

AMERICAN LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION

LIGHTHOUSEFOUNDATION.ORG

March 6, 2024

Chair Rotundo, Chair Sachs, and honorable members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

Good afternoon. My name is Bob Trapani, Jr., Executive Director of the nonprofit American Lighthouse Foundation. I am here today to testify on behalf of Maine's historic lighthouses as it relates to LD 2225, "An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events.

The two coastal storms of January 2024 marked a turning point for Maine. The widespread damage was nothing short of riveting. In the wake of these devastating weather events, it is clear that we can no longer be complacent with our efforts to protect Maine's most vulnerable and precious coastal resources, which includes lighthouses.

Following the storms, Ford Reiche of The Presumpscot Foundation and I surveyed two dozen lighthouses by helicopter. We saw firsthand the terrible toll these two storms had taken on lighthouses statewide. The storm damage is in the millions.

Maine's lighthouses – 66 in all, are some of the most historic and picturesque in the country, and are irreplaceable pillars of the Maine Brand. But they need our help. Lighthouses stand on the frontlines of every storm, a changing climate and rising sea levels. Therefore, we need to act today to make lighthouses more resilient.

Why are lighthouses so important?

For the last two centuries, Maine's lighthouses have helped save countless lives. Most still serve as active aids to navigation. Fishermen, recreational boaters and kayakers can attest to the lifesaving capabilities of a lighthouse when the need arises.

However, just as importantly, lighthouses are a vital component of Maine's present day economy – beckoning residents and visitors alike to spend ample time along our rugged coastline and islands. People seek lighthouses out for their unique sense of place, to experience their history, admire their architecture and enjoy the natural beauty surrounding them.

Lighthouses help "light" the way for Maine's tourism and outdoor recreation economy. Maine's Office of Outdoor Recreation has noted, "Outdoor recreation contributed \$3.3 billion to Maine's economy in 2022 – nearly 4% of the gross domestic product."

In addition, according to the Maine Office of Tourism, 51% of visitors in 2023 listed “enjoying the ocean views/rocky coast” as an activity, and 17% visited historic sites/museums. There is no doubt that lighthouses contribute mightily to the economic success and growth of Maine’s tourism and outdoor resources.

In closing, I am requesting an additional \$12 million dollars be transferred from the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund to the Department of Transportation for Maine’s lighthouses. The \$12 million dollars being requested is in addition to that already provided for in the proposed legislation. We do not wish to divert funds away from roads, bridges, coastal areas and communities, all of which undeniably need resources as well.

The additional funds we are requesting will provide mitigation investments to protect against the adverse effects posed by future storms, which promise to be more intense and more frequent, as well as rising sea levels. The requested funds could also serve as a match for any available Federal disaster funds or ineligible costs.

Why is this funding so critical?

Nonprofit organizations serve as the steward for 40% of Maine’s lighthouses. These nonprofits work extremely hard to raise much-needed funds for the general maintenance and care of these lighthouses. However, the costs of this storm damage is simply above and beyond the capacity of what nonprofit organizations can provide for on their own. There are very few funding resources available to nonprofits for assistance with storm recovery, let alone addressing diverse mitigation measures so desperately needed.

Such an investment by the Maine Legislature will ensure our lighthouses are made more resilient – thus protecting and sustaining an important asset of Maine’s tourism and outdoor recreational economy. This investment will also safeguard some of our most beloved historic and cultural resources in their time of greatest need. That time is now.

Thank you.

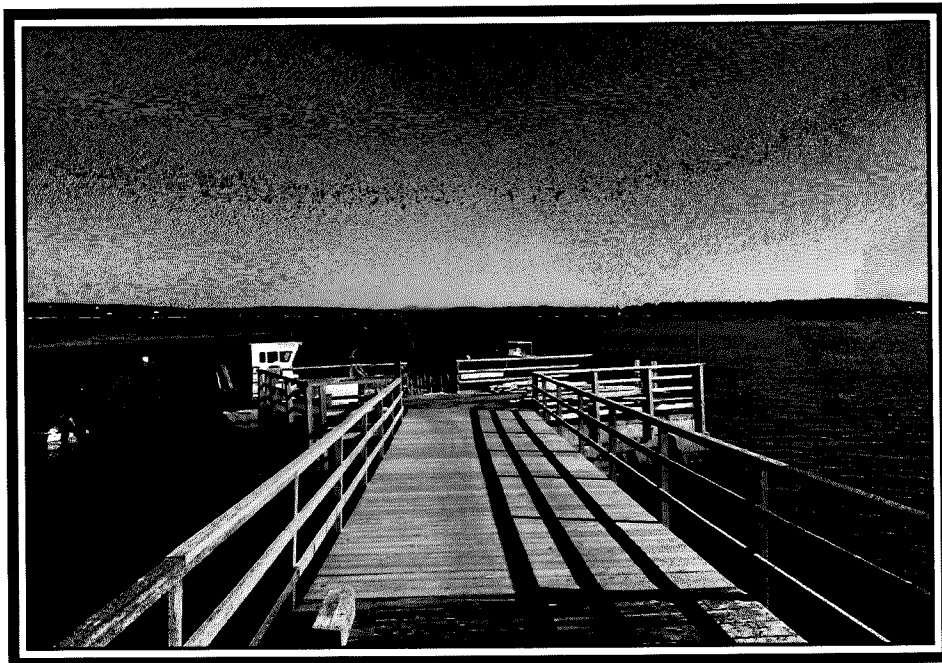
Whitehead Lighthouse

Whitehead Island, Penobscot Bay

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024 destroyed the 1860s wooden boathouse as well the 85-foot dock and its support pilings. Valuable contents inside the boathouse were also lost which included a Boston Whaler and electric 4wd Polaris Ranger vehicle. The brick whistle house sustained damage.

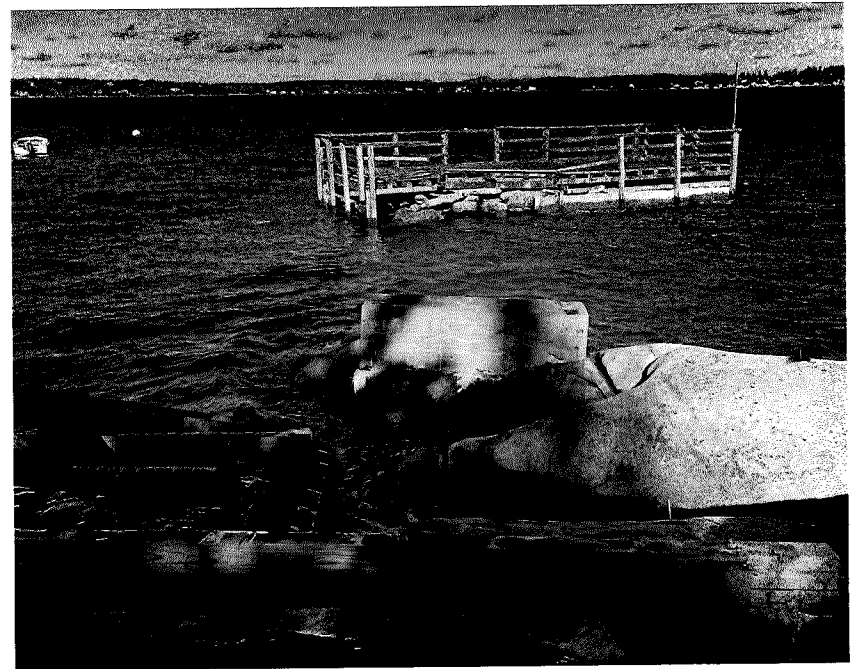


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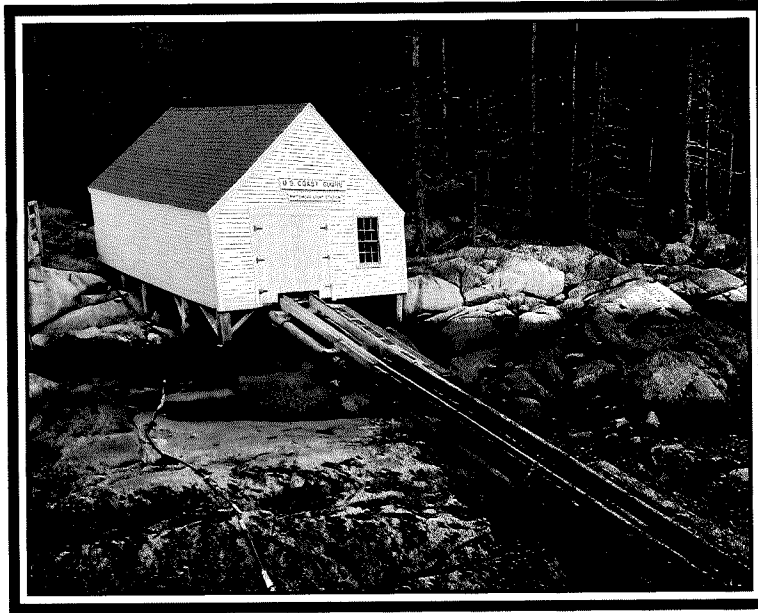


