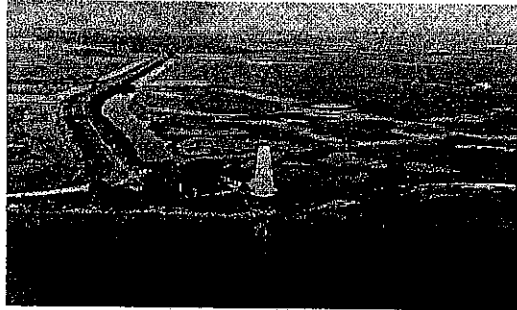
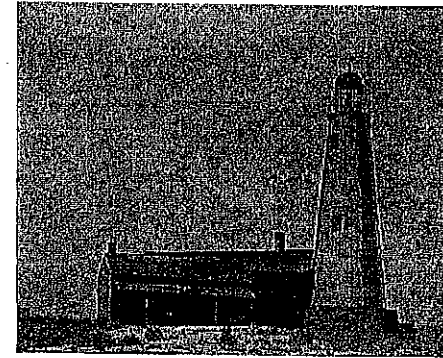


History Highlights of the St. Marks Lighthouse

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

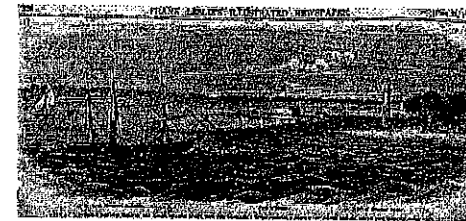


ca. 1950s U.S. Coast Guard



1840 U.S. Coast Guard

- 1852 – The lighthouse sustained much damage from an October hurricane. The iron door to the tower was lost and much of the rebuilt seawall again washed away. The keeper's house was badly damaged and all its contents lost.
- 1854 – A breakwater was built to protect the tower and a new keeper's house, attached to the tower, was built.

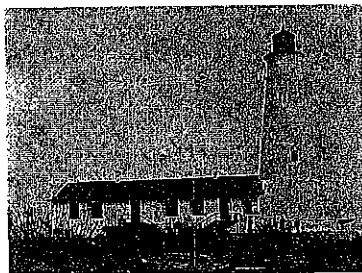


1862 Florida Archives

- 1828 – Congress authorized construction funds for a lighthouse at the mouth of the St. Marks River.
- 1830 – The completed lighthouse was rejected by the Customs Inspector because the walls were hollow instead of solid.
- 1831 – The second tower was built, possibly near the end of what now is Cedar Point Trail, with solid walls. Moisture retention, erosion, and settling of the foundation caused cracks in the tower walls. Iron bands held the tower together like a barrel.
- 1842 – A new location east and further inland (present location) was selected as the site for the third tower which was built with hollow walls.
- 1843 – Although the keeper's house was destroyed, the tower survived the same September hurricane that destroyed the town of Port Leon. Eleven to fourteen people at the lighthouse lost their lives. The town of Port Leon was abandoned after the storm, and residents moved up river to start the town of New Port Leon, now called Newport.
- 1851 – A category 3 hurricane, considered worse than 1843 hurricane, destroyed lighthouses on Dog Island and at Cape San Blas. The seawall at St. Marks lighthouse was washed away.

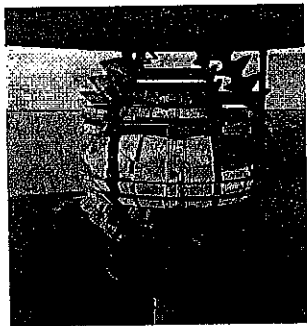
- 1861-1865 – Although damaged by fire and shelling during the Civil War, the tower remained standing. After the war, the tower was repaired and the lamp relit in 1867. The keeper's house, which had been lost to fire, was rebuilt of masonry. Previous dwellings, at least three, possibly built of wood had been destroyed. Saltworks were critically important during the Civil War, especially after the Union blockade reduced salt shipments on the southeastern coast. In those days before refrigeration, salt was necessary for food preservation. Remnants of several old saltworks can still be found on the refuge.
- March 1865 - Union General Newton safely landed almost 1000 men near the lighthouse. The soldiers attempted to cross the river at Natural Bridge but were stopped by Confederate forces.

- 1883 – After another hurricane, the outer stairs of keeper’s house were rebuilt after being blown away. Repairs and some reconstruction were done to the top of the tower.
- 1892 – A 453-foot long steel wire fence was built around the tower and keeper’s dwelling.



1885 Florida Archives

- 1902 – A picket fence and gate were erected to enclose the yard.
- 1928 – A former WW I sub-chaser (S.C.144), used by Florida Shellfish Commission, caught fire and sank near St. Marks Lighthouse channel.
- 1934-1942 – The Civilian Conservation Corp constructed the levees, buildings, and Lighthouse Road.
- 1938 – Funds were requested to bring electricity to St. Marks Light Station.
- World War II – a submarine/U-Boat lookout station was located at the lighthouse.
- 1943 – B-17 bomber on a training mission crashed in the marshes near the lighthouse during a severe thunderstorm. Of the 10 crewmembers, only one survived.
- 1960 – The lighthouse beacon, a fixed lamp (non-rotating) with a flashing pattern of 19 seconds on and 1 second off, was automated. Many of the support buildings were removed or allowed to fall into disrepair.



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- 2000 – Fresnel lens was turned off and exterior solar powered occulting white light every 4 seconds, was installed..
- 2001 – Interior and exterior repairs of lighthouse and keeper’s house were preformed by the U.S. Coast Guard. This included stabilizing the lantern.
- 2013 – The historic St. Marks Lighthouse was transferred from the U.S. Coast Guard to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, St. Marks NWR.



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St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge
 1255 Lighthouse Road
 St. Marks, FL 32355
<http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks/>



Donations may be sent to
 St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc.
 Lighthouse Restoration
 P.O. Box 368
 St. Marks, FL 32355