No. 6.

YORK NUBBLE.

NAVY COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE,
December 15, 1837.

The board have recommended that no measures be taken for erecting the light-house authorized at this place, in consequence of the reasons assigned by Captain Smith in his report.

His recommendation of other works, as substitutes for the light-house is submitted for the information of Congress.

I. CHAUNCEY.

UNITED STATES REVENUE CUTTER MORRIS,
Portland, Maine, May 1, 1837.

SIR: In answer to circulars alluded to above, I received communications from Nathaniel Baker and others, residing at and about the harbor of York, from Samuel Lunt, Esq., from Captain Coyle, of the steam packet Portland, and Green Walden, a man of much experience as a pilot upon this coast, and now first lieutenant of this cutter.

These communications are herewith forwarded for your consideration, and form a part of this report.

It will be seen by them that, with the exception of Captain Coyle, who is now for the first time in command of a boat, and who does not profess to be much acquainted with the coast, they all express opinions adverse to the erection of a light-house upon "York Nubble."

The water in every direction from this point is bold, and there are three lights in view therefrom, furnishing a safe and easy guide to the mariner in approaching to or departing from the coast in any direction; indeed, an additional light here would obviously tend to embarrass rather than aid navigation generally upon the coast.

It is alleged by some that a light upon "York Nubble" would facilitate navigation, particularly in the winter season, with the wind blowing off shore, when coasting vessels wish to hug the land. These advantages are not perceptible to me, excepting, perhaps, to the few fishing and coasting vessels belonging to Cape Nedrick and Wills harbors, and steamboats, since an off-shore wind here generally brings fair weather, when the landmarks are plainly discernible, and the Nubble, one of most prominent, can be seen, I am informed, six miles at night.

The principal, and indeed the only object of a light at this place, perceived by me, is to guide coasting vessels through an in-shore passage, between a dangerous shoal called "York ledge" and Stone's rock, near the main land. The ledge lies about three miles southeast from the main land, and about two miles from said rock, and between them there is a clear passage of deep water, of about two miles in width. But when the fact is stated that this passage is not *generally* used by coasters or other vessels, it may well be doubted whether the dangers and embarrassments to which the proposed light would subject the mariner, by leading him too near the coast, where, with the wind from the eastward, he

could not at all times "haul off," nor make by its guide any accessible harbor, would be counterbalanced by the comparatively small benefits to be derived from it. The grand in-shore thoroughfare of vessels traversing this coast is on a compass course of S. W. by W. and N. E. by E., passing *inside* of Boon island and outside of York ledge.

Having thus stated my opinion against the expediency of a light-house upon "York Nubble," with the reasons for that opinion, I now most respectfully suggest for your consideration the propriety of the erection of a monument or beacon upon "York ledge," as a substitute.

The melancholy instances of shipwreck and loss of life upon this dangerous shoal should prompt the Government to provide the best possible remedy therefor. Nothing has suggested itself to my mind, after examining this ledge as carefully as I was able, as so effectual and proper for this purpose as a monument or beacon, of suitable dimensions and materials, erected thereon.

This would, in my view, be of most importance; the cost would be trifling, and the advantages comparatively very great. I landed upon this ledge at low water, and also took the soundings in various directions around it. The water deepens boldly, but, generally, regularly; at common tides the highest points of the ledge at low water are about four feet above the level of the sea. At high water, when the sea is smooth, this dangerous reef is hidden from view. At low tide the part above water extends from sixty to seventy yards from N. E. to S. W., and about fifty yards from N. W. to S. E. My means of forming a correct estimate of the cost of a work of the kind suggested are now very limited. It would not, in my opinion, exceed twenty thousand dollars; and, should it exceed that sum much, its value and importance would make the expenditure both just and economical.

It will be observed, from the communications of Mr. Baker and others, and of Mr. Lunt, that reasons are presented for the erection of a light-house in York harbor. These reasons are not without their weight; this harbor, as represented, is a blind one to the stranger, but when entered is safe and commodious; and a light-house upon the inner extremity of "Stage neck" would render the entrance to it both easy and safe. Vessels can carry in twelve feet at low water; the common rise of the tide is nine feet, and the current is three knots strong, often compelling vessels to move when lying in the deepest water.

The expense of a harbor light at this place would be trifling, probably not exceeding two thousand dollars; and dwelling-houses are so near that the erection of a dwelling-house for the keeper would not be required. Faithful and honest keepers could be employed, I think, to take care of the light for *one hundred and fifty dollars* per annum, so that the whole annual expense would not exceed *two hundred dollars*.

