

PART I

RASPBERRY ISLAND LIGHT STATION

A LIGHTHOUSE ODYSSEY

By David Snyder



Raspberry Island Lighthouse circa 1890. In this era, the walls were white, the trim lead (gray), shutters probably green, and lantern black. Photo from the Wisconsin State Historical Society courtesy of the Apostle Island National Lakeshore.

The following article has been excerpted from a Historic Structure report compiled by David L. Snyder, Park Historian of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The 205 page report, and accompanying 284 page Historic Furnishings Report, provide one of the most detailed and well researched studies of an American light station.

We are calling the article *A Lighthouse Odyssey* as it details many aspects of the evolution of a light station from the 1860's to its transfer to the National Park Service in the 1970's. Along the way, you'll read about changes in the equipment and structures, lives of the keepers, and their interaction with authorities. The story of Raspberry Island is a fascinating story and one which will give you the 'flavor of the bean' of lighthouse life on the Great Lakes.

The year is 1863. Abraham Lincoln defeated Stephen Douglas and became the sixteenth President of the United States. The Civil War was raging. The Confederates were victorious over the Yankees at Chancellorsville. The tide turned later that year with two northern victories at Gettysburg and Chattanooga. In the midst of this national crisis, the United States government constructed a lighthouse in Lake Superior, on Raspberry Island.



Chequamegon Bay, on Lake Superior's south shore, is a large, mostly navigable, body of water. Sheltering the bay's entrance are twenty-two islands. Early French explorers and missionaries first visited this region in the 1620s and came to stay in the latter part of that century. They settled the largest island of the archipelago, which is known today as Madeline Island. The early Jesuits thought there were twelve islands, hence the name, Apostle Islands.

When the locks were constructed at Sault Ste. Marie in 1855, Lake Superior became accessible to ships from all parts of the world. The countryside around the mighty lake was ripe with untapped natural resources. Timber, brownstone, fish, copper and iron ore were some of the many resources which were developed. Towns sprang up around the lake. Proximate to brownstone, timber and fishery resources, Chequamegon Bay was one of the best harbors on Lake Superior. It also became a major shipping point for iron ore from the nearby Gogebic Range. The community of Bayfield, Wisconsin was established in 1856 to take advantage of this fine natural harbor. In the early years Bayfield competed with cities like

Duluth, Minnesota and Ontonagon, Michigan. Nearby towns on Chequamegon Bay were established: Ashland in 1854 and Washburn in 1884. With development of Lake Superior's natural resources increasing at a brisk pace, hundreds of boats plied Chequamegon Bay. While many ships entered the bay for commercial reasons, some ships sailed into Chequamegon Bay solely to seek protection from vicious Lake Superior storms.

Prior to the establishment of the Raspberry Island Lighthouse, two lighthouses were constructed in the Apostle Islands in the 1850s. A contract was negotiated to have a lighthouse built to make the eastern entrance into Chequamegon Bay, between Long and Madeline Islands. Government engineers originally wanted to build this lighthouse on Madeline Island, in the town of La Pointe. In the 1850s, La Pointe was the major town in the area, and many boats made it a port of call. After studying the proposed locations, Long Island's northeastern shore was chosen as a better site for the new lighthouse. Although the lighthouse was to be built on Long Island, the government still referred to it as the La Pointe Lighthouse. Somehow the contractors became confused concerning the location. Consequently, the La Pointe Light Station

was not built on Long Island, or at the town of La Pointe, but on nearby Michigan Island in 1857. When officials from the Treasury Department's Lighthouse Board learned of the costly mistake, they apparently demanded that the contractors build a lighthouse on the intended island. The first La Pointe Light, a substantial stone structure, on Michigan Island, was discontinued in 1858. The same year, the contractors built a 1-1/2-story, wooden lighthouse on Long Island, where it was originally intended.

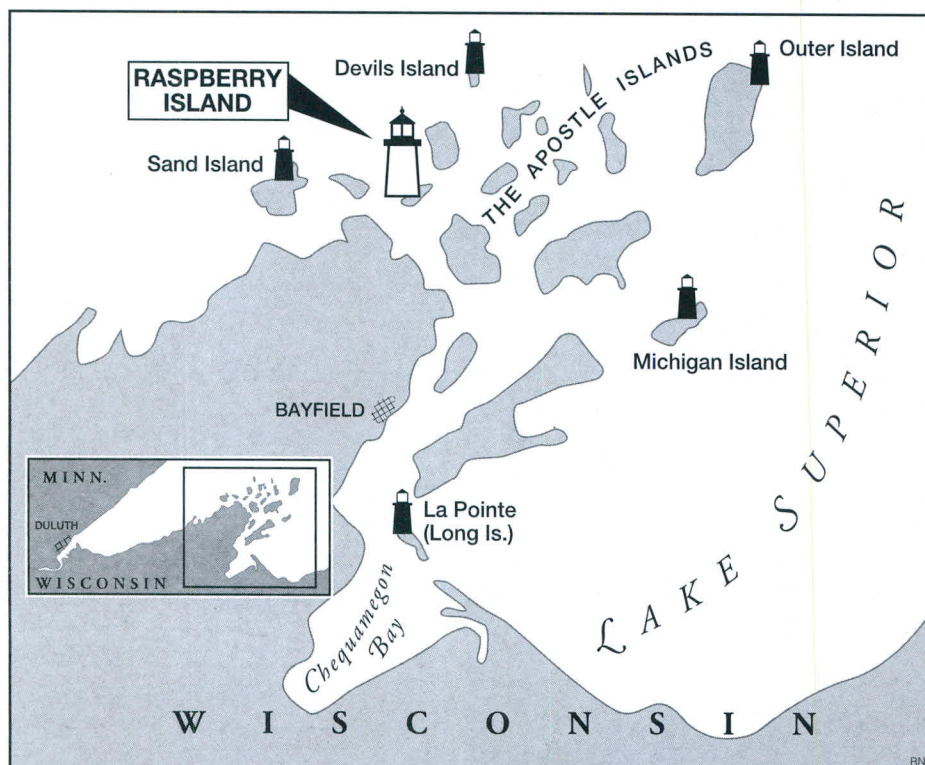
The Need for a Lighthouse on Raspberry Island

