

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 an 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 Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex (Additional Documentation and Boundary Expansion)  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number E & W sides NC 12 N of SR 1185 N/A  not for publication  
city or town Corolla N/A  vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Currituck code 053 zip code 27927

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 7/10/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
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.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other. (explain: _____)	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5		buildings
2		sites
7	5	structures
		objects
14	5	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

5

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE-COMMERCE/lighthouse

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE-COMMERCE/lighthouse

RECREATION AND CULTURE/park

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/ Stick Style

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

WOOD/weatherboard

roof WOOD/shingle

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached sheets (section 7)

8. Statement of 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE  
 MARITIME HISTORY  
 SOCIAL HISTORY  
 ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1873-1939

Significant Dates

1873  
1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance See attached sheets (Section 8)  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: 1. Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, N.C.; 2. Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Corolla, N.C.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 21.58 acres (~~boundary expansion only~~)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	118	42511610	40256410
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	118	425280	4025960

3	18	426090	4025980
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	18	426140	4025780

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 Penne Smith/ Historic Preservation Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date May 12, 1999

street & number 104 E. Horne Avenue telephone (252) 753-4412

city or town Farmville state N.C. zip code 27828

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 \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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(Additional Documentation and Boundary Expansion)

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The Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex is located approximately one-tenth of a mile south of the village of Corolla, in the northernmost section of North Carolina's Outer Banks, and is approximately twenty miles south of the Virginia border. North Carolina Highway 12, the principal road for this area, bisects the property. This lighthouse complex, established in 1873, is in the United States' Fifth Lighthouse District and was the last lighthouse to be built on North Carolina's Outer Banks. It is North Carolina's northernmost lighthouse and until the 1980s was not accessible via principal or graded public roads from either north or south.

The lighthouse property tract is comprised of 30.58 acres, an evocative landscape that includes five acres of fenced and maintained grounds of built resources, and approximately twenty-six acres of natural vegetation and dunes extending to the Atlantic Ocean. The latter acreage includes a small maritime forest, the oceanfront and dunes, and the marshland along Currituck Sound. The fenced and maintained area surrounding the lighthouse contains all the property's historic contributing buildings. Within the two-and-a-half acre fenced area is the 1873-1875 masonry brick conical lighthouse tower and attached one-story brick office; an 1876 two-story frame light keepers' dwelling with two contemporary cisterns; a one-story storehouse also built in 1876; and an 1870s light keeper's house moved to the site in 1920. Overall, this property's developed and undeveloped areas have remained intact since the United States Government purchased them in 1873.

The principal buildings and structures of this complex date from the sixty-six-year period (1873-1939) that Currituck Beach Lighthouse was operated under the authority of the United States Lighthouse Board, later known as the United States Bureau of Lighthouses (1910-1939) and the United States Coast Guard (1939-). These buildings include the conical red brick lighthouse tower and its attached one-story brick office built between 1873 and 1875. Also on the site are the two-and-a-half story Keepers' House, a frame duplex completed in 1876, and the story-and-a-half Small Keeper's House, an 1870s dwelling moved from the Long Point Lighthouse Station on Currituck Sound to this site in 1920. Dependencies for these buildings include the Keepers' House's two rainwater cisterns and one surviving storehouse; the Small Keeper's House retains a front-gable weatherboarded privy and a concrete cistern dating from 1920. There is a modern storehouse building dating from the early 1990s just beyond the lighthouse complex but it is built in the style of an early twentieth-century Outer Banks storehouse. It was, in fact, modeled after a period storehouse at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Complex.<sup>1</sup>

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A small number of significant buildings contributing to the Currituck Beach Lighthouse's historical context were built near the lighthouse between 1874 and 1930. Of these, three community landmarks survive. The Corolla Chapel and Corolla School, two small frame buildings constructed at the turn of the twentieth century, are less than a quarter mile north of the lighthouse complex. The third building, the Whalehead Club, is one of North Carolina's exceptional, albeit late, examples of the Art Nouveau style and was built as the Corolla Island Club between 1921 and 1923. This former hunting lodge and residence is located approximately five hundred yards southwest of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse property.

The recent tree cover at the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex, from trees within the compound to the pines that have sprung up between the compound's east fence and NC Highway 12, began with the U.S. Coast Guard's vacating the premises after World War II; the site was not maintained for the following three decades. A great deal of present tree cover is said to have stemmed from the Ash Wednesday northeaster in February 1962; at that time sea dunes that were washed inland apparently led to inert seeds germinating around the lighthouse area.<sup>2</sup> The trees that have grown on the lighthouse site in the last fifty-one years, apart from recent plantings, are mostly pines and live oaks; a secondary contingent are the many persimmon, red cedar, and sweet gum trees. As such, they are indigenous to this part of North Carolina's Outer Banks. These trees have provided a buffer allowing preservation of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex's historic character in that they screen the lighthouse and its satellite buildings from the 1980s-1990s commercial development of Corolla, North Carolina.

The entire 30.58 acre Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex tract is owned by the State of North Carolina, although the lighthouse tower is still under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard. Two state agencies maintain the complex. The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has leased the five-acre lighthouse complex to a local historic preservation group, Outer Banks Conservationists, Incorporated, which maintains and manages the site. The rest of the acreage -- the forested area, oceanfront, and Currituck Sound marshland -- is maintained by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. In 1973 the nine acres including the five acre lighthouse compound was listed in the National Register of Historic Places; this nomination further elaborates upon the lighthouse compound's built resources framed by the natural resources of its integral surrounding landscape.

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### Inventory

#### 1. Currituck Beach Lighthouse Tower (1873-1875): Contributing (NR 1973)

The lighthouse's conical unpainted red brick tower is laid in a 3:1 common bond and is a total height, counting its massive brick and iron polygonal base, of 162 feet.<sup>3</sup> It rests on a nearly seven-foot deep masonry and a wooden grillage foundation below ground.<sup>4</sup> Above ground, the wide hexagonal tower base has overhanging iron weatherings that form a water table. The tower's brick walls are five feet, eight inches, thick at its base and three feet thick at its parapet. Five tall, narrow windows, two of which face the Currituck Sound and three of which face the Atlantic Ocean, pierce the shaft at various heights; each window is located at a landing. All five windows have eight-over-eight double hung sash; their projecting exterior molded brick surrounds are segmentally arched. The windows are enlivened by granite decoration at the surrounds' keystones, upper corners, and sills.

Above the seventh landing is the lighthouse's former watch room, a gallery lit by four segmentally arched windows at its north, south, east, and west openings. Large ornate metalwork brackets resting on a cornice just below the watch room's windows support a circular exterior observation platform above this room. Above the observation platform and the eighth landing is a polygonal glass lantern window and a smaller observation deck with a plain iron railing. This level is where the lighthouse's first order Fresnel lens is enclosed. The lantern is covered by a copper roof which is, in turn, surmounted by a copper ventilator ball and lightning rod spindle; the spindle connects to both the lantern roof and the stairway's hand rail.<sup>5</sup>

Inside, the tower is simply finished. Walls are unplastered brick. The first floor gallery is located a short flight of steps from the hall that connects the lighthouse tower to a one-story brick office. This gallery, a circular space now used for exhibitions, has marble flooring and niches for seating. In its center is a recessed well sectioned off by a metal rail; this well was where the former lighting mechanism's cords hung from the lantern level. Above the first floor gallery is the iron spiral staircase, which the tower was built around; landings are openwork iron floors. The staircase ascends to the former watch room above the seventh landing, a simply finished room where the lighthouse keepers monitored the beacon, weather, and other important events such as shipwrecks.

In the lantern is the lighthouse's first order Fresnel lens, the largest size of the Fresnel lenses. It was made by the firm Sautter, Lemonier et Cie., one of three nineteenth-century French optics manufacturers who made lenses for lighthouses all over the world.<sup>6</sup> This lens type was particularly employed for seacoast lighthouses, while smaller order lenses were used for lighthouses on rivers and lakes. The light from this beacon, visible for nearly eighteen nautical miles, has an

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estimated 160,000 candlepower.<sup>7</sup> The beacon, its revolutions engineered by a cord and weights system comparable to that of a grandfather clock, has a four-and-a-half minute revolution.<sup>8</sup> Each point in the beacon's path receives a three-second flash with a seventeen-second interval. Until the beacon was electrified in 1939, it was illuminated by kerosene.

