

## **Coal Shed (SM-512), Point Lookout Light Station**

*Narrative Summary:* The Point Lookout Light Station was established in 1830 at the tip of Southern Maryland in St. Mary's County, where the Potomac River enters the Chesapeake Bay. In 1883, the Lighthouse Service constructed a buoy depot at Point Lookout Light Station to store, repair, and place buoys for the middle portion of the Chesapeake Bay. Two similar frame buildings, a buoy shed and a coal shed, were constructed south of the lighthouse and a tramway was built to move buoys and supplies between the wharf and the two sheds. Each of the one-story buildings measures approximately 100 x 40 feet; they originally featured open interior plans and open north, south, and west elevations. The coal shed has been altered significantly but still retains its original form. It is clad in vinyl siding with single and double entrances on all four elevations. Asphalt shingles have been added to the side-gable, box-cornice roof. The interior has been converted in recent years to offices and testing laboratories. Point Lookout Light Station also includes a lighthouse, buoy shed, smokehouse, and the remains of the wharf.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-512

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Coal Shed (Point Lookout Light Station)

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number South terminus of Maryland State Route 5  not for publication

city, town Scotland  vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county St. Mary's

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Patuxent River Naval Air Station (United States Navy)

street & number telephone no.: (301) 342-3000

city, town Patuxent River state and zip code Maryland 20670

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Lands and Licenses liber

street & number 1 Courthouse Drive folio

city, town Leonardtown state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. SM-512

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved    date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

See continuation sheet 7.1.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. SM-512

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1884 **Builder/Architect** unknown

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

See continuation sheet 8.1..



**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 7 (Description)**

*Description Summary:* The Point Lookout Light Station was established in 1830 at the tip of Southern Maryland in St. Mary's County, where the Potomac River enters the Chesapeake Bay. In 1883, the Lighthouse Service constructed a buoy depot at Point Lookout Light Station to store, repair, and place buoys for the middle portion of the Chesapeake Bay. Two similar frame buildings, a buoy shed and a coal shed, were constructed south of the lighthouse and a tramway was built to move buoys and supplies between the wharf and the two sheds. Each of the one-story buildings measures approximately 100 x 40 feet; they originally featured open interior plans and open north, south, and west elevations. The coal shed has been altered significantly but still retains its original form. It is clad in vinyl siding with single and double entrances on all four elevations. Asphalt shingles have been added to the side-gable, box-cornice roof. The interior has been converted in recent years to offices and testing laboratories. The Point Lookout Light Station also includes a lighthouse, buoy shed, smokehouse, and the remains of a wharf. (Separate Maryland Inventory of Historic Property forms have been completed for the lighthouse, buoy shed, and smokehouse).

*Description of Coal Shed*

Built in 1884, the coal shed closely resembled the buoy shed that had been constructed the previous year. Located approximately twenty feet south of the buoy shed and oriented to the north, the coal shed formed a compound or semi-protected work space with the buoy shed. As originally built, the coal shed was a long, rectangular, brace-frame building with a gable roof and open interior plan. It had four bays on the north and south sides and two bays on the gable ends. The north, west, and possibly the south elevations were open, with a gable-end wall on the east side. The shed was sided with board and battens above the bays and in the gable ends. In 1889, a three-story, fog-bell tower was added to the east gable end.

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 7 (Description)**

The coal shed was significantly altered between 1928 and 1939, when it was converted to living quarters. It was completely enclosed, probably with board-and-batten siding, and the interior was divided with room partitions. An engaged screen porch was built on the west gable end and an interior chimney was added. The shed was further altered when the light station came under the administration of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. The Navy altered interior spaces and exterior fenestration when it converted the coal shed to offices and laboratories.

Currently, the coal shed retains its original form, an approximately 100 x 40, rectangular-shaped building, with a shallow-pitched, side-gable roof. It is clad in vinyl siding and features an asphalt shingle roof. Single and double entrances are located on all four elevations and all windows have been covered or removed. The original brick piers, visible on the north, south, and west sides, have been infilled with concrete block. A concrete-block porch and two sets of concrete stairs were added to the west side. The interior is divided into a series of offices and testing laboratories. The floor in the west half of the shed has been raised from ground level to approximately three feet, with a crawl space below.

