

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stepping Stones Light Station

other names/site number Stepping Stones Light

2. Location

street & number In Long Island Sound, 0.9 mile NW of Elm Point at town of Kings Point not for publication

city or town Kings Point vicinity

state New York code NY county Nassau zip code 11024

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Joseph J. Manil, CAPT 5/24/2005
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

United States Coast Guard
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Paul J. [Signature] 7/13/2005
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Stepping Stones Light Station
Name of Property

Nassau County, New York
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Light Stations of the United States

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/lighthouse

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/lighthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Second Empire

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls brick
roof asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Continuation Sheet.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Stepping Stones Light Station
Nassau County, New York
(Light Stations of the United States
Multiple Property Listing)

Section number 7

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Narrative Description

Stepping Stones Light Station was completed in 1877. It is a one-and-one-half story, Second Empire-style house with a three-story square tower, topped by an octagonal lantern. The integral tower is centered in the front façade of the building on the northwest side. The structure sits on a circular granite pier that is surrounded by rock riprap. The station is located in approximately 11 feet of water on the outer edge of a rocky reef at the western end of Long Island Sound. Owned by the U.S. Coast Guard, Stepping Stones Light Station is under the jurisdiction of the Third Coast Guard District. The only access to the station is by boat.

Exterior

Access to the structure is by a metal ladder attached to the side of the granite pier. The ladder extends from below the waterline to the top of the pier. The house and tower are located in the center of the pier on a partially raised basement. The pier is constructed of rusticated stone blocks that are painted a reddish-brown. A concrete deck encircles the structure. The deck currently is enclosed by a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire.

The walls of the house and the tower are composed of brick and feature rusticated stone quoins at the corners of the house. A mansard roof with a pyramidal top sits on top of the house. Both portions of the roof are covered in composition shingles. There is a wood cornice painted white between the top of the walls and the mansard roof. A narrow cornice lines the top of the mansard roof and the pyramidal top.

Fenestration on the first floor consists of two windows on each side, except the southeast face, which only has one. The tower has three windows, all located on the northwest face. All the windows feature projecting rusticated stone sills and bracketed lintels, all painted white. All of the window openings have been either filled with brick or covered with sheet metal or plywood boards. Several contain aluminum vents to provide air circulation in the house and tower. All openings, with the exception of the upper two tower windows, are painted so that from a distance there is the illusion that windows are still present.

There are two entrances to the building. The first is on the southeast face and leads directly into the kitchen. The doorframe and door are modern metal ones. The second entrance is on the northeast face of the tower and contains modern metal double doors. This entrance provides access to both the tower stairs and the first-floor central hallway. Both entrances are accessed from a set of stone steps and are topped by lintels similar in material and style to those of the windows.

As noted earlier, the tower rises a full story higher than the house. Above the tower is the lantern gallery, which extends out over the walls of the tower. A decorative metal railing encloses the lantern gallery. The railing consists of square stanchions topped by metal ball finials, horizontal pipe railing, flat bar railing, and balusters that connect the horizontal bars. The railing is painted black. Solar panels are mounted on the southeast side of the gallery directly on the railing and provide power to the light signal. At the center of the deck is a cast iron and glass octagonal lantern. At the apex of the roof is a ball vent and lightning rod.

On the northwest wall of the tower, above the first floor window, is a stone plaque in which the construction date of the lighthouse ("1876") is carved. In addition this wall contains the decorative cast-iron support brackets for the bell that was formerly used as the station's fog signal. The brackets are on both sides of the uppermost tower window.

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Interior

Basement

A short flight of wood stairs located through a door in the kitchen leads to the basement. While the entire basement of the building is excavated, the southern section is completely enclosed by brick walls. This space originally served as the station's cistern and held up to 3,000 gallons of water. The basement walls are brick and have been plastered over and painted (the plaster has been removed from the northeast wall). The floor is concrete. The space under the tower is accessed via a wood door on which is stenciled the words, "PAINT LOCKER." A series of holes have been drilled in the door, presumably to vent the room. Wood shelving has been constructed inside. A total of seven eyebrow windows are set into the tops of the basement walls and are either boarded or bricked up. Two of the windows retain their casement and glass.

