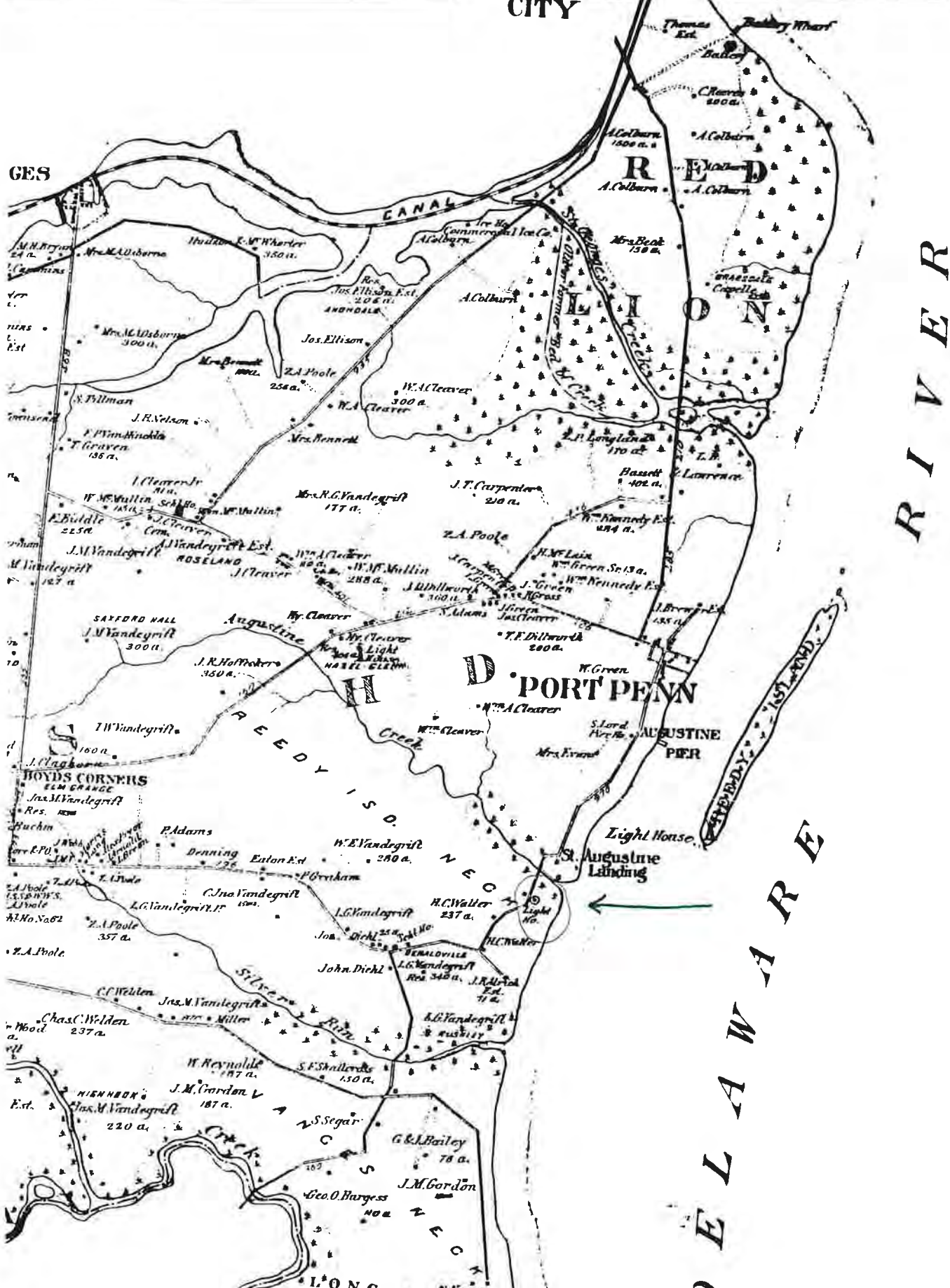
"