Although the coal shed has been significantly altered in recent years, it is possible that these changes did not result in a significant loss of historic building material and that much of the original (1884) building fabric--brick piers, brace frame, and roof--survives in the current structure. The alterations from 1928 to 1939 may also exist beneath recently-added wall board and vinyl siding. Changes to the coal shed within the last fifty years, while substantial, may be reversible. Further investigations are needed to precisely determine the extent of surviving historic material.

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

*Statement of Significance Summary:* Following its reorganization 1852, the Lighthouse Service divided the United States coasts into twelve lighthouse districts. The Chesapeake Bay was included in District 5. Each district was responsible for maintaining one or more buoy depots to service the thousands of buoys that mark shoals, define the navigable limits of channels, and identify anchorages. The buoy depot at Point Lookout Light Station was established in 1883, and is the only extant buoy depot that served District 5. It is among the few to survive of approximately twenty-five to fifty depots that were built throughout the United States. The coal shed at Point Lookout is eligible for listing in the Maryland Register of Historic Properties and the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because of its association with maritime history in Maryland.

*A Summary History of the Point Lookout Light Station*

The coal shed is one component of the Point Lookout Light Station. The history of the light station is provided below to provide a context in which to understand the significance of the coal shed.

In 1825, Congress authorized \$1,800 for the construction of a lighthouse on Point Lookout, Maryland, to protect shipping on the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. William Maury, Superintendent of Lighthouses in Maryland, selected five-and-one-half acres at the tip of Point Lookout as the most suitable site for the new lighthouse. Mr. Jenifer Taylor, the property owner, refused to sell his property, and negotiations continued for seven years. Construction of the combined dwelling and tower was completed in 1830. Two years later, the

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

Lighthouse Service received a deed to the property on which the lighthouse had been built.<sup>1</sup> The Point Lookout Lighthouse was first lit on September 20, 1830.<sup>2</sup>

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Point Lookout had become a popular resort for residents of Washington and Baltimore who sought relief from city life. In 1859, William Cost Johnson purchased 400 acres of land at Point Lookout. He developed an area north of the lighthouse as a resort and constructed a hotel and leased cottages.<sup>3</sup> In 1862, the Federal government purchased the existing hotel and 100 cottages and incorporated them into Camp Hoffman, a large complex of buildings that included a hospital for Union soldiers located adjacent to the lighthouse. Camp Hoffman also served as a supply depot for the Army of the Potomac. Following the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, the Federal government established a prisoner of war camp amid the hospital buildings at Point Lookout. At its peak, 30,000 men were imprisoned at the sprawling camp, subjected to primitive drainage and sanitary conditions. During the course of its operation, 3,500 prisoners died at the camp.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Eshelman, "Point Lookout Light Station: Condition Assessment Report" Historic background. (Williamsport Preservation Training Center, Williamsport, Maryland, 1995), 92.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald J. Sword, "Point Lookout Lighthouse" (Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland, 1980), 5.

<sup>3</sup>Regina Combs Hammett, *History of St. Mary's County, Maryland 1634-1990* (Ridge, Maryland, 1977), 122.

<sup>4</sup>Donald G. Shomette. "The Point Lookout Survey: The Examination of Marine Transgressions Against an Historic Civil War Prison Complex," in *In Search of Our Maritime Past* (Proceedings of the Fifteenth Conference on Underwater Archaeology, Program in Maritime History and Underwater Research, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, 1984), 131.

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

Point Lookout's appeal as a resort destination remained strong from the last decades of the nineteenth century through the 1930s. Several ambitious resort development projects were planned for the area during the 1870s and 1880s, but were never built. The hotel built by William Cost Johnson in 1857, however, continued to draw residents from Washington and Baltimore. Transportation to the Point Lookout Hotel, as it was called, was often difficult because the roads were rough and a rail link was never established. For weekend excursionists, steamer was the most popular mode of travel to Point Lookout.

In 1883, the Lighthouse Service raised the one-and-one-half-story lighthouse to two full stories and added new front and rear porches, "for the better accommodation of the keepers" and additional personnel assigned to Point Lookout.<sup>5</sup> This raised the height of the focal plane to forty-one feet. The renovated lighthouse featured a five-bay, symmetrical facade, center-hall plan, and gable-end chimneys.

