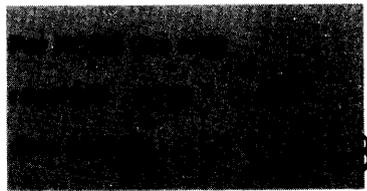


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Cape Romain Lighthouses

and/or common Same

2. Location

SE of McClellanville

street & number Lighthouse Island in the Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge not for publication

city, town McClellanville *McC.* X vicinity of congressional district First

state South Carolina code 045 county Charleston code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name United States Fish and Wildlife Service

street & number Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge

city, town Awendaw vicinity of state South Carolina 29429

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Regional Office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service

street & number Richard B. Russell Building 75 Spring Street, S.W.

city, town Atlanta state Georgia 30303

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Places
title in South Carolina has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Lighthouse Island, originally Racoon Key, in the Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge in Charleston County, South Carolina, is the home of two lighthouses constructed by the United States government in 1827 and 1857. The towers provided constant protection from the Cape Romain shoals, with the exception of the Civil War years, from 1827 to 1947.

The first Cape Romain lighthouse was built in 1827 under the direction of Winslow Lewis. It was a sixty-five foot conical brick tower painted black and white for daytime visibility. The basal diameter was 29.5 feet and the top diameter was approximately 15 feet. The focal plane was 87.5 feet above sea level and its "patent lamps, reflectors, &c." produced a beam visible for eighteen miles. The interior was plain with simple wooden steps leading to the lamp level. There were windows on the eastern and western elevations which featured simple pegged frames. The wooden lintel of the single entrance is carved with the word "Light" and the date 1827. The tower was refitted in 1847 with a fixed light featuring eleven lamps and twenty-one inch reflectors. By 1937 the tower had been painted red and was being used for storage. At some point a few of the windows were bricked in. Today only the brick tower remains, divested of both its paint and its lamp. A keeper's house was included in the project; however, there are no extant remains.

The second Cape Romain Lighthouse was built in 1857 and first lit on 1 January 1858. The taller, more modern structure was a 150 foot octagonal, pyramidal tower with a focal plane 161 feet above sea level. The first order Fresnel lens system cast a beam visible for nineteen miles. Originally natural brick, the tower was later painted with the bottom half white and top half painted black and white for use as a daytime beacon. In 1931 the Fresnel lens was replaced by a 500 watt electrical system and in 1937 that apparatus was supplanted by a 1000 candlepower stationary light requiring service only once every three months, which did away with the need for a resident keeper. The interior features an iron spiral staircase leading to the lamp house. The lamp house retains its revolving lamp platform, exterior balcony with iron railing and circular brass roof. Keepers' residences and other support buildings associated with the later lighthouse were destroyed in 1947 when the lighthouse was last lit.

Surroundings:

The Cape Romain Lighthouses are located on Lighthouse Island in the Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge. The island is thickly covered with undergrowth and various shrubs.

8. Significance

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/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1827, 1857

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Lighthouse Island, historically known as Racoon Key, in the Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge in Charleston County, South Carolina, is the site of two lighthouses built in 1827 and 1857 by the United States government. Constructed to warn shipping traffic of the Cape Romain shoals nine miles southeast of the island, the beacons provided constant protection, with the exception of the Civil War period, from 1827 until 1947. The lighthouses are significant for their major role in navigation and transportation in Charleston County and for their unique designs.

Additional Information:

In 1823 the United States Congress passed "An act to authorize the building of light-houses, light vessels, and beacons, therein mentioned, and for other purposes."¹ A provision of the act was an appropriation of \$10,000 to construct a lighthouse on Cape Romain in South Carolina to protect shipping from the Cape Romain shoals nine miles southeast of the Cape area.² Testimony on the preferred construction site was published in a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury in response to a resolution of the House of Representatives requesting information on the progress of efforts to build a lighthouse at Cape Romain.³ All witnesses testified in favor of locating the tower on the northeast key of the Racoon Keys.⁴

In 1827 a sixty-five foot conical brick tower and a dwelling house were constructed on Racoon Key at a cost of \$7,475.00.⁵ The work was contracted to Winslow Lewis, who also directed the fitting of the tower with "patent lamps, reflectors &c." a short time later at a cost of \$950.00.⁶ In 1846 a lengthy report was submitted to the first session of the twenty-ninth United States Congress extolling the virtues of the newer methods of illuminating lighthouses utilized in Europe.⁷ It is possible that this report led to revamping of several lighthouses including the Cape Romain light which was refitted in 1847 with a fixed light with eleven lamps and twenty-one inch reflectors.⁸

In 1857 a second lighthouse was built at Cape Romain.⁹ Reputedly constructed with slave labor, the beacon was 161 feet high, octagonal in shape, with the lower half painted white and the upper half painted black and white for daytime visibility.¹⁰ The tower is decidedly out of plumb and the tradition is that halfway through construction it was discovered that the walls were not sloping at the proper angles. Despite orders to correct the error the tower was completed with a noticeable lean.¹¹ It is probable that additional buildings for the keepers were built at this time to replace or supplement the 1827 residence. According to tradition use of the lighthouses was discontinued during the Civil War period but revived shortly after the end of the war.¹² The condition of all lighthouses was reviewed in 1867 and the tower on Cape Romain was found to be in good condition although the keepers' residences leaked in inclement weather, probably due to war time neglect.¹³

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.24

Quadrangle name Cape Romain

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1,7	6,5,1,8,5,0	3,6,5,4,2,9,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