Pipes, wires and insulation are visible throughout the basement. A large crack runs across the floor and up the walls at the northern corner

First Floor

The ground floor contains four rooms and a central hall. The rooms at the back of the house are labeled in the U.S. Coast Guard's 1950 proposed modernization floor plan as the kitchen and the living room. These rooms have been completely modernized with drop acoustical tile ceilings, fluorescent lighting, gypsum wallboard, tile floors, and metal doors and door frames. Both rooms have gray metal electrical boxes and conduit with the wiring for light switches, outlets and lighting fixtures. The kitchen contains modern equipment related to the operation of the light and fog signal. Other features of the kitchen include the exterior doorway to the gallery/landing area and the doorway to the basement. The room originally contained a closet (or pantry) adjacent to the basement stairs as well as a window on the southwest wall. The only evidence of the window in the kitchen is a square metal grate set into the wallboard.

An interior wall separates the kitchen from the dining room. A door allows for movement between the two rooms. The living room originally contained two windows, one on the northeast wall and one on the southeast wall. The windows are now obscured behind the wallboard. Square metal grates are set into the wallboard at the location of the windows to provide ventilation. The living room originally contained a closet in the northeast corner of the room. The closet is now covered by wallboard.

A doorway from the living room provides access to the central hall. Immediately to the right of the doorway is the entrance to a closet. Further along the hallway are entrances to the battery room (on the left in front of the kitchen), to the shop (on the right in front of the living room), and closets. The hallway continues into the tower. Within the tower and under the stairs to the left is another storage closet. Doors to the exterior are set into the tower wall to the right and are covered with plywood boards. The staircase begins at the front wall of the tower.

The hallway floor is covered in tiles, many of which are chipped, cracked or loose. The lathe and plaster on the wall are missing, and the studs are exposed. The ceiling retains its lathe, but all of the plaster is gone. The hallway closet is also stripped of all plaster and some of its lathe.

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The walls of the shop are covered in beaded board up to the chair rail. Above the chair rail is the exposed brick of the exterior walls. The shop contains two windows, one on the front (northwest) wall and one on the side (northeast) wall. Parts of the original frames and sashes are still extant as is some of the glass. Mounted in the center of the front window are instructions for the "Operational Test of the Fog Signal." On the lower portion of the northeast wall is a metal frame containing instructions for operating the radio equipment. The plaster has been removed from the ceiling, and the lathe is visible.

The battery room contains a wooden workbench along the front (northwest) wall. The wooden floors have been covered with a modern material as has the ceiling. The walls appear to be the original plaster over lathe and exhibit peeling paint. The wood doorframe and baseboard are still extant as are the window frames, although the openings are covered. The southwest window is covered with plywood and vented at the top by a metal grate. The northeast window is covered with wallboard.

Both of the front rooms as well as the hallway have modern electrical conduits, light sockets, and other related electrical equipment.

Second floor

The four rooms and hallway on the second floor generally mirror those of the lower floor. As one moves from the stairway landing to the back of the house, a doorway to the bathroom is located on the left, while a doorway to an office/bedroom is directly opposite on the right. Further down the hallway, on the right, is the entrance to a bedroom. Directly ahead in a wall running diagonally across the hallway is the entrance to another bedroom. There are no longer any walls on this floor. Only the studs remain to show where the lathe was nailed. Parts of the ceiling are still covered in lathe. However, all of the plaster is gone. Fluorescent lighting fixtures hang from the ceiling. The window openings are covered with pieces of plywood and no longer contain sashes or frames.

