

USDI/ NPS NRHP Registration Form
Pooles Island Lighthouse
Harford County, Maryland

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Pooles Island Lighthouse

other names/site number: Not applicable

2. Location

street & number: Not applicable not for publication N/A
city or town: Northwest portion of Pooles Island X vicinity
state: Maryland code: MD county: Harford code: 025
zip code: 21010

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide _____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the
National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for
additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:
____ entered in the National Register _____
_____ See continuation sheet.
____ determined eligible for the _____
National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
____ removed from the National Register _____
____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper _____ Date _____
of Action

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5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)
____ private
____ public-local
____ public-State
X public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)
____ building(s)
____ district
____ site
X structure
____ object

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing Noncontributing
____ buildings
____ sites
1 structures
____ objects
1 Total

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Defense Sub: Coast Guard Facility
Transportation Water-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Vacant/Not in Use Sub:

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation: Concrete
roof: Metal
walls: Granite Block
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

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- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Maritime History
Transportation
Architecture
Archeology: Historic-Non-Aboriginal

Period of Significance: 1825 - 1939

Significant Dates: 1825 - 1939

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: John Donohoo

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
[X] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # MD-47

- Primary Location of Additional Data
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
[X] Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
[X] Other

Name of repository: National Archives, Library of Congress, United States Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

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10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property: approx. 1.04 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 1: 18, 390760, 434956, 3. Row 2: 2, 4. Includes 'See continuation sheet.'

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title: W. Patrick Giglio/ Architectural Historian

organization: R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc.
date: Nov 1993

street & number: 337 East Third Street
telephone: 301-694-0428

city or town: Frederick state: Maryland zip code: 21701

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Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____

telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Pooles Island Lighthouse
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The Pooles Island Lighthouse is situated on the northwest point of Pooles Island, which is located in the upper Chesapeake Bay in Harford County, Maryland. Pooles Island comprises approximately 280 acres, and is marked by a variety of vegetation. Most of the island is characterized by wooded wetlands. Trees of varying age and species dominate the highest ground, which does not exceed 15 feet above sea level. Fresh and saltwater marshes dominate the lower areas of the island. Pooles Island is accessible by boat and is located east of the mouth of the Bush and Gunpowder River, approximately 1.25 miles from Robins Point on the mainland. Pooles Island and the Pooles Island Lighthouse are within the restricted boundaries of the Aberdeen Proving Ground Military Reservation, owned by the United States Federal Government.

The Pooles Island Lighthouse, constructed in 1825, is a solitary, stone conical tower topped by an iron cupola. It stands approximately 20 feet from the water's edge. The Pooles Island Lighthouse rises 40 feet, 6 inches in total height. The masonry

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Pooles Island Lighthouse
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tower portion is approximately 28 feet high and the cupola and lightning rod are 12 feet, 6 inches in height. The lighthouse structure can be described in three segments: **base**, **tower**, and **cupola**. The base is a broad brick pad supported by wood pilings. This foundation distributes the weight of the tower evenly over a larger area and supports the lighthouse. The stone tower is conical with a base diameter of 18 feet that tapers to 9 feet, 6 inches at the top. The tower is constructed of randomly laid, rough cut granite blocks, with irregularly sized mortar joints. The granite blocks were quarried locally in Port Deposit, Maryland. The exterior and interior walls of the masonry tower are stuccoed and whitewashed. The lighthouse is accessed through a doorway at the base. This doorway has a large granite stoop and lintel; the original door is missing. An interior circular masonry stairway with central column leads to the light platform. The interior of the structure was originally lit by three windows located at different heights along the spiral of the interior stairway; all presently are bricked in. A short cast iron ladder leads from the

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top stair through a trap door to the light platform and cupola above.

The cupola is fixed to the top of the truncated conical tower and housed the lighting mechanism. The cupola is 8 feet in height and is topped by a spherical copper ventilator ball and lightning rod. The light platform floor is composed of flat, cast-iron decking. The side and roof of the cupola are constructed of metal sheeting supported by a cast-iron framing system. A circular cast-iron walkway surrounds the cupola and is accessed by two small iron doors in the side of the cupola. The walkway features a single-bar iron handrail balustrade that is supported by 16 iron stanchions.

Archival documents indicate that the lighthouse was part of a complex that included a lightkeeper's residence, boathouse, barn, and other support facilities. Although none of the latter structures remain.

The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1939 and the lighting mechanism was removed. The Pooles Island Light has been vacant since that time. Although located within the restricted area of

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Aberdeen Proving Ground, the lighthouse has been the target of vandalism. All glass has been removed from the cupola. The structure is in good condition with the exception of several areas of mortar joint failure. Though isolated, the Pooles Island Lighthouse retains its original architectural integrity including its overall design, materials and setting associated with its original construction.