By the late 1850s increased commerce on the lake provided justification for another lighthouse to be built on the western entrance of Chequamegon Bay. Downbound ships entered the bay by steering a course through the islands. Shipping owners and lake captains petitioned legislators to construct another lighthouse. In the spring of 1859 President Buchanan set aside all 296 acres of Raspberry Island as a lighthouse reservation.

Henry M. Rice was one of Bayfield's founders and a former member of Minnesota's territorial legislature. He was impressed by Bayfield's natural, deep harbor and convinced a group of Washington, D.C. investors that Bayfield could be a commercial rival equal to Chicago. He intended to build a railroad from St. Paul to Bayfield. In July 1859, Rice wrote to Howell Cobb, Secretary of the Treasury, informing him of the importance of establishing a lighthouse on Raspberry Island.

Later that month, on July 21, 1859, J. D. Bright petitioned Secretary of the Treasury Cobb. Writing from the Steamer *North Star*, Bright heartily endorsed a lighthouse on Raspberry Island.

"The master of this steamer, Capt. Sweet, has just pointed out to me, Raspberry Island...for which there was an appropriation last Congress (\$6,000) to build a "lighthouse". He has explained to me the difficulty and peril of navigating this part of the lake in the night time, without some guide at the point named. He has satisfied me that there is an urgent public necessity



for this improvement and the effect of this letter is to ask you to order Capt. Smith (who I believe has charge of this branch of the public service) to commence this work with as little delay as possible.

Your attention to this matter will confer benefit on a large number of people."

In 1860 four contractors bid to furnish the lumber and supplies to construct the lighthouse. R. E. Coburn, of Superior, and G. H. Scote, of Detroit were the out-of-town bidders. Elisha Pike of La Pointe and the firm of Dairson, Brunett and LaBonte represented local merchants. The historical record does not reveal who was awarded the bid or who constructed the lighthouse. In later years, it was common for the district to acquire building material through bids in the Detroit area; then Lighthouse Service employees built the structures. A June 10, 1862 letter from Engineer J. D. Graham (Tenth and Eleventh Lighthouse Districts, Detroit) acknowledged the authority to construct a lighthouse on Raspberry Island for \$5,500.

The original, 1862 lighthouse was a large, two-story, dwelling with a light tower rising from the middle of the building. A one-story addition was attached to the building's north facade. The exterior dimensions were forty feet by twenty feet, with the one-story addition being sixteen feet square. Total square footage for the structure, excluding the cellar and tower, was approximately eighteen hundred square feet. The square addition to the house was a kitchen with a cellar underneath. The ground beneath the main part of the dwelling was not excavated (crawl space). The first floor of the dwelling contained a central hall, with a stairway to the second floor and a small store room. Two large rooms, each thirteen feet seven inches by eighteen feet ten inches, served as the dining room and parlor. Upstairs, there was a small cleaning room and two large sleeping chambers, one approximately thirteen feet by eighteen feet and the other ten feet by eighteen feet.

Several letters sent to Washington during the summer of 1862 requested a fifth order lens. One letter described the desired arc of illumination, which is the horizontal direction the light is seen from the water.

On October 17, 1862, Eleventh District Engineer Graham reported from St. Louis that the lighthouse was nearing completion; they needed a lens and a keeper to be appointed. Another letter dated November 19 reported navigation was closed for the 1862 season so the illuminating apparatus would not be sent that year.

During the spring of 1863, a lens was forwarded from the supply of the First and Second District Engineer in Boston. William A. Goodwin, the Lighthouse Engineer, wrote from Boston, April 10, 1863,

"Sir, I have the honor to report my arrival at New York on the 8th inst. and here yesterday, from New York, where I left the *Guthrie*, which will proceed to New Bedford with the first fair wind. Her arrival will be reported to you at once. The passage home was very stormy and I was forced to put into New York or run the risk of being several days longer. Your letter of 8th inst. is received and the apparatus for Cranberry Island will be forwarded, to Col. Graham immediately on the arrival of the *Guthrie*."

The lens Goodwin sent was not the lens requested. Engineer Goodwin explained the situation in a letter to Chairman Shubrick, of the Lighthouse Board, dated June 12, 1863.