**1a. Lighthouse Office (1873-1875): Contributing (NR 1973)**

A small brick "hyphen" with windows on its north and south walls connects the lighthouse tower to the office. This two-room side-gable building, three bays wide, is also constructed of brick, and its high foundation is set off by a granite course water table. The office's roofline, which has a projecting front-gable stoop, is covered with cedar shingles and retains its original decorative eave brackets and corbel cap interior end chimneys. Its exterior treatment is similar to that of the lighthouse tower, especially the segmentally arched double-hung four-over-six sash windows that light the front and side elevations; these windows have the same molded brick and granite decorative treatment of the lighthouse tower. The office entrance has a gabled canopy decorated with a wooden crossbar and king post. Sheltered beneath this canopy is the door with a tall, segmented arched transom. "1873" is inscribed in the center of the shaped stone hood mold embracing the transom.

The interior of the lighthouse office, now used as an admission center and exhibition space, retains its original form. Interior finish is simple; the floors in the hall and south room are marble parquet, and the north room has wooden floors. The brick walls are painted, not plastered. The north room was a workroom and storage space and the south room, separated by the center hall, was where some of the oil barrels for the lantern were stored. Iron benches along the south room's east and west wall are niched to secure the oil barrels; there are also overhead cabinets made further accessible by an attached ladder.

**2. Light Keepers' House (1876): Contributing (NR 1973)**

One hundred and thirty feet directly west of the lighthouse tower and office is the Light Keepers' House (aka Keepers' House), a two-and-a-half story cruciform frame duplex that was home to the chief light keeper, his two assistants, and their families. This building, a simple example of the Victorian Stick Style, rests on a raised 5:1 common bond brick foundation below which is a four-foot deep brick-floored basement. Its german-sided weatherboarding has a special lap joint feature molded into the back side of the boards to prevent wind-driven rain from entering the building's wall cavity.<sup>9</sup> The cruciform duplex, sited on an east-west axis, has broad two-bay projecting center gables that are the center pavilion's front and rear elevations; from these wider gables, narrower two-story gable wings project to the south and north. The wide east and west gables are decorated with narrow board-and-batten siding, shaped wooden rafter tails, a large

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crossbar and king post, and a wooden finial at the apex. The Light Keepers' House retains its four corbel cap chimneystacks at the building's center and exterior ends. Other original exterior decoration includes the single and paired double-hung sash windows' simple dog-ear surrounds that at the first floor have aprons with patterned beaded board panels. These windows have louvered shutters.

This house was modeled upon the U.S. Light House Board's 1873 designs for a "First Order Light House." According to these 1873 drawings, the west elevation of the Currituck Beach Light Keepers' House, facing away from the lighthouse and its flashing beacon, was intended to be the front elevation.<sup>10</sup> On each side of the projecting front-gable pavilion a one-story shed porch fills the recess created by the side wings. The symmetrical placement of the porches is functional; the interior plan of the house is that of a duplex, with the dividing wall positioned exactly down the east-west axis of the taller portion of the house. Each shed porch, supported by chamfered and bracketed posts, shelters an entrance with a transom and a tall double-hung sash. Decorative sawnwork boards, pierced by open diamond-shaped patterns, fill the triangle created between the shed porch roof and the west elevation wall. At the rear or east elevation, facing the lighthouse tower, the roof of each side wing extends as the shed roof of a narrow, square-in-section two-story bay at the juncture of the side wing with the house's taller, central unit. This bay contains a door fronted by a small shed-roofed entrance porch with chamfered post and side railing identical to the front porches.

Inside, the Light Keepers' House follows an irregular center hall plan on each side of the duplex. The center hall is the duplex's primary passageway as it directly connects each unit's east and west entrances. There are three downstairs rooms and a former pantry that is now a bathroom. The rooms are a parlor in the side wing and, on the other side of the hall, a kitchen and dining room connected by a small corridor with a butler's pantry. All three rooms have fireplaces with simple Victorian style mantelpieces, some of which have been reproduced based upon surviving originals. Interior finish is very simple; except for the attic, all walls are plastered. The first floor's staircase, hall and kitchen, and the second floor hall have a high vertical tongue-and-groove board wainscot. The staircase in each duplex retains its turned newel post, molded handrail and most of its turned balusters; the small window over the back door lights the landing. Upstairs are three bedrooms connected by the hall leading to the staircase; at the end of the hall away from the end bed rooms is a vertical ladder-like staircase to the attic. The south duplex attic is one large room, broken by the sunken landing to the stair. The north duplex attic consists of two partitioned rooms and a small hall at the landing.

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- 2a. Light Keepers' Rainwater Cistern (1876, restored 1990): Contributing**  
**2b. Assistant Light Keepers' Rainwater Cistern (1876, partially reconstructed 1990-1993): Contributing (NR 1973)**

Each duplex unit of the Keepers' House has its own rainwater cistern, located next to the side wing. Both cistern buildings have brick foundations, walls of fixed wooden louvers, and a board-and-batten, high-hip roof. The cistern room, raised above ground, is entered by a batten door. Pipes running from the house's roofline carry rainwater to the top of the closest well into the cistern located below the raised cistern house platform. These cisterns, screened by the louvered walls, were made of brick and their round interiors were parged.<sup>11</sup> Mesh screens over the cisterns' pipes and well filtered out debris.<sup>12</sup> The smaller cistern at the south end of the house was that of the chief lighthouse keeper and had a 1,795-gallon capacity; the larger cistern at the north end of the house was for the two assistant keepers and their families, and so had a 3,510-gallon capacity.<sup>13</sup>

Documentary photographs guided the partial reconstruction and restoration of the north cistern when the lighthouse compound was restored in the 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>14</sup> It was during this time that investigation of the north cistern's brickwork indicated that, before 1909, both cisterns had been the same size. It is not known exactly when the north cistern was enlarged.<sup>15</sup>

**3. Small Light Keeper's House (ca. 1872-1875; moved to site 1920): Contributing**

The Small Light Keeper's House (aka Small Keeper's House) is 100 feet northeast of the Light Keepers' House on the site of an 1875 storehouse no longer in existence. This T-shaped story-and-a-half dwelling is, like the Light Keepers' House, in the Victorian Stick Style. Its exterior decoration is particularly lively, from its elaborate vergeboard and scalloped upper-story board-and-batten covering to the front shed porch's bracketed and chamfered posts. The interior of the house follows a center hall plan with its staircase facing the rear of the house. Original elements, such as stairs and simple door and window surrounds in the first floor's rear wing, are still in place. After falling into disrepair, the building was thoroughly restored between 1990 and 1993. Although parts of the interior were carefully reconstructed with replacement materials based upon documentary photographs, nearly all of the house's exterior was salvageable. This former dwelling is now the museum shop for the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex.

The Small Keeper's House is especially significant for its connection to another maritime-related complex. Recent documentation and research has established that this small Victorian cottage was the Keeper's House at Long Point Station across Currituck Sound near present-day Coinjock. Long Point Station, established in 1872, was a supply and maintenance depot for North Carolina's northeastern lighthouses, lightships, and lifesaving stations.<sup>16</sup> Other buildings on the Long Point site included a larger Keeper's House, storehouses, barns, and a brick naphtha gas

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refinery. Long Point Station was gradually disassembled between 1915 and 1923; it was during this time that the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station obtained this house, floating it by barge across Currituck Sound to its present location.<sup>17</sup> By 1920 an 1870s board-and-batten storehouse for the Assistant Light Keepers had been removed from the site where the Small Light Keeper's House now stands.

**3a. Small Light Keeper's Cistern (ca. 1920-1921): Contributing**

After the Small Keeper's House was relocated to the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station, a concrete cistern was built at the house's east elevation. The cistern, which is approximately four feet high and seven by eight feet in width, was once connected to a metal pipe leading from the house's roof gutters. Its concrete blocks plastered by cement through the years, the cistern tank is not accessible for observation. The decision to have a concrete cistern may have been because an enclosed cistern was easier to keep clean.

**3b. Small Light Keeper's Privy (ca. 1920; restored 1993): Contributing**

East of the Small Light Keeper's house is a one-bay, front-gable weatherboarded privy that was built for the house in 1920. The privy has a shuttered window at its west and north facades.

