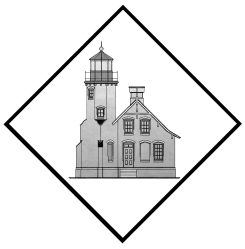
Cunningham Island Light

PROPOSED

By

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Cunningham's Island shown on 1835 Map.

Light Information from Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board and other sources

Cunningham Island, Lake Erie, Ohio

Statement of Appropriations March 3, 1837

For a lighthouse on the south side of Cunningham's Island, in Lake Erie, $3,000

25th Congress 2nd, Doc. 15 – December 14, 1837

pp. 11
Rejected A lighthouse on the south side of Cunningham Island, in Lake Erie

25th Congress 2nd, Doc. 41- December 22, 1837

pp. 73
Letter – June 1, 1937

To the Board of Navy Commissioners
Washington June 1, 1837

Sir: In obedience to my instructions from the Navy Board, I have made a careful examination of Cunningham Island, with the view of ascertaining whether it was expedient to erect a lighthouse on the south side of said island, and have the honor to report:

1st. As to whether the safety of navigation requires any additional facilities at that point: I am clearly of the opinion that it does not; and in support of this opinion would merely remark, that Sandusky Lighthouse is only four miles distant from the south side of Cunningham Island.

2nd. As to whether the commerce of the place is of sufficient importance to justify the expense of erection, attendance, and support of a lighthouse: I am of opinion that it is not and would beg leave to state that the island contains only nine families, who are mostly employed in quarrying stone and in cutting wood for steamboats. It is true the island forms an excellent lee for vessels in a northeast gale, and is visited by steamboats requiring wood; but there is not the least difficulty in finding the anchorage by paying attention to the bearings of Sandusky Light and the soundings.

3rd. As to whether the light might be mistaken for other lights, and thus expose vessels to danger: I think there is great reason to fear that it would often be mistaken for Sandusky Light, which, as I have before stated, is only four miles distant.

4th. As to whether any change of position is desirable, to secure greater advantages from the work: I think a very advantageous change might be made; and would beg leave to remark, that several of the most experienced navigators on this lake have called my attention to the great benefits that would result from placing a light on the South Bass or Put-In-Bay Island, instead of Cunningham Island. On examination, I am of opinion their wishes ought to be complied with, inasmuch as it would be the means of rendering a much frequented passage easy and safe. I am not certain that the terms of the law will allow the appropriation on Cunningham Island being applied to the adjoining island, South Bass, but could such a change be made, I am satisfied both the safety and general interests of lake commerce would be greatly promoted by it.

The accompanying circular, marked A, was addressed to several persons of experience and intelligence, and I herewith send their answers, marked B, C, D, E; all of which I have the honor of submitting to the board.

Respectfully, G. J. Pendergrast

B - Letter – April 30, 1837

To G. J. Pendergrast, April 30, 1837

Sir: Yours of the 26th instant has been received, asking my opinion as to the expediency of erecting a lighthouse on the south side of Cunningham Island, on Lake Erie.

A lighthouse on the south side of Cunningham Island cannot be of much importance to the commerce of Lake Erie. The Sandusky Light is but four miles from the above island, and stands in a situation well adapted to direct vessels through the islands.

In my opinion a light on the island could be of no general good, but might do great mischief. A vessel bound up the lake, having run to the westward until shutting in the Sandusky Light by the island, would be too far to weather the east point of the island, and there, in thick, uncertain weather, the light on the island might be mistaken for the Sandusky Light. In that case, it would direct them to the reef that lies between Cunningham Island and Middle Island, and jeopardize the lives and property on board.

Respectfully, Daniel Dobbins

C - Letter – April 30, 1837

To G. J. Pendergrast, Esq.
On Board Steamboat Commodore Perry
April 30, 1837

Cunningham Island

Sir: Your letter of the 27th instant, calling for information on the subject of erecting a lighthouse on the south side of Cunningham Island, and its advantages to the navigation of the lakes, is now before me; and I have only to say, that a lighthouse on any part of Cunningham Island I consider as unnecessary, and in many cases disadvantageous to the navigation of said lakes.

Respectfully, David Wilkison

D – Letter May 4, 1837

To G. J. Pendergrast, Esq.
Steamboat Sandusky, May 4, 1937

Dear Sir: I do not think that it is necessary to have a lighthouse erected on Cunningham Island, for this reason; it would be so near the other lights at Sandusky, that it might frequently be mistaken for them, and therefore expose vessels to danger.

I do not think a lighthouse on Cunningham Island of sufficient importance to justify the proposed expense. I think there should be a light on the northwest end of South Bass Island, commonly called Put-In-Bay. I think it should be there, for this reason: because it is directly in the track of vessels passing to and from Detroit river.

Respectfully, T. I. Titus

E - Letter May 20, 1837

To G. J. Pendergrast, Esq. May 20, 1837

Sir: Your communication of the 25th instant, requesting me to furnish you with such information as I may have it in my power to afford, touching the expediency of erecting a lighthouse on the south side of Cunningham Island, has been received, and in answer thereto, I have the honor to report:

1st. That I do not think that the safety of navigation requires a lighthouse at the point designated.

2d. I do not think a lighthouse erected on the south side of Cunningham Island of sufficient importance to justify the expense.

3d. Instead of a lighthouse on Cunningham Island, I would recommend a lighthouse to be erected on the south side of South Bass or Put-In-Bay Island, because it would be a safe leading mark for vessels from the eastward through the passage; as also for vessels from the westward bound eastward, a safe entrance.

4th. The lighthouse now in operation on the peninsula I think answers all the purposes for the safety of the entering the passage between the islands and the main land.

Respectfully, J. F. Wight

25th Congress 2nd, Doc. 41- December 22, 1837

pp. 73
Letter December 15, 1837

Navy Commissioners' Office, December 15, 1837

The reasons assigned by Lieutenant Pendergrast against the erection of a lighthouse on that island were, in the opinion of the board, sufficient to justify their concurrence with them, and they reported against its erection accordingly. With regard to the change of position proposed by him, the Board express no opinion, but merely submit it for consideration.

I. Chauncey

25th Congress 2nd, Doc. 41- December 22, 1837

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A light was authorized at this place, but it was thought to be perfectly useless, and I therefore reported against its erection. I suggested to the board, in former communication, the great advantages that would result from applying the Cunningham Island appropriation to the construction of a revolving light on the south end of Put-In-Bay Island; and I beg leave again to urge it, as a matter of the utmost consequence to navigation. Put-In-Bay is about ten miles from Sandusky Lighthouse, but owing to the crookedness of the passage, the two lights would be shut in from each other. Six miles to the southward and westward of Put-In-Bay is Port Clinton.

Statement of Appropriations

For building a lighthouse on the south side of Cunningham Island, in Lake Erie.

Date of appropriation, March 3, 1837
Amount of annual appropriation. $3,000 *

* Transferred to "For erecting fire-proof building for the Treasury Department."