



# U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

## Historic Light Station Information MISSISSIPPI

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### BILOXI LIGHT

Location: Mississippi Sound

Station Established: 1848

Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit: 1848

Operational: Yes

Automated: Yes, 1941?

Deactivated: n/a

Foundation Materials: Brick

Construction Materials: Brick encased by cast iron

Tower Shape: Conical

Markings/Pattern: White tower with black balustrade

Relationship to Other Structure: Separate

Original Lens: Fourth Order, 1848; Fifth Order, Fresnel, 1865

Characteristic: Fixed white.

Fog Signal: None

### Historical Chronology:

- 1847: Congress authorized \$12,000 for a lighthouse at Biloxi on 3 March 1847. The Treasury Department let a contract, dated 15 October 1847, to Murray & Hazlehurst to build an iron lighthouse for \$6,347.00. The keeper's house was contracted separately. The Collector at Mobile purchased the site.
- 1848: The tower was completed and placed in operation in 1848. The tower was 45 feet from the base to the lantern room and displayed nine lamps. The first keeper was Marcellus J. Howard.
- Miss Mary Reynolds, with a "large family of orphan children" was appointed keeper on 11 April 1854. She remained in service until the Civil War. She owed her appointment to Governor Albert Gallatin Brown.
- 1856: The light was "refitted."
- 1860: A hurricane swept the coast and destroyed some lighthouses but not the Biloxi light. Keeper Reynolds reported that she kept the light burning through the storm and "faithfully performed the duties of Light Keeper in storm and sunshine attending it. I ascended the Tower at and after the last destructive storm when man stood appalled at the danger I encountered."
- 1861: Local authorities ordered that the light be extinguished on 18 June 1861.



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- The light was repaired and returned to service by 15 November 1866. At that time the tower was reported to have been painted with coal tar to protect it from rust, not, as has been reported, to mourn the assassination of President Abe Lincoln.
- 1866: Perry Younghans was appointed keeper on 14 November 1866 but fell ill soon thereafter. His wife, Maria Younghans, took over and tended the light. Mr. Younghans died and Maria was appointed keeper on 6 December 1867.
- 1868: The tower was painted white and almost fell during a hurricane that year.
- 1880: The old keeper's house was razed and rebuilt.
- 1893: The seawall was washed away and the tower threatened during a hurricane on 1 October 1893. The New Orleans Daily Picayune of 21 October 1893 noted that "At Biloxi Mrs. Younghans, the plucky woman who was in charge of the light, kept a light going all through the storm notwithstanding the fact that there were several feet of water in the room where she lived."
- 1898: A telephone cable was laid by Reese Hutchinson between the Biloxi and Ship Island lighthouses at the start of the Spanish-American War.
- 1916: The light was again damaged by a hurricane and the wharf and boathouse were destroyed by a storm the following year.
- 1918: Maria Younghans retired on 31 December 1918 and was replaced by her daughter, Miranda, who remained as keeper until 1929. The Younghans family had maintained the light for a total of 63 years. W. B. Thompson took over as keeper.
- 1927: The station was electrified.
- 1969: Keeper's house was destroyed by Hurricane Camille.
- Tower is now owned by the City of Biloxi and is operated as a private aid to navigation.

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## CAT ISLAND LIGHT

Location: In shallow water at the westerly end of Cat Island, southerly side of the westerly part of the Mississippi Sound.

Station Established: 1831

Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit: 1871

Operational: No

Automated: n/a

Deactivated: 1937

Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern: Brick tower (1831); replaced by a white, square, crew-pile structure; piles and lantern, red (1871)

Height: 40-feet

Original Lens: 10 lamps in 14-inch reflectors (1831); Fifth Order, Fresnel (1871)



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Characteristic: Fixed white varied by a white flash every 90 seconds  
Foghorn: None

## Historical Chronology:

- 1827: "That the Secretary of the Treasury be authorized and directed to provide, by contract, for building a light-house at Cat Island, in the Gulf of Mexico" on 2 March 1827.
- 1829-Survey of the coast.
- 1830-Juan Cuivas was granted the property by an Act of Congress, 28 May 1830. Sold to the U.S. Government on 2 November 1830 for \$75.00.
- Contract to Winslow Lewis for building a lighthouse and dwelling on Cat Island and same at Pass Christian, and fitting both with apparatus. Total of contract was \$9,283.00. Lewis subcontracted the construction of Cat Island Light to "master workman" Lazarus Baukens. The brick tower was constructed directly on the sand with no foundation at all.
- Keeper George Riolly appointed 9 July 1831.
- Heavily damage by hurricane on 15 August 1860.
- Tower was burnt by Confederate forces during the Civil War.
- Rebuilt during 1870-1871. Light was relit on 15 December 1871 with a Fifth Order Fresnel lens.
- Station was discontinued on 22 September 1937.
- The land and the lighthouse were transferred to the War Assets Administration in November, 1948, with the lighthouse "in general disrepair."