I am not certain that remarks of this nature come within the purview of my instructions, inasmuch as the appropriation for "York Nubble" could not be diverted to this object; but I have taken the liberty to make them for the information of your board.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH SMITH,
Captain U. S. Navy.

To Com. JOHN RODGERS,
President of the Board of Navy Commissioners.

PORTLAND, *May* 1, 1837.

DEAR SIR: A light-house on York Nubble I consider quite unnecessary, and would serve to embarrass rather than assist the navigation.

As there are five light-houses in its immediate vicinity, four of which can be seen from the Nubble in clear weather, viz: Isle of Shoals, Cape Porpoise, Boon island, and Whale's back lights. Boon island is but six miles south, fifty-two east from the Nubble; I would therefore recommend that a monument be erected on York ledge, instead of a light on the Nubble. York ledge bears south six and a quarter miles distant from Broom island light, and is bare at low water, and directly in the way of vessels navigating the inner passage, or bound east or west. I am fully persuaded, from twenty-five years' experience on this coast, that no more lights in this vicinity are needed.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GREEN WALDEN,
1st Lieut. U. S. Rev. Service.

To Captain JOSEPH SMITH,
U. S. Navy.

YORK, *April*, 1837.

DEAR SIR: I have seen some notice respecting a light-house on York Nubble. The public in general, I presume, are in favor of the Nubble for a light. I believe myself that a light at York harbor would be more useful for coasters and other vessels, and less expensive.

York has a good harbor, no bar; almost any vessel can come in at low water; many large ships have sailed from this place; it is a blind harbor, and if there were a light there would be many more vessels come in than do. All vessels from the east could run in with a northeast wind, and find a safe harbor, when they could not get in at Portsmouth. The Nubble is prominent, and seen and known by all vessels along shore. Boon island light is very near, and a guide for them to shape their course for York harbor or any where else.

Respectfully,

SAMUEL LUNT.

Captain JOSEPH SMITH.

To Joseph Smith, Esquire Captain U. S. Navy, agent of the Board of Navy Commissioners.

SIR: The undersigned, residents in York, (Maine,) having had considerable practical knowledge in foreign voyages, and in the coasting trade, would respectfully submit for your consideration the following remarks:

To your first inquiry we would remark that we are of the opinion that additional facilities might be afforded by a light-house between Cape Porpoise and Portsmouth; but are not satisfied that *York Nubble* would be the most eligible place for its location.

We are not satisfied that a light-house on the Nubble would be of much, if any, advantage to any part of the commercial community, excepting to the small coasting and fishing craft belonging to Cape Neddick river.

Vessels bound up and down the coast, in clear weather, can discern the Nubble five miles in the night; and as there are no ledges near it, and no harbor where vessels can find shelter in a storm, we cannot conceive of any advantage to be derived from a light-house on the Nubble to coasters in general, or to vessels from a foreign port. Whereas, if the light-house should be built at York harbor, it would frequently afford great facilities to the coasting community, and also to vessels arriving on the coast from foreign ports.

Vessels from the eastward, bound to Boston and other western ports, after leaving Cape Porpoise, scarcely lose sight of lights in crossing the bay. When a gale from the northeast is coming on, it is desirable to make a harbor; no safe harbor can be made between Cape Porpoise and York harbor; and York harbor is a difficult harbor to make in the night, there being no light. If a light-house were erected there, it might be safely entered at all times of the tide by vessels of large draught; and if they should lose their cables and anchors, they may run them on the flats without damage; whereas Portsmouth harbor cannot be entered on ebb tide, with the wind northeast.

We think that a light-house *on Stage neck*, so called, (at York harbor,) might be erected for ——— thousand dollars.

We are, respectfully, yours, &c.

NATHANIEL BAKER,
SAMUEL A. DOUGLASS,
CHARLES O. CLARK,
JOSEPH KINGSBURY,
JOHN NORVELL,
JOSEPH LINE,
JOSEPH LOW, Jr.,
THOMAS PHILLIPS,
WILLIAM VANDY,
PETER KIRSWELL,
ROBERT P. HUTCHINGS,
WILLIAM NORVELL.

No. 7.

WING'S NECK.

NAVY COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE,

December 15, 1837.

From the report of Commodore Creighton and Captain Turner, the board were of opinion that the extent of navigation or commerce at this place would not justify the expense of the works proposed.

I. CHAUNCEY.