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The Pooles Island Lighthouse possesses the qualities of state significance defined in Criteria A, and C of the National Register of Historic Places. Chesapeake Bay served as a major transportation corridor for commercial traffic from the early nineteenth through the twentieth centuries. The Pooles Island Lighthouse is significant for its association with state and federal governmental efforts to provide an integrated system of navigational aids and to provide for safe maritime transportation in the Chesapeake Bay (Criterion A). The Pooles Island Lighthouse is the earliest extant lighthouse in the state of Maryland. The lighthouse embodies a distinctive design and method of construction that typified the majority of lighthouses constructed on the upper Chesapeake Bay during the first half of the nineteenth century (Criterion C). The Pooles Island Lighthouse was part of a complex that included a lightkeeper's residence, boathouse, barn, and other support facilities. None of these associated structures remain.

Pooles Island History

Pooles Island is located on the northwest side of the upper part of the Chesapeake Bay, east of the mouth of the Bush and

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Gunpowder Rivers, in Harford County, Maryland. The island was discovered first by Captain John Smith in 1608. The island was originally known as Powells Island and was named for Nathaniel Powell, one of Smith's companions. The first land patent for the island was granted in 1659 to Captain Robert Morris.

A map published by Captain John Smith in 1612 shows the island as Powels Iles. The plural remains unexplained, unless the marshy middle of the island made it appear as if there were two islands. Maps indicate a variety of spellings for the island: Pool's Island in 1824, Poole's Island in 1825, Pools Island in 1843, Pooles Island in 1856, Pool's Island in 1867, and then Poole's Island again in 1882. Since 1892, it has been spelled Pooles Island.

A small settlement appears to have occupied the island early in the eighteenth century. In April 1813, the British fleet plundered the settlement during the War of 1812. Under the command of Admiral Cockburn, the British fleet raided neighboring islands and the town of Havre de Grace, Maryland. In 1873, 7,000 peach trees were planted on the island. Pooles Island peaches became a delicacy prized in Baltimore markets. In 1917, the Federal Government acquired the 280 acres of Pooles Island from the estate

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Pooles Island Lighthouse
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of C.C. Homer, for the establishment of Aberdeen Proving Ground.
The Coast Guard retained 6.94 acres of the island for the
lighthouse complex.

Navigational Aids on the Chesapeake

Between 1791 and 1910, 74 lighthouses were erected along Chesapeake Bay. The first lighthouse erected by the federal government was located near Cape Henry, Virginia in 1792 at the mouth of the Bay. The development of a system of lighthouses along the length of the Bay was not initiated until the nineteenth century. Congress assumed federal responsibility for the construction and operation of navigational aids in 1792. Prior to this time individual states had been responsible for lighthouses in their waters. Congress created a special U.S. Lighthouse Board in 1852, to supervise the operation of this service. This responsibility was transferred to the newly formed Bureau of Lighthouses in 1910 and finally to the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939.

Chesapeake Bay, during the early nineteenth century, served as a major commercial artery for the transport of raw materials and finished goods from the Piedmont and coastal areas of the Mid-

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Atlantic states. Water transportation in the Chesapeake was enhanced further by the construction of the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal, completed in 1839; and the Chesapeake and Delaware (C&D) Canal completed in 1829. The C&D Canal connected the key commercial waterways of Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware River, facilitating trade between Philadelphia, Baltimore, Alexandria, and Norfolk. Heavy traffic from both passenger lines and freight lines marked these early years, and increased the demand for safe water routes. Prior to 1800, the Chesapeake Bay was marked by only a few lighthouses. With the increase of commerce and maritime trade, additional aids to navigation were required.

Lighthouses constructed in the Chesapeake Bay during the nineteenth century varied in design. Three basic lighthouse types were constructed: conical land based masonry towers, offshore screwpile types, and offshore caisson types. Today only 32 lighthouses remain of the original 74 constructed on Chesapeake Bay; some of these structures are in ruins and abandoned.

The early stone or brick lighthouses on the Chesapeake were typically located on land and built as 30-foot, brick or stone conical towers, narrowing in diameter from 17 feet at the base to

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9 feet at the top. In addition, a lighthouse keeper's residence often was constructed. The typical residential complex contained a 20 by 34 foot house with a small porch and/or kitchen, an outhouse, and a well. The Pooles Island Lighthouse is an example of the stone conical tower type of lighthouse. Constructed in 1825, it is the oldest extant lighthouse in Maryland. The earliest lighthouse constructed in Maryland was the Bodkin Island lighthouse, built in 1821 at the mouth of the Patapsco River. Bodkin Island Lighthouse was dismantled in the early 1920s.

