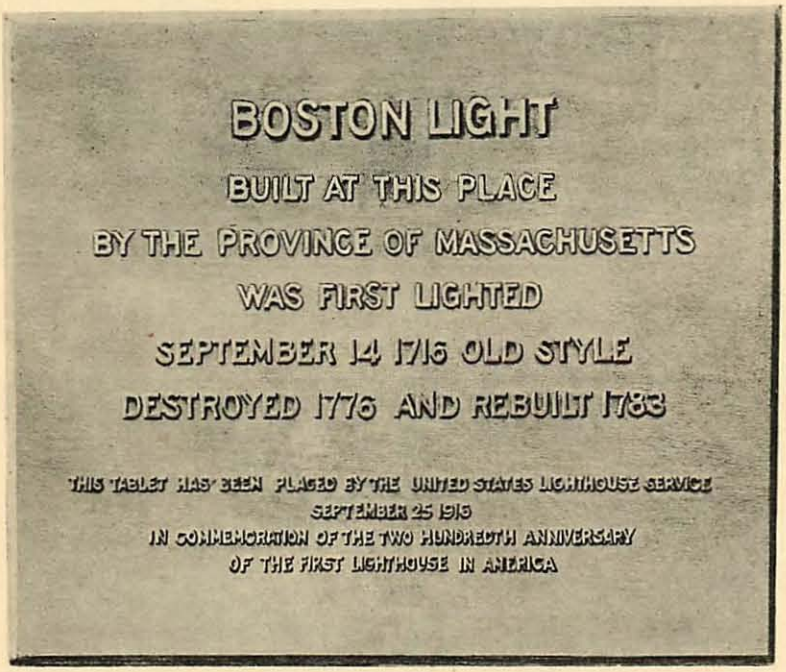
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE

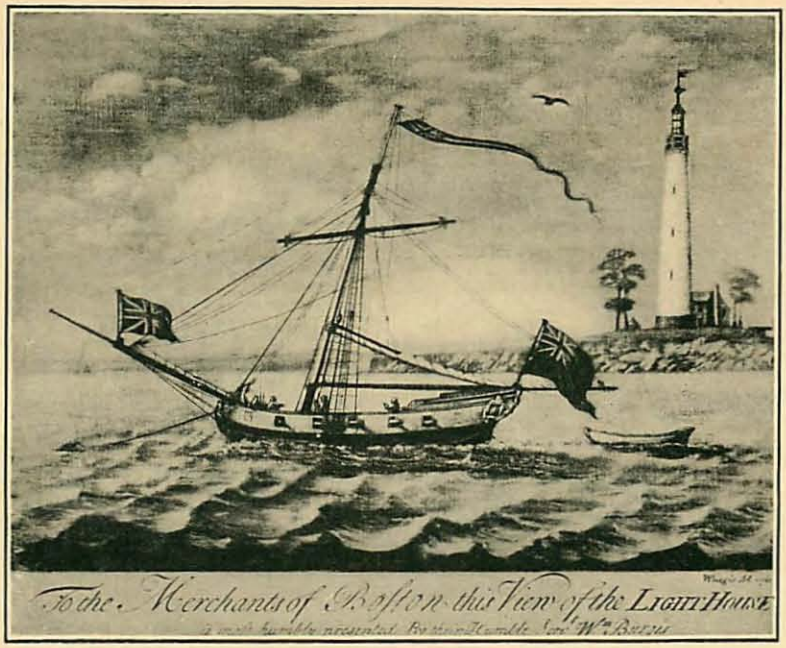
Two-Hundredth Anniversary of Boston Light

September 25, 1916

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COMMEMORATIVE TABLET.



BOSTON LIGHT, 1716.



BOSTON LIGHT, 1916.

TWO-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF BOSTON LIGHT.

The two-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of Boston Light, the first lighthouse in America, was celebrated in Boston, Mass., on September 25, 1916. The principal events of the day were the unveiling of a small commemorative bronze tablet at the Boston Light Station in the morning under the auspices of the Lighthouse Service; a meeting of the Bostonian Society in the afternoon at the old State House, Boston; and a dinner and evening meeting of the Boston Chamber of Commerce at the Old Beacon Club, Point Allerton, near Hull, from which point the assembled guests witnessed the first flashes of the light as it commenced its third century at sunset of the anniversary day.