Tower

Access to the dwelling's upper floor and the lantern is by a staircase contained within the brick tower. The stairs begin at the front wall of the tower and proceed in a counter-clockwise direction. The stairs are attached to the walls of the tower and to an octagonal central column. A metal pipe handrail is attached to the column. A window at the front of the tower originally provided natural light to the first level. The frame, sashes and most of the glass remain. However, the window opening is filled with brick on the outside. Three-quarters of the way up the stairs (approximately 12 steps) is a square landing, which provides access to the second floor hallway by a flight of two steps. Approximately three steps from the second floor landing at the front of the tower is another window. It is filled with brick on the outside, and only the frame remains on the inside. Approximately four steps up from the window, there is an original doorway and four-paneled door with hardware. The door is set diagonally from the southern corner of the tower to the center column, with the door opening out into the stairwell. This area served as the station's watch room. At this level the back wall of the tower juts out in a semi-circle. There is a closet on one side of the landing at the front of the tower. This closet is accessed via an original four-panel door with hardware. Its interior is lined in beaded board. Shelving of various sizes and shapes is built into the closet, and the window at this level is partially within it. The other half of the window is visible from the landing. Like the other window openings in the tower, this one has been filled with brick on the outside. Although the window frame exists, the original double-hung sash has been removed.

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There is a decorative cast-iron staircase that wraps around a metal post within the semi-circle at the back of the tower. A metal pipe handrail is attached to the beaded board paneled wall. This staircase provides access to the lantern.

Lantern

The lantern is an eight-sided structure composed of metal parapet panels lined with wood slats at the bottom and glass panes above. The floor is wood on top of cast-iron plates. The roof is composed of eight triangular metal plates with a round vent cut into the apex where the tips of the plates meet. The vent is missing its cover. There are also two vents in the lantern's parapet panels. Both vents retain their covers. The lantern contains a green, 300mm optic on a modern pedestal. Access to the lantern gallery is through a hatch door in one side of the lantern. There is both an exterior door and an interior door to the opening. The interior door is no longer attached to the parapet wall but is present in the room.

Changes over Time

Stepping Stones Light Station was modernized in the early 1950s to accommodate the Coast Guardsmen then living at the station. No longer were four bedrooms needed as in earlier days when a light keeper and his family occupied the dwelling. Thus one of the smaller upstairs bedrooms was converted to a bathroom. In addition, room functions on the lower level were changed slightly. The room identified above as the living room is likely to have previously been a formal dining room, with a sitting room at the front of the dwelling by the tower. With the 1950's modernization, the dining room became a living room for the men stationed at Stepping Stones. The sitting room as well as the area where the fog signal equipment was housed both became a work space. The installation of an indoor flush toilet eliminated the need for the station's outdoor toilet, which overhung the southern side of the pier.

One of the most noticeable exterior changes to the original station is the modification of the roof and its features. Six arched dormer windows have been removed from the mansard roof. At one time, these dormer windows projected from the mansard roof on three sides of the dwelling. The decorative wood surrounds of the windows featured scroll work at the base and were painted white. In addition, the original slate tiles on the mansard roof have been replaced with man-made shingles. As mentioned earlier, none of the window openings on the first floor of the dwelling or of the tower contain their original sash, and the two entrances are missing their original wood doors.

The station's day mark has changed slightly over time as well. When the station was established the lantern and lantern gallery floor were painted black. Photographs in the collection of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's office show that as late as 1963 the floor remained black. Today the lantern and floor are both painted white.

There also has been a change to the lantern glazing. For many years the eight-sided lantern contained just seven glass window panes. The eighth side was an opening at the back of the lantern (facing southeast) that was filled with a metal plate instead. Blocking that part of the lantern allowed for better control of the directions from where the light could be seen. Today all eight openings contain glass plates.

Early photographs also show metal tanks sitting on the pier deck. These are no longer present. The existing pier railing includes steel fencing and barbed wire of recent construction. The pier's original railing (no longer present) was identical to the one that still exists at the top of the tower.

Stepping Stones Light Station
Name of Property

Nassau County, New York
County and State

8. Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Maritime History

Transportation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1877-1955

Significant Dates

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

U.S. Lighthouse Board

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

US National Archives; NPS Maritime Heritage Program;

USCG Headquarters/Historians Office, Washington DC

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Stepping Stones Light Station, first lit in 1877, is significant for its association with the efforts of the federal government to provide an integrated system of navigational aids and to provide for safe maritime transport in and around the port of New York. The Second Empire-style brick house and tower are constructed on a granite pier that rests on the outer edge of a rocky reef at the western end of Long Island Sound. The Second Empire style was employed in the design of approximately two dozen lighthouses north of the Chesapeake Bay, with the majority built during the 1870s. The same design was used three years earlier in the construction of the Hudson-Athens Light Station, along the Hudson River upriver from New York City.