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## EAST PASCAGOULA RIVER LIGHT

Location:  
Station Established:  
Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit:  
Operational:  
Automated:  
Deactivated:  
Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern:  
Height:  
Original Lens:  
Characteristic:  
Foghorn:

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## HORN ISLAND LIGHTS

Location: Horn Island is one of the barrier islands in the Gulf Islands National Seashore between the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Sound. The island is twelve miles long and the east end, location of the former lighthouse, is eight miles from Pascagoula, Mississippi. The channel between Horn Island and Petit Bois Island is the entrance to Pascagoula.

### Historic Towers:

Year first lighthouse built: 1874.

\* Construction of 1874 lighthouse: lantern on roof of dwelling on screwpile foundation.

\* This light was endangered by shoreline erosion and was moved in 1880. This lighthouse was replaced in 1887 and destroyed by a hurricane in 1893.

Year second lighthouse built: 1887.

\* Construction of 1887 lighthouse: lantern on roof of story and a half square dwelling with covered porch created by overhanging second floor. Second floor had one dormer window on each side. The lantern room was located on the center of the roof with a square, open walkway outside the round lantern room.

\* This lighthouse was also moved 253 feet in 1900.

\* This lighthouse was abandoned in 1906.

Year third lighthouse built: 1908. Known as the Petit Bois Island Light.

\* Located in 13 feet of water three quarter miles from Petit Bois Island on the east side of the entrance to the Mississippi Sound.

\* Lighthouse: wood dwelling with lantern room on center top. Building painted white.

\* Foundation: 21 wood pilings cased with iron.

\* Lens: Fourth Order Fresnel by Barbier & Fenestre of Paris.

\* Lantern: oil vapor lamp.

\* Height of focal plane above mean high water: 47 feet.

\* Landing for boat under the lighthouse.

### Historical Information:

- The keeper, and his family, of the second lighthouse were killed in a hurricane in 1906.
- Petit Bois Island light abandoned in 1961 and subsequently destroyed.

Keepers: Valentine B. McArthur (1874), Martin Freeman (1874-1894), Charles Johnson (1906).

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



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## LAKE BORGNE LIGHT

Location:  
Station Established:  
Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit:  
Operational:  
Automated:  
Deactivated:  
Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern:  
Height:  
Original Lens:  
Characteristic:  
Foghorn:

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## MERRILL SHELL BANK LIGHT

Location:  
Station Established:  
Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit:  
Operational:  
Automated:  
Deactivated:  
Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern:  
Height:  
Original Lens:  
Characteristic:  
Foghorn:

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## PASS CHRISTIAN LIGHT

Location: North part of Lake Borgne; "about 6.5 miles northwesterly of Cat Island";  
30° 18' 54" N x 80° 14' 02" W (1858 *Light List*)  
Station Established: 1831  
Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit: 1866  
Operational: No



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Automated: n/a

Deactivated: 1882

Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern: White conical brick tower

Tower Height: 30 feet

Original Lens: 14-inch reflectors with "Eight lamps"; Fourth Order (1857)

Characteristic: Fixed white (1857)

Foghorn: None

## Historical Information:

- Congress authorized \$5,000 for "a light-house at or near the Pass Christian" with another \$500 authorized for buoys.
- 1/2 acre of land was purchased on 21 December 1830 for \$250.
- Contract let with Winslow Lewis for lighthouses at Pass Christian and Cat Island; contract was dated 5 March 1831 for a total cost for both lights of \$9,283.00.
- Lighthouse was built with solid walls, 28 feet two inches high and 15 feet outside diameter at base, tapering to about nine feet at top. Walls three feet thick tapering to one foot eight inches.
- First keeper was Robert A. Heirn; followed by Findley Heirn in 1839. A Miss C. A. Heirn was appointed keeper on 18 October 1844. Each were paid \$500 per annum.
- Refitted with a Fourth Order lens in 1857.
- Light was extinguished during the Civil War.
- The light was thoroughly overhauled and re-exhibited on 15 August 1866.
- The keeper in 1867 was listed as "C. F. Johnson."
- The 1867 Coast Pilot listed the light as being 6-1/2 miles from Cat Island and "on the Main" in town.
- The keeper in 1871 was listed as "E. F. Johnson" at an annual salary of \$640.
- In 1873 the keeper was listed as Mrs. M. J. Reynolds of Maryland. Her annual salary was \$600.
- In 1875 the keeper was listed as Sally A. Dar of Alabama.
- In 1877 the keeper was listed as Alice S. Butterworth of Mississippi.
- The keeper's dwelling was torn down in 1878 as it was "untenantable." A substantial frame dwelling was then erected on the site.
- In 1882 the light was listed as being a: "small harbor light [which] is on the main street of the village. The light is obscured by several trees. The owner refuses to trim or cut them; hence the light is of little use. . . .The tower should be raised or the light discontinued. . . The latter is recommended, as the light is of so little benefit to navigation or commerce."
- The "Committee on Location" recommended discontinuance on 4 September 1882 and the Secretary of the Treasury authorized the light's discontinuance on 9 September 1882.