Between 1927 and 1928, the Lighthouse Service made extensive alterations to the lighthouse at Point Lookout Light Station to accommodate an assistant lighthouse keeper. The single-family lighthouse was converted to a duplex, which more than doubled the depth of the building. The Service reorganized interior spaces and altered exterior fenestration to allow private entrances for each apartment. The side-gable roof was replaced with a large hip roof and the rear wing was demolished. Electricity, generated from one or more small motors, was introduced at Point Lookout Light Station between 1928 and 1933.

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<sup>5</sup>Bowerman to Booth, 13 August 1928, Point Lookout General Correspondence File, Record Group 26, National Archives, Washington, D. C.; Eshelman, "Point Lookout Light Station," 95.

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

In 1939, the administration of Point Lookout Light Station was transferred to the U. S. Coast Guard. The light, which had not been automated, was deactivated in 1965 and the lens was removed. It was replaced the following year by a skeletal tower located ¼-mile off Point Lookout. The property was transferred to the United States Navy in 1967.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the lighthouse, which is currently unoccupied, served as quarters for the Point Lookout State Park Superintendent. The state park was established in 1965 and comprises between 1,200 and 1,400 acres north of the lighthouse. The light station is currently administered by the Patuxent River Naval Air Station and access to the property is restricted.

*The Buoy Depot at Point Lookout Light Station*

As the lighthouse renovation was underway in 1883, the Lighthouse Service established a buoy depot at the Point Lookout Light Station to store, repair, and place buoys for the middle portion of the Chesapeake Bay, Lighthouse District 5. A coal shed was built the following year to store coal for the operation of the light station and for use by buoy tenders. One or more buoy depots were established in each of the twelve Lighthouse Service districts during the middle of the nineteenth century. As the number of lighthouse districts increased 16 districts in 1886 and 19 districts by 1918 and the jurisdiction of the U. S. Lighthouse Service was extended to noncontiguous U. S. territories, additional buoy depots were constructed. Between twenty-five and fifty depots were established in the United States. Although it is unknown exactly how many survive, the number of extant buoy depot buildings is likely to be small because many of the buildings remain in use, or were altered or destroyed according the changing needs of the Coast Guard. In addition, there have not been any significant efforts to document and preserve buoy

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

depots in the United States.<sup>6</sup> The buoy depot at Point Lookout is the only buoy depot of the three constructed in District 5 to survive.

As stated in an annual report of 1883, "the distance between Lazaretto [Baltimore] and Portsmouth [near Norfolk] depots was so great, and occasioned so much delay in buoyage work, when tenders were at intermediate stations distant from either, that it became necessary to establish a depot at Point Lookout, at the mouth of the Potomac River"<sup>7</sup> The annual report described the depot as follows:

A wharf, 64 feet by 35 feet, and a buoy shed, 40 feet by 100 feet, were built there. In the construction of the wharf, 140 piles were driven, and the bridge was extended about 250 feet into the water. The shed is built of pine lumber, upon brick piers and walls, and the interior is raised above high water and paved with brick. Material for a coal shed of the same size as the buoy shed was purchased and delivered at the site. A railway for small cars will be laid to and along the front of both sheds.<sup>8</sup>

The buoy shed was built in 1883. Construction of the coal shed was begun in July 1884 and completed in September of that year. In 1885, a wood tramway was built to move buoys, coal, and other supplies between the wharf and the two sheds. Coal stored at Point Lookout was

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<sup>6</sup>Although the literature on buoys and tenders is extensive, little has been written on the program for maintaining buoys. There is no inventory of buoy depots or historic context available in secondary sources and only one depot listed in the National Register, the Ninth District Lighthouse Depot, St. Joseph, Michigan.

<sup>7</sup>Annual Report, Point Lookout buoy depot, 1883, Point Lookout Clipping File, National Archives, Record Group 26, Washington, D. C.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

used to provide heat for the light station and may also have been used to power repair equipment in the buoy shed. In addition, the large size of the coal shed at Point Lookout suggests that it also supplied coal to buoy tenders working in the middle portion of the Chesapeake Bay. A buoy tender is a ship designed to place and retrieve active buoys.