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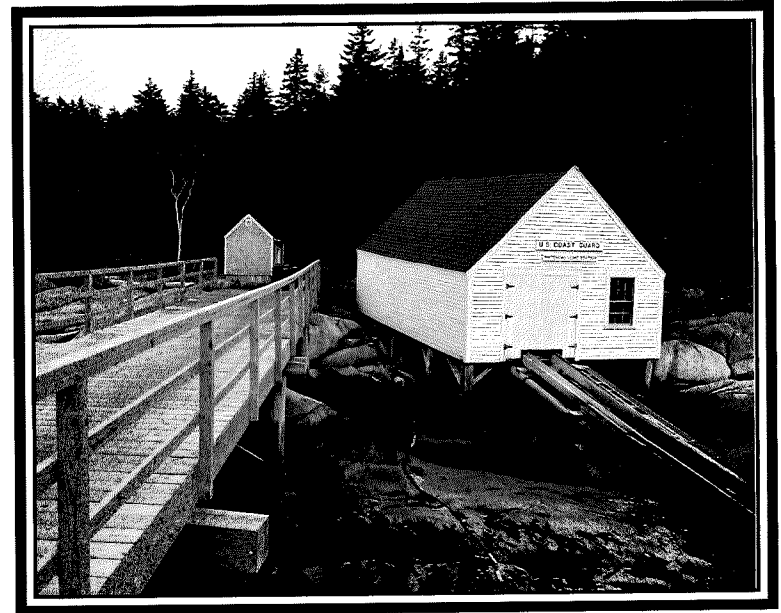
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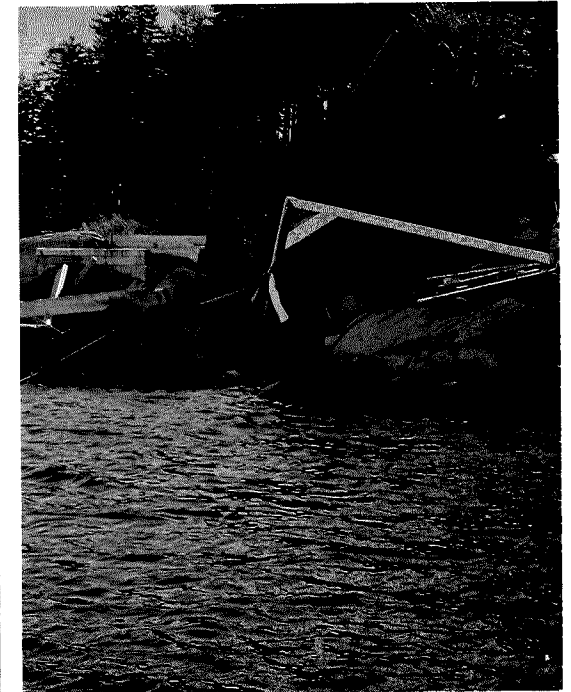
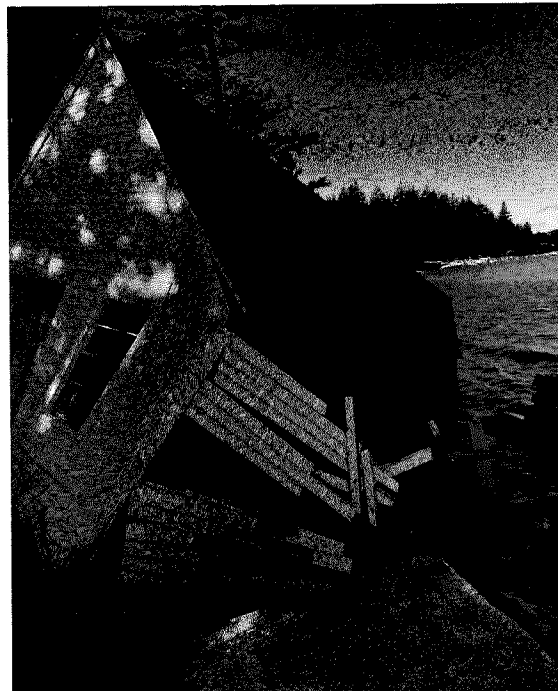
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BOATHOUSE



AFTER:



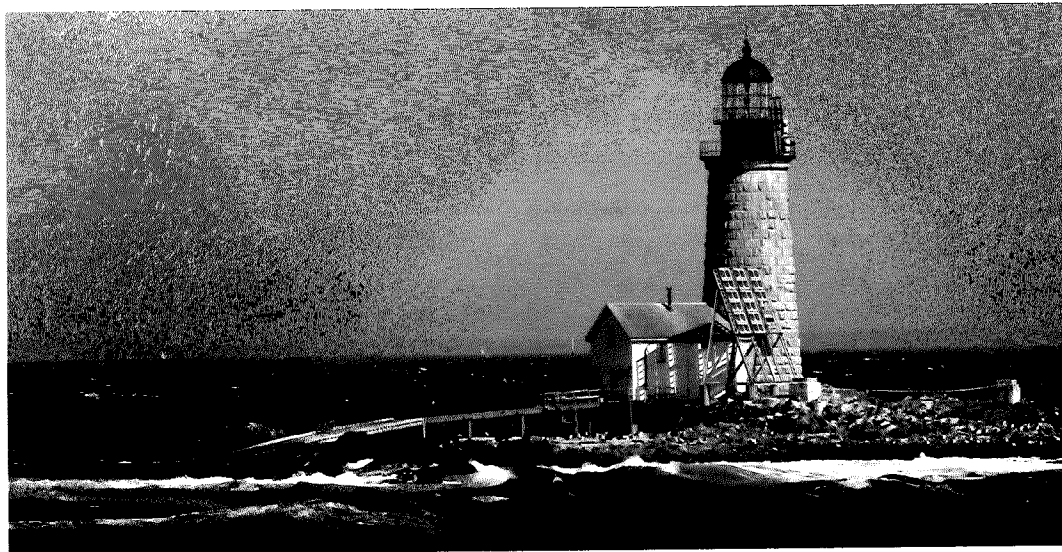
APPENDIX B

Whitehead Lighthouse

Halfway Rock Lighthouse

Casco Bay

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, caused serious damage to the 180-foot ramp and dock. Damage included several support columns, cross pieces and pier foundations. Also, dozens of 1-inch diameter steel connecting rods were damaged or destroyed. Two decks adjacent to ramp/dock were swept away and the galvanized handrail system was washed away.

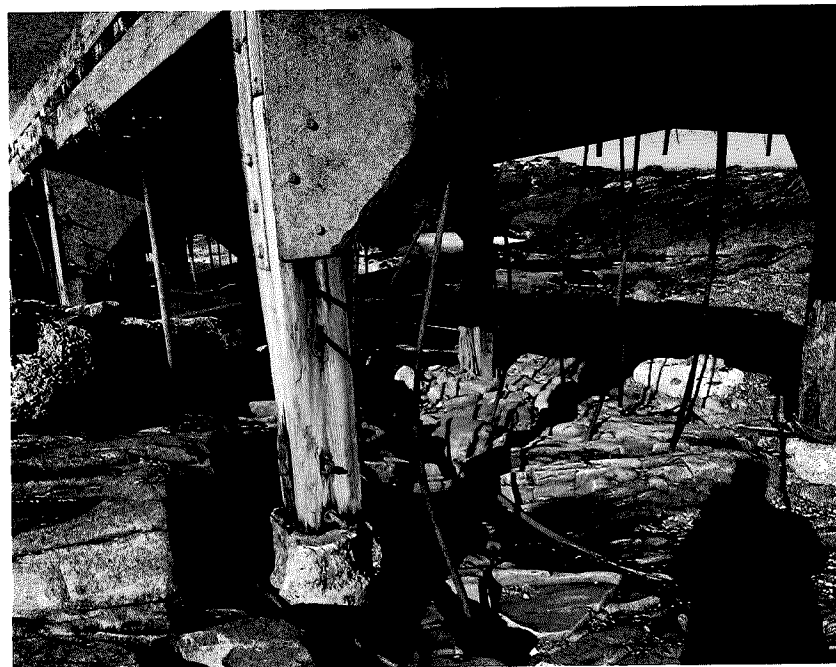


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BOAT RAMP

AFTER:



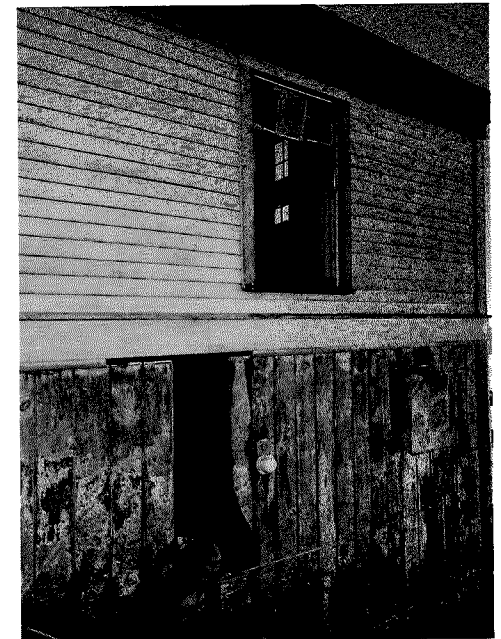
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BOATHOUSE INTERIOR

Siding and roof trim were damaged on the boathouse exterior. The sliding barn-style door was pushed in, permitting the seas to flood the first level of the boathouse up to four feet. This swamped the workshop, head and electrical systems. On the second level of the boathouse, two double-hung windows were broken which allowed seas to flood the recently restored galley/living room space.

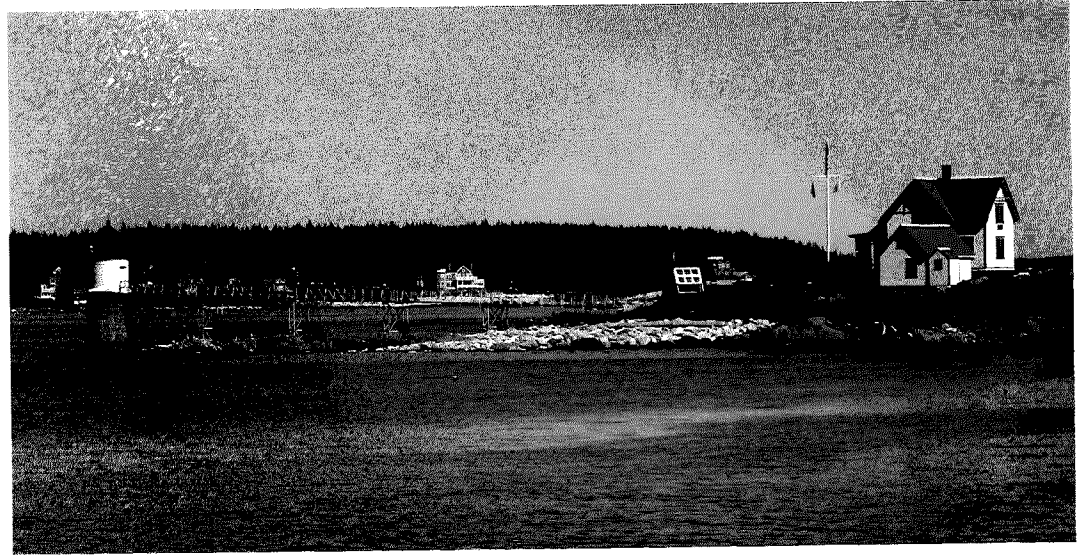
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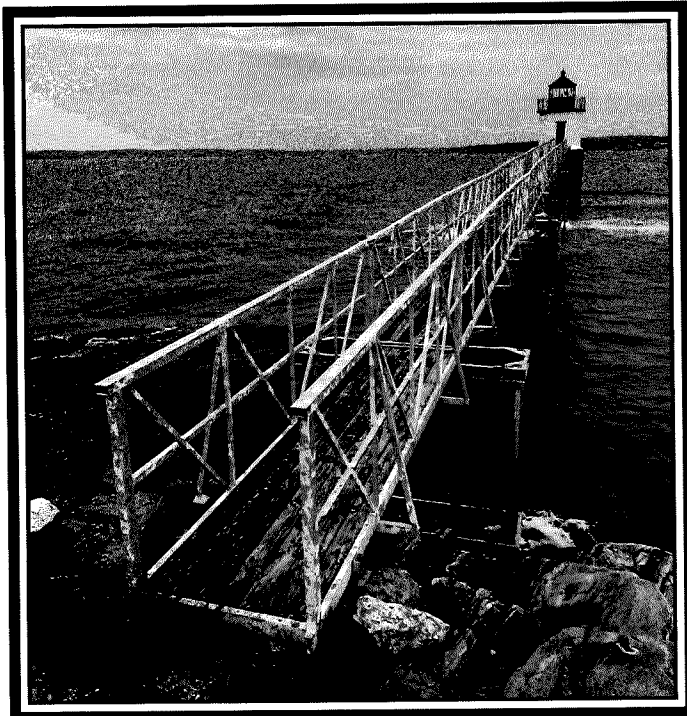
Ram Island Lighthouse

East Boothbay

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, destroyed the entire 214-foot walkway and its supporting piers. The walkway connected the island to the lighthouse. In addition, a small winch house on the southeast side of the island (at the former site of the boathouse) was swept away.