The memorial tablet placed by the Lighthouse Service, a reproduction of which appears as the frontispiece of this report, measures 18 inches long by 15 inches high. It was designed by John S. Conway, Deputy Commissioner of Lighthouses, and cast under the direction of Joseph T. Yates, inspector of the third lighthouse district, Tompkinsville, N. Y. It was placed inside the tower on the left-hand side of the entrance on the ground floor and secured in place by four secret rag bolts, well grouted into the brick lining of the structure.

The Secretary of Commerce invited the following guests to be present on the occasion of the unveiling of the tablet:

Governor SAMUEL W. MCCALL, of Massachusetts.
Senator HENRY CABOT LODGE, of Massachusetts.
Senator JOHN W. WEEKS, of Massachusetts.
Senator THOMAS S. MARTIN, of Virginia, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations.
Senator JAMES P. CLARKE, of Arkansas, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce.
Mayor JAMES M. CURLEY, of Boston.
Representative FREDERICK H. GILLETT, of Massachusetts.
Representative WILLIAM S. GREENE, of Massachusetts.
Representative ERNEST W. ROBERTS, of Massachusetts.
Representative AUGUSTUS P. GARDNER, of Massachusetts.
Representative CALVIN D. PAIGE, of Massachusetts.
Representative MICHAEL F. PHELAN, of Massachusetts.
Representative JOHN J. ROGERS, of Massachusetts.
Representative ALLEN T. TREADWAY, of Massachusetts.

Representative SAMUEL E. WINSLOW, of Massachusetts.
Representative JAMES A. GALLIVAN, of Massachusetts.
Representative WILLIAM H. CARTER, of Massachusetts.
Representative FREDERICK W. DALLINGER, of Massachusetts.
Representative RICHARD OLNEY, 2d, of Massachusetts.
Representative PETER F. TAGUE, of Massachusetts.
Representative GEORGE H. TINKHAM, of Massachusetts.
Representative JOSEPH WALSH, of Massachusetts.
Representative WILLIAM C. ADAMSON, of Georgia, Chairman of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce.
Representative JOHN J. FITZGERALD, of New York, Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations.
Assistant Secretary of Commerce EDWIN F. SWEET.
Solicitor A. L. THURMAN of the Department of Commerce.
Dr. A. LAWRENCE LOWELL, President of Harvard University.
Dr. RICHARD C. MACLAURIN, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
Prof. A. E. BURTON, Dean of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
Prof. EVERETT W. LORD, Dean of the College of Business Administration of Boston University.
Dr. HENRY S. PRITCHETT, President of Carnegie Foundation.
WORTHINGTON C. FORD, Editor Massachusetts Historical Society.
FITZ-HENRY SMITH, Jr., representing the Bostonian Society.
CHARLES F. WEED, President Boston Chamber of Commerce.
EDMUND BILLINGS, Collector of the Port of Boston.
JOHN M. COLE, Chairman Boston Waterway Commission.
WILLIAM C. BREWER, Boston Chamber of Commerce.
A. LINCOLN FILENE.
R. HENRY W. DWIGHT.
W. S. FORBES.
FERRIS GREENSLET.
HARVEY S. CHASE.
Capt. W. R. RUSH, Commandant Boston Navy Yard.
Col. W. E. CRAIGHILL, Corps of Engineers.
ERNEST B. GRANT, United States Shipping Commissioner.
EUGENE E. O'DONNELL, United States Supervising Inspector, Fifth District.
W. A. GRAHAM CLARK, Commercial Agent, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce.
FRANK E. PERKINS.
GEORGE R. PUTNAM, Commissioner of Lighthouses.
JOHN S. CONWAY, Deputy Commissioner of Lighthouses.
EDWARD C. GILLETTE, Superintendent of Naval Construction, Lighthouse Service.
JOSEPH T. YATES, Inspector Third Lighthouse District.
E. M. TROTT, General Inspector, Lighthouse Service.
CARL E. SHERMAN, Inspector First Lighthouse District.
RALPH H. GODDARD, Inspector Second Lighthouse District.
Representatives of the press.