In 1855, the first screwpile type lighthouse was constructed on the Chesapeake. Screwpile lighthouse were located away from land to mark dangerous shoals. Over 42 screwpile lighthouses were built over a period of 54 years. Screwpile lighthouses were anchored by a series of metal piles screwed into the sandy or muddy bottom of the bay. This superstructure supported a metal hexagonal platform with a keepers residence and a light tower affixed to the top. All the screwpile lighthouse on the Chesapeake and its rivers were similar in design; they varied in size and in the configuration of piles and superstructure. Screwpile lighthouses

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Pooles Island Lighthouse
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were vulnerable to ice floes and high tides and designs were developed for offshore lighthouses with stronger foundations.

Caisson type lighthouses were very expensive to build and required the construction of a series of huge cylindrical foundations, which were towed to the site and sunk. The Caisson created a man made island on which a lighthouse could be built. Twelve caisson type lighthouses were built in the Chesapeake Bay, all of which remain in use today.

Pooles Island Lighthouse

Pooles Island Lighthouse was constructed following an act of the United States Congress, passed 26 May 1824, that authorized the construction of lighthouses on Thomas Point and Pooles Island. A parcel of land located on the northwest portion of Pooles Island was purchased by Naval Officer Willis B. Barney of the Fifth U.S. Naval District, Baltimore, Maryland. This portion of the island was purchased on the behalf of the United States Federal Government from Perigrine Wethered of Kent County, Maryland for the sum of \$500.00 on 25 March 1825.

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On 16 April 1825, a contract for the construction of the Pooles Island Lighthouse was formalized between Mr. Barney of the Fifth Naval District; John Donohoo of Havre de Grace, Harford County; and Simon Frieze of Port Deposit, Cecil County, Maryland. The contract called for the construction on Pooles Island of a stone conical lighthouse, dwelling, kitchen, outhouse, and a well. The contract price was \$4,754.00, and construction was to be completed by 1 November 1825. The contract stipulated materials, building specifications, and construction methods.

John Donohoo of Havre de Grace was the most prolific builder of lighthouses in the Chesapeake Bay during the nineteenth century. He constructed at least twelve lighthouses between 1824 and 1853 (see attached list). Donohoo constructed two types of lighthouses in his career: stone conical structures with iron cupolas, and small keeper's houses with lantern tower tops. The more common and familiar lighthouse was the stone conical tower. Donohoo completed the Thomas Point Lighthouse in 1824. This lighthouse developed structural problems several years later and was dismantled in 1838. A screw pile lighthouse replaced it in 1875.

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Pooles Island Lighthouse
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Pooles Island, located in the middle of the upper Chesapeake Bay marked the mouth of the Gunpowder and Bush Rivers. The island separated Chesapeake Bay into two shipping channels, a shallow channel to the west of the island and a deeper channel to the east. The lighthouse on the northwest side of Pooles Island marked the deeper shipping channel and was the only beacon for ships passing the dangerous shoals at Gunpowder Neck.

The Pooles Island Lighthouse was of the traditional design, typical of the upper Chesapeake Bay. A stone conical tower with metal cupola, the lighthouse stood approximately 40 feet in height, and approximately 25 feet from waters edge when it was constructed. The original lighthouse complex comprised a one-story keepers house constructed of stone measuring 34 by 20 feet with an attached 14 by 24 foot kitchen. Annual lighthouse reports indicate that all the buildings on the property were painted white and surrounded by a white picket fence. In 1883, a brick second floor was added to the stone first floor of the keeper's house. In 1887, a front porch also was added to the house. Annual lighthouse reports indicate that subsequent alterations and the construction of outbuildings occurred throughout the property's history. These alterations

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included: the addition of a 2,000 gallon brick cistern in 1880, cow-stable and poultry house in 1887, a boathouse house in 1892, conversion of an existing coal house to an oil house in 1897, and the additions of new fencing and walkways.

A fog bell and tower were placed on the property in 1828. The bell weighed 1,000 lbs. and was 30 inches in diameter by 26 inches in height. It was struck by a hand-wound, automated clockwork device. The bell served as a warning device during inclement weather, and sounded every twelve seconds. The fog-bell tower was rebuilt in 1879 to replace the original bell, which had begun to decay.

When constructed, the lighthouse was lit by nine oil lamps. The lights were installed by John Bouis for the Baltimore District Naval Office. According to an 1865 nautical chart, the light was visible for 11.1 nautical miles, and marked the channels east and west of the island. In 1867, the lamps were upgraded with "new and improved lanterns," as described in the annual lighthouse reports.