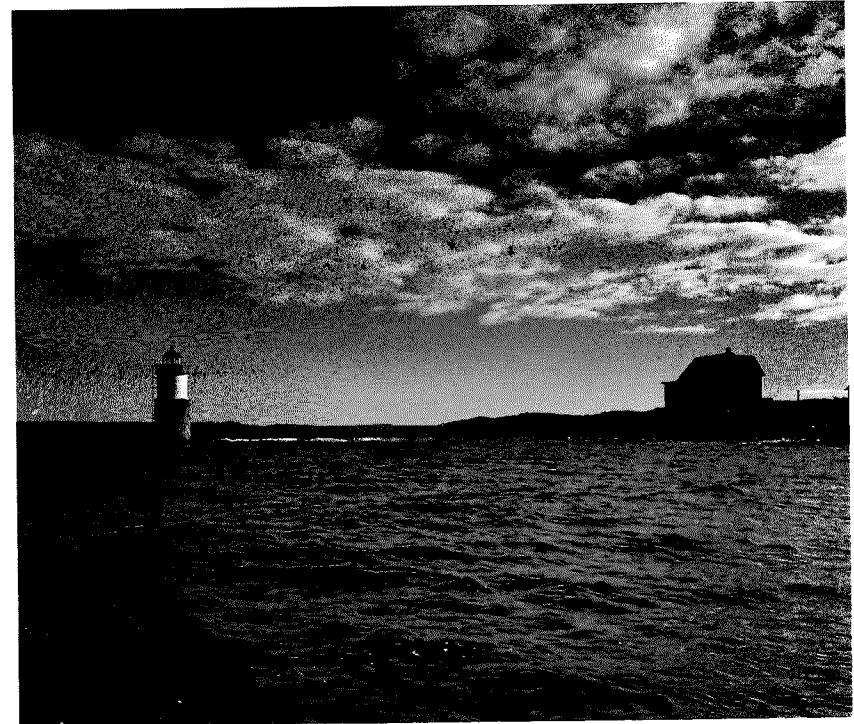


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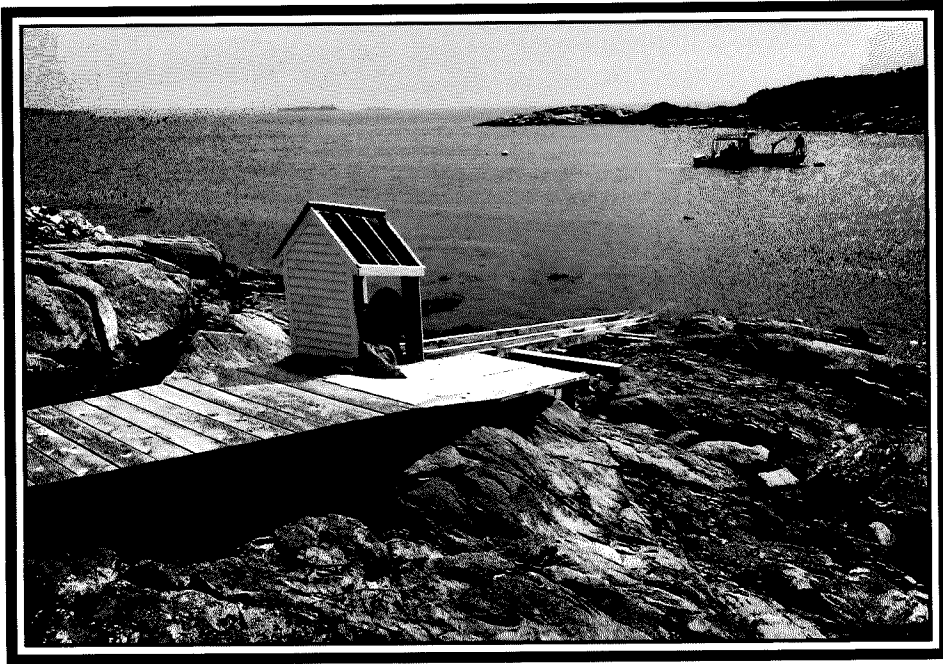


WALKWAY

AFTER:

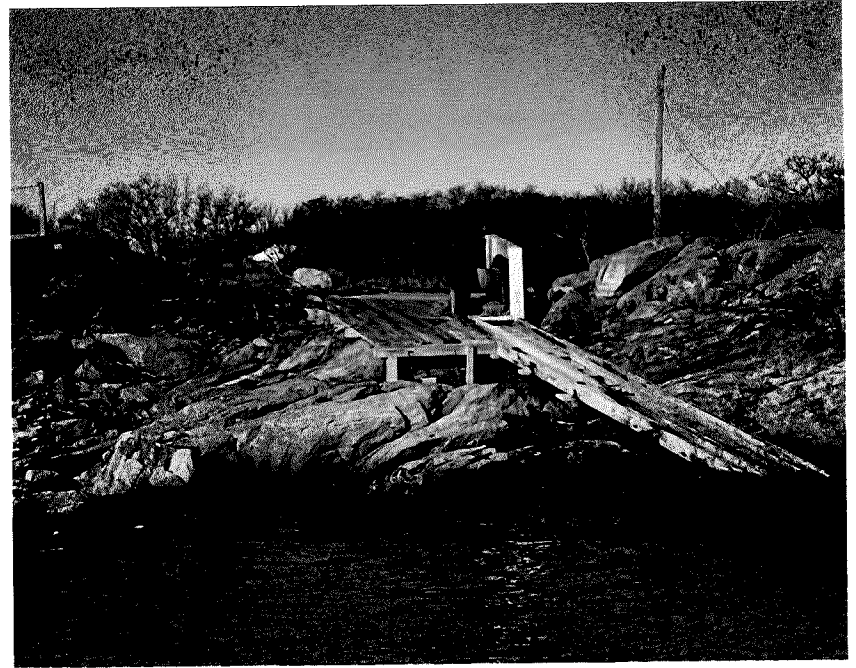


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WINCH HOUSE

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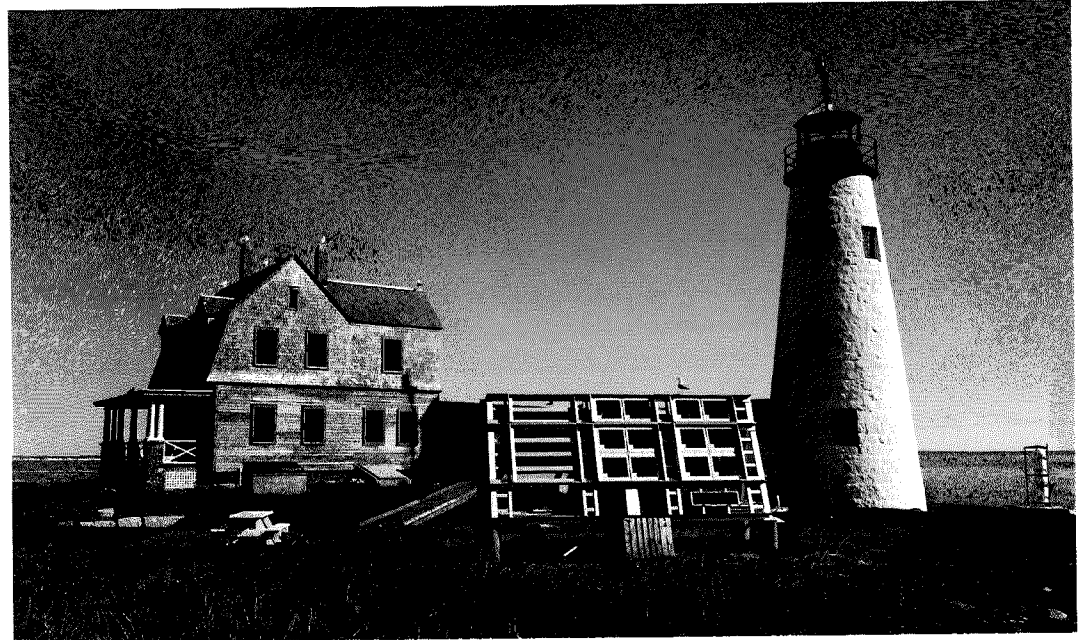


Wood Island Lighthouse

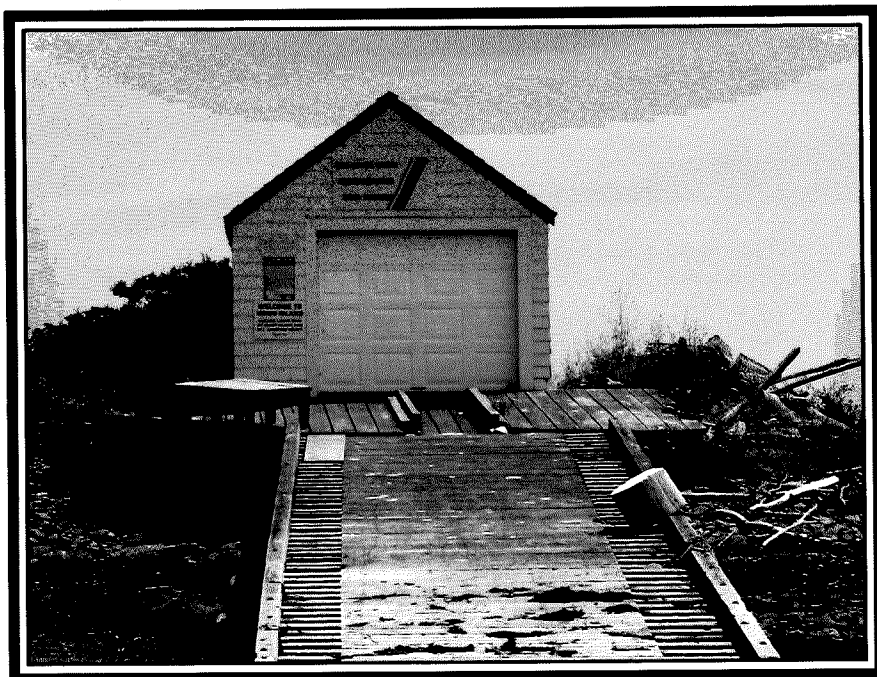
Biddeford Pool

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, moved the wooden boathouse from its foundation and floated it down the wooden ramp approximately 20-feet. A rear corner and access door on the backside of the structure is missing, and the garage door on the front/west side was damaged.