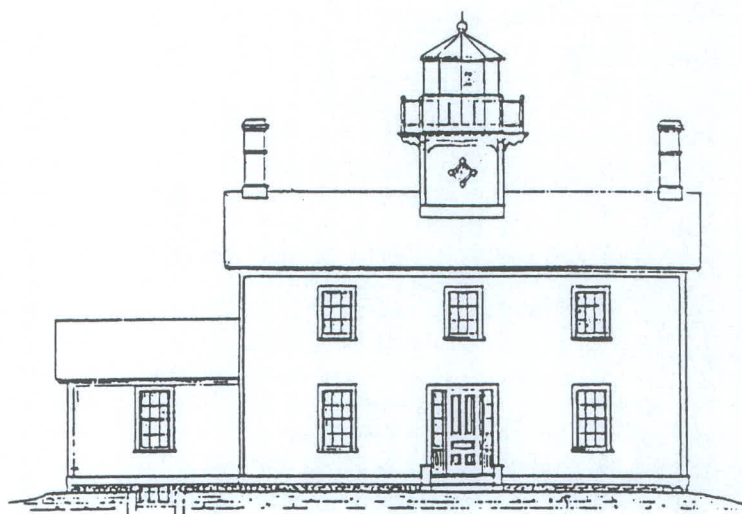
"I fear that an error has occurred in the transmission of the apparatus ordered by you to be sent to Lt. Col. Graham, March 28th – 8 cases, marked "C", (which is all the description I had of the 5th order lens F.V.F.)...is among the articles recently returned by me to the office in New York, and that a 4th order lens, F, is missing from another set of apparatus also returned thither.

I have not heard from Col. Graham that the apparatus has been received, and respectfully request that directions be given for the forwarding of the F.V.F. lens, and the return of the other, if it be not required in the western districts."

Another letter, written by Engineer William A. Goodwin, of the First and Second Lighthouse Districts in Boston gave further explanation for the mixup.

"Boston, June 5, 1863

Your letter of 3rd inst. relative of error in forwarding lens to Lt. Col. Graham, Detroit is received. The apparatus was selected from among a large number of cases, and forwarded while I was last in Washington. I am assured by Mr. Dunnier, that the cases sent were in conformity with the only description of this set, with which I was furnished, vis. 8 cases marked "C". They had other marks, but the distinguishing "C"



Front Elevation

was on each of them, and not apprehending the possibility of a mistake, he did not open any of them, which, as far as I am concerned, it is not customary to do so.

I very much regret the error, but do not wish to avoid the responsibility, as Mr. Dunnier did all that I could have done. As I have not heard from Lt. Col. Graham of its receipt, I am induced to hope he has not yet opened it, and that the mistake may be corrected in time. As the apparatus is not [a] charge of Com. E. Parnell, I have conveyed to him your order to me, by sending him your letter, with a recital of the facts of the case."

By June 20, 1863, the illuminating apparatus had not arrived. Anxious to put the lighthouse in operation, Engineer Graham, Eleventh District, Detroit, petitioned his superiors to use the new lens intended for Whitefish Point Lighthouse until the new Raspberry lens arrived.

The lens finally arrived in Detroit on June 29, 1863 but arrived too late to be sent north on the lighthouse tender *Belle*. It was sent to Bayfield via another boat where it was picked up by Commander Gardner of the *Belle*, and transported to Raspberry Island. A Notice to Mariners, dated July 1, stated the light would be exhibited for the first time on July 20, 1863.

First Keeper Appointed, Assistant Keeper Appointed

Personnel records in the National Archives indicated the first keeper was Andrew Cramer. He served from July 11, 1863 to October 16, 1863, at an annual salary of \$400. The local Superintendent, J. W. McMath, recommended in a letter dated October 4, 1863, that Cramer be removed from the keeper's position because Cramer had hired another man to do his duties as lighthouse keeper while he continued to live at his home on Madeline Island. McMath suggested William Herbert to replace Cramer. Herbert was appointed on October 16, 1863 and served almost three years.

During Herbert's tenure as keeper, Rear Admiral W. B. Shubrick, of the Lighthouse Board in Washington, D.C., petitioned his peers on February 5, 1863, for the "appointment of an assistant lighthouse keeper at the Raspberry Island Light Station on Lake Superior." He also requested that the keeper be authorized to name his assistant. On March 2, 1864, Shubrick wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, on behalf of the Lighthouse Board.

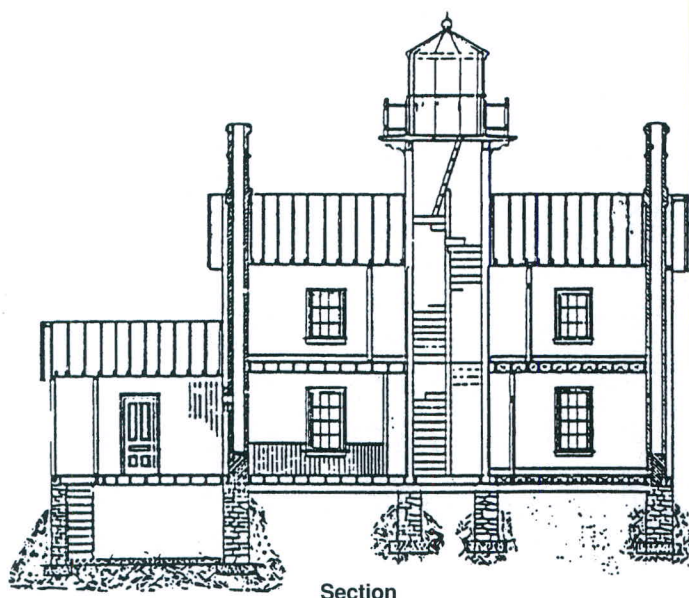
"I have the honor by distinction of this board to report that in view of the isolated situation of Raspberry Island

Light House (one of the Apostles Group) Lake Superior, it is of the opinion that the interests of the public will be subserved by the allowance of an assistant keeper at that station. I therefore respectfully recommend the allowance of an assistant keeper at an annual salary of \$300 per annum."