**4. Storehouse (ca. 1875-1876): Contributing**

Located 100 feet southeast of the Light Keepers' House on its original site is a small one-story storehouse constructed at the same time as the other principal buildings on the complex. Like the Light Keepers' House, this building has a primary gable-roofed unit on an east-west axis from which lower gable-roofed wings of varying width project to the north and south, creating a footprint akin to an irregular Greek cross. Most of the building was a storeroom for firewood. The north wing contained a separate "provision house" and the smaller south wing contained a small privy with a ventilation chimney and vault.<sup>18</sup> The building, partly gutted in the twentieth century, retains nearly all of its original exterior elements, including its board-and-batten siding, plain door and window surrounds, and its Stick Style vergeboard, shaped rafters, king posts, and eave brackets. Its replacement rooftop finials were reconstructed in the 1990s by careful study of 1890s documentary photographs of the building. The storehouse's interior is simple and sheathed with replacement manufactured beaded board siding in keeping with its original appearance. This building was moved off its site in the early 1960s by a local resident who later returned the building in the early 1990s; it was then rehabilitated into the current Light Keeper's office.<sup>19</sup>

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### 5. Lighthouse Compound Landscape (ca. 1873; 1930-1945): Contributing

Other contributing features of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex's built environment begin with the **network of brick paths (contributing structure, ca. 1873)** linking all principal buildings within the original two-and-a-half acre lighthouse compound. This walkway, built at the time the lighthouse was constructed, elliptically connects the south storehouse, the lighthouse and office, the Keepers' House, and the Small Keeper's House. These brick paths extend to surround the Keepers' House; there, they split into two parallel walks at the house's east and west elevations. The west walk once linked the house to an 1890s vegetable garden beyond the complex.<sup>20</sup> The east walk linked the house to the lighthouse tower and office. The parallel walks were constructed for the convenience and relative privacy of the two keepers and their families, who lived in the Keepers' House. The brick walkways have received some repairs over the years but are mostly intact.

Other important features of the lighthouse compound include the replacement **post-and-board wooden fence (noncontributing structure, ca. 1990)** that follows the lighthouse compound's original perimeter. Although not original, this fencing is in keeping with its predecessors; post-and-board perimeter fences were sited in this exact location from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. The harsh weather conditions of the Outer Banks, such as northeasters, hurricanes, and waterspouts, took their toll on the post-and-board fences, which had to be periodically replaced. Also within the compound are **concrete and metal posts (contributing structure, ca. 1939)**, dating from the United States Coast Guard's occupation of this site during World War II.

The earliest documentary photographs of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station were taken by U.S. Lighthouse Board engineer H. Bamber in 1893, showing there to have been little vegetation other than low shrubs and grass at the lighthouse site. Trees were visible at a short distance but they appear to have been low-growing oaks and pines along the maritime forest near the oceanfront or the marshland adjacent to the Currituck Sound. This stark landscape appears to have lasted to the 1940s, as contemporary photographs of the site show no tree cover.

### 6. Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex Natural Landscape (ca. 1873; 1930-1945; Contributing)

The 1873 deed map to the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station and H. Bamber's meticulous 1890s site maps show that, then as now, most of the lighthouse property was left in its natural state. Nineteenth-century cartography shows that the oceanfront side of the tract was dominated by migratory sand dunes, one of which was Jones, or Whalehead, Hill. Vestiges of these once massive

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dunes are still apparent within the lighthouse tract's eastern portion. **Sand fencing (contributing structure, ca. 1931-present)** in order to control beach erosion was contributed by a local branch of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and has been periodically replaced through the years by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. With erosion and migratory dunes under control, wild plantings, such as sea oats and wax myrtles have emerged on the dunescape.

West and north of the fenced lighthouse compound were small forested areas and marshland bordering the Currituck Sound. These marshes still exist much as they did in 1873. Built resources on the soundside include a **wooden walkway and pier (noncontributing structure, ca. 1990)** constructed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. This new walkway runs parallel to the site of the small 1870s construction railway (demolished) and to the site of the former **lighthouse pier (noncontributing structure, ca. 1873-1939; 1955-1970)**. This former wooden pier, continually replaced over a sixty-six-year period, was the lighthouse complex's link to the outside world, which came across the Currituck in the form of mail boats and passengers. Some wooden pilings of the former pier are still in place.

The Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex's natural landscape provides historic context for the site, emphasizing the isolation of such nineteenth-century maritime structures. As with the inner lighthouse compound, the relatively recent tree cover has turned advantageous as it provides a screen from later non-contextual built resources.

### 7. Storage House (ca. 1990-1994): Noncontributing

A one-story frame storage house is located just outside the lighthouse complex fence, less than fifty feet northwest of the Small Light Keeper's House. Although recently built, its simple exterior is typical of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Outer Banks agricultural buildings and so appears in context with its surroundings. The storage house, which rests on low brick piers, has board-and-batten siding. There is a small six-pane window in each gable end and, at the south façade, wide double batten doors. Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., designed and constructed this storage building in the 1990s using the example of an early twentieth-century storage house at the Bodie Island, N.C., Lighthouse Complex.

### 8. Frame Crib (ca. 1990): Noncontributing

A frame feeding crib was built east of the lighthouse compound for migratory horses who travel between the Back Bay Nature Preserve and the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex. These horses are descendants of seventeenth-century mustang ponies released on the Outer Banks from Spanish ships.

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Endnotes to Section 7

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd Childers, Outer Banks Conservationists, Corolla, N.C.. February 29, 1999, letter to Penne Smith (project consultant).

<sup>2</sup> Penne Smith, Childers conversation, September 24, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Kevin J. Foster and Candace Clifford, Inventory of Historic Light Stations (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, National Maritime Initiative, 1994), p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> United States Lighthouse Board, 1909 Fifth District Description of Buildings, Premises, Equipment, Etc., at Currituck Beach Light Station (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 7. Also, Dennis L. Noble, Lighthouses and Keepers: The U.S. Lighthouse Service and Its Legacy (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), pp. 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. (Corolla, N.C.), Currituck Beach Lighthouse Fact Sheet, ca. 1997. Also, Federal Writers' Project, North Carolina: A Guide to the Old North State, p. 293.

<sup>8</sup> 1909 Currituck Beach Light Station Report, pp. 6, 8, and 9. Also, Currituck Beach Lighthouse Fact Sheet.

<sup>9</sup> John Wilson, IV, Outer Banks Conservationists, Manteo, N.C., Letter to Penne Smith, February 29, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Light House Board Office, "Keepers Dwelling for A First Order Light House" (Washington, DC: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection), plates 3, 4, and 5.

<sup>11</sup> Bill Parker, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Corolla, N.C., March 17, 1999, facsimile to Penne Smith.

<sup>12</sup> 1909 Currituck Beach Light Station Report, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Penne Smith, conversation with Ms. Lloyd Childers, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Corolla, N.C., September 24, 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Bill Parker, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., March 17, 1999, facsimile.

<sup>16</sup> Jeanne Meekins Murphy, "'Frank' Talbott descendants plan reunion," The Virginia Pilot (n.d. and no page number given. Article courtesy of Bill Parker, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., and appears to date from 1990-1997). Also, Hilda Mathias and Jean D. Doxey, "Barco" in The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society (Currituck County Historical Society, 1977), p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> Nathan Swain (Light Keeper), Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station Log, 1910-1920 (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection), February-July 1920.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Light House Board Office, "Keepers Dwelling for A First Order Light House [Outbuildings]" (Washington, DC: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection), Plate 8. Also, H. Bamber, Photograph of Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station Outbuilding, 1893 (copy in Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, N.C.).

<sup>19</sup> Penne Smith, conversation with Bill Parker, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Manteo, N.C., October 22, 1998.

<sup>20</sup> H. Bamber, 1893 Map of Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection). Photocopy in attachments.

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### Summary

The Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex, established in 1873 when the United States Government purchased thirty-one acres between Currituck Sound and the Atlantic Ocean, was the last major lighthouse constructed on North Carolina's Outer Banks. As a relatively intact nineteenth-century maritime complex, it stands as a significant representative of the United States Lighthouse Board's efforts to facilitate navigational aids and prevent accidents at sea. The lighthouse is individually significant because it retains its original form and accoutrements, particularly the first order Fresnel lens that serves as a beacon. With the addition of the complex's recently restored buildings, which include a storehouse and two light keepers' dwellings, combined with its original untouched acreage running from sound to oceanfront, the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex is a remarkably intact regional landmark.

