Copy

U. States Revenue Cutter "Crawford"
Penobscot Bay May 29th 1837

Sir,

On the 19th instant I had the honor to address you from Eastport & enclose three communications from Capt. Heroes of the Steamer Ranger, intended to be placed on file with other papers previously sent to you by me, referring to the subjects on which they treat. On the 23rd instant I embarked on board this Cutter, under the command of Capt. Coolidge, & proceeded to this bay, stopping at several of the intermediate Harbours, where I have been directed by your instructions to examine locations for public works of improvement. I have just received written communications, which I was unable to procure in my cruise east, regarding a light house upon Saddleback Ledge in this bay, & now lay before you my own views upon that subject.

In selecting proper sites for Light Houses, I have had two objects principally in view, viz, a bold shore & conspicuousness of location, Saddleback Ledge, the place named in the appropriation, has these two advantages. It is near the centre of Isle au Haut bay, has seven fathoms of water within thirty yards & twenty five fathoms within sixty yards of it in every direction, a vessel may therefore run directly for, & so near to it on any course, that the distance may be accurately judged, so as to shape a course from it with confidence.

It is however my duty to say, that the west head of Isle au Haut, is considered by many as possessing in some account,

superior advantages to this ledge, But, the numerous sunken ledges around that reef, extending from one to two & a half miles, would, as I conceive, prove disastrous to many vessels, if a light were placed there.

The first day I visited Saddleback ledge, the sea being rough, I was unable to land, I therefore sounded around it & took the bearings of several Head lands from my boat, — On the following day, being desirous of making a more minute examination, the weather being mild & the water smooth, I returned to it, & landed upon it, — This is a ragged rock, extremely uneven about 450 feet in length by 350 in breadth, the highest parts of it, are twelve feet perhaps above the sea at high water.

From this ledge the following Bearings for compass were taken & the distances judged to be as follows, viz, Matinicus Island S.W. ¾ W. 22 Miles — Ragged Island S.W. 2½ Miles, Wooden Ball (Lighthouse) S.W. by S. 20 Miles — Seal Islands S.S.W. 15 Miles — West head of Isle au Haut E.S.E. 5 Miles — Eagle Island point N. ½ E 12 miles. And Fox Island passage N. ½ W. 5 Miles.

There is no light between Matinicus & Bakers Island a distance of about forty miles, In viewing the coast about the Isle au Haut & the Islands in the Penobscot bay, the necessity of a Light-House in that vicinity, as a guide to Vessels through the eastern Channel, is very apparent, the navigation is of importance sufficient to warrant the erection & support of it & Saddle-back ledge is decidedly the best location.

An objection may be raised to the construction of said work, upon a rock so difficult of access, & so exposed to the sea, on account of the expense, which, in my estimation, cannot fall much short of twenty thousand dollars, I am however, clearly of opinion that the expense would not be disproportionate to the importance & advantages of the Work.

I herewith forward a written communication from a number of Gentlemen of respectability, residents in the vicinity of Penobscot bay, another from the Master & Om also from the Pilot of the Revenue boat Veto, both of whom have had much experience in the waters of this Bay, & One from John Kent Esq a resident of Fox Islands & for many years master of a Vessel from there

I am
Very Respectfully
Yr. Obt. Servt.
Jos. Smith
Capt. U.S.N.

SIGNED.

To the Secretary of the
Board of
Navy Commissioners
Washington
DC.