As a result of political pressure directed at the Lighthouse Board from commercial shipping interests, Congress appropriated funds to replace their primitive illumination systems with the new,

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superior Fresnel lens system invented in France. Fresnel lenses were manufactured in seven sizes and orders. Pooles Island was fitted with a fourth-order Fresnel lamp in 1899, a common size for smaller lighthouses located along the Bay where long-range visibility was not considered important. The Pooles Island Lighthouse was visually connected to the Turkey Point Lighthouse, constructed by John Donohoo in 1833. Turkey Point is located approximately seventeen miles north at the head of the Bay.

The light at Pooles Island was automated in 1917, when the rest of the island was acquired by the federal government during the establishment of the U.S. Army installations, Aberdeen Proving Ground. The lighthouse remained in unattended operation until 1939, when it was decommissioned by the United States Coast Guard and the lens removed.

Today the lighthouse is the only remaining structure on the property associated with the lighthouse complex. All above-ground remnants of the keeper's house and associated outbuildings have been removed. The lighthouse structure is vacant, and is in good condition with the exception of some areas of mortar joint failure. The Pooles Island lighthouse retains its architectural integrity

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(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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including its overall design, materials, and setting associated with its original nineteenth century construction.

Pooles Island is one of thirty-two structures that remain of the seventy-four lighthouses built by the federal government to provide aids to navigation in Chesapeake Bay during the nineteenth century. The lighthouse represents a distinctive building pattern and method of construction which typified the majority of lighthouses constructed on the upper Chesapeake Bay during the first half of the nineteenth century (Criterion C). The Pooles Island Lighthouse is the oldest extant lighthouse associated with this period in Maryland and is significant in the historical development of maritime transportation in Chesapeake Bay (Criterion A).

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Pooles Island Lighthouse
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Lighthouses constructed by John Donohoo 1824-1853:

Location	Date	Type	Condition
1. Thomas Point Shoal	1824	Conical tower with cupola	Removed 1838, replaced with screw pile in 1875
2. Pooles Island	1825	Conical tower with cupola	Not at present on National Register
3. Havre de Grace	1827	Conical tower with cupola	Included on National Register
4. Fog Point	1827	Conical tower with cupola	Abandoned 1875, later destroyed
5. Cove Point	1828	Conical tower with cupola	Included on National Register
6. Point Lookout	1830	Rectangular structure with cupola	Discontinued 1966, leased to state of Maryland
7. Lazaretto Point	1831	Brick tower	Torn down in 1926
8. Watts Island	1832	Tower with cupola	Destroyed by storm in 1944
9. Turkey Point	1833	Conical tower with cupola	Included on National Register
10. Piney Point	1836	Conical tower with cupola	Included on National Register
11. Blakistone Island	1851	Two story brick house with tower	Destroyed by fire in 1966
12. Fishing Battery	1853	Tower on top of house	Demolished in 1921

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Bibliography

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- U.S. Lighthouse Board. *Building & Premises at Pooles Island, Maryland July 14, 1909*. Department of Commerce and Labor, February 1906.
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(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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Pooles Island Lighthouse
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Boundary Description

This property is located in the Chesapeake Bay on a north point of Pooles Island in the state of Maryland. The boundary begins at a point in the center of the doorway of the Pooles Island Lighthouse. Using the doorway as a center point, proceed 120 feet south to form a radius. Using the radius, proceed in a circle around the lighthouse. The boundary includes all land within the circle.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the lighthouse and approximately 1.04 acres of land to protect the viewshed of the structure.