The Currituck Beach Lighthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. At that time, the listed nomination acreage was nine of the 30.58 acre original parcel, five acres of which was the lighthouse compound. The purpose of the present nomination is twofold. First, this nomination provides additional documentation on the resources of the original National Register nomination. Early National Register nominations in North Carolina were quite brief and gave a limited picture of what today is considered essential information detailing a site's built and natural resources. In the original nomination the Currituck Beach Lighthouse and Office were discussed, as well as the Light Keepers' House and its cisterns. Since 1973, however, a great deal of effort has gone into restoring the historic buildings and structures within the lighthouse compound; other buildings and structures on site, such as the Small Keeper's House, the 1870s storehouse, and other contributing elements, were not documented in the previous nomination. The present nomination serves to document these additional resources and further define all of these resources' historic context. Second, this nomination is to expand the boundaries of this National Register site to its original 30.58 acres. The 1973 nomination, like many early National Register nominations, limited its boundaries to the built environment and did not take into account the equal importance of a site's physical surroundings. By expanding the earlier nomination's nine-acre boundary to the original 30.58 acre tract, this nomination serves to provide the complete and appropriate natural

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historical setting essential to understand and evaluate the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex's integral historic character.

This additional documentation, both physical and historical, underscores the complex's significance in the areas of architecture, commerce, and maritime history as listed in the original National Register nomination. Furthermore, the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex, in addition to its established eligibility under Criteria C and A, is also significant under Criterion A for its association with the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century culture of the Currituck Banks and the emergence and development of Corolla, North Carolina.

### **Historical Context Statement: Maritime History, Commerce, and Social History**

The site of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse property and the small village of Corolla, North Carolina, has been traditionally referred to as Whalehead, or Whaleshead. The community took the name from a large dune in the area, one of many such migratory dunes in this part of northeastern North Carolina known as the Currituck Banks.<sup>1</sup> Settlement of this remote seaside area is said to have begun as early as the late seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> The region was first called Coratank, the local Native American term for wild geese, and, later, Currituck, an area extending from part of North Carolina's northernmost barrier peninsula and crossing the sound to include a small section of mainland.<sup>3</sup> Whalehead's few inhabitants, as with other Currituck Banks' settlements, were subsistence farmers who raised livestock; the feral pigs, still seen in the woods of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex and nearby Corolla village, are descended from these early free-range pigs.<sup>4</sup> Traditional livelihoods in this area have included fishing and hunting.

From the colonial period into the early twentieth century, commerce along the Atlantic seaboard and its inland cities was linked to maritime enterprises. During this time, when a great deal of commerce was water-borne, North Carolina's unique coastal geography, in conjunction with the dangers of the sea, could be hazardous. The Outer Banks, often referred to as "The Graveyard of the Atlantic", did not have an inlet north of Oregon Inlet when Currituck Inlet closed in 1828. Commercial shipping and passenger travel by boat along North Carolina's barrier islands, already dangerous because of the strong Labrador Current close to shore, were further impeded by the lack of visible – but conveniently distant – landmarks.<sup>5</sup> Many ships also foundered off the Currituck Banks because captains mistook the shoreline for that of False Cape, located south of Cape Henry, Virginia. Consequently, there are many shipwrecks along the Outer Banks, and at least eighteen just off the shore of present-day Currituck Beach. One of the earliest

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recorded wrecks was a Portuguese brigantine that sank off Currituck Beach in September 1757. Among the fallen ships in the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex vicinity is the *Evergreen*, a Philadelphia schooner carrying corn and flour that “went to pieces” in January 1849; another is the *Mary Turcan*, a brigantine returning to Liverpool on December 13, 1852 with a cargo of grain when it struck a submerged shipwreck.<sup>6</sup>

As early as 1789, North Carolina and the United States government attempted to redress the issue of lighthouses with the establishment of a lighthouse on Ocracoke Island in that year. Also in 1789, the United States Congress passed the first law establishing the building and maintenance of lighthouses and other maritime and riparian beacons. The first lighthouse built in North Carolina was at Bald Head Island in 1792; the first lighthouse built on North Carolina’s Outer Banks was at Cape Hatteras, one of the most hazardous maritime sites, in 1802. Cape Lookout’s first lighthouse followed ten years later, and Ocracoke Island’s lighthouse was constructed in 1823. These early lighthouses, the first stable beacons for the Outer Banks, were an average height of ninety feet, and sixty-five feet in the case of the Ocracoke lighthouse; Bodie (formerly Body’s) Island’s fifty-four feet lighthouse tower was constructed in 1848.<sup>7</sup> The Hatteras lighthouse was altered in the 1840s, and its observational tower raised so that the lighthouse’s total height reached 150 feet. Then in 1854 the lantern was expanded for the state-of-the-art, first-order Fresnel lens. The Cape Lookout lighthouse was to be heightened as well until it was decided to build a new lighthouse in 1859.<sup>8</sup> This second Cape Lookout lighthouse, 169 feet tall and equipped with a first-order Fresnel lens, served as the prototype for future North Carolina lighthouse construction.

By 1870 Federal and State government had coalesced to construct three substantial lighthouses along North Carolina’s northern Outer Banks, two of which would replace the outmoded 1802 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the 1848 Bodie Island Lighthouse at Oregon Inlet. In 1872 U.S. Congress appropriated \$50,000 to begin building a lighthouse “to illuminate the dark space . . . between Body’s Island and Cape Henry.” This third lighthouse site was finally determined to be at Whalehead, and it was determined that the lighthouse would be a first order lighthouse; these type of beacons, illuminated by a first order Fresnel lens, were considered to be the most technically advanced lighthouses of that time.<sup>9</sup>

In May 1873 a group of landowners in Whalehead sold two parcels of land to the United States Government. The first parcel, comprising part of the land of Abram Baum, Josephus and Caroline Baum, and Edmond and Mary Eliza Lindsay, was twenty-five acres, sold for seventy-five dollars.<sup>10</sup> The second parcel of land, which included more access to Currituck Sound, was only six acres but apparently more valuable to the U.S.

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Lighthouse Board; for this parcel, the Baums and Lindsays were paid \$150.00.<sup>11</sup> An 1874 plat for Currituck Beach Lighthouse, N.C., shows the initial twenty-five acres of the property exactly as it is in the present day. Other area landowners on the plat besides Josephus Baum were Edmund Baum, who owned the parcel north of the lighthouse tract, and Arthur Amory, who owned land to the south.<sup>12</sup>

Planning and building the Currituck Beach Lighthouse took nearly two years. Because of the sandy soil and substratum, a pile and grillage foundation was made for the tower. The piles were driven twenty-four feet into the ground for stability and then capped by a series of timbers and stone, all of which was secured by concrete. During the time that building commenced in June 1874 workmen had already erected makeshift buildings for worker's housing, a carpenter's shop, a blacksmith's shop, and a cement shed. A temporary depot to transfer building materials from ships to the lighthouse site was created at Church's Island, twelve miles north where there was deeper water; part of the difficulty of transporting materials to Whalehead was the shallowness of Currituck Sound. At the lighthouse site, in addition to a pier and wharf on the sound, a small railway had been built to aid in transporting materials. Because the additional necessities of a railway and a second depot were so expensive, the U.S. Light House Board requested \$20,000 from Congress in 1874.<sup>13</sup>

By mid-summer 1875 construction of the Currituck Beach lighthouse was nearly complete. In the process of building the lighthouse and its attached brick dependency, the U.S. Light House Board had decided that, as opposed to the distinctive painted spirals, stripes, and diamonds of the Cape Hatteras, Bodie Island, and (the recently painted) Cape Lookout lighthouse towers, the Currituck Beach lighthouse tower would retain its unpainted red brick finish.<sup>14</sup> As work finished on the lighthouse, the Light Keepers' House, a "double dwelling" specifically designed to accompany a first order lighthouse, was being completed along with a rainwater cistern and two storehouses.<sup>15</sup> By the time the Currituck Beach Lighthouse became operational on December 1, 1875, it is probable that the brick walkway connecting all the lighthouse property's permanent buildings was nearly complete as well.