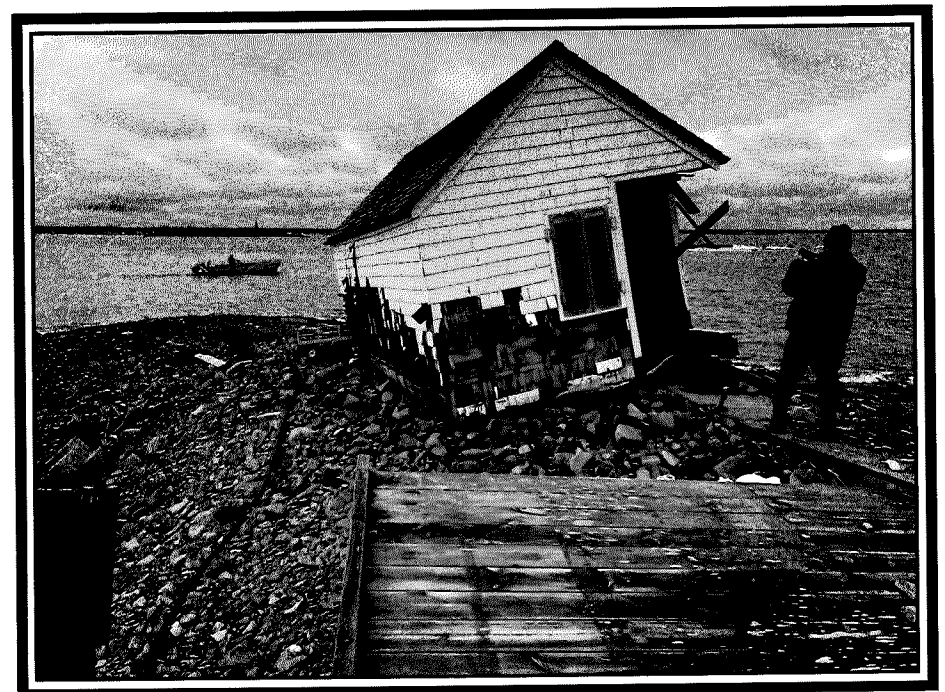
In addition, the platform on the backside of the boathouse was lifted and compromised by cobble accretion and the platform in the front of the boathouse was destroyed. Some boards along the wooden ramp were swept away.

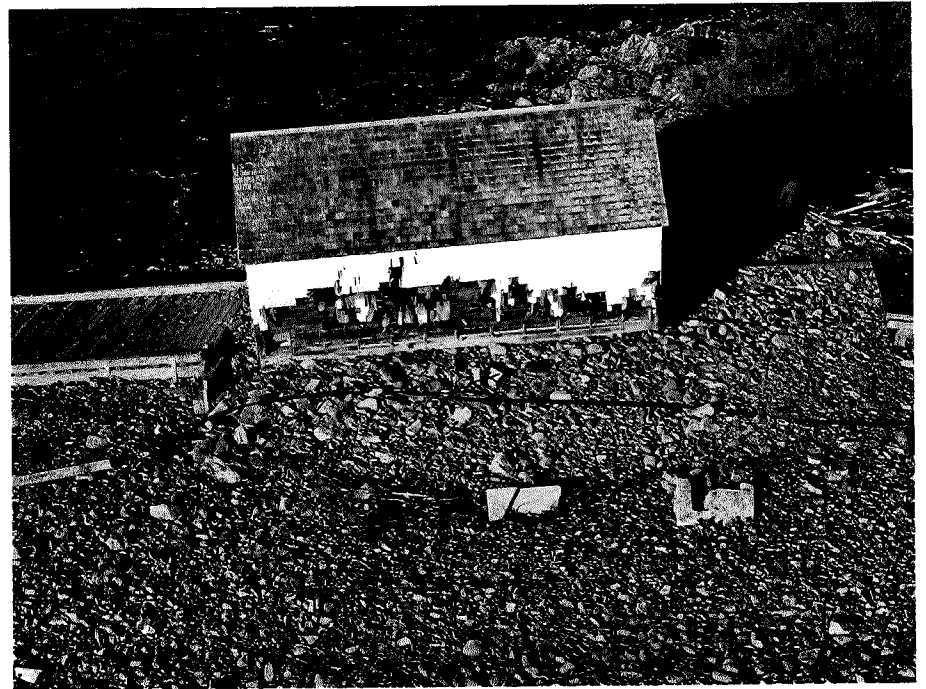


BEFORE:



BOATHOUSE





Browns Head Lighthouse

Vinalhaven

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, caused large areas around the lighthouse and the retaining wall to erode. The old seawall held the water away from the foundation of the house, but sustained scouring at the base, compromising the masonry structure's internal integrity. The large deck that provides access to the keepers dwelling had high water under the supports and large areas of supporting soil has been washed away, causing the deck to require structural bracing. The land to the west of the lighthouse received the force of the wind-driven waves, and about 4-feet of the soil and rock has been lost in the wake of the storms.

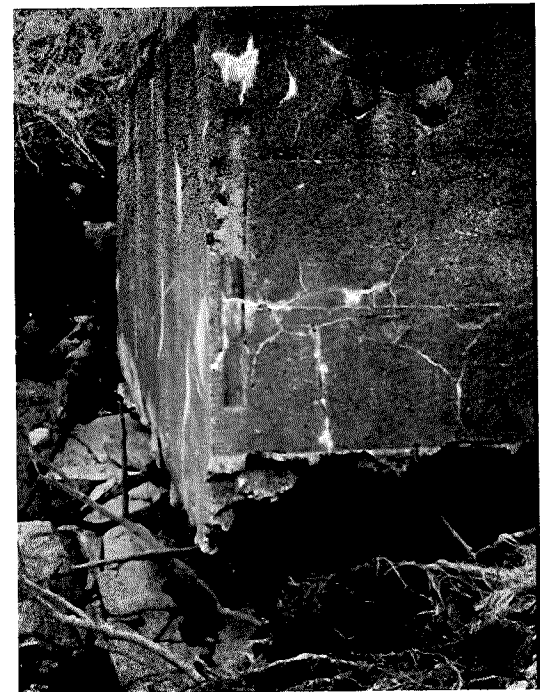
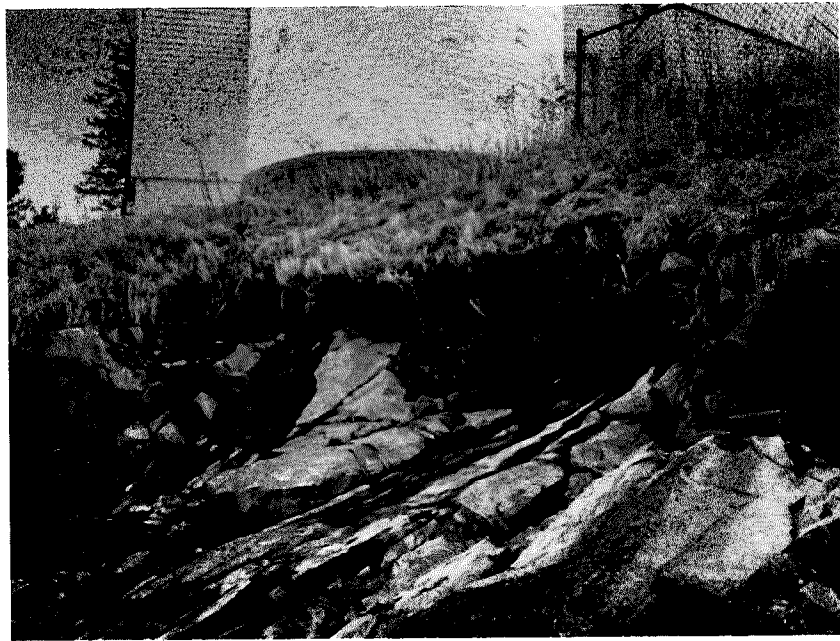


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SEAWALL



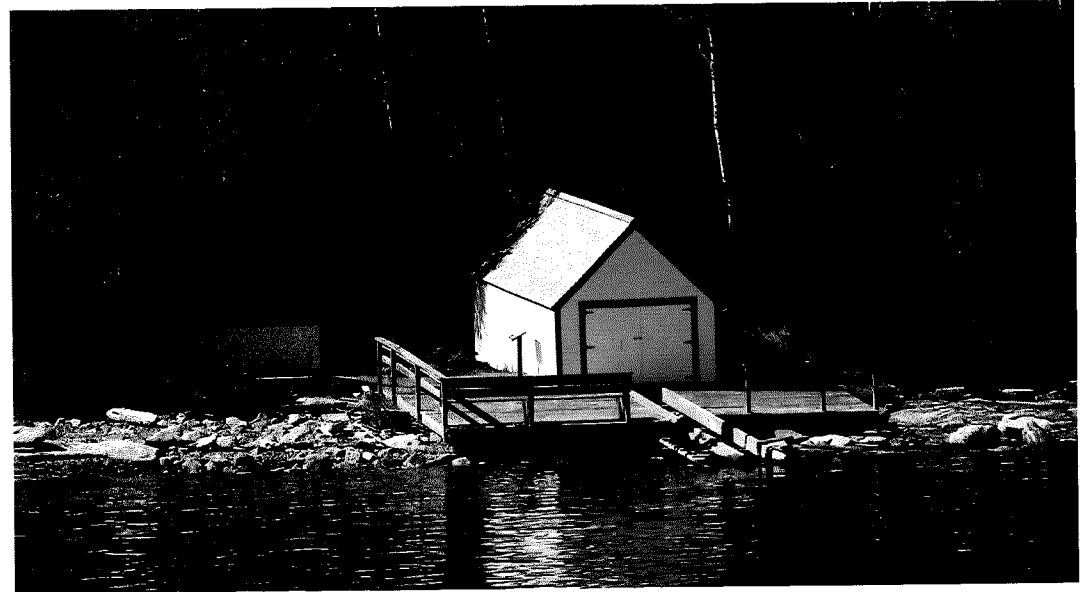


Burnt Island Lighthouse

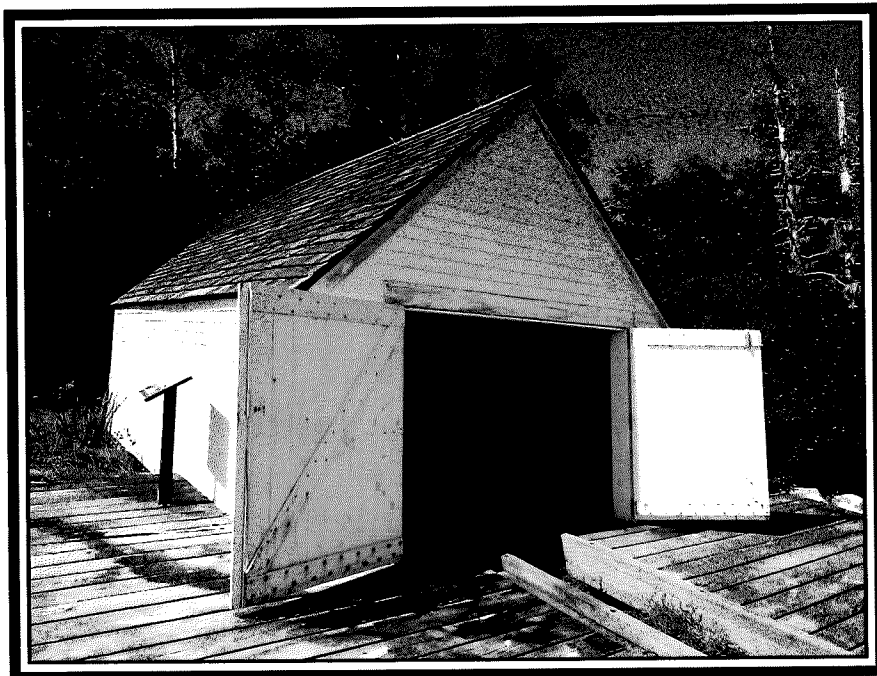
Boothbay

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, surge and wave action inundated the boathouse surroundings, causing the structures two swinging wooden doors to be destroyed. Siding was also lost on the east and south sides of the boathouse.