Stepping Stones was one of the last offshore lighthouses in the upper Mid-Atlantic region to be built of brick and stone. It was also one of the last light stations to separate the lighthouse optic from the station's domestic functions, although the house and tower were connected. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the form and materials employed in the construction of offshore lighthouses changed dramatically. In place of masonry, most light stations constructed circa 1880 to 1920 were built using prefabricated iron plates, although at least three in the Chesapeake Bay area were constructed of brick. With the new construction methods, cylindrical iron-plate piers, referred to as "caissons," were sunk on bottomlands where they were then filled with concrete and stone. A tower was then placed on atop the caisson. These towers contained both the optic and the keepers' dwelling.

Stepping Stones Light Station meets the registration requirements outlined in the multiple property documentation form "Light Stations of the United States." The light station remains in its original location and, despite the loss of some exterior features such as a chimney, original windows and doors, an outhouse, and boat davits, its character and appearance are essentially unchanged from its period of significance. Stepping Stones continues to operate as a federal aid to navigation today.

The Port of New York and Aids to Navigation

The early part of the nineteenth century marked the rise of the port of New York, and, to a lesser degree, ports in nearby northern New Jersey. Virtually landlocked, the port of New York provided a safe natural harbor for vessels. Due to its geographic location, the port was ideally situated to take advantage of transatlantic, coastal and inland trade. New Jersey ports adjacent to the New York bays, such as Newark and Perth Amboy, also presented opportunities for maritime trade. Perth Amboy was especially well situated because it was located three miles closer to the open sea than New York City. New Jersey ports initially offered incentives to shipping such as evasion of New York's customs, quarantine, and immigration regulations.

The port of New York could be reached through several entrances, including channels from the Atlantic Ocean, Long Island Sound, Hudson River, and the Raritan River. Prior to the completion of the Ambrose Channel circa 1909, maritime traffic from the Atlantic would generally enter via the Gedney Channel, located south of Sandy Hook. Once within Lower New York Bay, vessels would either continue westward into Raritan Bay to Perth Amboy or turn north and follow the Main Ship Channel to the Narrows between Staten Island and the western end of Long Island. Though the Narrows is only two miles long and at one place only 0.75 mile wide, more than one-third of the world's late nineteenth century maritime commerce passed through it.¹

¹ Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *The Rise of New York Port [1815-1860]* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), 16-19.

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Until the early twentieth century the East River (a tidal strait rather than a river) was the principal scene of shipping business at the port of New York. However, the Hudson River, with its broader and less turbulent waters, provided a better berthing place for ocean-going steamers and eventually became the main docking place for maritime traffic in the area.

Vessels entering the port of New York from ports in New England generally arrived by way of Long Island Sound and the upper East River. The waters of Long Island Sound were generally more sheltered than the open Atlantic, though it could become quite rough in bad weather. The Sound also afforded a "back door" to the port of New York when weather conditions made it difficult for vessels to enter by way of Sandy Hook.²

Although the port of New York was endowed with an abundance of natural features, it was further improved through human ingenuity. In the early 1760's, New York conducted a lottery to raise funds for a light station at Sandy Hook. The tall, masonry lighthouse built there as a result was completed in 1764 and remains the oldest extant lighthouse in the United States. More lights were added after the creation of a lighthouse establishment by the United States' federal government. For the most part, these lights were land-based, masonry towers. With advances in engineering, lighthouses began to be built offshore directly on or nearby such hazards to navigation as shoals and rocks. The first offshore lighthouse in the water surrounding the port of New York was Robbins Reef, constructed in 1839 on a granite block pier set atop a rocky ledge in Upper New York Bay. By the mid-1870s, the Lighthouse Board was constructing offshore light stations atop cast iron cylindrical caissons set into the seabed. One example of this is Great Beds Light Station in Raritan Bay.