1,7	6,5,1,8,8,0	3,6,5,4,3,5,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

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 Suzanne P. Wylie, National Register of Historic Places, South Carolina Department of
David Chamberlain, Historic Preservation Planner Archives and History

organization Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council date
of Governments

street & number Old Citadel Annex telephone

city or town Charleston state South Carolina 29403

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Christie Z. Dent, Deputy SHPO, for

title Charles E. Lee, State Historic Preservation Officer date September 4, 1981

For NCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

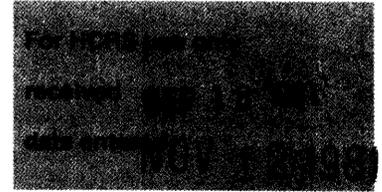
[Signature]
 Keeper of the National Register

[Signature]
 Chief of Registration

[Signature]
 Date 11/2/81

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 1

Item number 8

Page 1

In 1931 a generating plant was installed on the island to support a new lighting system with a 500 watt bulb with a revolving bull's eye lens visible for nineteen miles.¹⁴ Around 1937 the tower was fitted with a 1000 candlepower stationary light which required attention only once every three months thereby doing away with the need for resident keepers.¹⁵ By this time the first tower had been painted red and was being used for storage. The second Cape Romain lighthouse was last lit in 1947.¹⁶

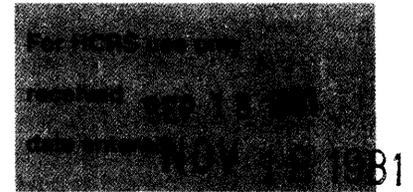
Engineering:

The 1827 lighthouse at Cape Romain is the second oldest lighthouse in South Carolina. It is the oldest lighthouse in Charleston County, and the only light of its period in the county. Its short, conical brick tower without ornamentation and its simple wooden spiral stairs distinguish it from all other lights in the state.

The second Cape Romain Lighthouse is the only octagonal pyramidal lighthouse in Charleston County. Its tall brick tower, iron spiral stairs, and brass circular conical roof represent the height of lighthouse design in the Charleston area.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 2

Item number 9

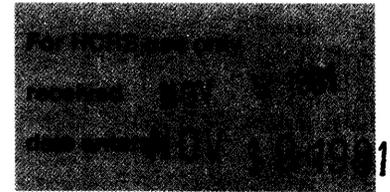
Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States. Washington: Printed by Gales & Seaton, 1822.
- Lofton, John M., Jr. "Fixed Lamp Will End Need for Romain Light Keepers." Charleston News and Courier, 6 April 1937.
- Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances for the Year 1867. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868.
- Snow, Edward Rowe. Famous Lighthouses of America. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1955.
- Statutes at Large. 17th Congress. 2nd Session. 3 March 1823. Microfiche. vol. 3, card 8.
- United States. Congress. House. Letter From the Secretary of Treasury Accompanied by A Report of the Fifth Auditor Upon the Subject of Lighthouses. H. Doc. 19, 19th Congress, 1st Session, 1825.
- United States. Congress. House. Statement of Contracts Made Relative to Oil, Lighthouses, Floating Lights, Beacons, Buoys, Stakeage, &c. H. Doc. 185, 20th Congress, 1st Session, 1827.
- United States, Congress. Senate. Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on Improvements in the Light-house System and Collateral Aids to Navigation. S. Doc. 488. 29th Congress, 1st Session, 1846.
- United States. Congress. Senate. Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, on the State of the Finances, for the Year Ending June 30, 1858. Executive Document 2. 35th Congress. 2nd session. 1858.
- Witney, Dudley. The Lighthouse. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet 3

Item number 10

Page 1

Verbal boundary description and justification:

Beginning at a point A, 20 meters due north of the northernmost (1857) lighthouse, proceed 50 meters due southeast, to a point B; thence 100 meters due southwest, to a point C; thence 50 meters due northwest, to a point D; thence 100 meters due northeast, to the point A of origin.

This boundary includes both historic lighthouses, and 5000 square meters of sand, seagrass, and tidal morass at their bases.

FOOTNOTES

¹Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States (Washington: Printed by Gales & Seaton, 1822), p. 308; Statutes at Large, 17th Congress, 2nd Session, 3 March 1823, pp. 780-781.

²Statutes, pp. 780-781.

³U. S. Congress, House, Letter From the Secretary of Treasury Accompanied by a Report of the Fifth Auditor Upon the Subject of Lighthouses, H. Doc. 19, 19th Congress, 1st session, 1825, pp. 3-12.

⁴Ibid.

⁵U. S. Congress, House, Statement of Contracts Made Relative to Oil, Lighthouses, Floating Lights, Beacons, Buoys, Stakeage, &c., House Document 185, 20th Congress, 1st session, 1827.

⁶Ibid.

⁷U. S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on Improvements in the Light-house System and Collateral Aids to Navigation. Senate Document 488, 29th Congress, 1st session, 1846.

⁸U. S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, on the State of the Finances, for the Year Ending June 30, 1858, Executive Document 2, 35th Congress, 2nd session, 1858, pp. 414-415.

⁹Ibid. p. 284; Edward Rowe Snow, Famous Lighthouses of America (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1955) p. 194.

¹⁰Snow, p. 194; John M. Lofton, Jr., "Fixed Lamp Will End Need for Romain Light Keepers." Charleston News and Courier, 6 April 1937, p. 12.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of Finances for the Year 1867. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868) pp. 219-220.

¹⁴Lofton.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Dudley Witney, The Lighthouse (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975). p. 235; Lofton.