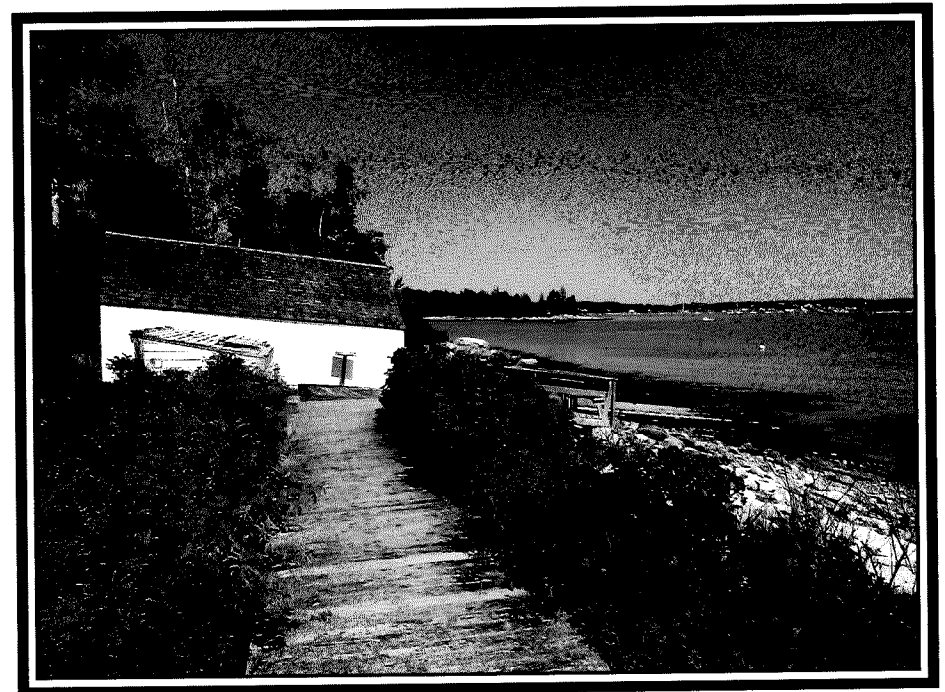
In addition, the landing platforms that straddle the wooden ways were damaged and appear to be no longer level. A nearby small shed adjacent to the boathouse – on the southeast corner, also suffered damage, as did the wooden walkway that leads from the landing area in a southerly direction to other light station structures.



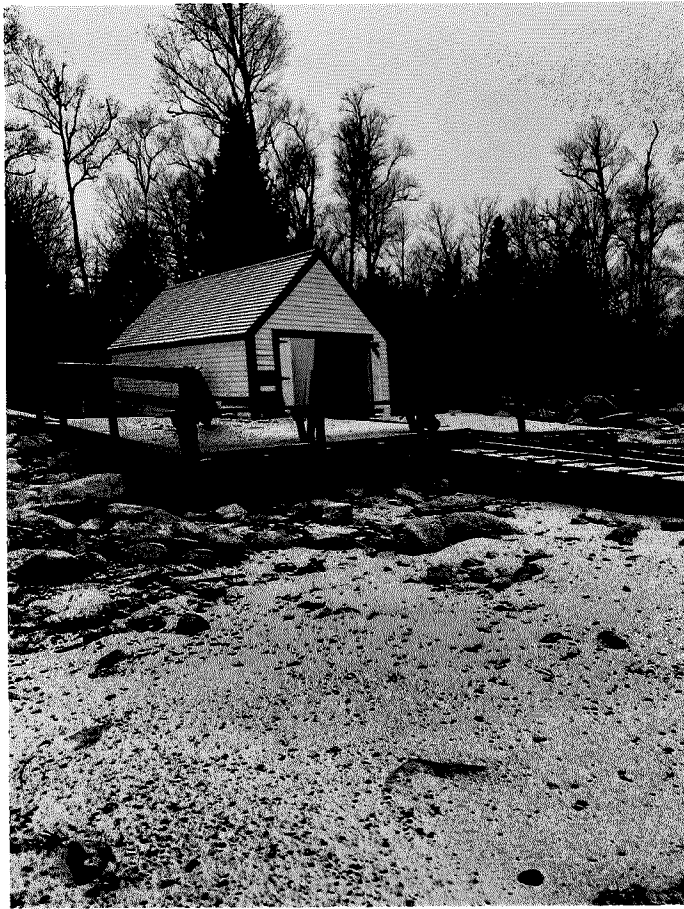
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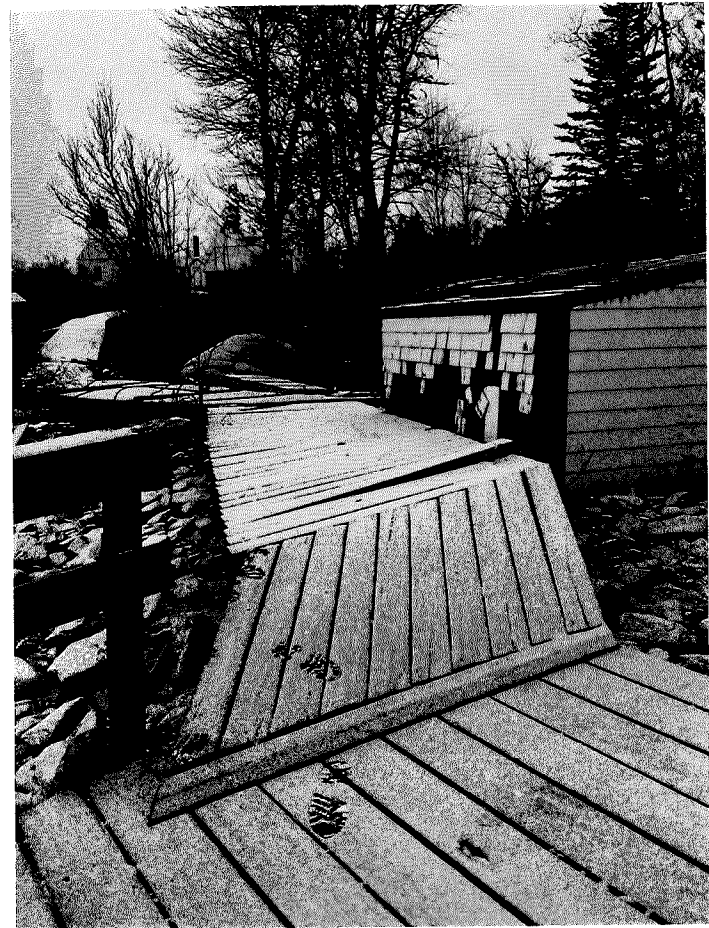
BOATHOUSE



AFTER:



BOATHOUSE



Cuckolds Lighthouse

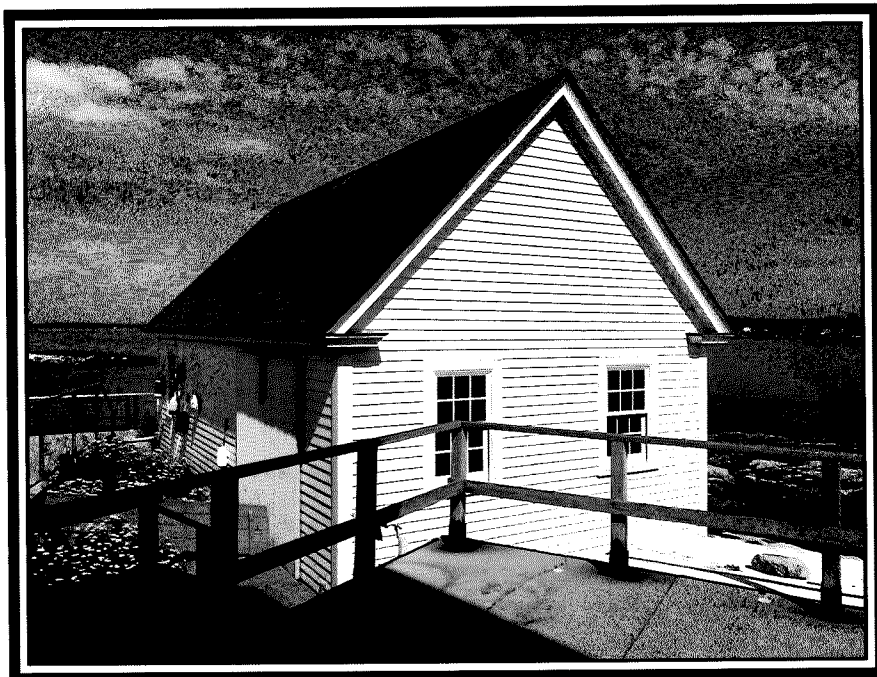
Southport

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, destroyed the south seawall. This was a contributing factor to damage inflicted upon the boathouse, which is situated northward of the demolished seawall. Surge and wave action was able to flow through this area unabated across the islet once the south seawall gave way.

The station's pier / walkway also suffered damage. Over three-quarter of the wooden planking that spans this long stretch was washed away. In addition, shingles were lost on the roof of the lighthouse.