In 1922, the Lighthouse Service reported that the port of New York and its immediate waters (containing roughly 200 nautical miles of shoreline and about 170 square miles of water area) were marked by 387 aids to navigation.³ These aids included lighthouses, lighted beacons, lightships, and unlighted beacons and buoys. This was an increase of nearly eighty percent from 1905 when nautical charts showed only 217 aids.⁴

History of Stepping Stones Light Station

The Stepping Stones are a series of rocks that form a reef near the western end of Long Island Sound. The reef is next to the main shipping channel and is a hazard to navigation. It has been marked to warn mariners since at least the early nineteenth century, when a spear was stuck into one of the rocks to show its position. A black spar buoy was later placed to mark its offshore end, in 18 feet of water at low tide.⁵

² Ibid, 20-21.

³ The Lighthouse Board was disbanded in 1910. The Bureau of Lighthouses, often referred to as the Lighthouse Service, assumed responsibility for aids to navigation.

⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Lighthouses, *Lighthouse Service Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 61, 2 January 1923 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1923), 261-262. At the beginning of 1923, the *Lighthouse Service Bulletin* printed an article entitled "New York Harbor and its Lights and Buoys." An editor's note states that the material was taken from an address given by George Putnam, Commissioner of Lighthouses, at the November 1922 Marine Show in New York at which the Lighthouse Service exhibited lenses, fog signals, lanterns and charts of New York Harbor.

⁵ Edmund Blunt, *The American Coast Pilot*, Ninth Edition (New York: Edmund Blunt, 1817), 157; also *The American Coast Pilot*, Tenth Edition (1822), 197; Thirteenth Edition (June 1837), 205; Eighteenth Edition (1857), 302; and Twenty-First Edition (1867), 314.

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In April 1866, Congress appropriated \$6,600 for the construction of a lighthouse in western Long Island Sound in the vicinity of Hart Island, which is 1.5 miles north of the Stepping Stones. Six years later, in June 1872, Congress again appropriated money for lighthouse construction near the tip of Hart Island. This amount was later increased to \$50,000, and the proposed station referred to as both a light and fog signal station. A third appropriation was made in June 1874 in the amount of \$6,000. At this time it was stated that the funds would be used for the construction of a day beacon on Stepping Stones and for the construction of a lighthouse anywhere in the Hart Island vicinity that the Lighthouse Board selected.

The *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board* for 1874 stated that no patent to the site on Hat Island could be granted to the United States by the state of New York. Thus, the site of the lighthouse was changed to an offshore one near the Stepping Stones. Cessation of jurisdiction of the site was obtained from New York, and Congress authorized the change in location. The report concluded "...the erection of this much-needed aid to navigation will be commenced at an early date."⁶

Annual reports from 1875 and 1876 mention the ongoing construction of the lighthouse at the Stepping Stones. Due to the sheltered location of the site, work continued through December 1875, restarted in May 1876, and then continued to December 1876. The structure was built of brick and was one-and-one-half stories tall. It included a Second Empire-style dwelling with kitchen, dining room and sitting room on the first floor and four bedrooms above. Attached to the northwest side of the house was a tower that contained the stairway to the second floor and the light tower's lantern. The basement of the house was in the interior of the structure's granite foundation pier, and contained the cistern and coal bin. The station was equipped with a fifth-order Fresnel lens exhibiting a fixed red light that was visible for 8.5 miles at 45.5 feet above sea level. The fog signal employed was a bell that was struck by machinery. The signal consisted of a double blow every twenty seconds during thick weather. The light was first exhibited on 1 March 1877, more than ten years after Congress had proposed building a lighthouse in the vicinity.⁷

One keeper and one assistant keeper were assigned to Stepping Stones. The first keeper was Finlay Fraser. He was paid an annual salary of \$600 and stayed on over two years before resigning in September of 1879. He was replaced by the assistant keeper, James G. Scott, who stayed on for less than a year. When Scott became keeper, the assistant keeper position was abolished. Keepers assigned to Stepping Stones through 1912 included William McGloin of Ireland (June 1880 to November 1886), and Cornelius Douglass (November 1886 to September 1895). In May 1890, the keeper's salary was increased in lieu of receiving rations from the Lighthouse Depot at Tompkinsville on Staten Island.⁸ Elmer E. Gildersleeve was keeper from September 1895 to December 1902, followed by Charles Redfern (December 1902 to April 1910), and Ernest Bloom, who was keeper at the time the 1912 list was published.