The assistant keeper's position was authorized later in 1864. The first assistant appointed was William J. Herbert, the keeper's son. Over the years, however, the position was abolished and eventually reestablished.

Correspondence from the mid 1860s indicates the Lighthouse Service wanted to make changes to the lens. On March 14, 1864, Inspector Gardner of the Eleventh District Office in Detroit, first requested "flash[ing] lights of the glass" for the Raspberry Island. They were apparently installed by the spring of 1868 because Capt. A. L. Case, Third District Inspector, Tompkinsville, New York sent instructions relative to white flashing apparatus for Raspberry Island to Eleventh District Inspector Stevens. Funds were requested to make unspecified repairs to the lighthouse in April 1869.

Patrick Mulcahy was appointed keeper on August 13, 1866, and served until he drowned on July 29, 1868. In the interim, William J. Herbert, the former assistant keeper acted as lightkeeper until a permanent keeper could be appointed. Unfortunately, his temporary appointment was "irregular", which meant it had not gone through all the proper bureaucratic channels. It was over a year before Herbert was reimbursed for his services. The local Deputy Collector of Customs, James Chapman, intervened on his behalf. In March 1870, he wrote the Superintendent of Lights for the District of Superior and stated Mr. Herbert was principal keeper from the day after Mulcahy died, July 30, 1868, through October 5, 1868. He requested, on Herbert's behalf, pay for two months and seven days at \$45.00 per month, for a total of \$100.50.



Section

Ground floor from left—kitchen, dining room and parlor. Second floor—In addition to the two bedrooms there is a 'cleaning' room (not visible) behind the tower staircase.

1870s Daily Life of Keeper Lewis Larson

Edward Kreuse was nominated in September and approved to replace Mulcahy. However, a letter to the Superintendent of Lights from John Dillingham states Edward Kreuse "has left the country and abandoned the idea of lighthouse keeping." Lewis Larson, who served as assistant keeper under Mulcahy since August 1867, was promoted to keeper on January 2, 1869. He stayed eleven years, until February 1880.

The most detailed description of an Apostle Islands lighthouse and its occupants from this era comes from Rev. R. B. Howard, a Lutheran minister from Chicago. While on vacation during the summer of 1871, he stopped at an Indian Agency at Red Cliff and met Lightkeeper Lewis Larson.

"I found on inquiring that he kept the U.S. Lighthouse on Raspberry Island, fifteen miles from Bayfield, Wisconsin. He was a devout Swedish Lutheran and was returning in his boat from market with his two month's supplies. In answer to my queries he told me of his wife's faith and life, and closed by asking if I would not go off with him to the place where, for five years, no minister had been, and administer the rite of baptism to his little Hilda and Jonas;... Well, I went with him bowled along by a spanking breeze. We saw the light that his wife Annie had kindled as soon as the sun went down. He glanced at me cheerfully. His forty-eight hours absence made him fear for a little, but the light reassured him of the safety of his dear ones. The moon had risen when we grazed the white sand of the beach. Annie came down three-fourths of a mile through a wood path, to meet the boat that the setting sun had shown her scudding across the bay. She gave the expected stranger a cordial welcome, as a few confidential Swedish phrases revealed his office and errand. After the boat was hauled up, you should have seen our procession through the woods and over the fallen trees, out to the clearing where on the point Hilda and Jonas

were sweetly sleeping under the kindly flashing of the light. The minister led, bearing a package of groceries, then came Lars with a bag on his back and a lantern in his hand, and then Annie, not unburdened, for Swedes are importing the right [kind] of women to labor out of doors. We had to look well to our feet, and were glad when the breakers on the shore told us we were near the point where the tower with its beacon rose from the center of the substantial house. After a hearty supper, a stroll by moonlight, and a look at a padding steamer. I retired to a chamber, through the opposite window of which fell the light of the moon and of aurora



Annie, dressed becomingly, presented their babes.

borealis, the interspersing rays of which were uninterrupted save by the bedstead and chair, the entire furniture of the apartment.

But when I had stretched myself on the clean bed of straw between the windows, and thought of Him who does not like to sleep; it seemed to me, for a moment, like lying in the light between two angels in the ark of the covenant, and I thought of little ones other than the flaxen-aired babes below... The next morning was clear and bright and when the breakfast cloth was removed, Lars and Annie, dressed becomingly, presented their babes, with grateful tears, while I, after extemporaneously catechizing an address, baptized them in the

name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. They showed me a well worn Swede English Testament. They never omitted family prayer or a verse at the table. By and by they must go off the island and send the children off to school, but their first reading must be the work of God."