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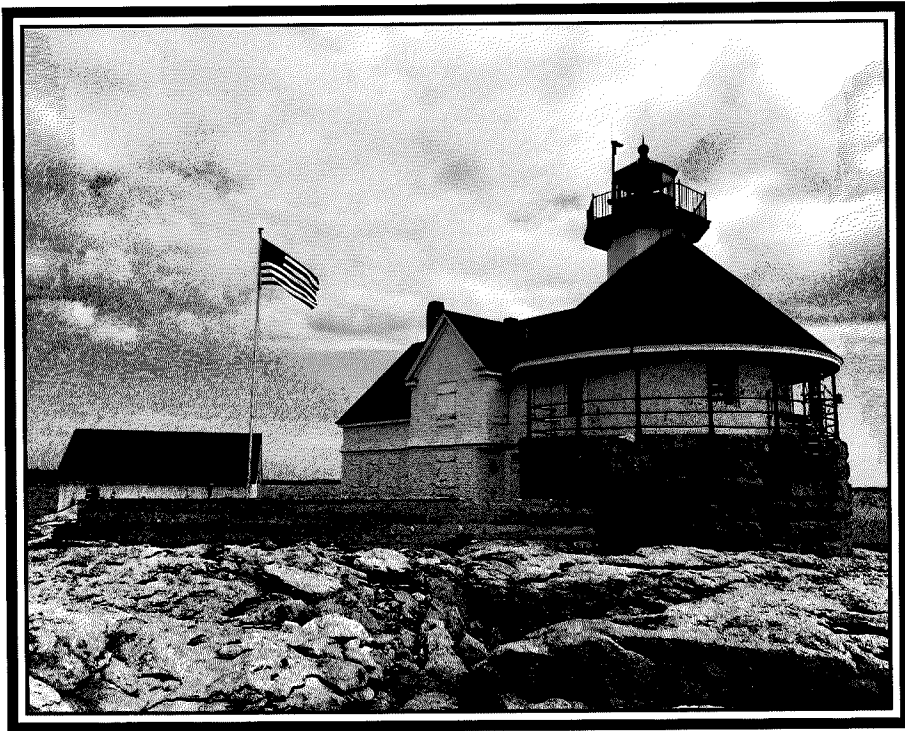


BOATHOUSE

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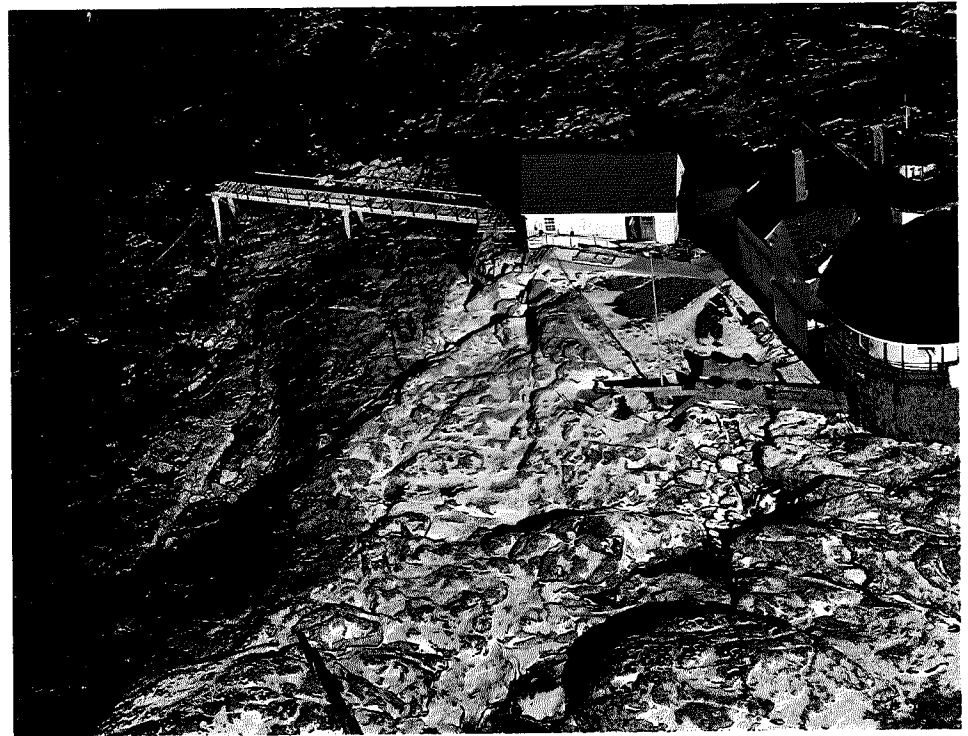


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SEAWALL

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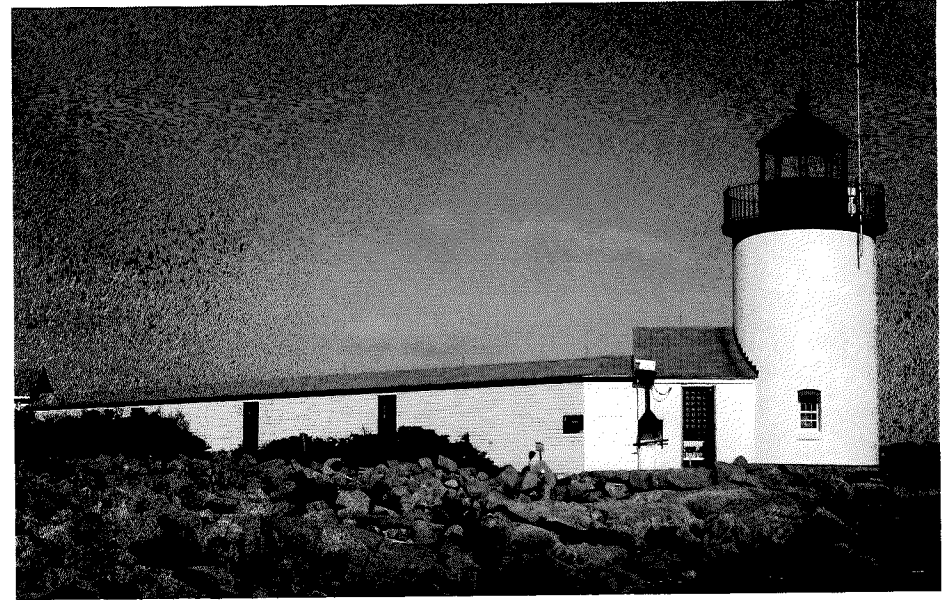


Goat Island Lighthouse

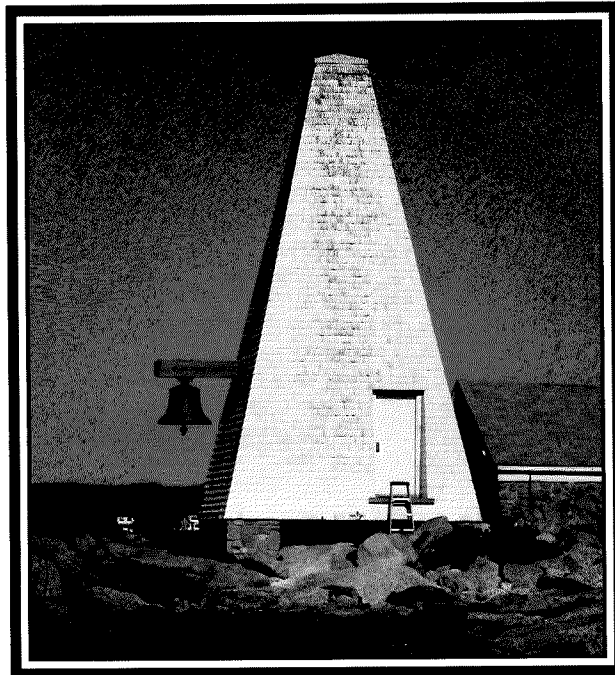
Cape Porpoise

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, caused damage to various light station structures. The wooden connector building (covered walkway between the lighthouse and keeper's house) sustained shingle and clapboard damage, as did the wooden bell tower. In addition, the stone walkway to the lighthouse entrance was destroyed.

Also, the wooden boathouse suffered damage, including its foundation. Storm surge undermined the foundational pinning of the structure and moved it three (3) feet. Siding was lost on the boathouse, and its garage door was pushed in – making it unusable. The wooden slipway / ramp was damaged and two (2) landing floats were swept away by the sea.



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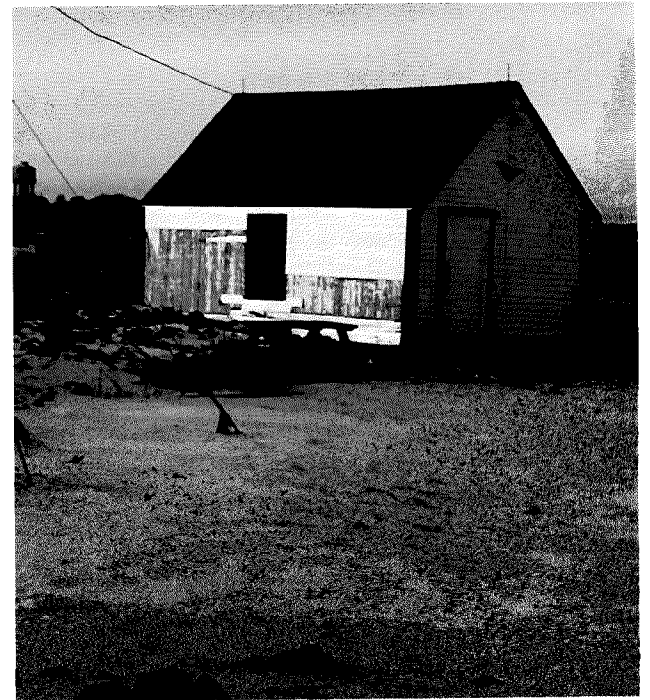
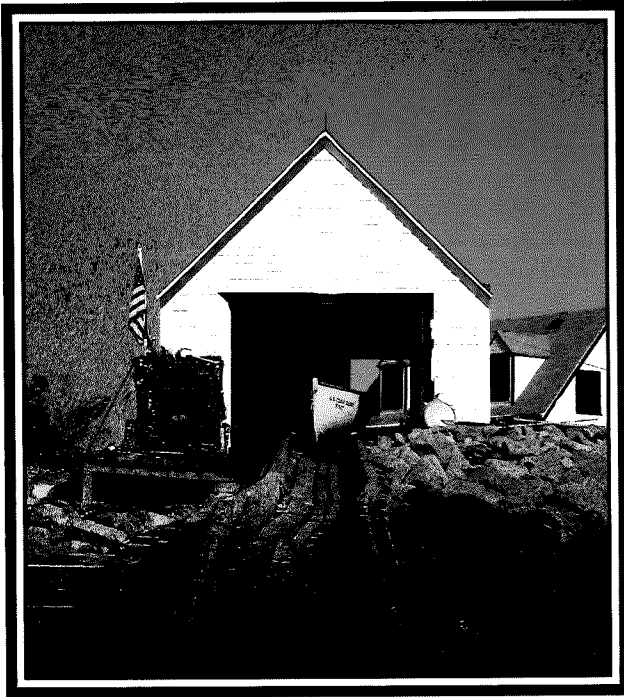
BELL TOWER

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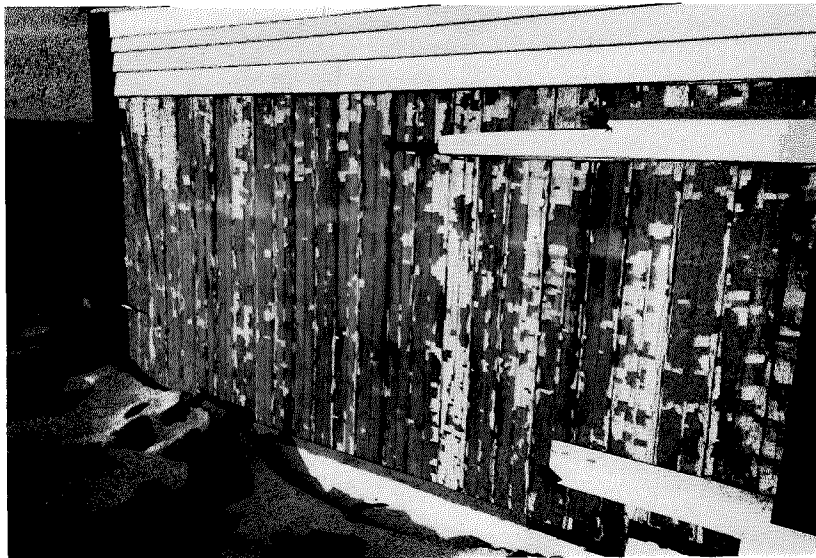