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- The light was extinguished on 1 October 1882 and sold the following year to Lawrence G. Fallon for \$1,225.00.

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## ROUND ISLAND LIGHT

PASCAGULA HARBOR, GULF OF MEXICO, NEAR PASCAGOULA, MISSISSIPPI

Station Established: 1833

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1859

Operational? NO

Automated? 1944

Deactivated: 1949

Foundation Materials: UNKNOWN

Construction Materials: BRICK

Tower Shape: ROUND

Markings/Pattern: RED BRICK

Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE

Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER FRESNEL

### Historical Information:

- In 1833, money was appropriated for construction of a lighthouse on Round Island in the Pascagoula Harbor on the Gulf of Mexico.
- The sandy soil of Round Island did not provide a solid base for such a large structure and erosion was eating away the island. By 1853 the light station was in dire need of replacing or repairing.
- Building was completed in 1859 on a new light station moved inland from the previous site. A fifty foot red brick tower was fitted with a fourth order Fresnel lens. A new separate keeper's quarters was also built on the site.
- During the Civil War, Round Island Light like so many other lights in the South went dark. It was re-lit in 1865 and shown until 1949. It was automated in 1944.
- Life on a barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico can be very hard for structures, constantly buffeted by winds and shifting sands underfoot. Hurricanes are a constant threat and in 1998 Hurricane George toppled the Round Island Light.
- A preservation group was in the process of re-building the light when Hurricane Katrina swept in and toppled the structure yet again. The City of Pascagoula decided to rebuild once again, however this time on more solid ground on the water front in Pascagoula. The original base of the lighthouse was placed atop a concrete slab which sits on five 50 foot steel beams driven into the ground. Bricks from the tower and the original lantern room will be used for the rebuilding which is expected to be completed in late 2012.



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- The site on Round Island is closed to the public.

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

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## SHIP ISLAND LIGHT

Location: On the northerly side of the westerly end of Ship Island, and on the easterly side of the entrance to the Ship Island anchorage from the Gulf.

Station Established: 1853

Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit: 1886

Operational: No

Automated: 1950

Deactivated: 1964

Current / Last Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern: Black lantern on square, white, wooden pyramidal tower; one-story white frame dwelling with green blinds, along-side.

Height: 50 feet

Original Lens: Fourth Order

Characteristic: Fixed white (1865); fixed red (1880)

Foghorn: None

## Historical Chronology:

- On 1 August 1848, \$12,000 was allotted for a lighthouse on the west end of Ship Island. The appropriation was renewed on 28 September 1850 and again on 31 August 1852.
- After a dispute regarding the land available was resolved, the Collector of Customs at Mobile advertised for bids on 2 August 1852 in a Mobile newspaper for the lighthouse's construction. The tower was to be 45 feet from the base to lantern, 20 feet diameter at the base and 10.5 feet at the top, with a 12-foot lantern deck of stone. Walls to be 3.5 feet thick at the bottom and two feet thick at the top.
- As of the end of 1852 the lighthouse had been contracted for and was promised for completion and lighting on 1 February 1853. Light was actually completed on 4 November 1853.
- The light's first keeper, appointed 25 December 1853 (effective) was Edward Havens. His wife succeeded him on 29 June 1855 at a salary of \$500 per annum. The assistant keeper was John Reid, appointed 25 November 1858.
- Keeper list of 1 February 1859 lists Noel Buset (or Buret).; In 1860 the keeper was M. Wilmont, appointed 26 April 1860.





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- On 13 January 1861 Confederate troops from Mississippi seized Ship Island and "all facilities" on the island.
  - The island was retaken by Union forces on 17 September 1861, and became the headquarters for the Union Navy's Gulf Blockading Squadron. The retreating Confederate forces burned the interior of the lighthouse and removed the Fresnel lens, presumably to New Orleans. The lighthouse was repaired and returned to service in November, 1862. "The lens, Franklin lamps and accessories were found at Ship Island and delivered to the keeper. The light was exhibited for the first time November 14 [1862]."
  - Characteristic was changed from fixed white to fixed red in the 1880 *Light List*.
  - The old tower and keeper's dwelling were condemned in 1886 and a new tower and dwelling were completed in September, 1886. The 1888 *Light List* noted: Fixed red, fourth order. Focal plane 76 feet above sea level. . . .White, four-sided pyramid [wood construction] with a one-story dwelling alongside."
  - By 1901 the old tower had fallen into the Gulf.
  - In 1933 the light was electrified. The characteristic was changed again to occulting red fourth order.
  - The keeper in 1938 was Alex H. Brooks.
  - Light was automated on 17 February 1950.
  - Light was deactivated in 1964.
  - A skeleton tower was built in 1971, showing a flashing white light 84 feet above sea level.
  - The old light tower burned down in June, 1972.
  - A replica of the old tower was erected in 2000 on the old tower's foundation, sponsored by the Friends of Gulf Islands National Seashore. The U.S. Navy Seabees did the actual construction work.
  - This replica was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.
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