The completed coal shed featured open north, west, and possibly south elevations, with a gable-end wall on the east side. It was sided with board and battens above the bays and in the gable ends. A three-story, fog-bell tower built on the east gable end of the coal shed in 1889 is the only significant alteration made to the building before the 1920s. The fog tower no longer survives.

The layout of the Point Lookout buoy depot was characteristic of similar maintenance complexes that required significant amounts of space and light, with large work sheds, storehouses, open yards for construction and storage of buoys, and living quarters and outbuildings. Buoy depots needed space and equipment to handle and repair the variety of large, multi-ton, wood and cast-iron buoys. The large size of each shed at Point Lookout enabled them to function as multi-purpose buildings. In addition to storing coal, it is likely that the coal shed stored other buoy-related material and provided sheltered work space. The buoy and coal sheds were built parallel, only about twenty feet apart, and oriented on the east-west axis. These two buildings, with open, inward facing sides, formed a work yard that was partially protected from the weather. The wharf was constructed to enable buoy tenders to drop off buoys in need of repair and pick up buoys to be returned to service.

The buoy and coal sheds were built from standard Lighthouse Service plans. These plans were used to construct a similar buoy shed at the Portsmouth Buoy Depot in Portsmouth, New

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

Hampshire.<sup>9</sup> Other buoy depots built during the late nineteenth century were designed by Lighthouse District engineers. For example, the former Ninth District Light-house and Supply Depot in St. Joseph, Michigan was designed by Major William Ludlow of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and was built between 1891 and 1910.<sup>10</sup>

The coal shed was significantly altered between 1928 and 1939, when it was converted to living quarters. It was completely enclosed, probably with board-and-batten siding, and the interior was divided with room partitions. An engaged screen porch was built on the west gable end and an interior chimney was added. It is uncertain for whom the additional quarters were built; they may have been additional buoy depot or lighthouse staff, or personnel needed to support other Lighthouse Service or Coast Guard operations. The shed was further altered when the light station came under the administration of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. The Navy altered interior spaces and exterior fenestration when it converted the coal shed to offices and laboratories.

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<sup>9</sup>F. Ross Holland, *America's Lighthouses: An Illustrated History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1972), 206.

<sup>10</sup>Robert O. Christensen, "Ninth District Lighthouse Depot," St. Joseph, Berrien County, Michigan (Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Washington, D. C., 1993), 7.1-7.5, 8.2.

**SM-512, Coal Shed  
Point Lookout Light Station  
St. Mary's County, Maryland  
Section 8 (Significance)**

**MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
PLANNING DATA**

The coal shed at Point Lookout Light Station is evaluated at the state level of significance. Based on the statewide historic contexts delineated in the Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, the geographic organization; chronological and developmental periods; associated historical theme; resource type; and design source are outlined below:

1. **Geographical organization:**  
Western Shore
  
2. **Chronological/development periods:**  
Agricultural-Industrial Transition (A. D. 1815-1870)  
Industrial/Urban Dominance (A. D. 1870-1930)  
Modern Period (1930-Present)
  
3. **Historic-period theme:**  
Maritime History
  
4. **Resource type:**  
Category: Building  
Historic environment: Rural  
Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Storage building
  
5. **Known Design Source:** The U. S. Lighthouse Service

512, Coal  
SM-511, Buoy Shed  
**Point Lookout Light Station**  
**St. Mary's County, Maryland**  
**Section 9 (Major Bibliographical References)**

Calvert Marine Museum. Photographic Collection. Solomons, Maryland.

Christensen, Robert O. "Ninth District Lighthouse Depot." St. Joseph, Berrien County, Michigan. Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. 1993. National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

Clifford, Candace. *Inventory of Historic Light Stations*. Washington, D. C.: National Park Service, History Division, 1994.

De Gast, Robert. *The Lighthouses of the Chesapeake*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Eshelman, Ralph. "Point Lookout Light Station: Condition Assessment Report." Historic background. Williamsport Preservation Training Center, Williamsport, Maryland, 1995.

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Holland, F. Ross. *America's Lighthouses: An Illustrated History*. New York: Dover Publications, 1972..