During the time the Currituck Beach Lighthouse was constructed in Whalehead, the small community received another new resource. The United States Lifesaving Service, incepted in 1871, began planning and building lifesaving stations every four miles along North Carolina's Outer Banks to be run by a paid superintendent, or keeper, and volunteer staff who were known as surfmen. Jones Hill, the lifesaving station nearest to the Currituck Beach Lighthouse's oceanfront, was built in 1874; nearby stations, such as Pennys Hill to the north and Poyners Hill to the south, were built by 1879.<sup>16</sup> Given the

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proximity of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse's oceanfront property to these former lifesaving stations, it is likely that there was a good deal of interaction between the stations on that site as they went about their work.

The first three years of Currituck Beach Lighthouse's operation were probably the time of its worst shipwrecks. On March 1, 1876, the *Nuova Ottavia*, an Italian barque en route to Baltimore from Genoa, ran aground off Currituck Beach just after dusk. According to contemporary accounts and local history, when the Jones Hill rescue crew approached the ship, its frantic passengers overturned the rescue boat in their haste to escape. Of the twenty men who left Jones Hill Station to retrieve the *Nuova Ottavia's* crew and passengers, only four survived.<sup>17</sup> These crewmen were local farmers and volunteers who left behind widows and families. The second shipwreck, on January 31, 1878, was the *Metropolis*, a New York-based steamer that had departed Philadelphia with a cargo of Irish workmen and railroad ties to build a railroad in Brazil.<sup>18</sup> The steamer, which already had structural problems, was disabled and ran aground off Currituck Beach. One hundred and sixty people were saved but eighty-five people drowned. In spite of the resulting public outcry that the lifesaving station's inefficiency doomed the *Metropolis'* passengers, it can be argued that the lighthouse had done its job; had the ship's captain not seen Currituck Beach Lighthouse in the distance and realized heading toward shore was his best option, probably all lives on board would have been lost. The *Metropolis* shipwreck prompted a re-evaluation of the U.S. Lifesaving Service, which led to the construction of new lifesaving stations along the North Carolina coast, such as Pennys Hill and Poyners Hill. With these new stations and additional staff at the Jones Hill Station, more jobs were created for local people.<sup>19</sup>

Gradually, as the Currituck Beach Lighthouse and the Jones Hill Lifesaving Station provided employment and generated necessities, the Whalehead settlement began to grow. Other opportunities emerged for local people in 1874 when a group of New York businessmen established the Lighthouse Club, a hunting club that acquired extensive Currituck Banks acreage mostly south of the lighthouse.<sup>20</sup> The Lighthouse Club was one of several hunting clubs established in the Currituck Banks and Sound area during the late nineteenth century for the delectation of northeastern businessmen who wanted to hunt the plentiful duck and geese of the area. Consequently, enterprising local men worked for the Lighthouse Club and other nearby clubs as guides. Some Whalehead residents became market hunters, supplying northern markets with fowl and muskrats.<sup>21</sup> By 1896 the Whalehead area had a population sufficient to request a post office. Emma Parker, the village's future postmistress, sent three proposed names – Jones Beach, Whalehead, and Currituck Beach – to the United States Post Office. When the U.S. Post Office rejected all three names, the villagers suggested the name Corolla, after the inner

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circle of a flower. Although Corolla became the official name of the post office and surrounding community, the name Whalehead or Whaleshead continued as a common term into the mid-twentieth century.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the new village, life at the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station was often isolated and daily routine uneventful, a pattern of existence mostly unbroken from 1875 until 1939. The light keepers' duties included continual observation from the lighthouse tower's watch room, recording weather conditions, cleaning the Fresnel lens, and maintaining the lighthouse tower and mechanical system. There was also hauling barrels of kerosene oil from the nearby oilhouse and storehouses to, first, the oil room in the brick office and, eventually, the beacon itself.<sup>23</sup> Other responsibilities were maintaining the grounds, from the 3,000 feet of post-and-board fencing and the brick walkways to upkeep on the storehouses and the Keeper's House.<sup>24</sup> In 1888, the lighthouse's pier was completely rebuilt and a small shed was constructed at the pier's end; this pier, which was rebuilt again in 1902, required continual maintenance.<sup>25</sup> Time off from lighthouse duties usually was work-related. The keeper or assistant keepers might take the lighthouse boat to Currituck on the mainland or Long Point Station (the maritime depot established in 1872 on Long Point Island near Coinjock) to get supplies or to bring the schoolteacher to Corolla.<sup>26</sup> Occasionally, time off was taken so that the keepers could dig potatoes in their half-acre garden or slaughter their hogs. Corolla Chapel was built less than a half-mile away in the 1880s but many of the light keepers chose to attend services in Coinjock, possibly for contact with relatives and the outside world.<sup>27</sup>

The light keepers' children did not always attend the local school established in Corolla by 1896. A possible reason may have been due to hostility from Lewis N. Simmons, a former Currituck Beach light keeper who, after being dismissed from his post in 1881, became the local Corolla teacher.<sup>28</sup> According to descendants of the light keepers, this local school served the children of farmers, boatbuilders, and fishermen. The light keepers' children worked at the lighthouse complex, too. Chores could vary from maintaining the grounds to taking lighthouse tower casualties – ducks and geese that had crashed into the tower at night and fallen into the lighthouse net hung below the lantern railing – to neighbors for food.<sup>29</sup>

In 1893 H. Bamber, an Assistant Engineer for the U.S. Light House Board, was sent to Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station to make a topographical survey of the property. Bamber meticulously mapped the entire site, from the unoccupied oceanfront to the marshes and woodland on either side of the lighthouse's Currituck Sound pier; on the map, Bamber also documented the photographs he took of the site. He also took

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notes regarding structures on the property, from the pier's small shed to an old brick cistern southeast of the lighthouse. The photographs Bamber took of the site show the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station to have been a tidy, well-maintained property and, with the exception of several small outbuildings no longer standing today, much as it appears in the present day. In 1893 the lighthouse complex was an open space with no tree plantings and little shrubbery; trees were visible in the distance, particularly closer to Currituck Sound. In his report to the Light House Board regarding the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station, Bamber recommended that employing tile drains that would empty into Currituck Sound could drain wetlands on the complex.<sup>30</sup> It is not known if such tile drains were ever constructed.

By 1922 the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station had received a number of improvements. These included, first, the 1901 replacement of the outmoded magneto-electric calling bell system in the complex with telephones, and, then, a new building.<sup>31</sup> In February 1920 the Keeper's House at Long Point Station was moved by barge across Currituck Sound to the lighthouse property. After it was placed on the site of the former north storehouse, it became the Small Keeper's House. The Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station was able to retrieve this story-and-a-half Victorian Stick Style house, identical in style to its Keepers' House and 1875 storehouses, because Long Point Station was gradually being dismantled following transfer of its operations to Coinjock.<sup>32</sup> The keepers built an enclosed cement cistern for the new house later that year.<sup>33</sup>

Also in 1922, a new landmark was being constructed on the old Lighthouse Club acreage. Edward C. Knight, Jr., an executive with the Pennsylvania Railroad and the American Sugar Refinery, bought the Lighthouse Club property in 1922.<sup>34</sup> He and his wife, Marie Louise LeBel Knight, were both avid hunters and decided to build a luxurious hunting retreat immediately southwest of the lighthouse. This retreat, sometimes referred to in its early history as the Corolla Island Club, is an imposing mansion and northeastern North Carolina's preeminent (albeit late) example of the Art Nouveau style. It was completed in 1925 for approximately \$383,000.<sup>35</sup> The Knights employed Corolla villagers, including sons and daughters of the lighthouse keepers, as domestic staff and as hunting guides. By 1946 the Corolla Island Club, sold by the Knight estate to Ray T. Adams, was renamed the Whalehead Club, a name it has continued to retain.<sup>36</sup>

The Great Depression affected change at the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established a camp at Corolla, which may or may not have been on lighthouse property. During their time in Corolla, the CCC built

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sand fences along the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station's beachfront, planted grass, and created a dune barrier to stem erosion along the shore.<sup>37</sup> The concrete and iron fencing seen at the lighthouse compound may have been constructed by the CCC at this time.

The United States Bureau of Lighthouses, created from the United States Lighthouse Board in 1910, merged with the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939. It was also in that year that the Currituck Beach Lighthouse's signal was automated by an electric generator.<sup>38</sup> With the lighthouse's beacon controls automated, light keepers were no longer necessary and so were let go. The keepers, who were not allowed to stay on the property, vacated their dwellings, which stood empty until December 1941, when World War II began.