The lighthouse steamer *Mayflower*, under the command of A. P. Bartow, master in the Lighthouse Service, transported the official party to the lighthouse and return. The other officers of the tender on this occasion were William G. Remsen, first officer; Joseph H. Moore, engineer; and Millard J. Lord, assistant engi-

neer. The small wharf at the light station is accessible to vessels of the *Mayflower's* draft only at high water, which occurred at about 9.30 a. m. on the day of the ceremonies, and it therefore was necessary to leave Boston at about 8 o'clock in the morning. Through the courtesy of the War Department, the Quartermaster Corps' space at Long Wharf, foot of State Street, Boston, was placed at the disposal of the Lighthouse Service. The weather conditions were quite favorable, the morning being partly cloudy with a light northwesterly air and a temperature of 56° F. at 8 a. m. A buffet breakfast was served on board the tender while en route to the light station, which was reached about 9 a. m. The party came ashore and assembled on the grass directly in front of the entrance to the tower. The Commissioner of Lighthouses introduced the speakers, and the remarks made were substantially as follows:

Commissioner PUTNAM. Two hundred years ago to-night Boston Light was first lighted, and for 30 years it appears to have been the only lighthouse on the Atlantic coast. 1716 was an early date in modern lighthouse construction. The first Eddystone lighthouse had been built only 18 years before and for over 90 years later was lighted with tallow candles. The original Boston tower probably stood on the same spot as the present lighthouse, and the old print of it shows that it was a dignified structure. The old cannon which you see near by was the first fog signal. Massachusetts was not only the pioneer in building the first lighthouse on this coast, and probably in America, but she maintained her activity during the colonial period, and turned over to the Federal Government 6 out of the 12 lighthouses completed by the States. It is very fitting that the State which built the first lighthouse 200 years ago, and which built this present tower 133 years ago, should be represented here. I have the honor to introduce Capt. Charles M. Rotch, representing the governor of Massachusetts.

Capt. ROTCH. Gentlemen, I can assure you that his excellency was very much disappointed at not being able to be here on this occasion. I know he would be very glad to do it if he possibly could, but he is so busy at this time of year that he can not accept all invitations extended to him. It is a great pleasure for me to come here and represent him officially. I know that I can not go by this lighthouse without thinking of the first time I saw it from the water. I was a youngster at the time, about 17 years old, and with two others of about the same age had come around from New Bedford in a sloop. We had good weather until we got to

Highland Light and then the fog came in. When we came into Boston Harbor the first thing we saw was Boston Light, and we were very glad to see where we were. That was about the longest trip I had taken on a boat. I know that this lighthouse has served its purpose during the past years, and I know that many a seafaring man was very much pleased to see where he was. I am sure the governor would have found this trip a most pleasant one if he had been able to join us.

Commissioner PUTNAM. The city of Boston was a leader in the development of maritime commerce on the shores of this continent, and this lighthouse is intimately associated with the history of this city and the development of its maritime interests. History even tells us that when the selectmen of Boston learned that there went with the lighthouse a tonnage tax on shipping which would be a source of revenue they asked that the city be allowed to build the lighthouse. I have the honor to introduce Mr. Charles F. Weed, president of the Boston Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. WEED. On behalf of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, it is my pleasure and privilege to welcome Secretary Redfield to Boston. The Chamber of Commerce, more than any other organization, appreciates the splendid cooperation and attention that has been given to the business men; in particular do business men appreciate the Lighthouse Service and the many things it has done for the Chamber of Commerce.

There is only one thing lacking from this station and that is a flag and flagstaff, and it is thought that the Chamber of Commerce might do something in the way of procuring them for Boston Light Station.

Commissioner PUTNAM. No part of this country has shown a deeper interest in the records of colonial history than Massachusetts, as perhaps no part has history more interesting. Such a deed as the building of this lighthouse at that early period was an historical event in the development of a people of deeper real significance than some of the feats of arms which occupy more of the pages of history. I have the honor to call upon Mr. Worthington C. Ford, editor of the Massachusetts Historical Society, who has been designated to represent that society by its president, Senator Lodge.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Secretary and gentlemen, in June and July, 1630, eleven ships, in measure less than 2,000 tons burden, came into Salem and Charlton—the Winthrop party—up to that time the

largest fleet of vessels bent upon a peaceful errand ever seen in an American harbor. The Massachusetts, already described by enthusiastic voyagers as the garden spot of the New England coast, then passed from savagery to civilization. At once a commerce came into being, small boats, pinnaces, and shallops stealing along the coast from the fishing stages on the Kennebec and Penobscot to Virginia, a commerce growing rapidly as the country was settled. Wrecks, war, pirates could not check that growth, and as adventure led to more distant voyages it demanded protection from natural and occasional enemies. Beacons were placed at different points to give warning of the approach of hostile vessels, and Beacon Hill, Boston, the earliest spot thus marked, reminds us of the purpose it served. Where we now stand was early known as Beacon Island, but it also bore the name of Elder Brewster, of Plymouth, though the time of its receiving it has been lost except in tradition. Some beacon stood here, doubtless for warning only.

