LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

NUMBER 33

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

See National Register File
listed 3/8/77

PHOTOGRAPH KEY

SKETCH MAP

HISTORIC NAME: Plymouth Light Station

TOWN: Duxbury

LOCATION: Gurnet Point

COUNTY: Plymouth CODE: 023

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 11

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

refer to National Register Nomination

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

LAT./LONG.:

UTM COORDINATE: 19/367/500/4651/100

USGS QUADRANGLE: BOSTON,MA;NH;CT;RI;ME

SCALE: 1:250,000

ACREAGE:

OWNER(S): Unites States Coast Guard

STATUS:

RECORDED BY: M.F. Flaherty

ORGANIZATION: USCG

DATE: May 3, 1976

The records describe Plymouth (Gurnet) Light Station as of 1910.

Situated on the Southerly part of the Gurnet Point, Seacoast of Massachusetts, and on the Northerly side of the entrance to the harbors of Plymouth, Kingston and Duxbury.

Characteristic of light was fixed white, two separate lights, first built or established in 1769, rebuilt in 1803.

Tower was octagonal in shape, pyramidal in form, 39 feet in height, 102 1/4 feet above mean high water, painted white, of wood construction, diameter at base 20 feet.

Both lanterns were 4th order, polygonal, 35 mm.

Fog signal was a First Class Daboll Trumpet 1st class, 6' in length, blasts for 3 second, silent interval 12 seconds.

The keepers were housed in a double dwelling, 6 rooms to each keeper, wood construction, painted white with three outhouses.

Water was supplied by rainwater from roofs of dwelling and engine house placed into two cisterns in cellar of dwelling and two in whistle house.

Drinking water was supplied from a 60' well, housed over, obtained by 2 buckets on a roller pulley.

The nearest public road was 4 1/2 miles from the station and 7 miles by team to Duxbury Railroad Station.

Living conditions have improved since 1910: Plymouth (Gurnet) Light Station in 1976 consists of:

Dwelling - 1 story with basement and attic, woodframe construction, 55' x 35', built in 1960. It includes 4 bedrooms, 2 indoor bathrooms and 12' 8" x 20' garage and storage room.

Oilhouse-brick construction, 10' x 12', built approximately 1900.

Fog Signal Building-brick construction, 1 story, 19' x 24', now used as a generator building.

Light tower-Wood frame construction, 21' diameter at base, 39' high built in 1843.

Height above water 102 feet, painted white, octagonal shape, pyramidal form.

The light characteristic is group flashing white and red, 20 seconds-per revolution. It has a 4th order rotating optic, mercury float, 100 watt lamp, 155 flasher by Wallace and Tierman, the red sector has 7733 candle power with a 21 mile range, the white sector has 20900 candle power with a 25 mile range.

The Fog Signal is an air horn, TF 150/255/2B. Characteristic one blast every 15 seconds, lasting 3 seconds, range 4 miles.

The red sector from 323 to 352 covers Mary Ann Rocks, the scene of many wrecks.

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
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The Plymouth (Gurnet) Light Station was established in 1768 by the Massachusetts Legislature, to guide ships, the lifeline of industry and commerce, into harbor in the towns of Plymouth, Duxbury and Kingston. The first lighthouse was thirty feet long, twenty feet high and fifteen feet wide with a lantern at each end of the building, each holding two lamps.

During the Revolution, the three towns of Plymouth, Duxbury and Kingston had erected a fort of Gurnet. In the midst of an engagement between the fort and the British frigate Niger, which had gone aground on Brown's bank, a wild shot from the ship pierced the lighthouse itself.

The armed brigantine General Arnold was caught in a blizzard during the last week of 1778. Captain Magee anchored his vessel rather than risk the treacherous waters of Plymouth's inner harbor without a pilot. The ship dragged and finally hit on White Flats. Seventy two of the crew died freezing to death in the below-zero temperature. The keeper of the Gurnet Light was unable to go to their aid because of the ice blocked harbor. A causeway was built, over the ice from Plymouth and the few survivors were rescued.

Massachusetts ceded the Gurnet Light to the Federal Government in 1790.