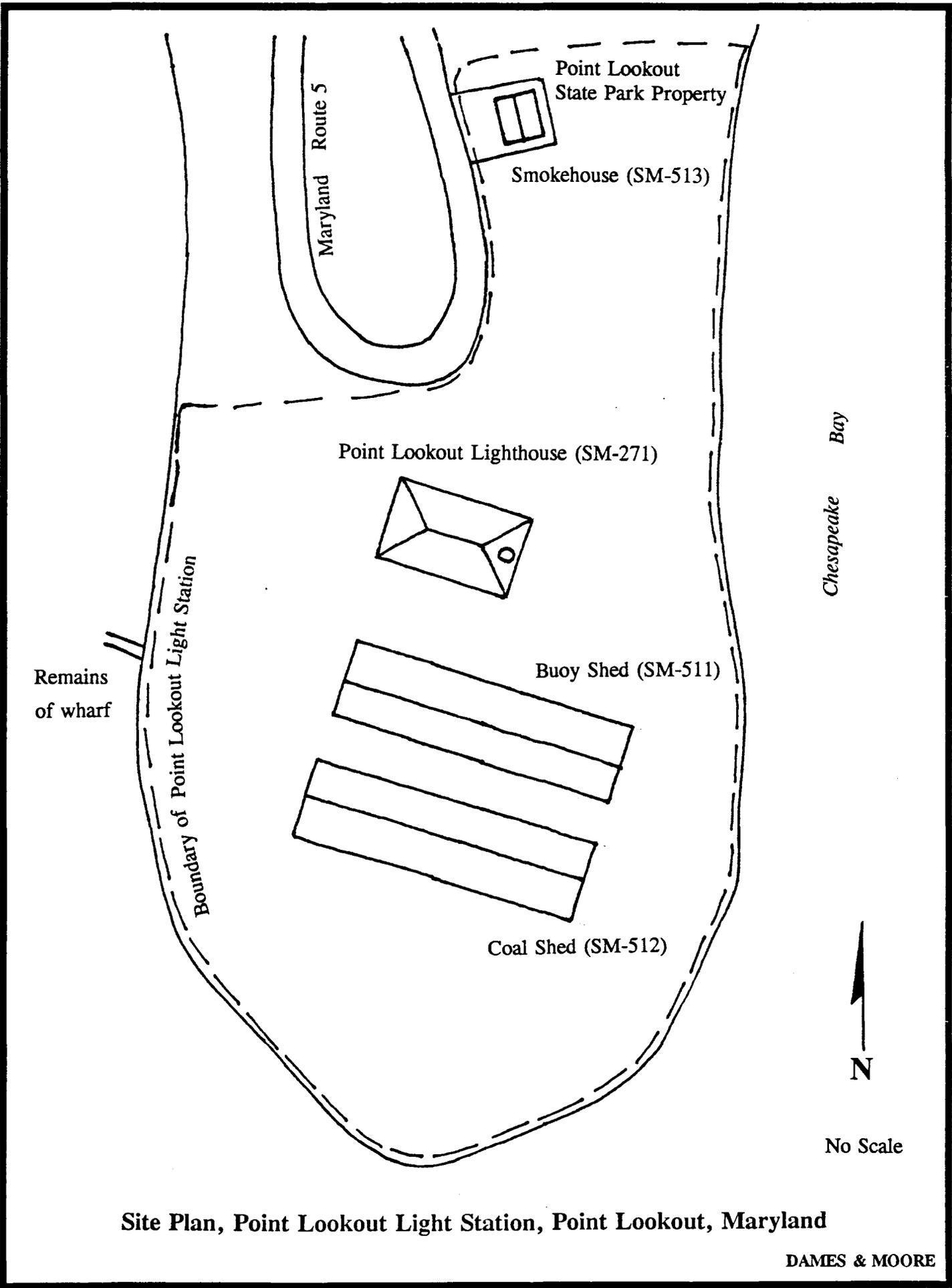
Marshall, Amy K. "A History of Buoys and Tenders." Insert for *Commandant's Bulletin* (November 1995).

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Strobridge, Truman R. *Chronology of Aids to Navigation and the Old U. S. Lighthouse Service, 1716-1939*. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1974.

Sword, Gerald J. "Point Lookout Lighthouse." Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland, 1980.