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Section Photos Page 1

Pooles Island Lighthouse
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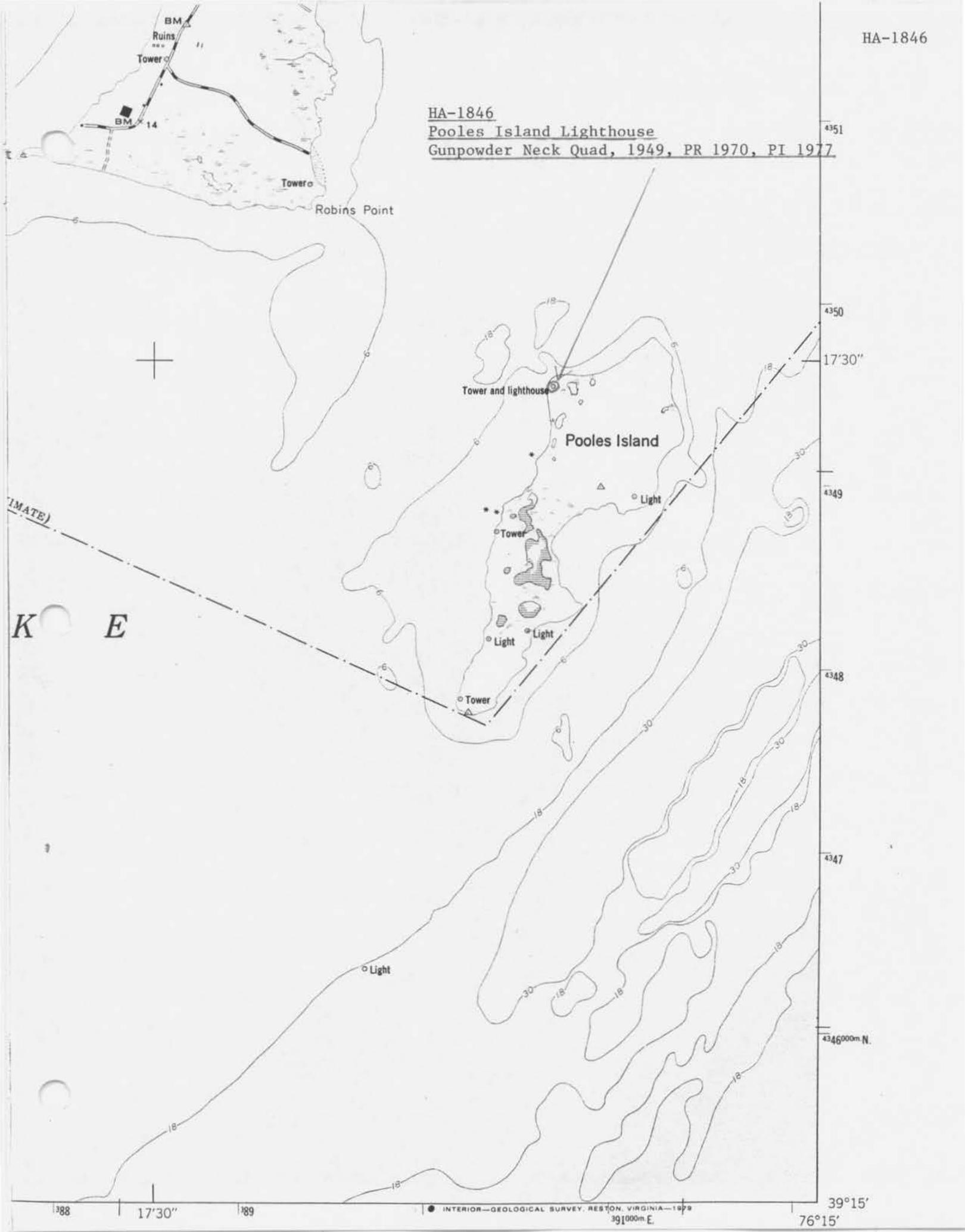
Photo #1