1947 ∅

Fire co. ^{both}
history ∅

1859
1876
28

DELAWARE CITY



DELAWARE RIVER

DELAWARE

739-2578

Guiding Lights of the Delaware River & Bay

by
Jim Gowdy & Kim Ruth

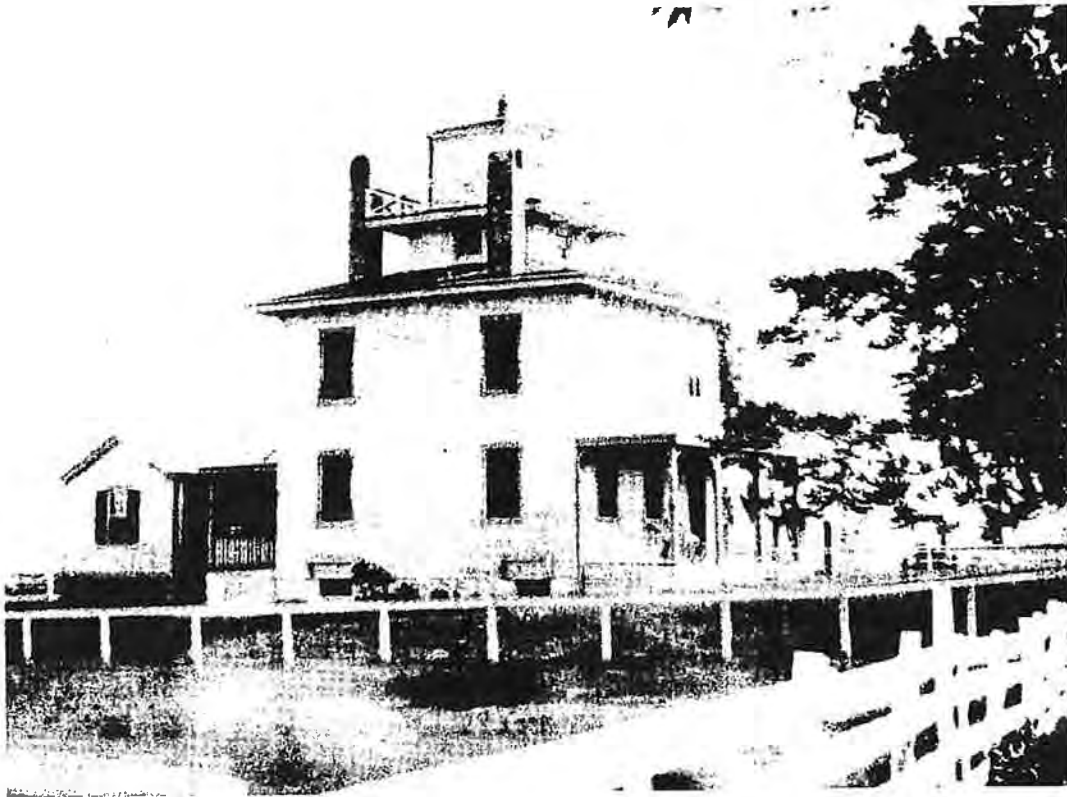
Printed by Laureate Press, Inc.
Egg Harbor City, New Jersey

Wm. Duncan
656-0689



William Duncan, grandson of Keeper George W. Duncan, on September 7, 1998, standing amid a wild profusion of phragmites reeds at the corner of the foundation where the Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse once stood. His left hand is on one of the bolts which secured the lighthouse to the foundation. His father was born at the light in 1894.

Photo by Jim Gowdy.



This 1897 view shows the Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse facing the nearby roadway, known today as Route 9. National Archives photo 26-LG-21-27C.

