RG 26 NC-31 Entry 35 "Light-House Letters", Series P, 1833-1864

Box 1: Letters recd. by Lighthouse Establishment, April 1833 - November 1837

ME

Sidebar on p. 13

Letter dated Oct. 1833, from G. E. Smith complaining that the contract he had entered into for building Mt. Desert Light House had been taken away from him and he requests an investigation.

Supt. of Lighthouses in Maine, John Chandler, letter to Pleasonton, dated Oct 19, 1829, states

"The erection of the buildings must necessarily be postponed, as they cannot now be completed this season, and I very much doubt whether they will ever be done by him in the manner they ought to be. He appears to understand nothing of the work, and has scarcely begun it. ... Smith has been gone weeks, and left only two men, and they could do nothing of use, and the superintendent left in consequence."

Later in the letter, "Perhaps I ought to state that Smith's proposals were so much lower than it is profitable the work could be done for, and knowing the charater of the man, I doubted his intention of ever closing the Contract, when he put in his proposals...he will probably follow up with his petition for further compensation." He goes on to recoomend he be released from his contract and that future contracts will specify that the lighthouse and dwelling be completed by the 15th of July. "Owing to buildings of this description not having been completed until late in the fall, and other causes..., several of the Lighthouses are nearly falling down, and will incur a great annual expense to keep them standing."

Same author, letter dated March 12, 1830, Chandler reports he has hired Joseph Berry, the man who built the lighthouse at Hendricks Head, to build the lighthouse at Mount Desert Rock. He was the next lowest bidder to G. Smith the previous year. In describing the site, "it is perhaps the worst and most difficult place to build of any place one has been built on our coast."

"It seems to me that there are two very important points to be observed in erecting these buildings. One is that they should be finished only in the season, in this cold climate, to give them time to dry before the frost sets in and destroys the adhesive quality of the lime mortar; and that they should not be so large at the base, in proportion to the top, as to have the water not so long on them; or it is unnecessary to have them so large at the bottom for the purpose of keeping in oil in them as the oil must be kept in the cellar in this cold country." He also calls for a strong superintendent be appointed to inspect the work in

progress and ask whether Winslow Lewis be contracted to "fit up" the light.