During the late nineteenth century, a white horizontal strip was painted on the southern side of the light station's pier. This was used as a datum mark for range-finding during artillery practice at nearby Forts Schuyler and Totten. Several other light stations in the vicinity, such as West Bank and Robbins Reef, were also painted with similar datum marks. The mark on the pier at Stepping Stones is still visible.

⁶ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Lighthouse Board, *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1874* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1874), 30.;

⁷ *Annual Report ... 1875*, 28 and *Annual Report ... 1876*, 22.

⁸ "Registers of Lighthouse Keepers, 1845-1912," M1373, RG 26, National Archives; and

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By 1926, the Lighthouse Service had determined that a stronger and more distinctive optic was needed at the Stepping Stones Light Station. At that time, the Lighthouse Service was in the process of eliminating port hand red lights. The Office of the Superintendent of Lighthouses, Third District, proposed changing the light signal at Stepping Stones from a fixed red to a fixed green. Owing to the number of white lights in the background, a white light that was either fixed or flashing would not be as distinctly visible as a green light. In addition, the light's brightness was increased to 500 candlepower by removing the fifth-order lens and wick lamp arrangement and replacing it with a larger fourth-order lens with a 35mm incandescent oil vapor (I.O.V.) lamp.⁹

In 1933, the Third District proposed installing a new heating system consisting of a boiler and radiators. The installation of an indoor toilet closet was also proposed. Until this time, the house at Stepping Stones had been heated by "expensive and inefficient" stoves, and the toilet was outside on the pier. As early as 1910 there was discussion of creating an indoor water closet with the stated reason being that using the facilities was an embarrassment to the keeper and his family because the waters surrounding the station were popular with fishing boats especially on weekends. In denying the request, it was stated that an indoor toilet had been originally placed in the basement of the structure. However, due to the strong odor it was removed and its pipe hole closed up. It was suggested that alternatives be considered, such as carrying the boards of the outdoor closet down to the water line or providing a tub or hopper that could be removed and emptied at a less conspicuous time.

The new heating system consisted of a hot water system with a boiler installed in the dining room, with its hot water circulation pump in the basement. Radiators were installed in the four bedrooms and in the sitting room on the first floor. The indoor toilet was created by enlarging the closet in the oil room and constructing a door from the main hallway. A tank located in an upstairs bedroom directly above the toilet provided its water.

The Stepping Stones Light Station log books record several instances when the surrounding waters froze over, permitting the keeper and his family to walk to shore on Long Island. The early months of 1934 were especially harsh. In March of that year, a Mexican petroleum steamer bound for New York reported seeing the flag at the lighthouse flying upside down, a signal of distress. Due to the late ice, the keeper and his family were running short of food. This news was received at Lighthouse Depot on Staten Island later that day, and the lighthouse tender *Hickory* dispatched with food supplies.¹⁰

The Lighthouse Service was abolished as a separate federal agency in 1939, and its duties subsumed by the U.S. Coast Guard. In following years the light station underwent a series of changes. An internal Coast Guard memo indicates that Stepping Stones was modernized in the early 1950s. This work included new radiators and electrical outlets in the house. A modern bathroom was also installed in the smallest of the four second floor rooms. The Stepping Stones Light Station was automated in 1964. At that time its optic was a 1,700 candlepower electric light exhibiting a flashing green signal. Automatic operation ended the need for resident keepers, resulting in an annual savings of approximately \$10,000. The light today remains an active aid to navigation. It exhibits an occulting green light every four seconds, visible for 8 miles with a focal plane 46 feet above mean low water. It continues to fulfill its original role marking the offshore end of a dangerous rocky reef.