Port Penn Range

The *Annual Report of the Light-House Board for 1875* records that “by [an] act approved March 3, 1875, an appropriation of \$55,000 was made for two sets of range-lights at or near Liston’s Tree, Delaware Bay. As the proper location for these ranges could only be determined by a careful survey, the Superintendent of the Coast Survey was requested to make it.” By late 1875, the surveys had been completed, but, due to the unreasonable price being asked for the swampland where one of the front range lights was to be located, that pair of range-lights was moved to the opposite end of the range-line, in New Jersey, and became the Finns Point Range. The other pair, marking “the channel in the reach from Ship John Shoal to near Reedy Island, was located about 1½ miles below Port Penn,” and became known as the Port Penn Range. This range having been discontinued in 1904 and with the passage of time, the keepers and the range lights have been all but forgotten.

Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse

The property for the Port Penn Front Range Light Station (known locally as the St. Augustine Lighthouse) was transferred from Henry C. and Emma Walter of New Castle to the United States on April 14, 1876, the

consideration being \$2,000. The property consisted of 7 acres of land, more or less, and for the most part that land was low and wet. In fact, once the dwelling for the keeper was completed, a considerable amount of earth had to be filled in around it, so as to make a dry yard in the immediate vicinity of the house. Though the front light station was ready for service by the middle of December, 1876, a delay in completing the rear light station pushed back the first lighting of the range to April 2, 1877.

There were only two keepers for this lighthouse over the 27 years that the range was in operation. The first keeper of the Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse was none other than Henry C. Walter, the former owner of the property. Keeper Walter served from December 21, 1876, until his resignation on October 1, 1885. He was followed by George W. Duncan, also of Delaware, who remained with the station until it was closed. Upon the closing of this station, Keeper Duncan then transferred to the newly constructed Liston Front Range Lighthouse, where he served from October 25, 1904, through September 20, 1906.

As recounted in the *1878 Description of Lighthouse Sites of the Fourth Lighthouse District*, the Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse was situated about 900 feet southwest of the mouth of St. Augustine Creek, and about 2½ miles southwest of the Port Penn wharf along the public road. Located in Saint George's Hundred, New Castle County, at 39° 29' 30" north latitude and 75° 35' 22" west longitude, the lighthouse could best be reached by the "Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad, Delaware Division, to Mt. Pleasant, hence by stage about 7 miles to station; or during summer season by steamboat to Port Penn, thence by private conveyance 2 miles to station." The lighthouse stood about 500 feet back from the Delaware River, on land reclaimed from the tide, and was protected from overflow at high tide by an embankment of mud extending in front of the lighthouse lot.

The fixed white light was exhibited from a "lantern room on top of [the] dwelling, the light showing through a plate of glass 44 inches square." The 26-inch diameter lens, with silvered reflector, was 41½ feet above mean sea level, and used "a double-wick burner and Funck lamp." The dwelling itself "is of frame, securely bolted to stone walls, upon which it rests, the stonework being founded on piles." The structure is "two stories in height, with oil-room and watch-room and lantern above the second story; it is

double weather-boarded on outside and lathed and plastered inside." Regarding living space for the keeper and his family, "the first floor is divided into 3 rooms, with hallway and stairway; the second story is divided the same, with addition of a small room over [the] hall. There is a good cellar under the house, with concrete floor, and [a] cistern with a capacity of 3,500 gallons." The construction of the lighthouse was under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel W. F. Reynolds of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The *1879 Annual Report of the Light-House Board*, notes that "the embankment protecting the site has been repaired and raised higher, and the outside slope pitched with stone, and the buildings and grounds that were damaged by the storm of October 23, 1878, repaired." The lighthouse had the coloration typical of so many other lights along the Delaware: white dwelling, with green shutters and lead colored trim. To make it stand out more as a daymark, around 1879 the front part of the roof was painted red. In the following year that effort was expanded, as the riverfront side of the tower and the lantern room were painted bright red also.

