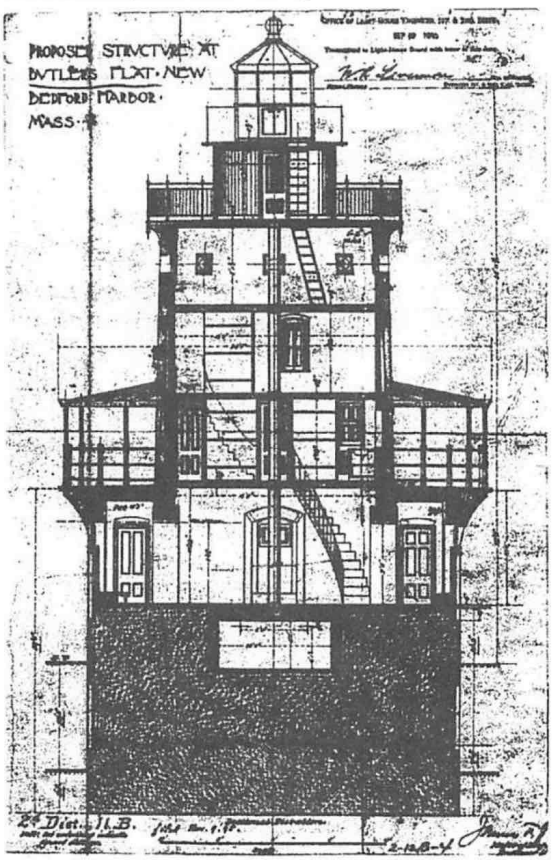
A Brief History of Butler Flats Light Station
Port of New Bedford 41°36.2' N 70°53.7' W



Above: Butler Flats Light Station today.
Below: Smith's plan of Butler Flats Light Station



Butler Flats Light was first lighted on April 30, 1898, replacing the light atop Fort Taber at Clark's Point, New Bedford's southernmost tip in Buzzards Bay. Noted artist, author and engineer Francis Hopkinson Smith (1838-1915) designed Butler Flats Light. Smith is also credited with building the breakwaters at Block Island, the sea wall at Governor's Island, New York, the foundation for the Statue of Liberty and the Race Rock Lighthouse off New London.

The first light keeper was Capt. Amos C. Baker, Jr., a retired New Bedford whaling master who served from 1898 to 1911. His son, Charles A. Baker served as light keeper from 1911 to 1941. Baker and his son often entertained important guests and friends at the lighthouse throughout the summer season. The Baker family resided for many years at 191 Elm Street but often rowed out to the light to visit their father and brother. Daughter Amy Baker once received a booklet about the famous sloop *Spray* from Captain Joshua Slocum in which he inscribed, "To the little girl who rang the bell each time I passed the light." Miss Baker also recalled how the keepers regularly rowed swimmers to the light back to shore. Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, cited the junior Baker for one such daring rescue.



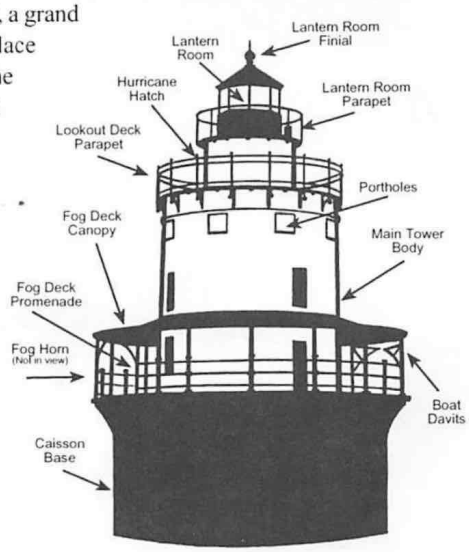
F. Hopkinson Smith
Designed Butler Flats Light

Constructed between 1896 and 1898 at a cost of $34000, Butler Flats is a caisson-style structure 35 feet in diameter. The original lens was French-made with six "bull's eyes" and was of the Fifth Order, or 375 mm in diameter. Accessible only by boat, the station's tower rises 53 feet above mean low tide. It includes basement storage chambers, light keeper's quarters and lantern room. The exterior features three decks: fog deck promenade (complete with canopy, boat davits and launch ladder), lookout deck and lantern room parapet.

In 1975, the Coast Guard announced plans to deactivate Butler Flats, move the beacon to the nearby hurricane barrier and dismantle the historic structure. Working with the Coast Guard, New Bedford citizens led by the late Dr. John B. O'Toole, Jr., rallied to save the light. Butler Flats was officially added to the National Register of Historic Places on June 15, 1987. The light is now owned and maintained by the City with the assistance of the Butler Flats Light Station Volunteers, currently headed by Hugh Murray and Peter Duff.