Lighthouse keepers were required to keep a journal of matters pertaining to their stations. They recorded such things as weather anomalies, numbers of ships which passed in a season, and visitors to the lighthouse. The earliest extant entry for Raspberry Island is from 1872.

"July 25, 1872-U.S. Light House Steamer *Haze* delivered the annual Light House supplies. Lamps and revolving machinery overhauled and repaired and [put] in order by lampist, and station inspected by Commander A. Murry, U.S. Navy Lt. House Inspector, 11th District."

A. M. Larson, believed to be Lewis' wife Annie, was assistant keeper during their entire eleven-year stay on Raspberry Island. As assistant keeper, she was responsible for the care and operation of a fifth order light. At this time, few women worked for the lighthouse Service. A letter written eight years before Annie Larson was appointed assistant keeper explains the Lighthouse Board's stand on women keepers.

"Custom House, Astoria, Oregon
Nov. 13, 1861

To the Honorable Salmon P. Chase
Secretary of the Treasury

Sir:

As the regulations of the Treasury Department forbid the employment of female light keepers, without "the special authority of the Department", I have thought best under existing circumstances to most respectfully ask your permission to employ a female assistant light keeper at the Shoal Water Bay Light House, on Toke Point, W.T. [Washington Territory].

It has been with much difficulty that I have been enabled to procure two men who would live agreeably together there heretofore.

The present keeper will probably leave for the gold mines in March next: when there will be such a general rush for the many discovered gold mines in this state, and the British possessions – now well settled to be fabulously rich, that it will probably be next to impossible to procure light keepers at the present salaries.

I have an opportunity to employ a man as keeper of this lighthouse, provided his wife can be employed as assistant keeper. As this is a light of the fourth order, a female could easily perform the duties of assistant keeper. An early answer is most respectfully requested.

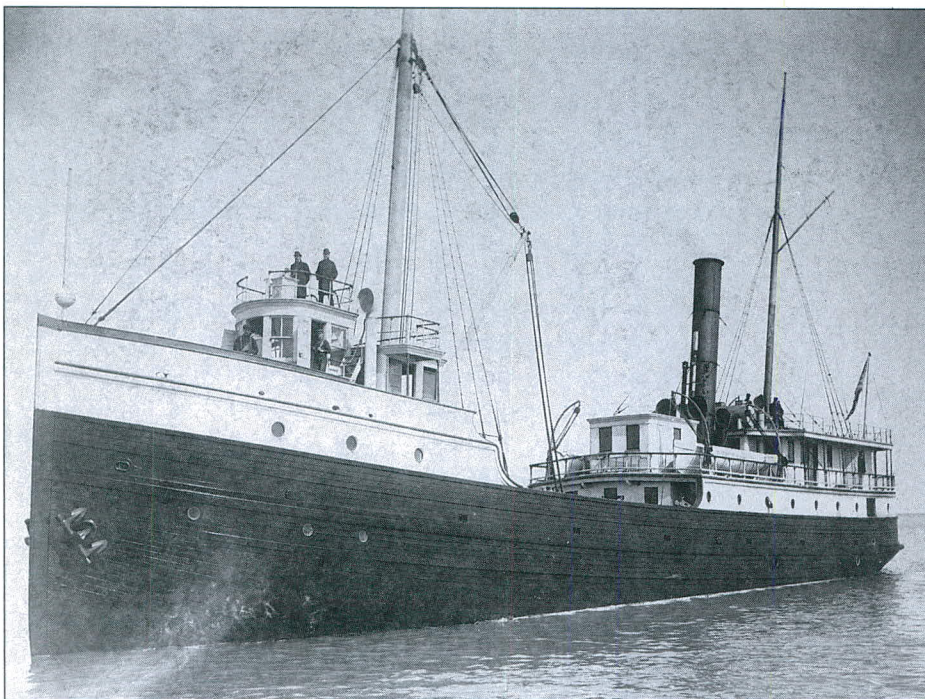
Most respectfully
Your obedient servant
Wm. L. Aumms, Collector
Keeper of Lights"

During this period (1870s) Lewis Larson earned \$560 per year until his salary was raised to \$600. Annie Larson earned \$400. Their combined annual salary was between \$960 and \$1,000; thus it was economically advantageous to have one's spouse as assistant keeper.

The Larsons recorded anomalies in the weather. On December 12, 1876 he noted the schooner *Mary Ann*, from La Pointe, was stuck in the ice one mile from the light, undamaged. Larson predicted it would be there all winter. On August 11, 1877 a "big, heavy squall" struck the lighthouse and broke one "stormpane on the lantern". On January 16, 1878 he noted, "Keeper gone to Bayfield—very sick for two weeks. No solid ice here all winter."

Apparently Lewis Larson spent the winters of 1877-78 and 1878-79 on the island. His wife moved to Bayfield so the children could attend school. The journal entry for December 1, 1877 records, "Asst. and family gone to Bayfield, children gone to school." The school year for Hilda and Jonas was apparently short; they returned to the island on March 18, 1878. Larson noted his "dotter Miss Hilda Larson, gone to Superior City to school" on January 27, 1879. She returned from school on May 28, 1879.

Larson's entries quantify the busy navigation season. From July 1, 1876 to June 30, 1877, 443 vessels passed the light. On December 31, 1878, 483 vessels passed the station the previous season. Considering the season was only about eight months long (April to December), an average of two ships passed each day.