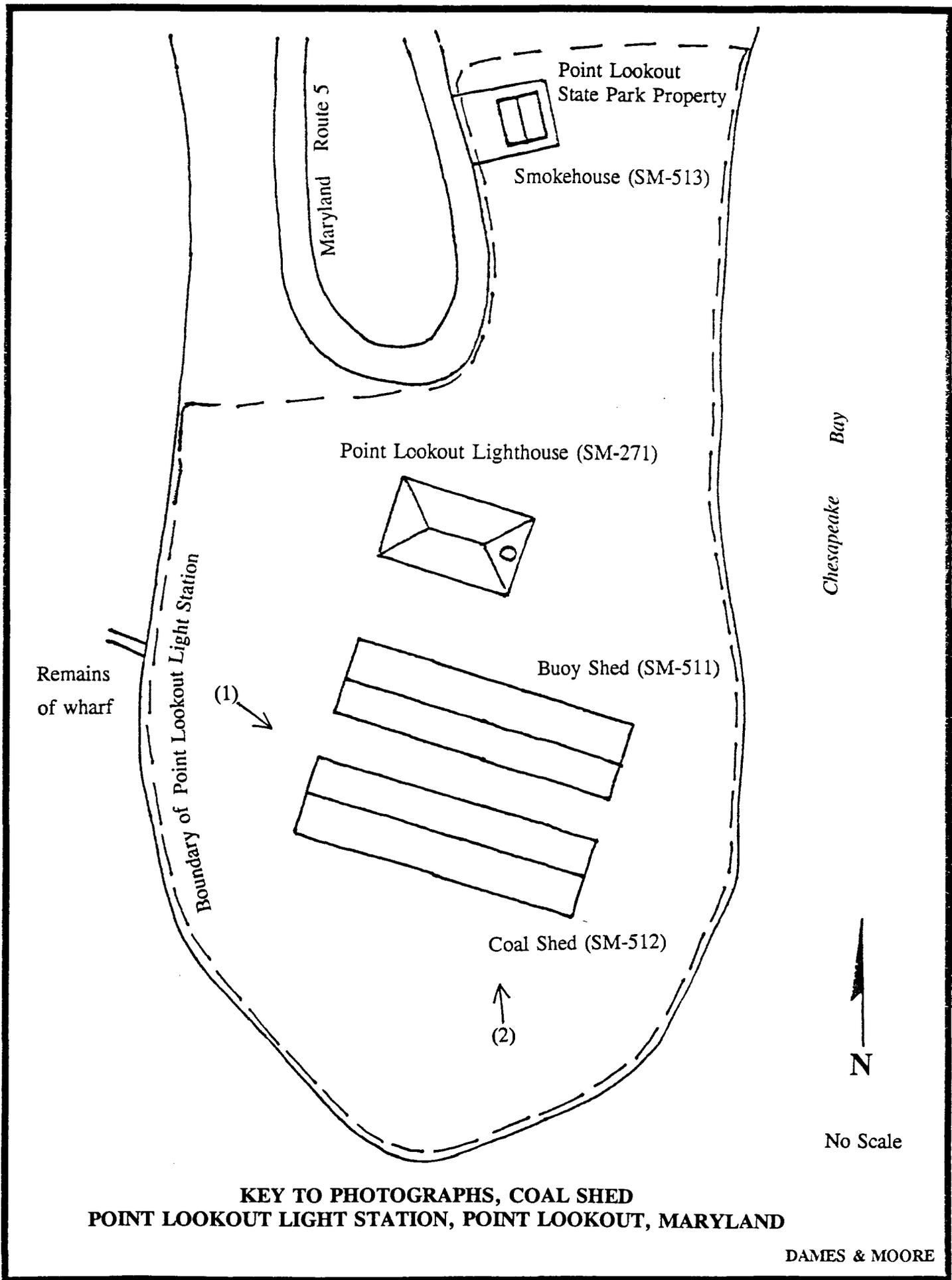
U. S. Department of Commerce. *Buoyage System of the United States*. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1931.