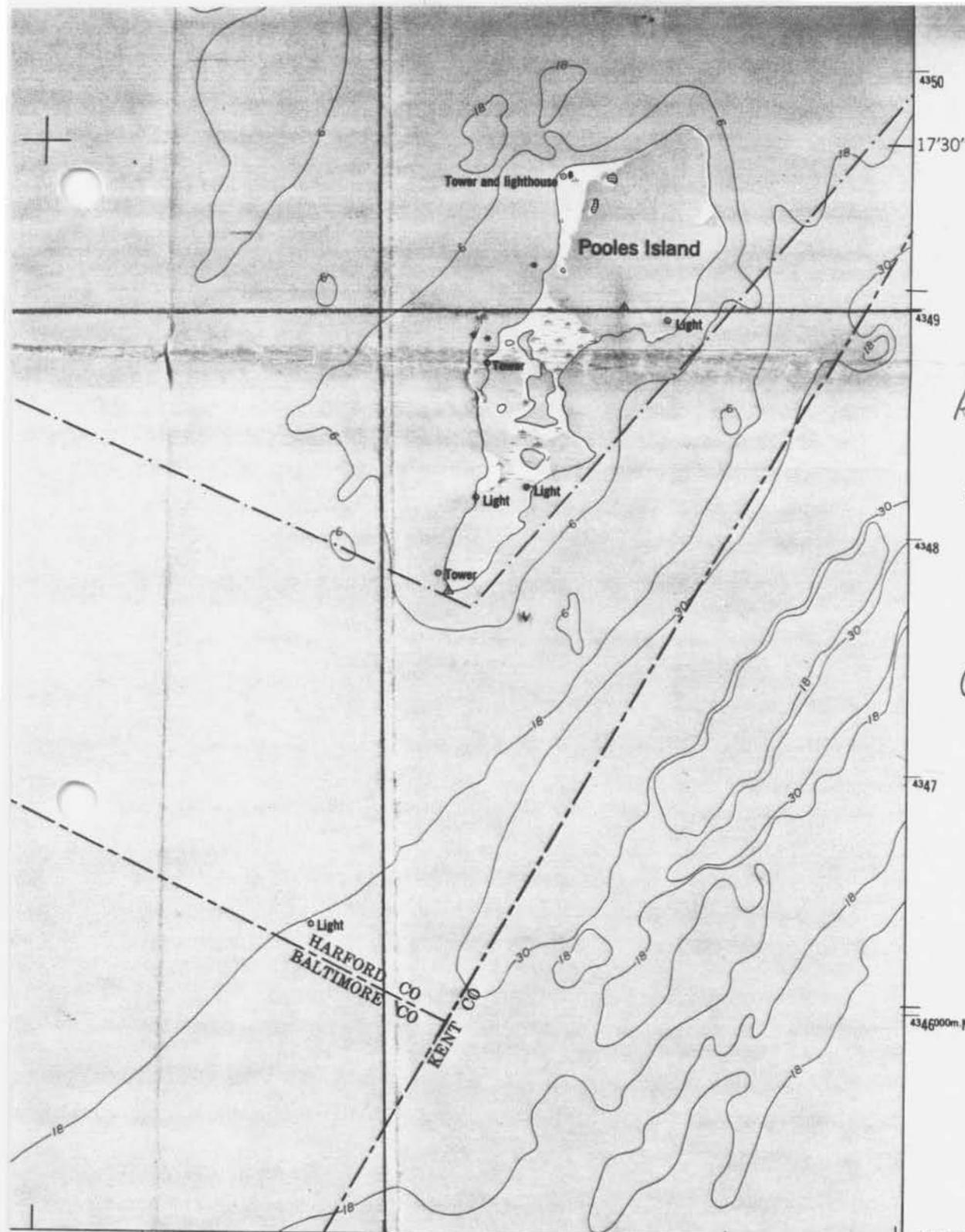
- 1. Pooles Island Lighthouse
- 2. Harford County, Maryland
- 3. Reed Macmillan
- 4. 10/1993
- 5. STEAP-SH-ER
Environmental Management Division
Building 5650
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010
- 6. Range tower and lighthouse, looking north

Photo #2

- 1. Pooles Island Lighthouse
- 2. Harford County, Maryland
- 3. Reed Macmillan
- 4. 10/1993
- 5. STEAP-SH-ER
Environmental Management Division
Building 5650
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010
- 6. Lighthouse in foreground, looking west

HA-1846
Pooles Island Lighthouse
Gunpowder Neck Quad, 1949, PR 1970, PI 1977





HA-1846
 Pooles Island
 Lighthouse
 Gunpowder
 Neck
 quad

INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1987
 391900m E

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route

(ROCK HALL)
 5762 II NW



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

GUNPOWDER NECK, MD.
 39076-C3-TF-024

1949
 PHOTOREVISED 1986

visions shown in purple and woodland compiled by the
 logical Survey from aerial photographs taken 1983 and
 or sources. This information not field checked
 edited 1986