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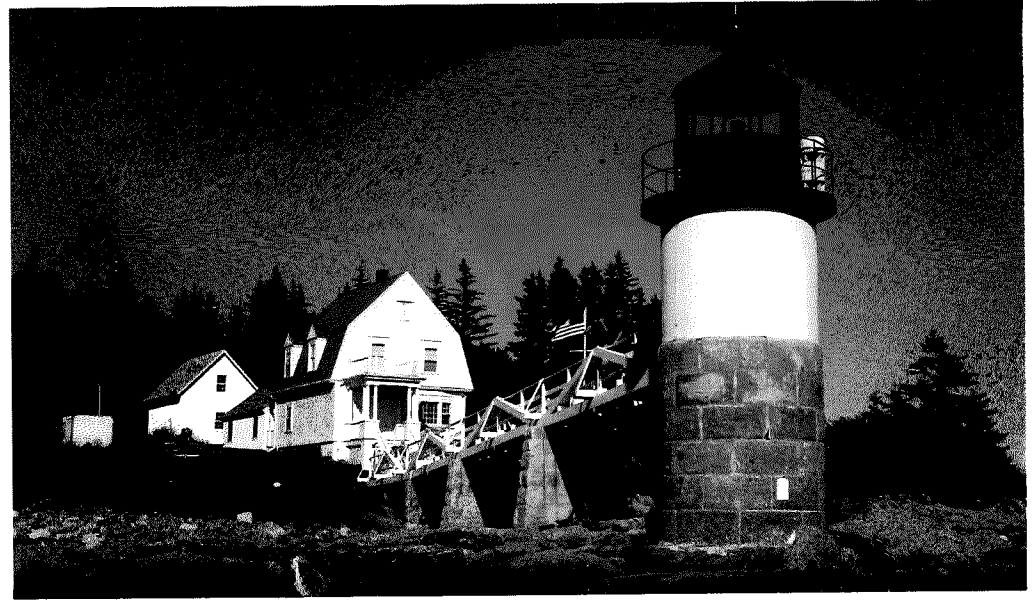
BOATHOUSE



Marshall Point Lighthouse

Saint George

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, caused unprecedented damage to the grounds. The sea eroded approximately four (4) feet of lawn out in front of the keeper's house on the southerly side, while undermining the masonry piers that support the wooden walkway leading to the lighthouse. In addition to scouring out the bases of the piers and dislodging stonework, the seas also compromised the wooden walkway, causing it to be deemed unsafe.



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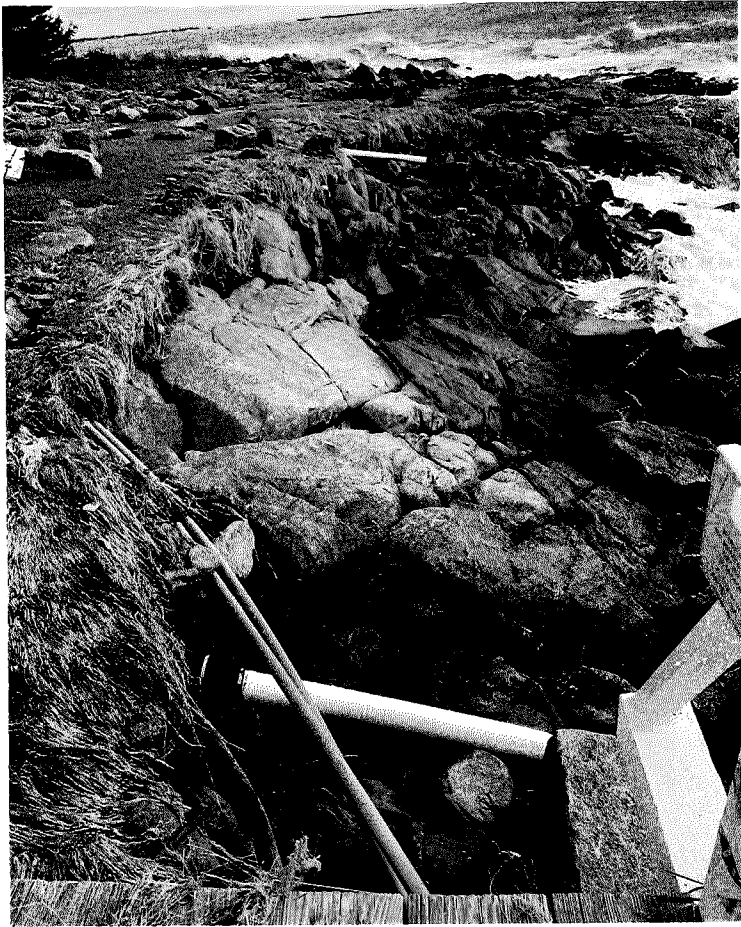


WALKWAY PIERS

AFTER:



AFTER:



EROSION

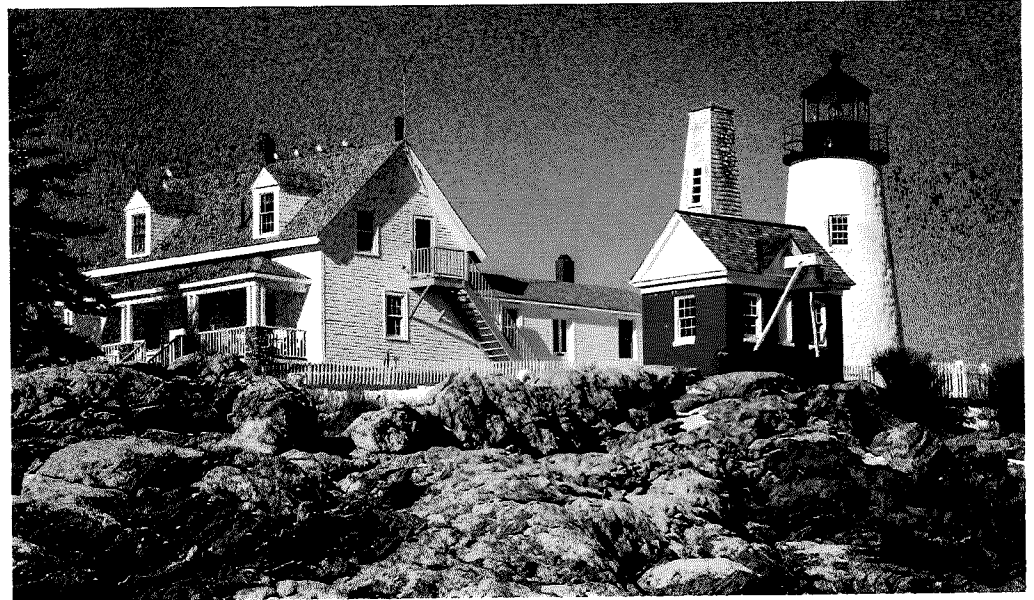


Pemaquid Point Lighthouse

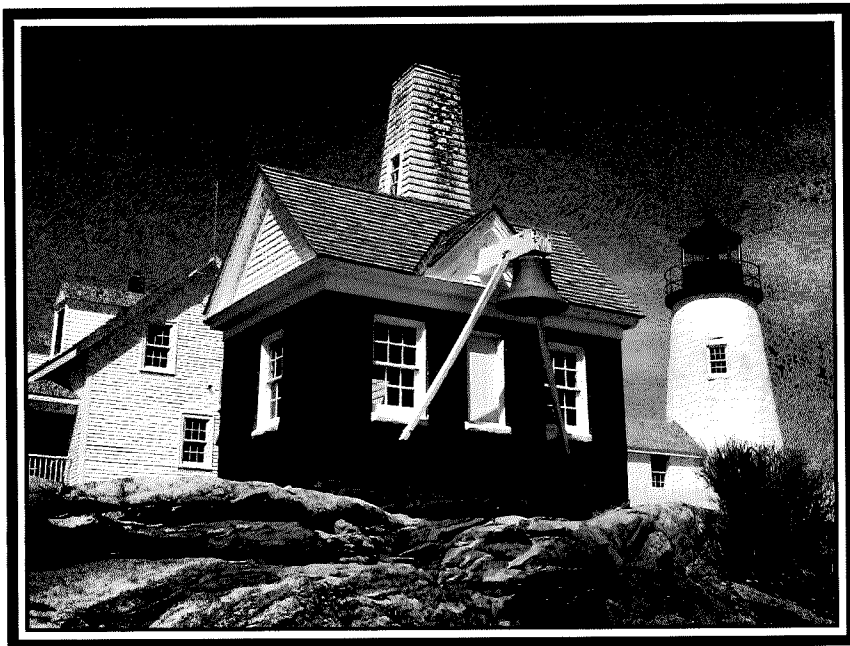
Bristol

The storms of January 10 and 13, 2024, caused damage to the brick bell house, brick oil house, wooden keeper's house and grounds.

Waves demolished the east and south side walls of the 1896 brick structure. In addition, wind and seas ripped wood trim from the nearby brick oil house, knocked down the wooden fence that was situated along the east side of the station property, and damaged siding and windows on the east side of the keeper's house.