⁹ "Recommendation as to Aids to Navigation," 7 July 1926, "Correspondence of the Bureau of Lighthouses, January 1911-December 1939."

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, "Lighthouse Service Bulletin," Vol. IV, no. 51, March 1, 1934 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1934), p. 172.

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National Park Service

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Stepping Stones Light Station
Name of Property

Nassau County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 603295 4519755
Zone Easting Northing

2 18
Zone Easting Northing

3 18
Zone Easting Northing

4 18
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer Perunko (edited by Daniel Koski-Karell, Ph.D., USCG HQ Environmental Management Division)

organization NPS Maritime Heritage Program date 22 March 2005

street & number PO Box 189 telephone 202-354-8243

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20240-0001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title United States Coast Guard Headquarters

street & number 2100 Second SW telephone 202-267-1587

City or town Washington State DC zip code 20593

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Stepping Stones Light Station
Nassau County, New York

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is conterminous with the exterior boundaries of the foundation pier and the surrounding riprap and completely encompasses the light station..

Boundary Justification

The property boundary is the same as during the period of significance.

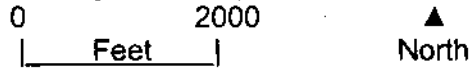
United States Department of the Interior
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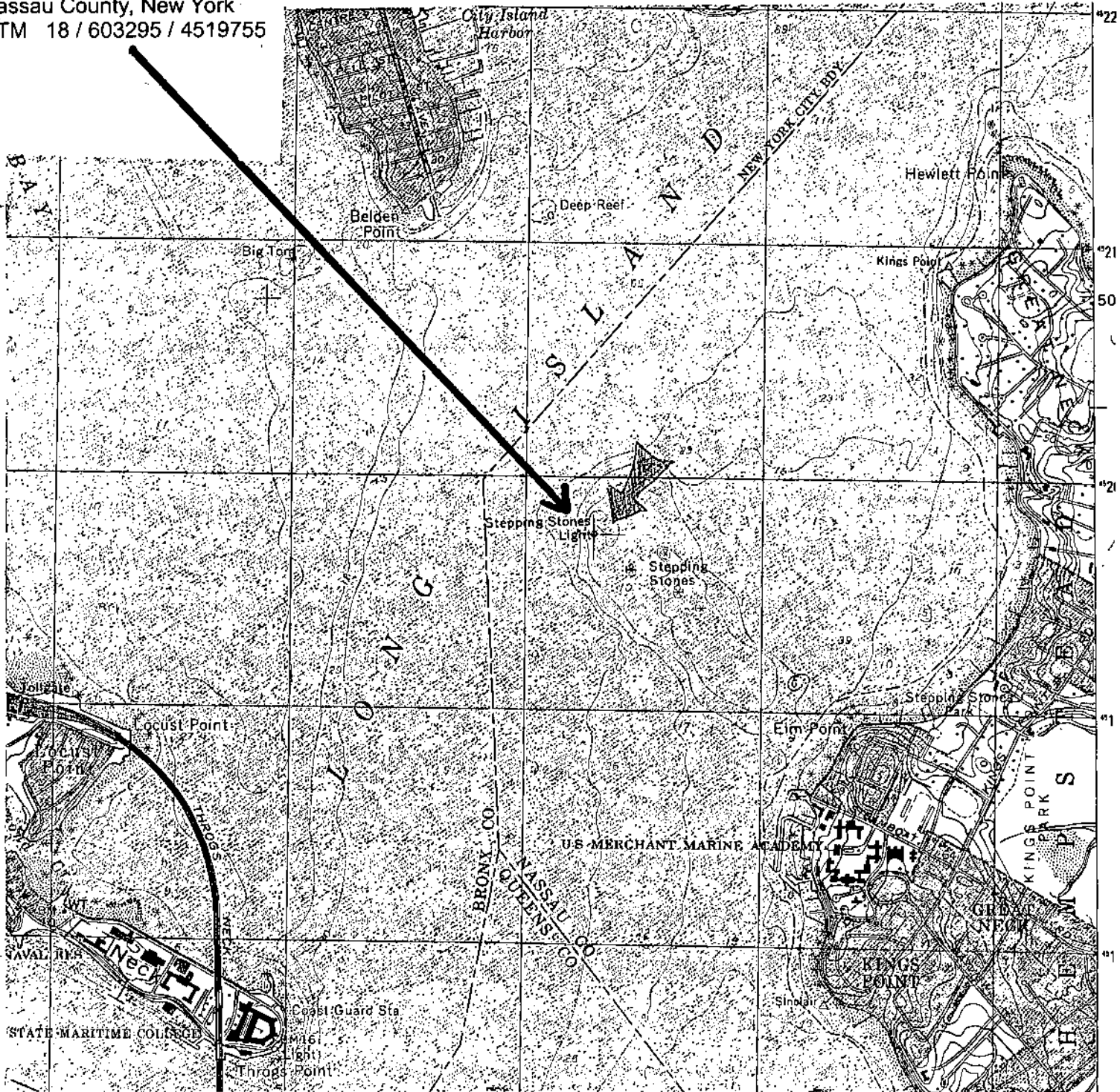
Stepping Stones Light Station
Nassau County, NY
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LOCATION MAP