Lighthouse Service Tender *Warrington* (constructed in 1868) was similar in design to the *Dahlia* but was about 10 feet longer. Several wooden hull vessels like the *Warrington* were constructed for the Lighthouse Service to work the Great Lakes. If you look closely, you can make out numerous crew members poking their heads out of port holes and over bulkheads. National Archives Photo.

1880s Seth Snow Appointed Keeper

The journal records Seth Snow arrived on May 25, 1880 to succeed Larson as keeper. Lewis Larson and family left the next day for Duluth on board the schooner *Northern Belle*. It is not known if Larson stayed in the employ of the U.S. Lighthouse Service or if he pursued another career.

Snow's wife (or relative) Mary E. Snow held the assistant keeper position from 1880 until the position was abolished in October 1882. According to journal entries, Snow spent five winters on the island, from 1880 until 1885. In later years keepers were not required to live at the station year round. It is unknown whether the Lighthouse Board required Snow to live there during the winter months, or if Snow preferred the year round living situation. Snow's journal entries are sparse; day-to-day living conditions were never mentioned. Daily temperatures, however, are recorded of the entire five-year period.

One noteworthy operating change occurred under Snow's direction. The type of fuel for the lamps at the station was changed in 1880. On July 27, Snow records,

"U.S. supply str. *Dahlia* arrived at 12:15 p.m., Captain J. N. Miller, Inspector. Changed the lamps leaving kerosene lamps both for lens and dwelling. Also left 100 gallons of mineral oil, taking the oil barrel and balance of lard oil with them..."

Francis Jacker Appointed Keeper

Francis Jacker filled the keeper's position vacated by Seth Snow in November 1885. Jacker's journal entries shed little light on the physical characteristics of the light station. Like Snow, most of his entries are limited to weather data. A few exceptions stand out. On September 13, 1863 he recorded,

"Sailboat (which was anchored near the dock for the night, it being impossible to haul it up at the time) was wrecked in the night (from 13th to 14th) during a heavy storm in consequence of the part-

ing of its line. Reported the cause fully to the inspector."

From Jacker's entries, it is apparent he did not winter at the light. His entry for December 2, 1886 states he was leaving the station for winter quarters, going to Portage Entry, Michigan (near Houghton).

On May 15, 1887, he noted the revolving apparatus did not work regularly and "stopped altogether last night." He put on additional weights and temporarily solved the problem. A week later he "thoroughly cleaned and overhauled the apparatus" which made it work well. As part of the station's spring cleaning and fix-up he painted the sailboat (the Lighthouse Service must have replaced his boat), the dwelling's floors, and the outbuildings. On July 4 he wrote, "No celebration within twelve miles of the station. The day passed in quiet solitude as usual."

A lightkeeper's job was not an easy one. They were required to light the lamp one-half hour before sunset and to extinguish it one-half hour after sunrise. At times the kerosene lanterns could be finicky, and the lantern room panes attracted bugs, or iced up. The light had to be visible during this period. Since Raspberry Island's assistant keeper position was abolished in 1882, Jacker was carrying out his duties alone, prompting him to write this entry in July 1887,

"The reinstitution of an assistant keeper for this station is deemed necessary by the present writer for reason submitted by letter to the inspector. In case of an emergency, no assistance is available on the island, and the proper surveillance of the revolving apparatus during the long nights of the fall when frequent windings are required, is exhausting."

On September 22, 1877, J. C. Thompson, master of the steamer *Horace A. Tuttle*, wrote the Secretary of the Treasury, C. S. Fairchild. Thompson reported the light was out at Raspberry Island from midnight on September 13 until 3 a.m. on September 14. This upset Thompson and he further stated the Raspberry Lighthouse was "important because it is the leading light between Duluth, Bayfield, and Ashland." Letting the light go out was reason for a stiff reprimand or more likely, dismissal. Jacker

recorded what happened from September 13 to 15 in the journal.

"Early in the morning of the 13th, a westerly gale sprang up, all of a sudden, endangering the sailboat of the station which that night had been anchored near the dock. Jumping out of bed, I hurried to move it to a place of safety at the eastern extremity of the island—the dilapidated condition of the ways rendering it impossible, for the moment, to have it hauled up to the boathouse. In the dark, I missed the point of landing, sailing beyond it, and the impetuosity of the storm made it impossible either to row or beat up against it, gravel having entered and lodged in the centerboard box, prevented the use of the latter; consequently tacking could not be resorted to. I could do nothing to sail, under reefed canvas, with the current of the wind and waves, thus drifting over to Oak Island. The storm did not abate until noon of the third day, by such time the boat had received such damage that there would have been no escape for me from my prison, were it not for a passing Indian who noticed my signal of distress and rescued me. I had spent nearly three days on the desolated island, without food, without fire, and being but scantily dressed.