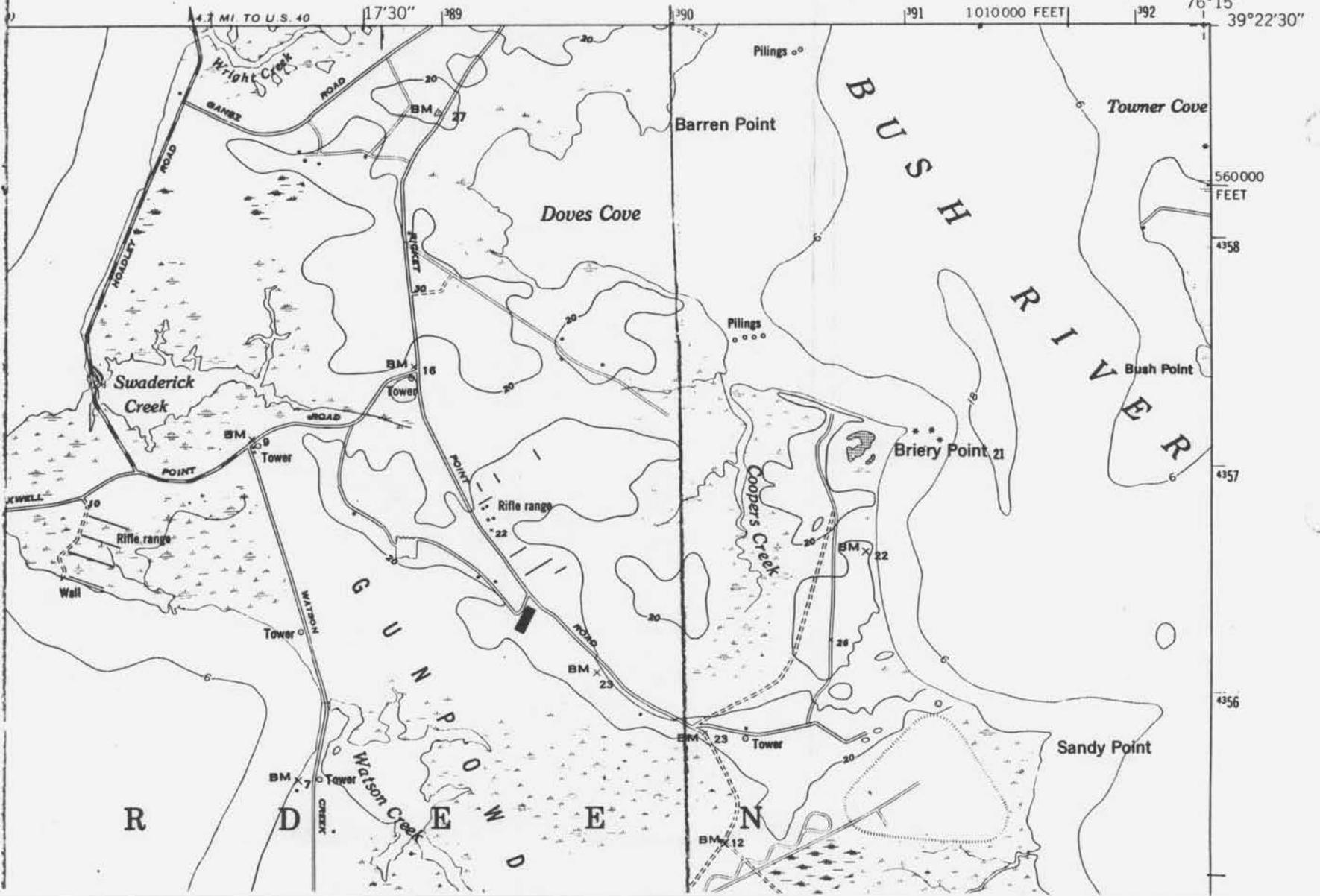
Pooles Island Lighthouse

STATES
THE ARMY
ENGINEERS

18 390760 434956

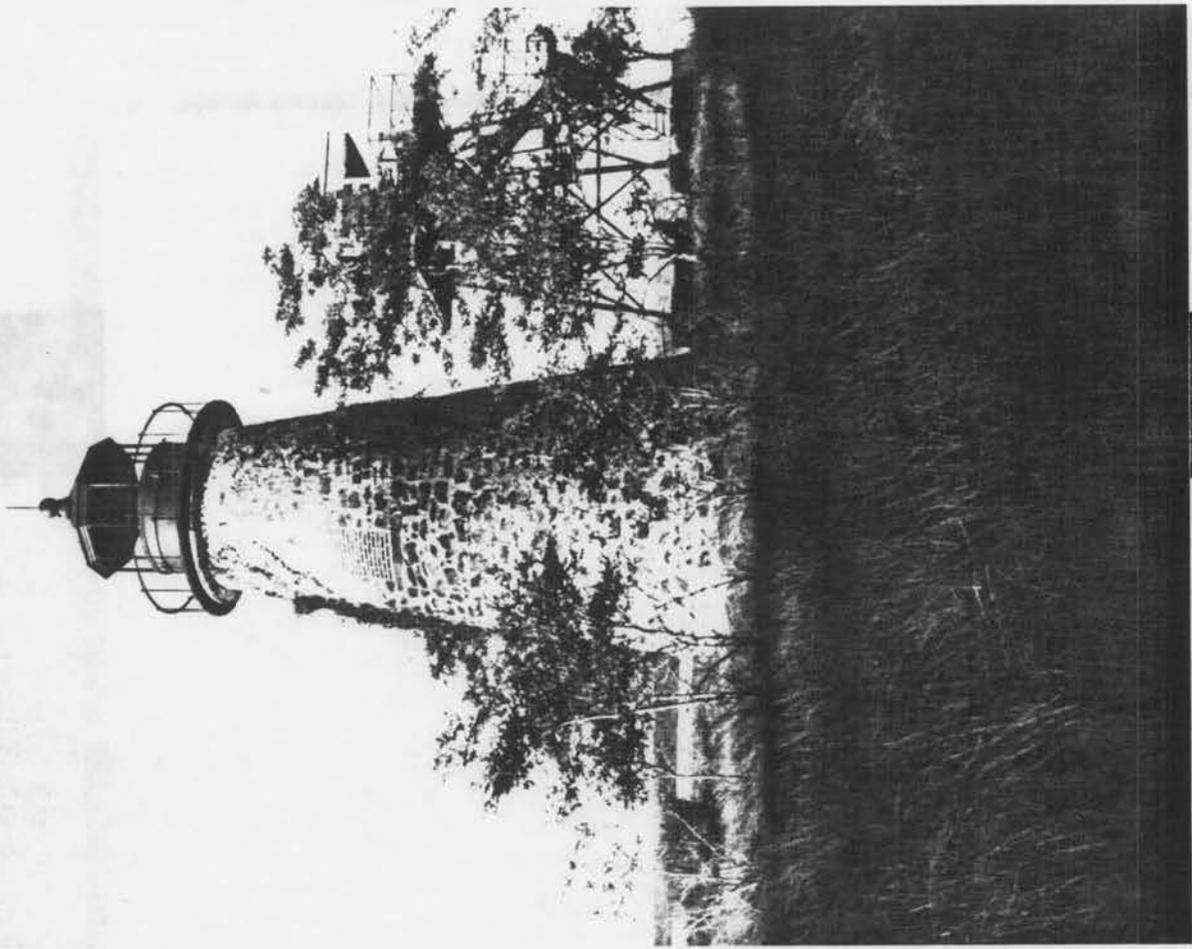
GUNPOWDER NECK QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5762 1 NW
(PERRYMAN)