During World War II, the U.S. Coast Guard utilized the former Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station property. The U.S. Coast Guard built three barracks houses on the complex southeast of the lighthouse tower between 1941 and 1945. (All three have been removed from the complex; one of these buildings was moved one-third mile north by a Corolla resident at an unspecified time after 1950.<sup>39</sup>) Older Corolla residents remember German submarines periodically sinking tankers and ships off Currituck Beach.<sup>40</sup> By 1947 the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station property was again vacated.

Between 1947 and 1980 the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station was abandoned except for periodic inspection trips by the U.S. Coast Guard, who converted the lighthouse to regular electricity in the 1950s. Corolla residents visited the site occasionally, some of them appropriating small outbuildings that appeared to be going to waste.<sup>41</sup> The Small Keeper's House, obscured by the small forest that had developed after the 1962 Ash Wednesday storm, was not included in the 1973 National Register Nomination prepared for the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. The storehouse that had originally stood on the site of the Small Keeper's House remained in its new location southeast of the lighthouse into the 1950s but vanished soon after, as did a small barn north of the compound.<sup>42</sup> In January 1952 the United States Government conveyed the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station's thirty-one-acre tract to the State of North Carolina with the proviso that, certain preexisting conditions aside, the land was to be used for muskrat research and public operation of the United States Coast Guard. In 1979 the State of North Carolina transferred the two-and-a-half-acre section comprising the lighthouse compound to the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.<sup>43</sup> The following summer, the Department of Cultural Resources leased the property to Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., who restored the Light Keepers' House between 1980 and 1991.<sup>44</sup> Since then, Outer Banks Conservationists has conducted the extensive

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restoration and rehabilitation of the Small Keeper's House and the surviving 1875 storeroom, and in 1993 began managing the site for the Department of Cultural Resources.

### Architectural Context

The Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station was one of three first order lighthouses built on North Carolina's Outer Banks between 1870 and 1875. Contemporary lighthouses include the 1870 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, which is the tallest lighthouse in the United States, and the 1872 Bodie Island Lighthouse on Oregon Inlet. All three brick and masonry lighthouses are of the same conical form and all, being first order lighthouses, were specifically designed to be of considerable height. All three were designed to use a first order Fresnel lens, then the most concentrated and brightest beacon light available, to steer ships away from the dangerous currents, shipwrecks, and sand bars along their shores. The Currituck Beach Lighthouse, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, and the Bodie Island Lighthouse retain their original exterior and interior form, elements, and finish.

An earlier beacon, the 1859 Cape Lookout Lighthouse Station on Core Banks, was also a first-order house. The Cape Lookout lighthouse, 169 feet high, also has a first order Fresnel lens. It has been called the prototype of the 1870s Outer Banks lighthouses as the impressive lighthouses at Cape Hatteras, Bodie Island, and Currituck Beach followed its lead.

Dexter Stetson, a local contractor, built the Cape Hatteras and Bodie Island lighthouses per the specifications of the U.S. Lighthouse Board; it is not known who the contractor was for the Currituck Beach Lighthouse, although Stetson would be a logical and possible hypothesis.<sup>45</sup> Apart from its tower, the Currituck Beach Lighthouse shares little in common with the buildings on the other two sites except for its attached office and oil storage facility that is identical to the one at Bodie Island. The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Complex, which dates from 1803, had preexisting buildings before 1870, one being the two-story light keepers' house built in 1854.<sup>46</sup> The two-story brick light keepers' house at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Complex was built in 1872, one year before the U.S. Lighthouse Board published their prescriptive designs for first order light keeper houses and outbuildings of frame construction.<sup>47</sup> Both Bodie Island Lighthouse and Currituck Beach Lighthouse retain and employ their original first order Fresnel lenses.

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Of the three complexes, the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex presents the most intact example of a model first order lighthouse compound. In addition to the restored 1875-1876 Light Keepers' House and storeroom outbuilding, the complex retains its original brick walkway, specifically designed for ease of movement and efficiency of tasks about the lighthouse property. The understated Victorian Stick Style of the Light Keepers' House and storeroom complement the ornate Victorian flourishes, such as the office's bracketed eaves and the tower's lace-like iron brackets, of the lighthouse. There is no other comparable lighthouse complex in North Carolina.<sup>48</sup>

The Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex is furthermore significant for its retrieval of another North Carolina lighthouse resource. Though of a different form, the Small Keeper's Cottage, located at Long Point from approximately 1875 until its removal to Currituck Beach Lighthouse in 1920, further complements the Stick Style of the preexisting Light Keepers' House and storehouse. It is the only building from the Long Point Station site (presently a campground) that is known to survive intact.<sup>49</sup>

It should be noted that the current climate of accelerated development along North Carolina's Outer Banks has created a fragile environment for the few surviving nineteenth- and early twentieth-century maritime architectural resources, let alone its natural resources. For example, in the mid-1970s Corolla, North Carolina not only retained the 1905 Currituck Beach Lifesaving Station at its original oceanfront location but had gained the 1878 Poyners Hill Lifesaving Station and, on the Whalehead Club grounds, the 1870s Pennys Hill Station.<sup>50</sup> By the 1990s none of these stations remained.<sup>51</sup> The poignancy of losing three irreplaceable architectural resources is heightened by the ever-changing built environment of Corolla, North Carolina. The recent extension of NC Highway 12 to Corolla has brought further development to the area, an area that until ten years ago was a vista of dunes, marshland, and woods. Today, Corolla is an increasingly dense environment of oceanfront and soundside condominiums, golf courses, and upscale strip malls. The Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station's undeveloped acreage is a remnant of the earlier Currituck Banks landscape and, even as its dunescape, marshes, and woods now stand out as remarkable, it continues, in its unspoiled state, to complete the lighthouse compound's built context. Nomination of the entire thirty-one acres is essential in order to maintain the site's integrity and historic character.

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<sup>1</sup> Shirley Austin, "Corolla," The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society (Currituck County Historical Society, 1977), p. 83, and Norris Austin and Suzanne Tate, Whalehead: Tales of Corolla, N.C. (Nags Head: Nags Head Art, 1987), p. 7. Also, "Lighthouses For Sale," Coastland Times (Manteo, N.C.), August 5, 1955, p. 1. These dunes, referred to by Corolla natives as "hills", include Lewark's Hill, Pennys Hill (which engulfed the settlement of Seagull in the 1950s), and the now-vanished Poyners Hill, leveled for development.

<sup>2</sup> Austin, "Corolla," p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas J. Schoenbaum, Islands, Capes, and Sounds: The North Carolina Coast (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1982), p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Penne Smith, conversation with Bill Parker, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Manteo, N.C., October 22, 1998. Also, Roy Mervin Saunders, Sr., Information of The Outer Banks of Dare and Currituck County from 1776 to 1993 (Ahoskie: Pierce Printing Company, 1993), pp. 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> NPS, National Landmark Nomination for the Cape Hatteras Light Station, N.C., (1998), pp. 12 and 14.

<sup>6</sup> N.C. Division of Archives and History, Underwater Archaeological Research Unit, Shipwreck References for Currituck Beach, 1757-1878 (courtesy Frank Cantelas, Maritime History Department, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C.).

<sup>7</sup> David Stick, North Carolina Lighthouses (Raleigh: N.C. Division of Archives and History, 1982), pp. 13-14, 19-24, and 66-68. The Ocracoke Lighthouse was not built until the 1820s, however; Shell Castle Island, located by Ocracoke, built the beacon initially meant for Ocracoke in 1797.

<sup>8</sup> Terrance Zepke, Lighthouses of the Carolinas (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, 1998), pp. 21-23, and 49.

<sup>9</sup> 1873 Annual Report of the Light House Board to the Secretary of the Treasury (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1873), p. 47; 1872 Annual Report of the Light House Board to the Secretary of the Treasury, p. 47.

<sup>10</sup> Currituck County Register of Deeds, Book 32, pp. 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> Currituck County Register of Deeds, Book 32, pp. 4-6.

<sup>12</sup> Plat of Currituck Beach, N.C., Lighthouse Property (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection. Photocopy of this map is at Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, N.C.), May 1874.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; also 1873 and 1874 Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board, p. 47; it is not clear that Congress appropriated the full amount of money at that time. The lighthouse railway is no longer in place.

<sup>14</sup> Stick, North Carolina Lighthouses, pp. 68-69.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Light House Board Office, "Keepers Dwelling for a First Order Lighthouse" (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection), plates 3, 4, 5, and 8.