Site Plan, Point Lookout Light Station, Point Lookout, Maryland

DAMES & MOORE

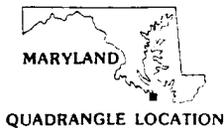
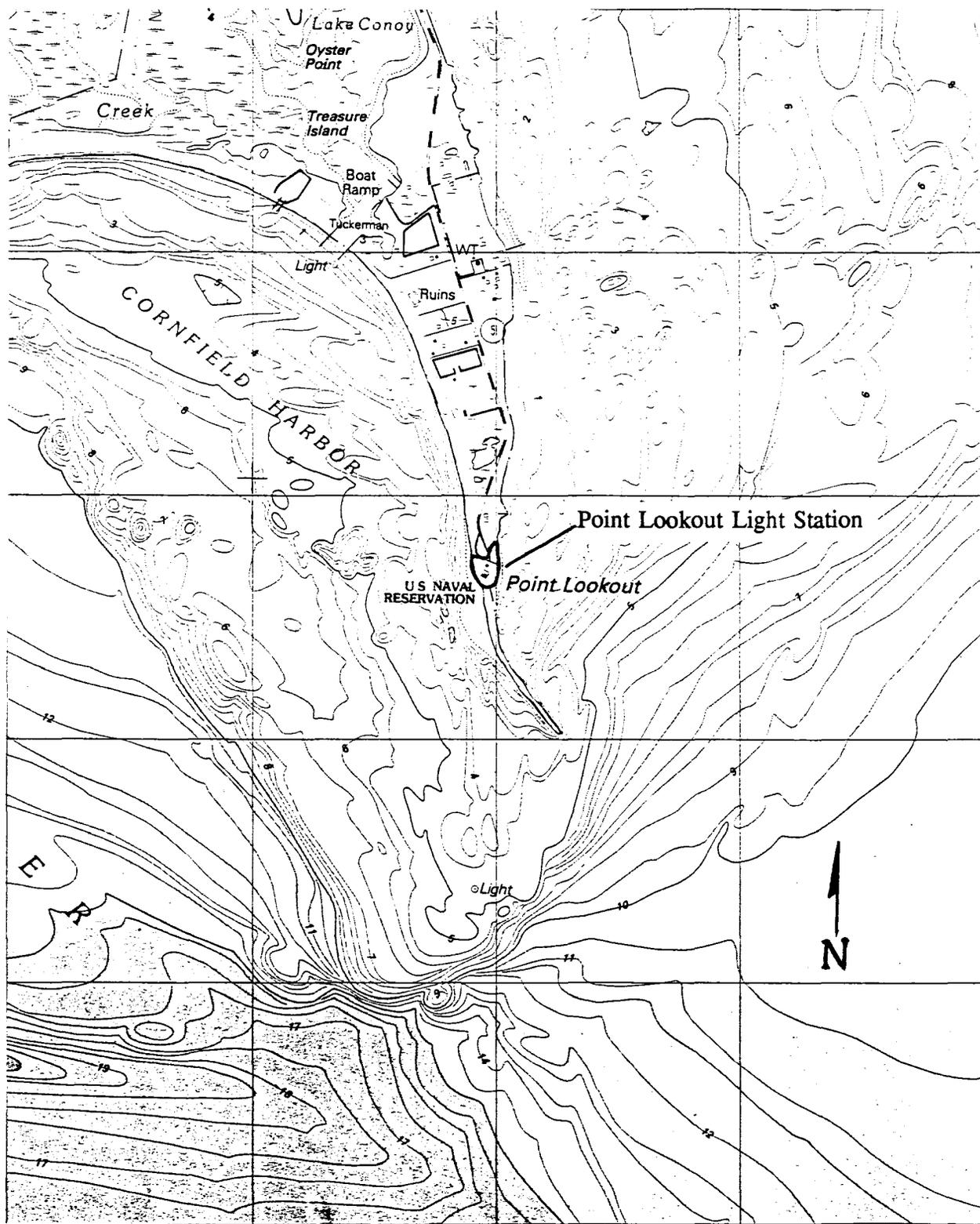
SM-512



**KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS, COAL SHED  
POINT LOOKOUT LIGHT STATION, POINT LOOKOUT, MARYLAND**

DAMES & MOORE

SM-512



**Point Lookout Light Station**  
**Point Lookout, Maryland**

Point Lookout, Maryland  
 Quadrangle, Scale 1:24,000

DAMES & MOORE

SM-512







510-519

Coal shed

Point Lookout Light Sta.

St. Mary's Co., Maryland

John H. Mather

10 August 19--

Worland 2072

Coal shed in yard - round, 400 lbs.

2 of 2