



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

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Historic Light Station Information NEW HAMPSHIRE

Note: Much of the following historical information and lists of keepers was provided through the courtesy of Jeremy D'Entremont and his website on New England lighthouses.

ISLE OF SHOALS (WHITE ISLAND) LIGHT

Location: WHITE ISLAND/PISCATAQUA RIVER ENTRANCE

Station Established: 1790

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1865

Operational? YES

Automated? YES 1987

Deactivated: n/a

Foundation Materials: SURFACE ROCK

Construction Materials: GRANITE/BRICK

Tower Shape: CONICAL

Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK TOWER

Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE

Original Lens: SECOND ORDER, FRESNEL 1859

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

Capt. John Smith discovered the rugged, storm-swept Isles of Shoals off the coasts of Maine and New Hampshire in 1614. The first settlers were Robert, John, and Richard Cutts who came across the seas from Wales to build their huts on the islands. Later Sir William Pepperell established the fishing industry there and laid the foundation for a fabulous fortune. The Pepperell Mills at Biddeford, Maine, stem from this beginning and Sir William was closely associated with Gen. George Washington and Gen. Knox during the Revolution. The largest of the island group was originally called Hog Island, but this was later changed to Appledore. This island contains about 4 acres and its greatest elevation is 75 feet above the sea. In 1641 the 40 families living on the island incorporated it into a town and here the first church in the Province of Maine was erected, under the direction of the Reverend John Brock. The town flourished through its fisheries and enjoyed an extensive trade with the Spaniards. In 1670, during trouble with the Indians, the inhabitants moved to Star Island, for greater protection.



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Smutty Nose, earlier known as Haley's Island, lies close to Appledore and at low tide Cedar and Malaga Islands are connected with the latter by a breakwater, built, it is said, by Captain Haley with the proceeds from four bars of silver found among the rocks. He also erected a salt works, built a rope walk and set up a windmill. Each night he kept a lamp lighted from the sunset to sunrise to aid the mariners into the harbor formed by the breakwater. Notwithstanding this aid to navigation, the ship *Sagunte* from Cadiz was wrecked on the southeast point of the island on January 14, 1813, and stones marking the graves of those lost can still be seen.

It was on Star Island that Captain Kidd was said to have buried some of his treasure. During the colonial period, the Indians swept down upon Star Island in their canoes and killed or carried off every inhabitant except a Mrs. Moody, who hid herself and her two children under the rocks. Unable to keep them quiet, the mother killed them with a knife she was carrying rather than let them fall into the hands of the Indians.

The first Isle of Shoals Lighthouse was erected on White Island, 5 1/2 miles off the coast of New Hampshire in 1821. It was a stone tower with the lantern about 90 feet above the water. In 1835 Capt. Henry D. Hunter of the United States Revenue Cutter *Jackson* inspected it and reported "The lanthorn is old and wants a new one. The whole establishment is dirty and in bad order."

Thomas B. Lughton, who was defeated for Governor of New Hampshire in 1839, sold his business in Portsmouth and became keeper of the Isle of Shoals Light. Five years before, he had purchased Appledore, Smutty Nose, Malaga, and Cedar Islands, across the boundary line in Maine, from Capt. Samuel Haley. When Lughton retired as keeper in 1847, he had built a large hotel, the Oceanic, on Star Island. During the Civil War, because of the danger from blockade runners and Southern gunboats, the lighthouse was entirely rebuilt of granite, with walls 2 feet thick. One night in 1873, Louis Wagner, knowing that the men were away from Smutty Nose Island, rowed all the way across from the mainland to rob fisherman Houtnet's residence. Caught and recognized by the women, Wagner killed two of the three females on the island. Then he returned to his dory and rowed back to the mainland. Later he was captured, tried, and hanged.

Today the white conical tower rises 58 feet above ground and 82 feet above the water, and the 170,000-candlepower second-order incandescent oil-vapor light, flashing white every 15 seconds, is visible for 15 miles. An air diaphragm horn blasts for 3 seconds every 30 seconds during fog.

PORTSMOUTH HARBOR (NEWCASTLE) LIGHT



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Location: FORT POINT
Station Established: 1771
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1877
Operational? YES
Automated? YES 1960
Deactivated: n/a
Foundation Materials: STONE BLOCKS
Construction Materials: CAST IRON
Tower Shape: CONICAL
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1877

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

In 1771 the first wooden tower at Portsmouth Harbor was built on a point of land running out into the harbor. This early colonial tower was one of the 12 lighthouses turned over to the Federal Government under the act of August 7, 1789. The original tower was replaced by another wooden tower in 1804. In 1877 this second tower was removed and a cast-iron beacon erected 1,000 feet east of the first station. This was on ground known as Newcastle. In reaching the lighthouse by land one has to pass through the "Old Fort" yard before arriving at the lighthouse reservation. For 30 years after its first settlement in 1623, this area was known as "Strawberry Bank" because of a large patch of wild strawberries on the bank of the river.

In 1789 George Washington visited the Portsmouth Lighthouse and remained in Portsmouth 4 days. Earlier in 1782 General Lafayette had been a lighthouse visitor. Daniel Webster practiced law here in 1807, and was a frequent visitor at the lighthouse during his 9 years of residence in Portsmouth.

Today the lighthouse is a white conical tower, with a fog signal house attached, built on Fort Point. It rises 52 feet above the water and its 3,000 candlepower fourth-order electric light flashes a green light visible 13 miles. During fog a bell strikes once every 10 seconds.
