Boston Light f.6

UNITED

STATES

COAST

GUARD

Commander
First Coast Guard District
1400 Custom House
Boston, Mass. 02109
Tel: CA 7-3710

Boston, Mass., June 12 . . . . . Boston Light - America's oldest lighthouse - has been preserved for posterity. One of New England's four remaining civilian lighthouse keepers has unveiled a plaque marking it a Registered National Historic Landmark.

If the Coast Guard ever discontinues the light, now an important beacon of two million candlepower, the plaque will protect the ancient tower from destruction. The National Park Service would maintain it.

Osborne Earle Hallett, Keeper of Nobska Point Lighthouse, who served on Boston Light from 1937 to 1944, unveiled the plaque. Rear Admiral James A. Alger, Jr., Commander, First Coast Guard District, made a welcoming speech, and Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth N. Black, Commander, Boston Group, related the light's history.

New England historian Edward Rowe Snow, the "Flying Santa" who each Christmas parachutes gifts to New England lighthouse keepers, told how he once dropped a package to Keeper Hallett at Nobska Point. The chute caught on top of the station's flagpole and remained there until a ladder crew from Woods Hole Fire Department retreived it for Keeper and Mrs. Hallett.

Built in 1716, the light has a colorful and dramatic history. Benjamin Franklin wrote a ballad about the tragic drowning of the first keeper and his family. Bloody battles were fought over the light during the Revolutionary War,

(M O R E)

when the British held it for two years, blowing it up before evacuating Little Brewster Island. It was rebuilt, and during the War of 1812 the keeper and his wife watched the famous naval battle in which the mortally wounded Captain James Lawrence called out "Don't give up the ship."

Several of the keepers became lifesaving heros when ships were wrecked on nearby rocks during severe winter storms.

Boatswain's Mate First Class Mike Mikelonis is present officer-in-charge of the light. Since absorbing the Lighthouse Service in 1939, the Coast Guard has been allowing civilian keepers to serve out their time until retirement, then replacing them with military personnel.

(wrb) (3 0) (6-12-65)