Faro del Puerto de Guanica
(Guanica Light)
Punta Meseta
Carenero (barrio)
Guanica
Puerto Rico

HAER No. PR-14

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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PHOTOGRAPHER: Luis Morales, August 1978

PR-14-1 Photocopy of book illustration, undated ca. 1898; from Album de Puerto Rico, NORTH FACADE

PR-14-2 Photocopy of measured drawing, ca. 1892, SITE PLAN

PR-14-3 Photocopy of measured drawing, ca. 1892, FLOOR PLAN AND ROOF PLAN

PR-14-4 Photocopy of measured drawing, ca. 1892, SECTIONS OF LIGHTHOUSE, PLAN AND ELEVATION OF BALCONY RAILING

PR-14-5 Photocopy of measured drawing, ca. 1892, PLAN AND SECTION OF LIGHT TOWER

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PR-14-18 INTERIOR DETAIL VIEW

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Location:	On Point Meseta at Guanica Bay, on the south west shore of Puerto Rico Position: 17° 53.3' N - 66° 54.3' W
Date of Erection:	1892
Present Owner:	Government of Puerto Rico
Original Owner:	Central Lighthouse Commission Colonial Public Works Office Harbor and Port Section Government of Spain
Present Use:	Unoccupied
Significance:	The Guanica Light is completely vandalized and in ruins, projected against the hills and dry mountains which form the east entrance to Guanica Harbor; one of the most important, busiest, and best of the Island. Similar to Cabo Rojo, the rocky and desertic land is unsuitable for cultivation. The lighthouse, which stands near a cliff, was built in 1892 as a minor or local light (6th order) to guide the entrance to the harbor. In terms of design, use of materials, and decorative elements it was almost identical to Punta Higuero Light. The 2nd class keeper's dwelling, 15.2 x 8.5 x 4.75 mts., was built for one keeper. The principal entrance is in the north facade which opened into a 4.8 x 2.65 mts. vestibule at both sides of which were two rooms 4.55 x 2.65 mts. each. The bedrooms were located on the west side of the dwelling: one 4.55 x 2.65 mts. and two 4.55 x 2.1 mts., and a bathroom. The living room was located to the east section of the structure. 4.55 x 2.65 mts. It was followed by the engineer's room, 4.55 x 2.1 mts., and a kitchen-dining area. A square storeroom, 2.4 x 2.4 mts. was located behind the octagonal tower built in the center of the

building. Excluding the lantern, the tower was 10 mts. high and 3.5 mts. in diameter. A cast-iron winding stairway, 1.6 mts. in diameter, led to the lantern. A door on the north facade of the tower opened to the roof and a window to the south. The octagonal tower lantern was 1.1 mt. in diameter, had vertical bars and was built of cast-iron, copper, and glass. An outside cemented gallery was surrounded by a cast-iron balustrade. The original illuminating apparatus was a fixed 6th order 1892 lenticular Sautter, Lemonnier & Cie. lens, 30 cm. in diameter. It had 4 panels; 5 elements in each panel of the central drum; 5 prisms on each panel above the central drum and 2 below. It was mounted on a cast-iron pedestal.

Some examples of the best original architectural characteristics are still visible in the crumbling structure: "ausubo" (firewood) beams, white and gray Genoa marble slabs, part of the old Spanish kitchen, some wood window frames, and the old Spanish cistern and well. Other examples of its decorative elements are also visible: the grayish lime stucco imitating granite, and the excellent exposed brick work in the main cornice. At one point, the building was finished with a parapet of exposed brick lace-typed work. Also significant is the quoined tower. Still existing are parts of the old cast-iron balustrade, part of the lantern, some of its vertical bars, and the cast-iron lens pedestal. Otherwise, the building is increasingly desintegrating: the ceiling has caved in; the cast-iron stairway has been partially torn down, doors and windows are missing from most locations.

Since 1940 the property has been owned by the Government of Puerto Rico, although the U.S.C.G. retained access to the tower. In 1950 the entire property and structure was released by the U.S.C.G. to the Government of Puerto Rico.

The Faro del Puerto de Guanica served as a local light and also as a bridge between Cabo Rojo and Isla Caja de Muertos Lights. Architecturally, it represents the only extant structure of its kind, especially with regard to its decorative elements. Historically, the lighthouse merits recognition because from its tower the light keeper saw --and possibly signaled, (according to uncorroborated verbal sources)-- the United States warships that invaded Puerto Rico through Guanica Bay on 25 July 1898.

Transmitted by:

Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, August 1984; from the National Register Nomination prepared by Dr. Benjamin Nistal-Moret, August 1979.