



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Historic Light Station Information INDIANA

GARY HARBOR BREAKWATER LIGHT

Location: GARY HARBOR, LAKE MICHIGAN, NEAR GARY, INDIANA

Station Established: 1837

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1911

Operational? YES

Automated? UNKNOWN

Deactivated: N/A

Foundation Materials: UNKNOWN

Construction Materials: STEEL PLATES

Tower Shape: CONICAL, TAPERED AT THE TOP

Markings/Pattern: RED

Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE

Original Lens: SIXTH ORDER FRESNEL

Historical Information:

- In the early 1900's representatives of the United States Steel Corporation were scouting a location on the southern shores of Lake Michigan to house a steel plant. The area selected was a barren and virtually uninhabitable. A city was built south of the plant's location to house the workers. It became Gary, Indiana. The harbor at the plant had to be excavated in order for the large container ships to enter the slips in the harbor.
- An "L" shaped breakwater was created in Lake Michigan to protect the harbor. It extends several thousand feet into the lake. At the end of the breakwater, Gary Harbor Breakwater Light was established.
- It was built in 1911 out of steel plates and stands 30 feet tall. A keeper's quarters was not built at the site.
- A sixth order Fresnel lens was installed. It is reported the lens is still intact in the light but a modern light is currently in use.
- The light still serves as an active aid to navigation. The light is privately owned by U. S. Steel Corporation and is not open to the public. It is best viewed by boat or air.

Researched and written by Melissa Buckler, a volunteer through the Chesapeake Chapter of the U.S. Lighthouse Society.



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INDIANA HARBOR LIGHT

INDIANA HARBOR EAST BREAKWATER LIGHT

Location: EAST CHICAGO HARBOR, LAKE MICHIGAN, NEAR EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA

Station Established: 1935

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1935

Operational? YES

Automated? UNKNOWN

Deactivated: N/A

Foundation Materials: UNKNOWN

Construction Materials: STEEL

Tower Shape: SQUARE STEEL ART DECO TOWER

Markings/Pattern: WHITE

Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL

Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER FRESNEL LENS

Historical Information:

- As industry grew in the 1900s the shoreline of Lake Michigan became prime real estate for steel mills and other factories. The need for breakwaters began apparent to allow the large vessels to dock. Between 1901 and 1903 a breakwater was constructed in the Indiana Harbor.
- In 1914 the federal government took on responsibility for Indiana Harbor. A lighthouse may have been built in the harbor in 1920, though that is not verified.
- In 1935, the Indiana Harbor East Breakwater Light was built. It is a twin to the light that was built on the Port Washington, Wisconsin Breakwater the same year.
- Originally the light was fitted with a fourth order Fresnel lens. Today a green beacon shines from atop the lighthouse. It is not known when the light was automated.
- The lighthouse is still an active aid to navigation but is not open to the public. It is best seen by boat or air.

Researched and written by Melissa Buckler, a volunteer through the Chesapeake Chapter of the U.S. Lighthouse Society.



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MICHIGAN CITY LIGHT

Location: LAKE MICHIGAN

Station Established: 1837

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1858

Pierhead Tower Lit: 1904

Operational? NO (Pierhead Tower Operational)

Automated? NO (Pierhead Tower Automated: 1960)

Deactivated: 1904

Foundation Materials: NATURAL/EMPLACED; Pierhead Tower: CONCRETE PIER

Construction Materials: WOOD; Pierhead Tower: STEEL/BRICK

Tower Shape: SQUARE (REPLICA); Pierhead Tower: OCTAGONAL ON FOG SIGNAL BLDG

Markings/Pattern: WHITE TOWER ON BRICK DWELLING; Pierhead Tower: WHITE TOWER

W/BLACK LANTERN

Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL; Pierhead Tower: INTEGRAL

Original Lens: FIFTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1858; Pierhead Tower: FIFTH ORDER 1904

Historical Information:

- 1837 – Original post light replaced by 1st lighthouse built on this site.
- 1858 – New lighthouse built 100' East of previous tower.
- 1887 – Light in lantern first lit all year around rather than just April to November.
- 1902 – Improved kerosene lamps installed.
- 1904 – Extensive rebuilding done to the lighthouse – including enlarging the single keeper's dwelling to a duplex. Light tower removed from the roof and the lens was transferred to an iron tower above fog signal building.
- 1904 – 1940 – Inactive lighthouse served as keeper's house.
- 1960 – U.S. Coast Guard abandoned the light.
- 1973 – Replica light tower and lantern installed.
- 2003 – Spiral stairway rebuilt.

Keepers:

- John M. Clarkson (1858-1861)
- Harriet E. Colfax (1861 – 1904)
- T.J. Armstrong (1904 – 1918)
- Phillip Sheridan (1918 – 1930)
- Walter Donovan (1930 – unknown)



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Researched and written by Marie Vincent, a volunteer through the Chesapeake Chapter of the U.S. Lighthouse Society.