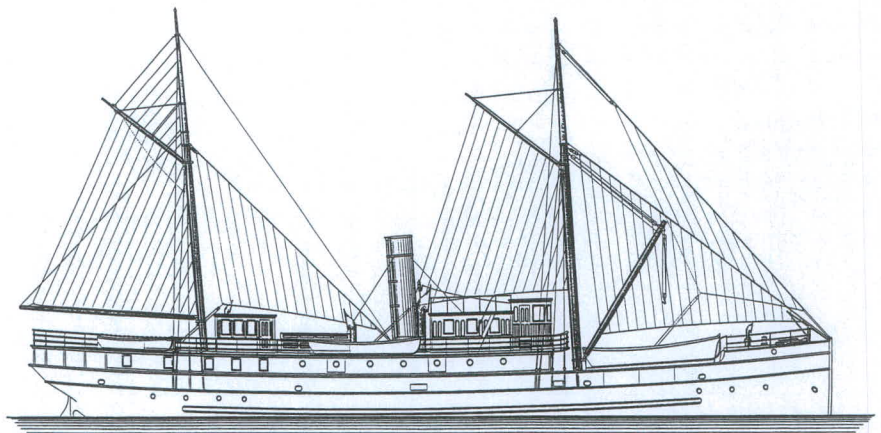
In consequence of the above occurrence, the light of this station was not extinguished in the morning of the 13th and not exhibited the night fol-

lowing. It was relighted, however, in the night of the 14th and 15th by my family who happened to come on a visit, but owing to their inability to get the revolving machinery into motion, the apparatus did not revolve."

This was a miserable ordeal for Jacker and the sailboat was the second destroyed at the station in two years. Instead of dismissing Jacker, his superiors agreed one person could not handle the station efficiently. Secretary of the Treasury C. S. Fairchild authorized an assistant keeper at \$400 per year. While the wives of the two keepers who preceded Jacker worked for their husbands as assistant keepers, Jacker's spouse did not. Apparently, however, the position was kept in the family, as the new assistant was Edward Jacker.

Groundings, shipwrecks, and drownings usually made the pages of the lighthouse journal. On October 21, 1889, the record shows two fishermen drowned. They capsized their boat off York Island on a windy day. On June 2, 1891, the *Mayflower*, while being towed by the tug *Cora A. Sheldon*, sank three miles east of Duluth. It was loaded with sandstone from Portage Entry, Michigan. "The Captain went down with her but the rest of the crew was saved by the crew of the tug." Later, in October, the *Cora A. Sheldon* freed two ships which ran aground on Raspberry Island.

"Propeller D.C. *Whiting* and consort *Wayne* having run in for shelter on Saturday evening the 10th, grounded south of the island, half way between



USLH Tender *Marigold* was constructed in 1890 to replace the *Warrington*. She was an iron hulled vessel 150 feet in length.

the station and the boathouse. [The boathouse was near the sandspit.] The tug *Cora A. Sheldon* from Houghton happening to lay here, succeeded in pulling off the steam barge but her consort was not released until the following Tuesday noon, and not until two tugs with a lighter and a propeller had come to her. The boats grounded in about 14 feet of water."

The lighthouse tender *Marigold* was built in 1890 to replace the *Warrington*. It first arrived at Raspberry Island in June 1891. The lighthouse tender *Amaranth* was built in 1891 and made its first visit to Raspberry Island in August 1893. These two vessels became familiar sights in the Bayfield area as they serviced the Apostle Islands lighthouses until the 1940s. They were a combination traveling hardware store, coal yard, and fuel station. They brought coal, oil, building material, food, and the traveling lighthouse library to the light stations in the Eleventh District. The District Engineer and Inspector also traveled to the lighthouses via these boats to make their inspections.

William Pinkerton Appointed Keeper

From April 1892 to August 1895, William Pinkerton was the principal keeper at the station. Keeper Pinkerton's journal entries are terse and often illegible. The Lighthouse Service made some major changes to the station and the lens during his tenure.

The last major improvement to the lens was the installation of flash panels in 1868. On July 26, 1890, a suggestion was made to the Lighthouse Board to improve the light's visibility. In June 1891, a letter from Engineer Heap, of the Third Lighthouse District reported flash panels from Sauter and Company were being shipped to the Eleventh Lighthouse District. On June 26, 1893, Pinkerton records "Mr. Crump was here, flash panel on lens." Mr. Crump was the lampist, a Lighthouse Service employee who went throughout the Eleventh District installing and fine tuning Fresnel lenses and their oil lamps. He was with the Service since at least August 1874; the Outer Island journal's first entries describe him putting the illuminating apparatus in order.

John Eddy Appointed Keeper

John Eddy succeeded Pinkerton as keeper. Eddy previously served as assistant keeper at Isle Royale Light Station (Menagerie Island). Keeper Eddy was married with two children. At Menagerie Island he only had single quarters, so he was probably happy to be promoted to a station where his family could accompany him. Another reason he may have been glad to leave Menagerie Island was he shared the four bedroom lighthouse with ten other people. Keeper John Malone, his wife Julia, and their eight children also inhabited the dwelling which was on a tiny sliver of an island narrow enough to throw a rock from side to side.



Keeper John Eddy with his wife Katie early 1890's. John was the keeper at Raspberry Island from 1895 to 1900. Photo from the Catherine Carroll collection. Courtesy of the NPS.

John Eddy arrived August 24, 1895. From extant letters from the Lighthouse Board, it is apparent the Eddy's kept a tidier lighthouse than did Mr. Pinkerton. The following letter addressed housekeeping as well as some recurring structural problems at the light station.

"...I have the honor to report an inspection of Raspberry Island Light Station on June 19, 1898.