More than two generations later—in 1701—the most popular author of the day, with that incidental manner belonging to the almanac maker, asked "whether or no a lighthouse at Alderton's point may not be of great benefit to mariners coming on these coasts?" The suggestion did not bear fruit; for six years later, in 1706, in apprehension of an attack from the French fleet then cruising in the West Indies, it was proposed to place a beacon here and at other points—still to give warning of any ship which might be "thought to be enemy." The emergency passed before action was taken, and the harbor remained in darkness, as before.

As a possible source of profit some Boston merchants, John George and associates, petitioned for permission to erect a lighthouse and lanthorn on some headland at the entrance of the harbor of Boston. A survey by a committee of the General Court and several of the most experienced masters of ships of Boston and Charlestown selected the southernmost part of the Great Brewster, called Beacon Island, as the most proper location. The report was accepted, a duty of tonnage upon shipping to be laid for encouraging the undertaker. The town of Boston coquetted with the matter "in order to an income," but fortunately it was the Province which constructed the house, and private has never superseded Government ownership. Out of these suggestions came the first regular lighthouse in the United States, the word itself having been only a half century in use. The first structure

was nearly contemporaneous with the second Eddystone house, completed in 1709, and doubtless well known to American traders with England. September 14, 1716, the lanthorn was first lighted.

Twice has the light been touched, not destroyed, by accidental fires—in 1720 and in 1751—each time to the improvement of the lighthouse structure. Twice has it been extinguished by war. In the war for independence it gave occasion to one of those daring raids which altered so materially the British ideas on provincial troops. The structure was burnt. The British, while in possession of Boston, maintained some signal there, but on leaving they blew up what remained of the tower and light. Not until 1783 did a new structure rise in place of the old—taller, better built, and sufficient for its purposes. That structure, modified in certain particulars, stands to-day. The light, ceded to the National Government in 1790, has continued its service uninterruptedly, except for a time in the war of 1812. From September, 1716, to September, 1916, with the exceptions noted, this light has been a beacon of safety, a welcome to the incoming vessel, a message of peace and brotherhood of nations, a guardian of that endless stream of commerce which normally tends to make the world one.

Commissioner PUTNAM. There is a great department of the General Government charged with doing what that Government properly can do for the aid and safe-guarding and development of commerce. The Lighthouse Service is a part of that department, and the lighthouse on this rock represents the first of more than 15,000 aids to navigation which are maintained by the United States Government without taxing shipping for their support, free to the vessels of all countries. I have the honor to introduce the Hon. William C. Redfield, Secretary of Commerce.

Secretary REDFIELD. Mr. Putnam and gentlemen, it is not many years ago that, speaking with a well-known Englishman in his own land, he said, "The trouble with your America is that it has no history. Here we can go to a great building and say this was made at such a time; this was later added; and again, later on in the history, it was further developed." I felt then that there was more truth in what was said than I liked. But here to-day we have an illustration of the fact that we have a history—a history of progress of a different tenor from that of which he spoke, but a history no less to be respected, probably, than his. In this tower we find that we have three different periods of construction. It is still the old lighthouse built by the Colony of Massachusetts Bay;

in part it is the tower which was constructed again by the State of Massachusetts after it had achieved its independence; and in part it represents the part of the National Government at a period still later. The material of the old original tower is still in use here. So this lighthouse represents not only work of the past but has also the very last word in science as applied to illumination. It is a very far step, gentlemen, from the original candle or simple oil lamp, with which this light probably started, to the modern incandescent oil-vapor light of 100,000 candlepower which is now in use at this station.

No history has been more singularly fine than this has been from the beginning, being a history of welcome and usefulness, against which there is no protest and whose record shows no bar sinister. It was a lonely light when it started; it was the only one on all the coast which has since come to be ours. It was pointing forward on the part of the Colony of Massachusetts to that future which we now see brought into fact. Now it is the oldest of a sisterhood of a thousand, and its fine example has been widely felt. It is a fitting thing that the Government should recognize the fine purpose that is here embodied. But I must take a word more to tell you, who are not so familiar with the Lighthouse Service, something of what it is and does.