<sup>16</sup> Mobley, Ship Ashore!, pp. 26-27 and 104. Also Schoenbaum, Islands, Capes, and Sounds, p. 88.

<sup>17</sup> N.C. Division of Archives and History, Underwater Archaeological Research Unit[UAU], Shipwreck References for Currituck Beach, 1757-1878. Also Austin and Tate, Whalehead, p. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Mobley, p. 65-66. Also, N.C. Division of Archives and History, UAU, Shipwreck References for Currituck Beach, 1757-1878.

<sup>19</sup> Mobley, pp. 66-73, 85-87. Also, Shirley Austin, "Corolla," p. 83.

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<sup>20</sup> Archie Johnson and Bud Coppedge, Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound (Virginia Beach: CurBac Press, 1991), pp. 95-96 and 100.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Also, Gary Soucie, "Fare-thee-well, Currituck Banks," Audubon, Vol. No. (January 1976), pp. 30, 32-33.

<sup>22</sup> Austin and Tate, Whalehead, p. 7. Also, Coastland Times (Manteo, N.C.), August 5, 1955, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> 1909 U.S. Lighthouse Board Report for Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station, pp. 6-10. Also, Nathan Swain, Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station Keeper 1905-1920, Log (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection) and U.S. Lighthouse Board Station Reports for Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station, 1880-1902.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Long Point Station, located on Long Point Island between Coinjock and Barco, N.C., was a lighthouse depot established in 1872; it supplied both the local lighthouses and lifesaving stations into the early twentieth century. Long Point Station also produced naphtha gas in its small brick refinery designed by Philadelphia's Railway and Marine Gas Works; the gas was to illuminate buoys in the Currituck Sound and at the North River Light Station.

<sup>27</sup> Swain Log, 1905-1920.

<sup>28</sup> Elinor DeWire, Guardians of the Lights: The Men and Women of the U.S. Lighthouse Service (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, Inc., 1995). Also, Roster of Currituck Beach Lighthouse Keepers, 1875-1920 (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection, Microfilm Reel M1373, No. 3).

<sup>29</sup> Austin and Tate, Whalehead, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> H. Bamber, August 3, 1893, Report to Light House Board, Washington, D.C. (a copy of this letter, as well as Bamber's map and photographs of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station, is in the Outer Banks History Center's archives in Manteo, N.C.).

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Lighthouse Board Station Reports for Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station, 1880 and 1901.

<sup>32</sup> Tate, "Coinjock," p. 77. Also, Mathias and Doxey, "Barco," p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> Swain Log, February 8, 1920.

<sup>34</sup> Johnson and Coppedge, pp. 95-97.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Dunbar, p. 88. Also, Schoenbaum, p. 90.

<sup>38</sup> Foster and Clifford, p. 261.

<sup>39</sup> Penne Smith, Childers conversation, September 24, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Austin and Tate, Whalehead, p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> Penne Smith, Parker conversation, October 22, 1998.

<sup>42</sup> State of North Carolina, Wildlife Resources Commission, Map of Portion of Currituck Beach Property Leased to Mrs. S.M. Boettcher and Mr. J.A. Sutton (n.d., but appears to be from 1950s. In survey file for Currituck Beach Lighthouse, N.C.-SHPO, Raleigh).

<sup>43</sup> Currituck County Register of Deeds (State of North Carolina: Transfer deed to North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1979).

<sup>44</sup> State of North Carolina and Currituck County > Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Lease Agreement, August 6, 1980.

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<sup>45</sup> David Stick, North Carolina Lighthouses, pp. 65-68. Also, Catherine Bishir and Michael Southern, A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 90-91, 158-159, and 160-161.

<sup>46</sup> Bishir and Southern, p. 161.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 159. Also, U.S. Light House Board Office, "Keepers Dwelling for a First Order Lighthouse" (Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection), plates 3, 4, 5, and 8.

<sup>48</sup> Bill Parker of Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., has stated that his own research turned up two other lighthouse complexes on the Eastern Seaboard with lighthouse keepers' duplex housing identical to the Currituck Beach 1875 Light Keepers' House; one of these was the 1876 light keepers' cottage at the Morris Island Lighthouse (S.C.), also known as the Charleston Main Light, which was recently demolished. Penne Smith, Parker conversation, October 22, 1998, and Zepke, pp. 113-118.

<sup>49</sup> Penne Smith, conversation with Michelle Rose, Tax Office, Currituck County Courthouse, November 12, 1998. Also, Penne Smith, conversation with Lloyd Childers, November 12, 1998. During the latter conversation, Ms. Childers informed Ms. Smith that Barbara Snowden, a Currituck County historian, had informed Bill Parker of Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., that buildings from Long Point had been moved to Coinjock in the 1920s.

<sup>50</sup> Soucie, P. 30. Also, Penne Smith, conversation with Claudia Brown, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office [NC-SHPO], Raleigh, N.C. September 30, 1998.

<sup>51</sup> Penne Smith, Brown Conversation, September 30, 1998.

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H. Bamber, Photographs and Maps of Long Point Station, NC, 1893. Washington, D.C.: Record Group 26, National Archives Collection. Photocopy in Collection Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, N.C.).

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Currituck County Register of Deeds, Book 82, pp. 9-12 (United States of America>State of North Carolina)

State of North Carolina and Currituck County>Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Lease Agreement, August 6, 1980.

**Informal Interviews conducted by Penne Smith, Nomination Preparer**

Penne Smith, conversation with Claudia Brown, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office [NC-SHPO], Raleigh, N.C., September 30, 1998.

Penne Smith, conversation with Ms. Lloyd Childers, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Corolla, N.C., September 24, 1998.

Penne Smith, conversation with Ms. Lloyd Childers, October 22, 1998.

Penne Smith, conversation with Lloyd Childers, November 12, 1998.

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Penne Smith, conversation with Bill Parker, Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc., Manteo, N.C., October 22, 1998.

Penne Smith, conversation with Michelle Rose, Tax Office, Currituck County Courthouse, Currituck, N.C., November 12, 1998.

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## Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of Currituck County tax parcel number 0079-000-001-0000. The most recent map of this site is the attached 1982 survey map of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Reservation prepared by McDavid Associates, Inc., Farmville, North Carolina. On this map, 1" = 200'.

## Boundary Justification

The nominated tract is the same thirty-one acre parcel of land deeded to the United States of America by Edmond C. and Mary Eliza Lindsay, Josephus and Caroline Baum, and Abram Baum in April 1873 (Currituck County Register of Deeds, Book 32, pp. 1-7) for the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station.

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### Additional Documentation

Attached are:

#### Maps

- Exhibit 1: 1 U.S.G.S. Orthophotographic Map of Corolla, N.C., quad (in tube)
- Exhibit 2: Sketch Map of Buildings on Complex (in tube)
- Exhibit 3: Tax map of parcel

Items found in the working file at the N.C. Historic Preservation Office include:

Black-and-white enlarged contact sheet photographs of buildings and features of Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex, Corolla, N.C.