Annual Reports of later years note some of the changes that were made at the Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse to improve the efficiency and comfort of the station. In 1883, "the boundaries of the site were marked with stone monuments." About 1888, "a 4-inch well, 145 feet deep, was driven and furnished with a pump for supplying the station with water, and a new frame barn was built." In addition, "the sluice and ditches were repaired and cleaned, a wire fence to keep out cattle was erected, and a new ground connection supplied to the lightning conductor." In February, 1895, the characteristic of the light was changed "from fixed white, to fixed white during periods of 2 seconds, separated by eclipses of 1 second's duration." In the continuing struggle against Mother Nature, the *1896 Annual Report* mentions that "about 300 running feet of the river bank was repaired and strengthened." In 1897, "the attached kitchen was raised, re-leveled, and its foundation strengthened. The grounds around the house and barn were graded up to above storm-tide overflow, and the outbuildings were arranged in accordance." Also, "the oil was moved into a rough, detached shed, which is to be used until a fireproof structure can be provided."

Not knowing that discontinuance of this range was only six years away, the United States Lighthouse Service continued its plans to upgrade this station. In 1898, the needed brick oil house was built, and plans were made to erect an addition to the living quarters of the lighthouse. Probably in 1899, the kitchen and dining room addition was constructed, and since the new rooms began to settle, in 1900 they were raised again to the proper level and properly blocked up.

Because of the changes being made to the shipping channel, the Port Penn Front Range Light was closed on October 24, 1904, and replaced by the temporary front light of the Liston Range then under construction at the river's edge to the south. The buildings and land were sold off at public auction, on the premises, on April 20, 1911. The buildings on the site at that time were a barn, the former oil house, and the dwelling, which was said to be in "good, habitable condition." Prospective bidders were to make application to C. A. Davidson, custodian. The terms of sale were \$300 down at time of sale, and a bid of no less than \$2,500 for the property.

After the former lighthouse was sold it soon became a rental property. The condition of the dwelling went downhill over time, and later the building was destroyed by fire. Exact details about the demise of the former lighthouse are not known. Indeed, even the location of the site was forgotten over time. Thus, a couple of mysteries arose. Where had the building stood, and what actually happened to it? The first mystery was answered by William H. Duncan, of Wilmington, whose grandfather, George Washington Duncan, had been the last keeper of the Port Penn Front Range Light. William's father, Silas Blake Irwin Duncan, had been born in that lighthouse on June 1, 1894, and William had an intense interest in finding the site again. A lot of determined detective work and perseverance on his part did the trick, and in the summer of 1998, he found the foundation upon which the building had stood. The site is on private property, just off the east side of State Highway 9 to the south of Port Penn, and between Augustine Beach and the settlement of Bayview. The lighthouse site is unbelievably overgrown by bushes, trees, poison ivy, green briars, and phragmites reeds. Three of the four bolts on the corners of the foundation remain, with their nuts still in place. The cellar is full of water and

plant growth, and the broken remains of the brick oil house are nearby in the heavy undergrowth.

As for the second part of the mystery—this is where Linda Pierson, of West Grove, Pennsylvania, comes into the picture. A lighthouse enthusiast in the truest sense of the word, Linda and her husband Paul were searching for the remaining lighthouse sites in the Port Penn area, when she noticed an interesting structure off to the side of County Road 423, or Bayview Road, part way between Bayview and U.S. Highway 13. The Piersons stopped to take some photographs, and Linda later sent copies of the pictures to me, asking if the dwelling could have previously been a lighthouse. In examining the photos, there was a definite similarity between that house and the former Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse. The size was about right, the windows were similar, and the house had a partial tower, roofed over, which could have once held a lantern room. But the tower was in the front of the house, beginning at the second floor—not protruding out of the center of the roof as Port Penn's tower had been.

One thing was certain, if the house on Bayview Road had ever been a lighthouse, it was moved there from another location, because no lighthouse was ever built at that site. Upon further investigation, it seems the house on Bayview Road had been moved there from another location to replace a dwelling destroyed by fire, but no one seems to know where the building came from. Quite intriguing is the fact that some of the folks living near the mystery house have a vague recollection that the dwelling had previously been a lighthouse. Is this the solution to the mystery? Not quite. In addition to the fact that the tower is out of place, the various dimensions of the two buildings in question do not all coincide, some of the windows are out of place, and recollections of some other people that the former lighthouse was burned down, are strong. For certain, if the house on Bayview Road had once been Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse, a lot of changes and alterations were made through the years.