HN-1846

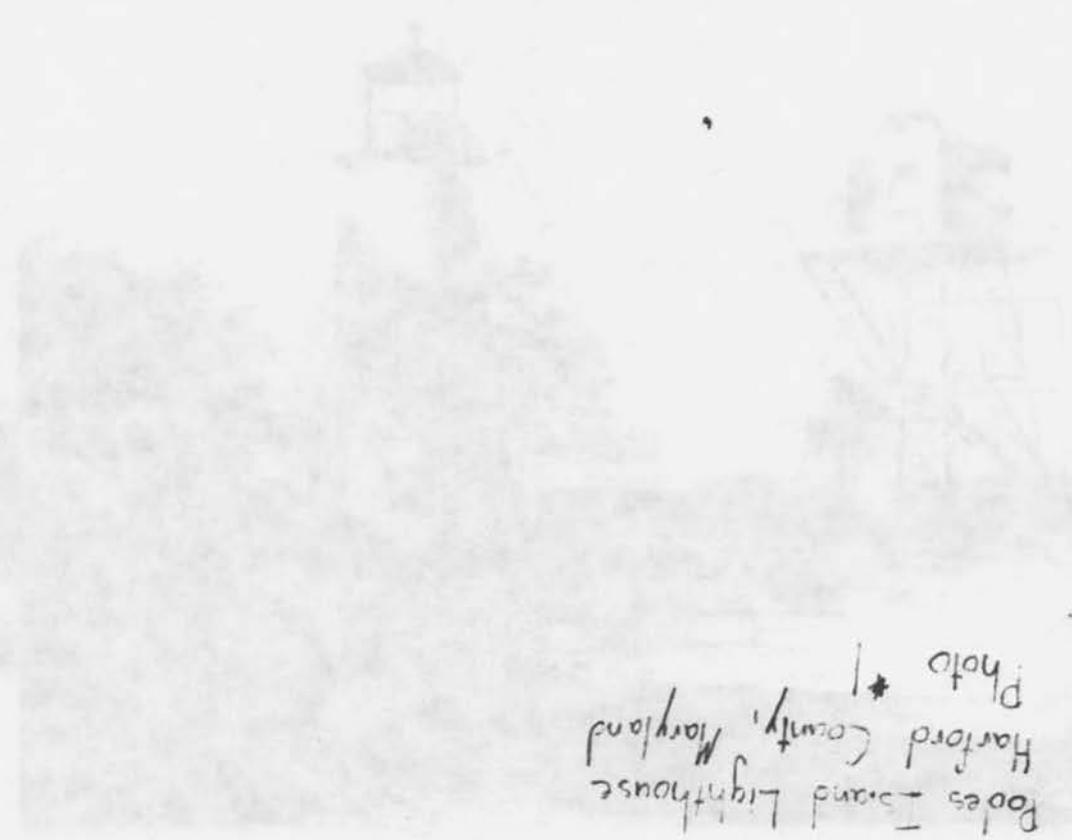
HA-1846



Pooles Island Lighthouse
Harford County, Maryland
Photo #2



Pooles Island Lighthouse
Harford County, Maryland
Photo #1





HA-1846

Pooles Island lighthouse

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

ADP

Map of Pooles Island

1907