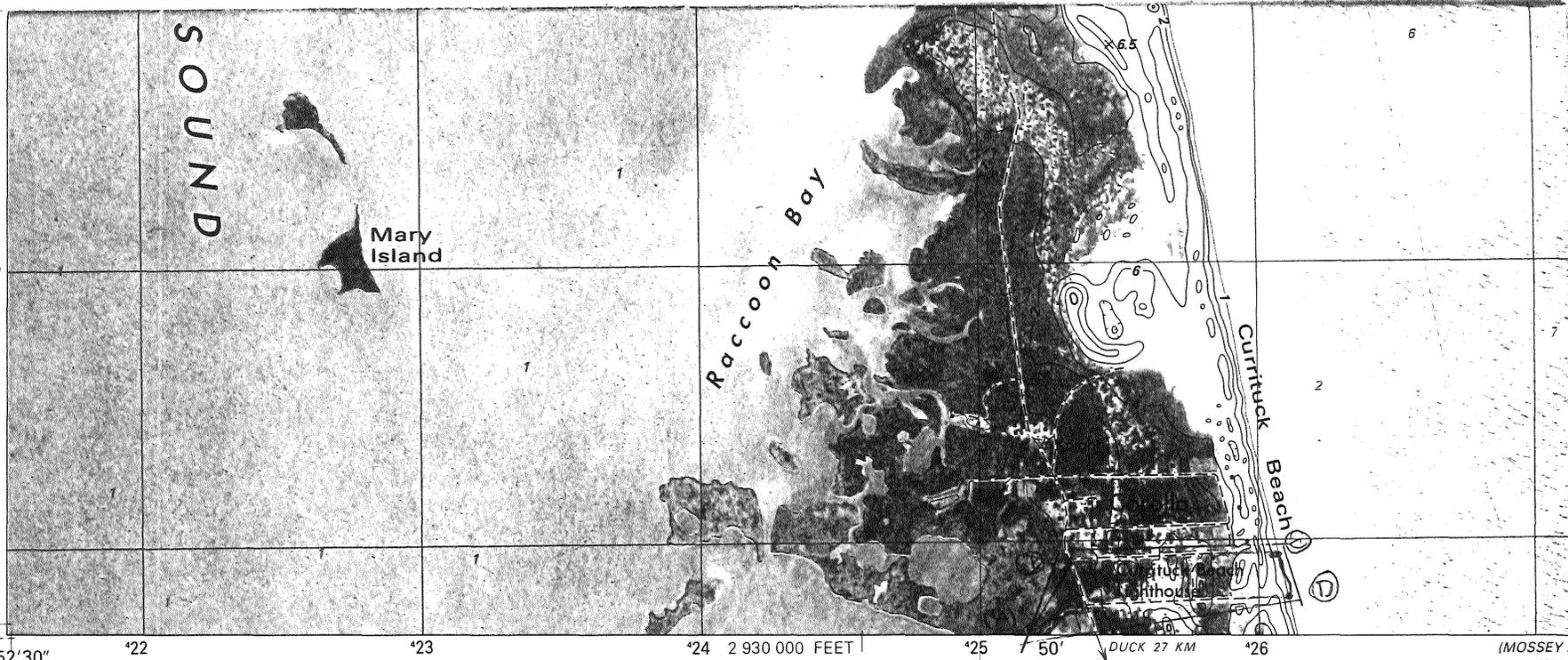
Color slides of buildings, landscape, and features of Currituck Beach Lighthouse Complex, Corolla, N.C.

Photocopy of H. Bamber's 1893 Map of Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station

Photocopies of U.S. Light House Board, Series of Illustrative Plates, "Designs for a First Order Lighthouse," 1873.

CORRELA QUAD  
 Currituck Beach  
 Lighthouse Complex  
 Aerial and documentation  
 and boundary expansion  
 Currituck Co., NC  
 N 425 160 4025640

4025 160 4025 980  
 4025 160 4025 760  
 (COINJOCK)  
 5856 IV SW



Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

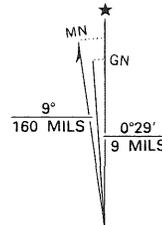
Orthophotomap prepared from aerial photograph taken  
 March 22, 1977. Topography by planetable surveys  
 1980. Field checked 1977. Map edited 1982

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS chart 12207 (1979)  
 This information is not intended for navigational purposes

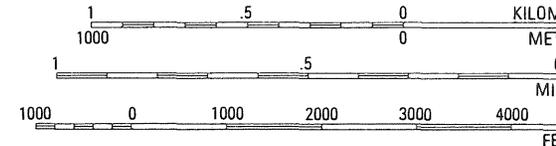
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: North Carolina coordinate  
 system (Lambert conformal conic)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18  
 1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
 move the projection lines 11 meters south and  
 31 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks



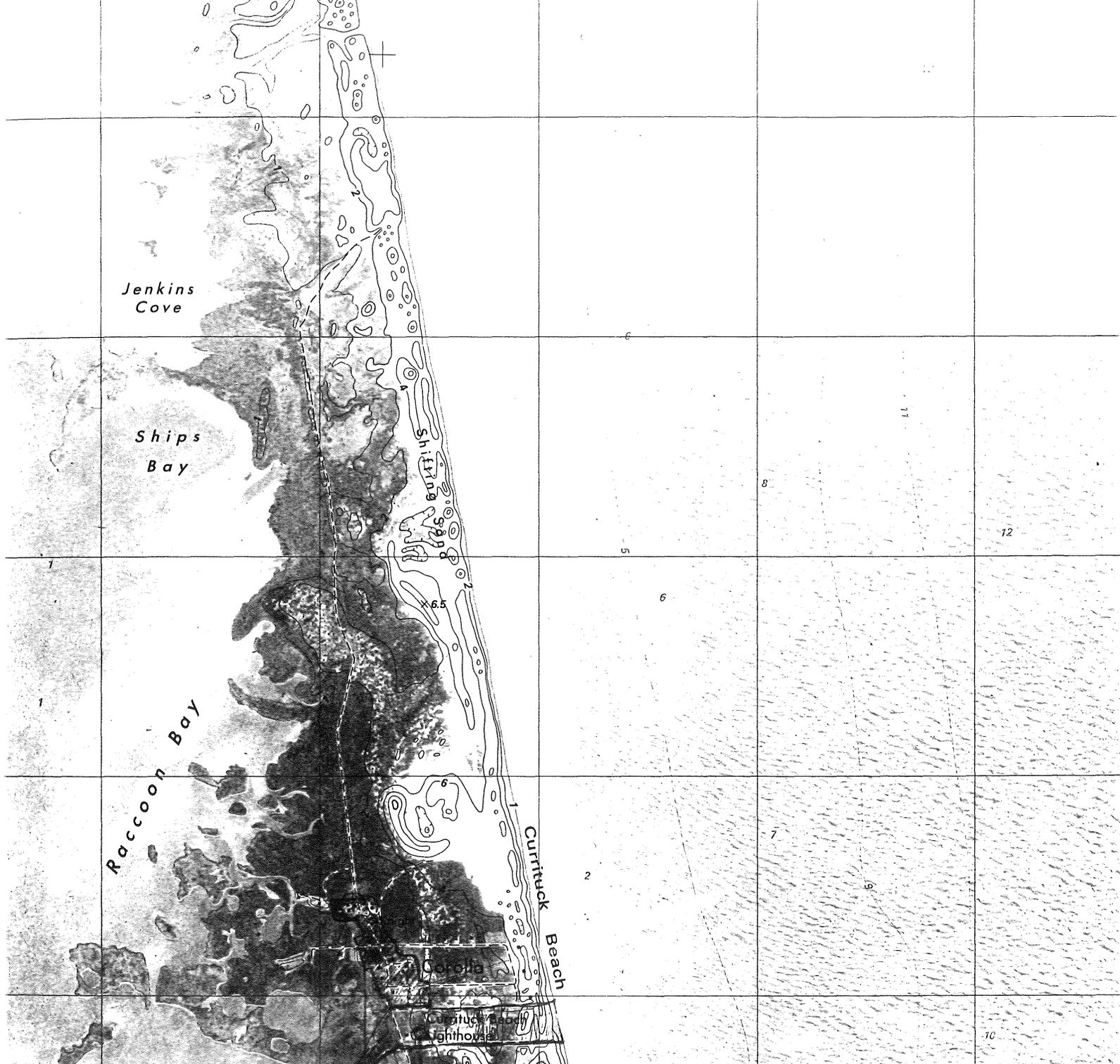
UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE

CONTOUR INTERVAL  
 SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOURS  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VELOCITIES  
 CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN  
 OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN  
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS  
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIDE GAUGE  
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY  
 AND 0.2 METER IN CURRITUCK BAY

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS



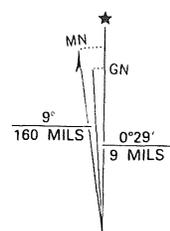
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CK 106 (NR)

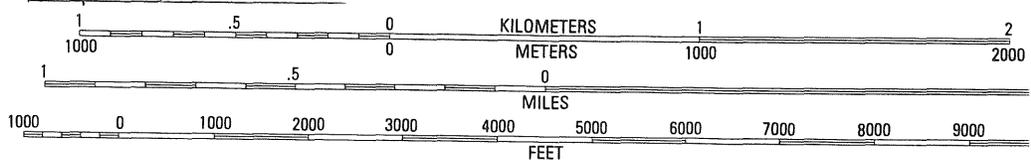
DUCK 27 KM | '26

CK 1 (NR)

SCALE 1:24 000



UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CK 97 (DEF)

CONTOUR INTERVAL 2 METERS  
 SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
 OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER  
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE  
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 1.1 METERS IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN  
 AND 0.2 METER IN CURRITUCK SOUND

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