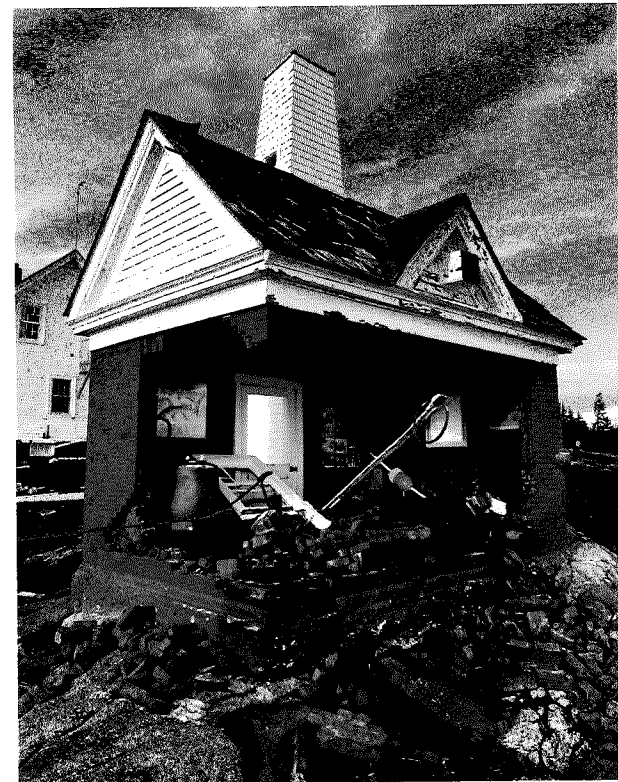


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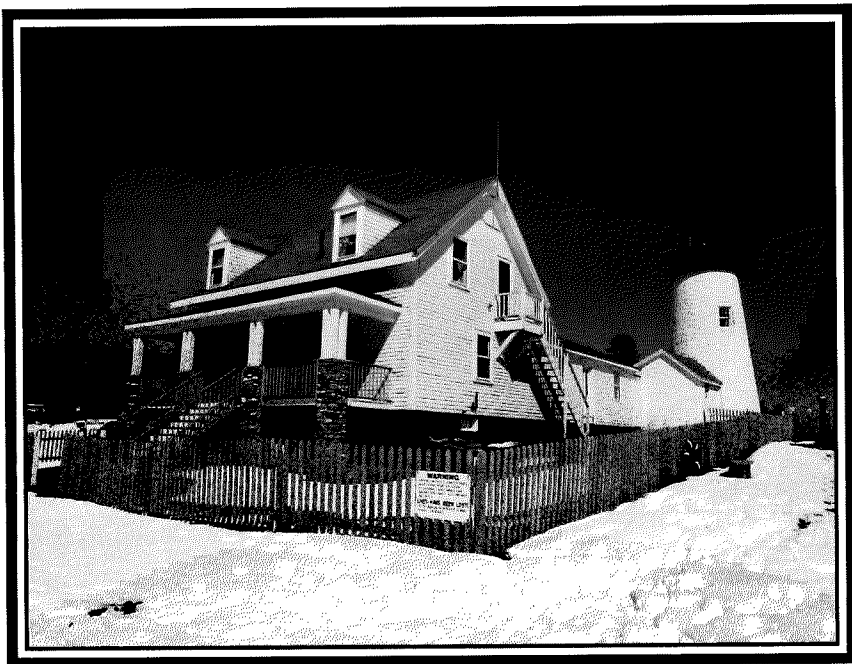


BELL TOWER

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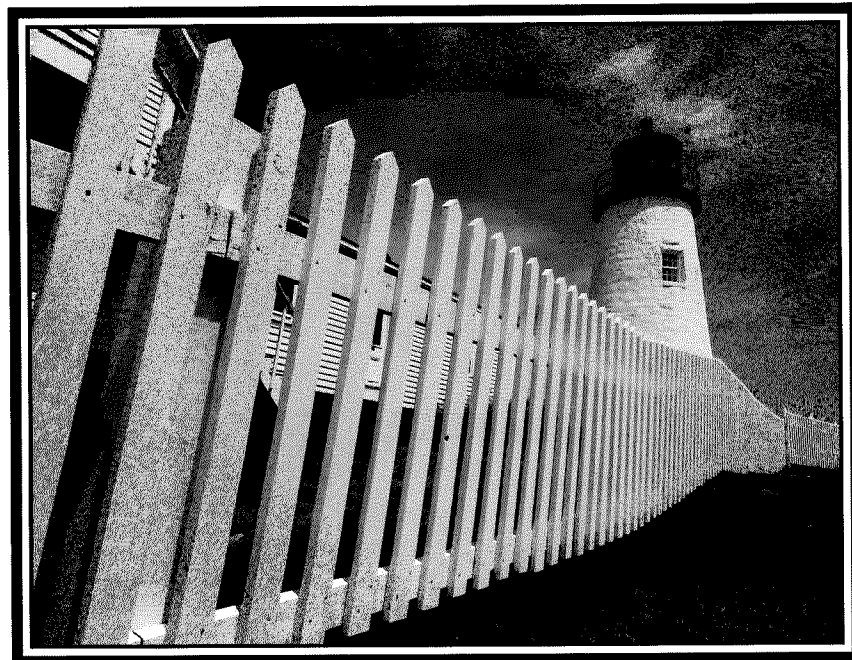
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KEEPER'S HOUSE & FENCE



Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse

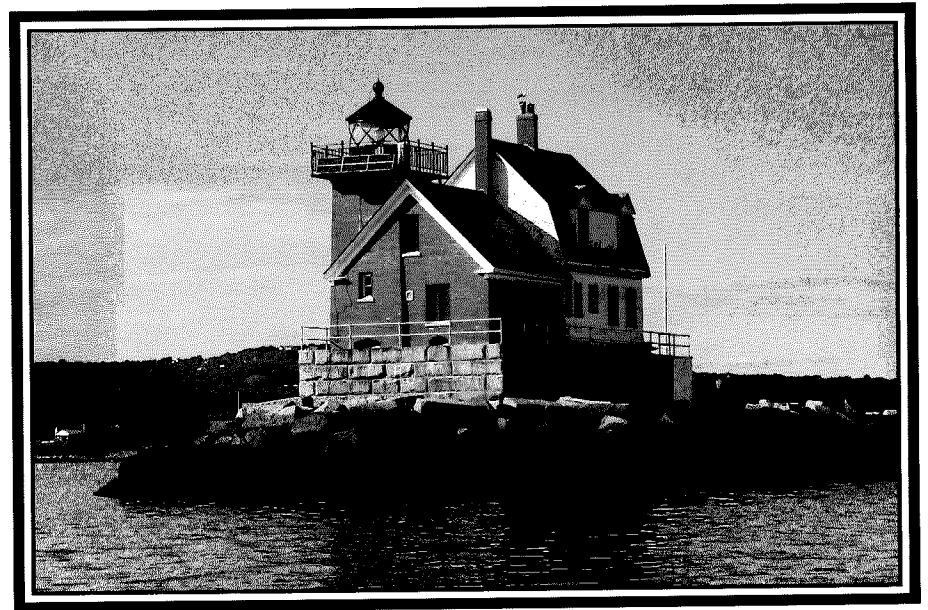
Rockland

The storms of January 10 and 13, of 2024, caused damage to the slate roof of the keeper's house and fog signal building, as well as to the wooden boathouse – its roof and east wall. Also, seas washed away shingles on the east side of the wooden keeper's house and damaged the wooden security shutters. The railing system atop the granite pier was also compromised – twisting of its metal framework and uprooting of its support stanchions occurred at distinct locations.

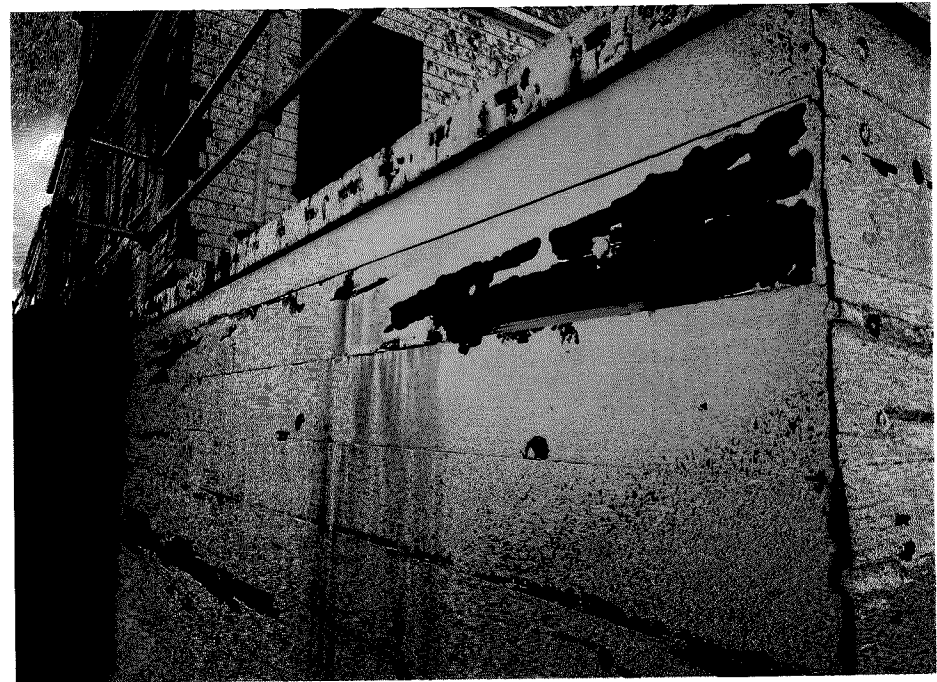
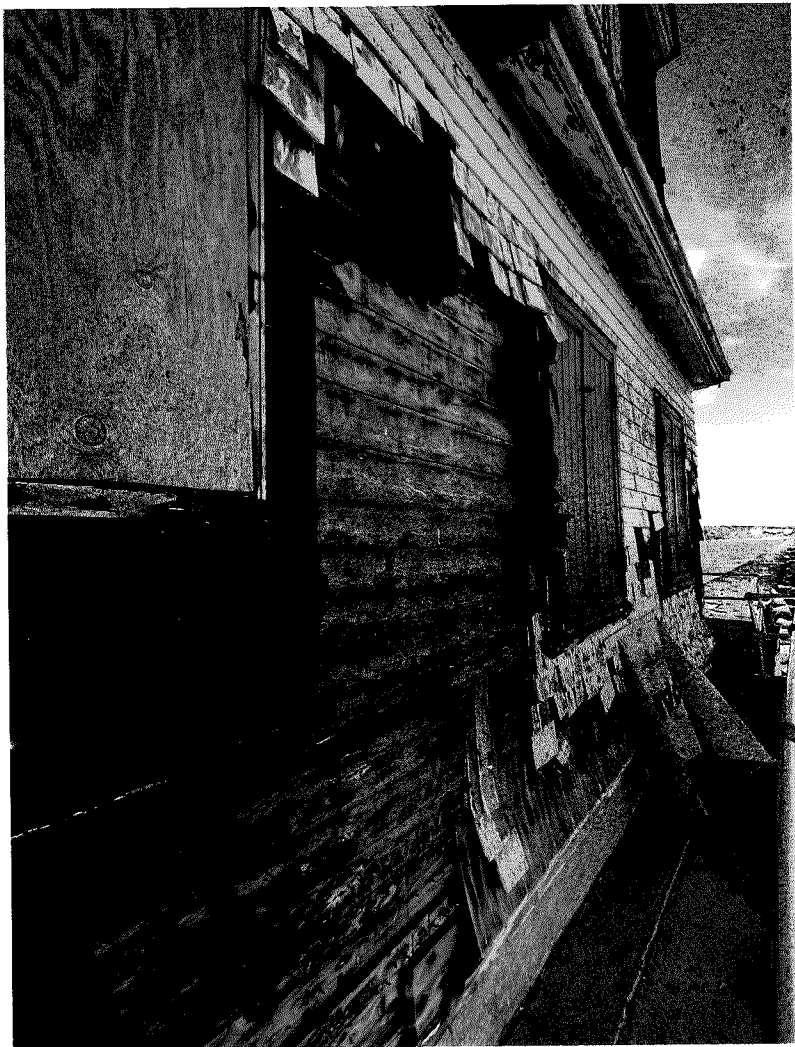
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BOATHOUSE