On July 2, 1801 the Gurnet Light was completely destroyed by fire but a temporary beacon was erected by the Merchants of Plymouth and Duxbury. Congress reimbursed the merchants in April 1802 and appropriated $2500 for a new lighthouse. The new light became operational in 1803 but due to exposure to the elements had to be rebuilt in 1843.

In 1914 the Cape Cod Canal revived the importance of the lighthouse as a coastal beacon between Boston and New York.

The northeast tower of the Gurnet's lights was discontinued in 1924, completing a period of 156 years that twin lights had been the Gurnet characteristic.

The remaining tower with alternate single and double flashes of 700,000 candlepower is a great improvement over the old fixed lights from the twin beacons.

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
PLYMOUTH (GURNET) LIGHT STATION

AND/OR COMMON
PLYMOUTH LIGHT STATION

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
DUXBURY __ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
12th

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
MASSACHUSETTS	25	PLYMOUTH	023

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	X MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*
FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT

STREET & NUMBER
150 CAUSEWAY STREET

CITY, TOWN
BOSTON __ VICINITY OF

STATE
MASSACHUSETTS

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
REGISTRY OF DEEDS PLYMOUTH CO.

STREET & NUMBER
NO. RUSSEL ST.

CITY, TOWN
PLYMOUTH

STATE
MASSACHUSETTS

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
COMMANDER, FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
BOSTON