Let me briefly point out to you that the Government has a fleet of vessels in its service whose duty it is to go where no other vessels are allowed to go, and which, through storm, darkness, and sunshine, does its work for humanity without boasting, without advertising. The men of this service work with none to trumpet their praises, and with only their own sense of duty to guide them. The story of the Service is full of brave deeds, and I honor the men who have done and are doing these things. We have established the custom, as the inspector will tell you, of sending a letter of commendation to men who have gone out of the path of duty to do some unselfish act, and almost every week there is some such letter to be written to some man in the Service. I recall a case of only a few weeks ago where the officers and crew of one of these vessels for 58 hours, in darkness and storm, fought to save an alien ship which was four times larger than their own. It is an honorable service, worthy to be appreciated by the public whom it serves, and I am glad to have this opportunity to express my appreciation of it.

At the conclusion of these remarks the party stepped inside the tower, and Secretary Redfield drew aside the national ensigns which covered the tablet and read aloud the inscription:

BOSTON LIGHT
BUILT AT THIS PLACE
BY THE PROVINCE OF MASSACHUSETTS
WAS FIRST LIGHTED
SEPTEMBER 14 1716 OLD STYLE
DESTROYED 1776 AND REBUILT 1783

THIS TABLET HAS BEEN PLACED BY THE UNITED STATES LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 25 1916
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE TWO-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FIRST LIGHTHOUSE IN AMERICA

Escorted by Charles H. Jennings, keeper, and Charles A. Lyman, first assistant keeper, of the light station, the party then inspected the illuminating and fog-signal apparatus of the station, also the old fog gun bearing the date 1700, which was first used as a fog signal in 1719 and is still preserved at the station. The representatives of the press obtained various photographs and motion pictures of the ceremonies, after which the party again embarked on the *Mayflower*, arriving at Boston at 11 a. m.

Officers of the Department and the Lighthouse Service, through the courtesy of the cooperating organizations, were guests at the meetings of the Bostonian Society in the afternoon and of the Boston Chamber of Commerce in the evening.

A brief historical and descriptive sketch of Boston Light Station is appended.

BOSTON LIGHT STATION, MASS.

The placing of a lighthouse to mark the entrance to Boston Harbor, Mass., was under consideration early in the eighteenth century, the matter being of record in Clough's New England Almanac for the year of 1701, but no definite action was taken until January 3, 1713, when a petition was presented to the General Court of Massachusetts proposing the erection of a lighthouse on some headland at the entrance to the harbor for the benefit of vessels bound into the harbor at night.

This action finally resulted in the passage of a bill July 23, 1715, entitled "An Act for Building and Maintaining a Lighthouse upon the Great Brewster called Beacon Island at the Entrance of the Harbor of Boston" at the charge of the Province,

and £500 was appropriated toward its construction and the purchase of the site, the town of Hull being the owners of the Brewsters. At a meeting of the owners held on August 1, 1715, they generously granted the site, the said Beacon Island, to the Province of Massachusetts for the use of a lighthouse forever, the grantors to be kept harmless.

On December 20, 1715, the court granted a further £500 toward the project and appointed two overseers to look after the work, which was carried out and the light placed in commission on Friday, September 14, 1716, old style, at a total cost of £2,385 17s. 8d.

The dimensions of the original tower, which is reported to have been the first lighthouse erected in this country, are not known; but the structure seems to have been built of stone.

The first keeper was George Worthylake, who was drowned November 3, 1718. In July, 1719, the keeper petitioned the General Court for a gallery to be built on the seaward side of the lighthouse in order that he might keep the glass clear of ice and snow in wintertime and for a "great gun" to answer ships in a fog.

On January 13, 1720, a fire occurred in the lantern and upper part of the tower, but the repairs were completed and the lights were burning again on February 17, 1720.

Additional repairs were made in 1726 to the station, and as a result of a report made by a committee appointed in June, 1734, the tower was extensively repaired and incased in wood. In 1738 and again in 1749 the structure was painted white. In 1751 another fire occurred which nearly destroyed the structure, but it was repaired in a manner similar to that of 1734, and the lantern which was formerly of wood was reconstructed in metal. In 1773 repairs were about to be made again, when the Revolution occurred.