This is a portion of the "Flushing, NY" 7.5 minute quadrangle topographic map, scale 1:24,000 (United States Geological Survey 1995).



Stepping Stones Light Station
Nassau County, New York
UTM 18 / 603295 / 4519755



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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Stepping Stones Light Station
Nassau County, New York
(Light Stations of the United States
Multiple Property Listing)

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

These are photographs of the Stepping Stones Light Station in Nassau County, New York. Three are contemporary photos showing existing conditions. The other two are historic photos of the property.

Contemporary Photographs:

Name of photographer: Jennifer Perunko.

Date: September 2003.

Location of original negatives: Maritime Heritage Program, National Park Service, Washington, DC.

1. View of northwest (front) side of Stepping Stones Light Station, looking southeast.
2. View of southwest side of Stepping Stones Light Station, looking northeast.
3. View of lantern room floor, stairway, and base of pedestal for the optic.

Historic Photographs:

Name of photographer: Unknown.

Date: Circa 1963 and circa 1951.

Location of original negatives: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC.

4. Circa 1963 view of northwest (front) side of Stepping Stones Light Station, looking southeast.
5. Circa 1951 view of southeast (rear) side of Stepping Stones Light Station, looking northwest.

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: G-SEC-3
Phone: (202) 267-1942
Fax: (202) 267-4219

16475

MAY 23 2005

Ms. Bernadette Castro
State Historic Preservation Officer
Peebles Island Resource Center
Delaware Avenue
Cohoes, NY 12047

Dear Ms. Castro:

In accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Programmatic Agreement Regarding Outgranting of Historic Lighthouse Properties (1996), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is nominating Stepping Stones Light Station in Nassau County, New York, to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Based upon information contained in the nomination, the USCG has determined that Stepping Stones Light Station is eligible for the NRHP. Therefore, we are submitting the nomination under our multiple property listing, *Light Stations of the United States*.

I request your review and comment for this nomination. In the event that the New York State Historic Preservation Officer wishes to comment, such comments will be considered and changes may be incorporated into the individual form where deemed appropriate. Comments from appropriate local officials have also been solicited.

Please sign the NRHP registration form and return it to me. After receiving the form, I will submit this nomination to the Keeper of the National Register in accordance with 36 CFR 60.9(d).

If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact Dr. Daniel Koski-Karell at (202) 267-1942.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. G. Manik".

J. G. MANIK
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief, Office of Civil Engineering
USCG Federal Preservation Officer

Enclosure: (1) Nomination Package Stepping Stones Light Station.

Copy: Don Klima, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (w/o encl)
Jennifer Perunko, National Park Service (w/o encl)
CG MLCA(s) (with encl)
CG CEUProvidence (with encl)