STATE
MASSACHUSETTS

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
_PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	_COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	_RELIGION
_1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	_CONSERVATION	_LAW	_SCIENCE
_1500-1599	_AGRICULTURE	_ECONOMICS	_LITERATURE	_SCULPTURE
_1600-1699	_ARCHITECTURE	_EDUCATION	X_MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
X 1700-1799	_ART	_ENGINEERING	_MUSIC	_THEATER
X 1800-1899	XCOMMERCE	_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	_PHILOSOPHY	X_TRANSPORTATION
X 1900	_COMMUNICATIONS	_INDUSTRY	_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
		_INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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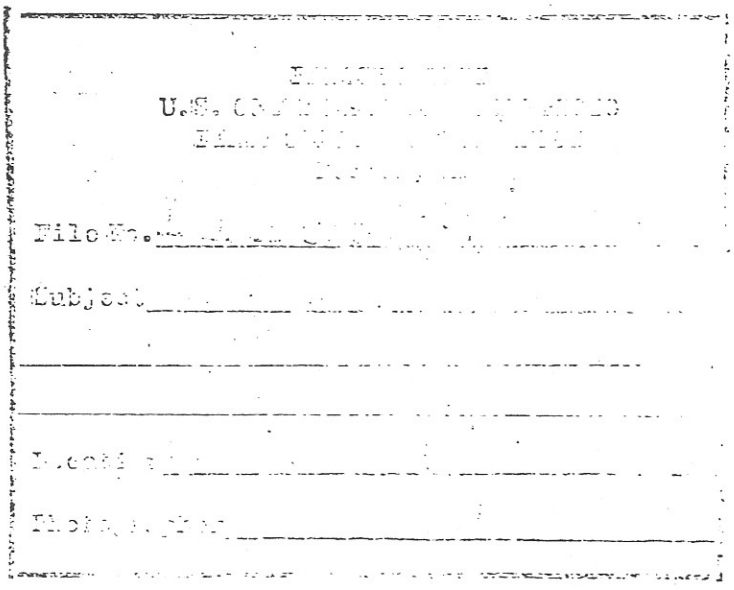
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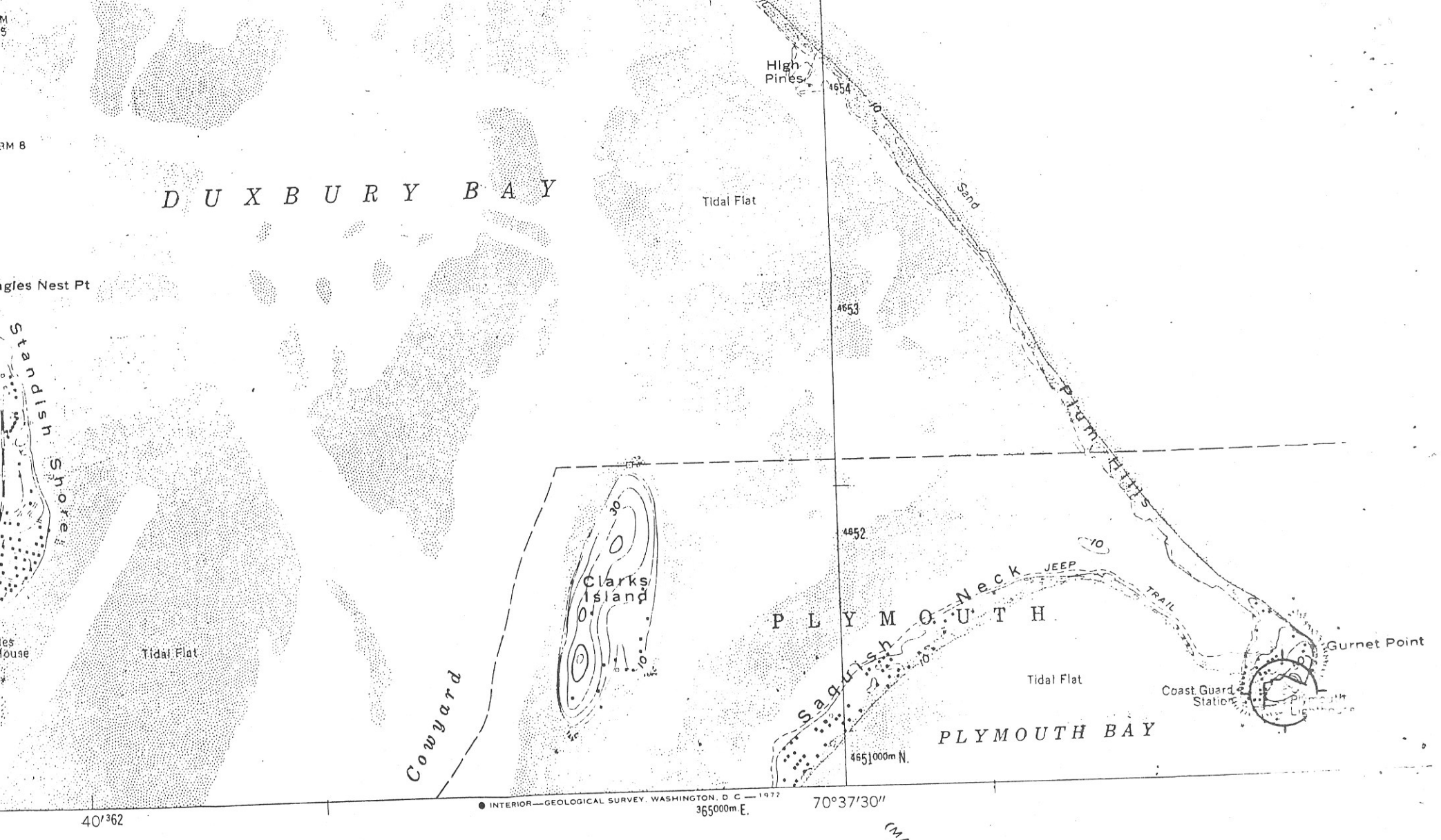
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1.PLYMOUTH(GURNET)LIGHT STATION
2.DUXBURY,MASSACHUSETTS
3. UNKNOWN
4. 1974
5.FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT,BOSTON,MA
6.AERIAL
7. 111874-05





PLYMOUTH (GURNET) LIGHT STATION
PLYMOUTH, MA.

UTM Reference:
19/367410/4651120

DUXBURY, MASS.
N4200—W7037.5/7.5

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Snow, Edward Rowe, The Lighthouses of New England, 1945 published by Dodd, Mead and Company, New York.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	19	367410	4651210
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
M. F. FLAHERTY

ORGANIZATION
FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT

DATE
3 May 1976

STREET & NUMBER
150 CAUSEWAY STREET

TELEPHONE
(617) 223-6903

CITY OR TOWN
BOSTON

STATE
MASSACHUSETTS

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES____ NO____ NONE ✓

Elizabeth Reed Amadon
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ____National ____State ____Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

DATE

TITLE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 899-214