In June, 1774, the British occupied Boston and the light passed into their hands. On July 20 and again on July 31 the Americans dismantled the station and burned the wooden parts of the tower and buildings. In June, 1776, the British, upon evacuating Boston, landed at the light station and blew up the tower, and subsequently the "old top of the lighthouse" (probably metal work of the lantern) was used by the Americans "to supply the cannon with ladles."

The reestablishment of the station, which brought about the construction of the present tower, was the result of a memorial

addressed in June, 1783, to the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the passage of an act in July, 1783, directing that it be built as soon as possible on the island where the old lighthouse stood and to be nearly of the same dimensions. It seems to have gone into commission that year, as the pay of the keeper began December 5, 1783. The tower is of stone, conical in shape, and at the time it was rebuilt was 75 feet high, including the octagonal lantern.

By the act of August 7, 1789, the United States took over the maintenance of the lighthouses, and on June 10, 1790, Boston Light was ceded by Massachusetts to the United States.

The type of illumination of the original light is a matter of some speculation. Lamps apparently were in use in 1720. Improvements seem to have been made from time to time, but complaints about its efficiency are of record between 1789 and 1804. New illuminating apparatus or repairs thereto are mentioned in 1811, 1828, 1839, 1849, and 1856. Fourteen lamps were in use in the lantern in 1839, and this number seems to have continued in use up to December 20, 1859, when a second-order Fresnel lens was installed and the same is in commission to-day. Fish oil as the illuminant seems to have been in use in the lighthouse prior to 1812, then sperm oil came into use and so continued to about 1867. Lard oil was used until 1882, then kerosene was adopted and continued in use up to the present time, the wick lamp in the lens being replaced by an incandescent oil-vapor lamp in 1913.

As already mentioned, the original fog signal put into use at this station was a cannon. Early in 1851 a fog bell was placed in commission. This continued in use until 1869 when the machinery was replaced by a more modern apparatus. A reed trumpet, using compressed air, was placed in commission in 1872 and was followed by a steam siren in 1887, which has continued in use to the present time.

The record of the second tower from the date of its erection to 1859 contains many items of repairs. A new lantern was installed in 1839. The station was completely renovated in 1859, the tower was raised and lined with brick, the new lens installed, as mentioned above, and a new keeper's dwelling constructed. In 1886 a large bulge in the outer ring of rubble masonry was removed. Since then many repairs and improvements, some quite extensive, have been made to various buildings, wharf, etc.

The present light is flashing white every 30 seconds, of 100,000 estimated candlepower, 102 feet above high water, and visible

16 miles in clear weather, while the fog signal sounds a double blast of 5 seconds each every minute.

The names of the keepers who have cared for the light from 1716 to date are as follows.

Name.	Service.
George Worthylake	Sept. 14, 1716, to Nov. 3, 1718.
Robert Saunders (temporary)	Nov. 6, 1718, to Nov. 8, 1718.
John Hayes	Nov. 8, 1718, to Nov. 8, 1733.
Robert Ball	Nov. 8, 1733, to ——, 1774.
William Minns	——, 1774, to June 13, 1776.
Thomas Knox	Nov. 28, 1783, to ——, 1811.
John Bruce	——, 1811, to ——, 1833.
David Tower	Sept. 11, 1833, to Oct. 8, 1844.
Joshua Snow	Oct. 29, 1844, to Dec. 30, 1844.
Tobias Cook	Dec. 30, 1844, to Oct. 2, 1849.
William Long	Oct. 2, 1849, to Sept. 16, 1851.
Zebedee Small	Sept. 16, 1851, to June 2, 1853.
Hugh Duglass	June 2, 1853, to Apr. 24, 1856.
Moses Barrett	Apr. 24, 1856, to Nov. 20, 1862.
Charles E. Blair	Nov. 20, 1862, to July 18, 1864.
Thomas Bates	July 18, 1864, to Apr. 6, 1893.
Alfred Williams (temporary)	Apr. 6, 1893, to May 3, 1893.
Albert M. Horte	May 3, 1893, to May 1, 1894.
Henry L. Pingree	May 1, 1894, to Nov. 1, 1909.
Levi B. Clark	Nov. 1, 1909, to Sept. 30, 1911.
George E. Kezer	Sept. 30, 1911, to Dec. 11, 1911.
Mills Gunderson	Dec. 11, 1911, to Apr. 30, 1916.
Chas. H. Jennings	May 1, 1916, to date.