In 1997, **Mayor Frederick M. Kalisz, Jr.** directed that all repairs and refurbishments be completed on the light in time for its 100th anniversary in 1998. As part of the celebration, the city was decorated with lamppost banners depicting the light. On April 30, 1998, a grand centennial birthday ceremony took place on East Beach directly across from the light. Sea chanteys, birthday cake and a special commemorative postal cancellation marked the event, which culminated in a re-lighting ceremony 100 years to the hour! A proud symbol of the Port of New Bedford's rich maritime history, Butler Flats Light Station continues to welcome New Bedford seafarers home.

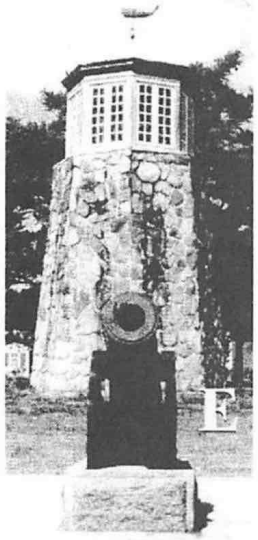
- Arthur P. Motta, Jr.



Courtesy of:
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City of New Bedford, Massachusetts

MAYOR FREDERICK M. KALISZ, JR.







OUR GUIDING LIGHTS

The historic whaling port of New Bedford features five diverse examples of lighthouses:

A. Palmer's Island Light

(National Register of Historic Places, 3/26/80)

Built in 1849, this Whaling Era light is constructed of rubble masonry with a wooden vestibule. It is the central element of the City Seal (above), designed in 1847. The City's motto, *Lucem Diffundo,* means *I diffuse Light,* alluding to New Bedford's fame as the whaling capital of the world. Restoration is planned for the Light's 150th anniversary in 1999.

B. Butler Flats Light Station

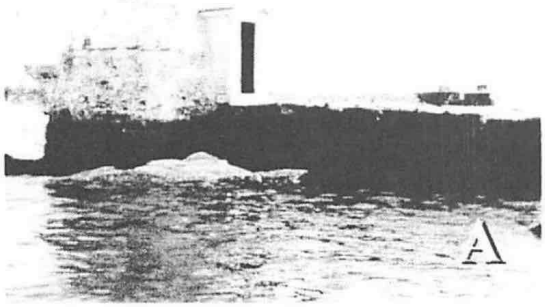
(National Register of Historic Places, 6/15/89)

Built in 1898, this caisson-style light was designed by F. Hopkinson Smith. On April 30, 1998, the City celebrated the Centennial of Butler Flats Light during a relighting ceremony, held 100 years to- the-hour of its first lighting. Restoration of the exterior continues throughout 1998.

C. Fort Taber Light

(National Register District, 2/8/73)

Designed, in part, by Robert E. Lee in 1846, Fort Taber was completed in 1860. Fort Taber Light was built atop the fort, replacing the old Clark's Point Light in the 1880's. Restoration of this light is planned as part of the Taber Park Plan, due to be completed by 2000.



D. LV#114, Lightship New Bedford

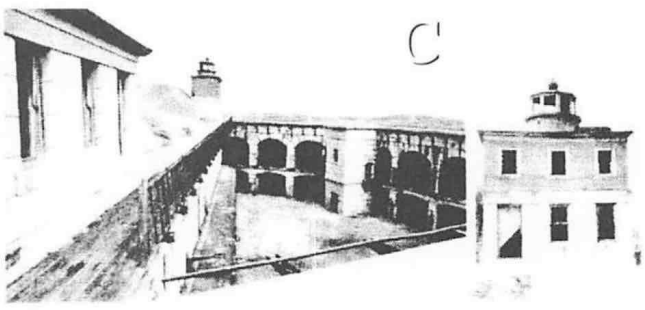
(National Register of Historic Places, 5/30/80)

Built in 1930, LV #114 is one of the few remaining lightships. It served in Atlantic waters along the east coast until being decommissioned by the Coast Guard in 1971. The ship was brought to New Bedford in 1975 and renamed. A city-owned vessel, plans are underway to repair and utilize LV #114 for educational activities.

E. WPA Stone Lighthouse

Built in 1930, as an ornamental lighthouse and lookout, the city recently moved this handsome 36' granite tower, stone-by-stone, and reassembled it in a city park in order to save it from demolition.





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