Another theory is that perhaps there was a fire at the old lighthouse, but only the roof was involved. Could someone have salvaged the rest of the building, moved it, and made repairs to the fire damage which resulted in major changes to the house itself? Indeed, when viewed from the air, the roof of the

house on Bayview Road has had major alterations made to part of it, perhaps as a result of a fire. But all of this is mere speculation, as there are not enough hard facts to draw a definite conclusion.

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Reader's Challenge

The demise of the Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse is still a mystery, needing photographs, newspaper accounts, eyewitnesses or passed-down information to provide clues to eventually solve. The history of the mystery house and how it got to Bayview Road may be tied to the history of the light. Photographs of the Port Penn Front Range Lighthouse while in service or in private hands, and photos of the mystery house at different time periods may reveal the answer once and for all.

Port Penn Rear Range Lighthouse

The property upon which this lighthouse was built was sold to the United States by John and Eliza Dilworth for the sum of \$3,000. The deed, dated February 16, 1876, stated that the property contained 2 acres and 121 perches of land. The light tower being built for this station was nearly identical to the Pinns Point Rear Range Lighthouse being constructed across the river in New Jersey, except that the Port Penn Rear Range Lighthouse was about 25 feet taller. Both towers were made of wrought iron, which is more resistant to corrosion and cracking than cast iron. Both were constructed by the Kellogg Bridge Company, of Buffalo, New York. Completed in March, 1877, due to delays in completing the rear light station, the range was not lit until April 2. This range guided ships along the segment of the channel from Ship John Shoal to Dan Baker Buoy, a distance of about 15 miles.

As listed in the *Description of the Lighthouse Sites of the Fourth Lighthouse District*, this range was still referred to as one of the Liston's Tree Range Lights—the name under which Congress had first made appropriations for the four lighthouses involved. The Port Penn Rear Range Lighthouse was described as being “2½ miles from Port Penn, and about 1¾ miles inland, St.

George's Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, in 39° 30' 40" north latitude and 75° 36' 37" west longitude.” As with the other light stations in the Port Penn area, it could be reached by hiring a private conveyance once the traveler had arrived in Port Penn.

The description of the lighthouse site is somewhat unusual:

The lot is about 15 feet above the level of the marsh of Augustine Creek, a small arm of which reaches into the lot. It is a clayey soil, and is cultivated by the keeper. The digging of the well, which is 25 feet deep and located in the low ground, showed a section of 6 feet of clay, then a thin layer, about 8 inches to the foot, of iron ore, followed by sandy marl, gradually turning into a hard marl filled with fossil shells for the rest of the distance, with an abundant supply of water.

The dwelling itself was built of framework, “1½ stories in height, with shingle roof, and lathed and plastered on inside. The first floor is divided into three rooms, with hall and stairway to [the] second floor and cellar. The second story is divided in the same way as the first.” There was an enclosed shed over the back door, and a small porch and a bay window in the front. Construction of both the tower and the home were done under the supervision of Lieutenant Colonel William E. Raynolds, of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

There were only three keepers of this light. Benjamin Denney of Ohio began as Acting Keeper on December 21, 1876, and was given his permanent appointment on June 7, 1877. Keeper Denney died on February 18, 1889, and was replaced by Acting Keeper Joseph H. Denney, who may well have been the late keeper's son, on March 13, 1889. Joseph H. Denney was given the keeper's position on June 15, 1889. The last keeper of the Port Penn Rear Range Lighthouse was Daniel Bailey, who served there from July 1, 1904, until the range was closed later that year. He transferred to the new Liston Rear Range Lighthouse and became its first keeper on October 25, 1904. All of these men were receiving an annual salary of \$500. That had not changed over a span of nearly 30 years.

For a number of years little note was made of this station in the *Annual Report of the Light-House Board*. Other than a brief mention in the *1883 Annual Report*