

Stepping Stones Light (1877)

by Harlan Hamilton



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Mansard roofs (more of which in a future article), high-pedimented dormers and a lush application of French Renaissance detail, it appeared in every form of secular building in the United States from post offices to city halls (for which it became the official style) lighthouses, city dwellings and summer cottages. Although fundamentally a masonry style, it was frequently executed in wood.

The first prominent American architect to employ the style seems to have been James Renwick (1818-1895). His two most important forages in this style were the Charity Hospital (1858-1861) on Welfare (now Roosevelt) Island in the East River of New York City and Vassar College in

Poughkeepsie, New York.

He also designed the Smithsonian Institution's "castle" (1849) and the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art (1859) in our nation's capital. The Light-House Board even adapted this popular style for some of the lighthouses in our area: Stepping Stones Light, Penfield Reef Light and North Dumpling Light. Their Mansard roofs are a clue to their Second Empire style.

Harlan Hamilton has lectured widely on the lighthouses of Long Island Sound and is the author of *Lights & Legends*, a guide to these lights, currently under revision. Information about his lectures may be had by calling him at 212-535-5690.

Stepping Around Stepping Stones - Lighthouse fans enjoyed their first ever visit to Little Gull Light this past September and may enjoy doing likewise at the historic Stepping Stones Lighthouse off Kings Point in the near future. The federal government is searching for a local government or nonprofit group to take ownership and provide public access. Among interested applicants are the Town of North Hempstead; Asian Americans for Equality of NYC, NY; Beacon Preservation Inc. of Ansonia, CT; Crabber Cup of Greenwich, CT; Historical Preservation Society of America, Washington, D.C. and Korstad Marine Preservation Society of Brooking, CT. The National Park Service will select which applicant gets the 1877 brick lighthouse at no charge.

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