The former keeper at the station kept bachelor's hall and there is at pre-

sent a decided improvement in the condition of the station, owing to the presence of a woman."

During the four years John Eddy served at Raspberry Island, he wrote journal entries which chronicled a busy life. From April to December the primary job for the keeper and his assistant was to keep the brasswork and glass clean, and to light the lamp in the lens each night. In addition, the dwelling and grounds were to be very clean and fresh looking. They used gallons of paint, whitewash, turpentine, and varnish each year. Most painting was done in spring and summer. Gardening was also a springtime activity. In summer and fall they picked berries and harvested the garden. Cranberries, strawberries, and raspberries were gathered on Raspberry Island. Blueberries were gathered at Devils Island. Later summer and fall found the keepers scrambling to cut, haul, split, and stack firewood for the woodstoves in the house. During Eddy's tenure, there were often visits from other keepers, particularly those from Sand and Devils Islands. Public visitation, or tourism seemed to increase.

The journal notes Keeper Eddy and his family moved some of their furniture into Bayfield on October 14, 1899. The keeper returned to the island four days later to operate the station until the navigation season closed. His wife and children stayed in town through the fall. John Eddy finished his fourth year as keeper at Raspberry Island Light Station when he closed the station on December 7, 1899. He died from an apparent heart attack, in Bayfield, on January 27, 1900. He was the second Raspberry keeper to die while still employed with the Lighthouse Service. In April John Eddy's widow, Kate, and her minister, Rev. Soule of Bayfield's Methodist Church, went to the station and retrieved the Eddy's personal belongings.

Charles Hendrickson transferred to Raspberry Island as keeper effective March 20, 1900. He was formerly keeper of the Portage River Range Lights, No. 3 to 15, near Houghton, Michigan. Hendrickson stayed as keeper for nine years. During those nine years the light station underwent major physical and operational changes.

The station journal indicates the *Amaranth* delivered "lumber, sewer pipes, and things for the repair of the station" in August 1900. The building, no longer occupied through the winter, was almost forty years old. On June 12, 1901, "Mr. J.A. Jeffray, with 6 men was landed from U.S. steamer *Amaranth*, at 2 p.m. to do some repairs to the station". The men stayed until July 27, 1901. During the six-week period, they constructed a new dock, installed a storm sewer, poured a new cellar floor, attached a storm shed to the west entrance door, reshingled the roof, and constructed new boatways. Keeper Hendrickson indicated water was 10 inches deep on the cellar floor prior to constructing the storm sewer. When the crew finished, they traveled to Sand and Michigan Islands and made repairs at those stations.

On August 16, 1901, the *Amaranth* delivered material for construction of an oil house. During the previous year shelves were built in the basement for oil storage. Before leaving for winter quarters, the oil was transferred to the shed. Storing combustible oil within the dwelling was a dangerous practice. Eventually oil houses were constructed at almost all light stations. They are usually of brick, concrete, or iron composition, with a hip roof, and a vent on top. People who are not familiar with light stations often mistake them for an out-house. On August 27, "Mr. Perry and 2 men arrived to stay at 2 p.m. to put up an oil house." The workers finished the oil house by September 10. It is not known whether the work crews stayed in the lighthouse with the Hendricksons and the assistant, or if they were housed in an out-building. Although the workers received subsistence pay of \$4.50 per week, it was common for the keeper's wife to cook meals for them.

The 1902 construction of a tramway was a major improvement to the station. The lighthouse was built atop a bluff and it was arduous work unloading building materials and coal on the dock to be subsequently transported up the long flight of stairs. In January 1902 the Lighthouse Board authorized construction of a fog signal for Raspberry Island. Knowing a sizable amount of construction materials would need to be



Raspberry Island Lighthouse in 1901 shortly after a storm shed was added over the front door. One year later a tramway (from the dock to the top of the bluff) replaced the stairs. Note the keeper and his wife on the dock. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service.

hailed up the bank, they determined a tramway was a necessity. In an April 15, 1902 letter, Captain Lansing H. Beach, Engineer for the Eleventh District, indicated only three parties bid to supply the material for the tramway and two bidders were selected. The Detroit Lumber Co., of Detroit, Michigan furnished the lumber for \$173.80. Fulton Iron and Engine Works, Detroit, Michigan furnished the iron for \$31.88. Five workers arrived via the *Amaranth* at 5:00 a.m. on May 9, 1902 to "put in an inclined tramway from the landing to the top of the dock". By May 28, the tramway was complete and ready for rails but was not used until fall. On September 20 the *Amaranth* arrived and "placed a hoisting engine on the bank in front of the tramway." The next day the iron rails were secured to the tramway and a covering was constructed over the engine. The tramway was completed just in time for the September 23 delivery of the lumber and brick for the new fog signal building. Even with the new tram it took four days to unload all the building material. Occasionally glitches arose, as indicated in the journal for July 22, 1905, "Hoisted wood from dock. The car broke loose, and went into the lake. Was taken up without any damage done." Despite an occasional mishap, the tram served the

station well until its replacement in 1931.

On January 8, 1902, the Engineer Secretary of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Naval Secretary, representing the Lighthouse Board, wrote to the engineer and inspector of the Eleventh Lighthouse District and asked for a report on the advisability of establishing a fog signal on Raspberry Island. Copies of a petition from the masters and pilots navigating Lake Superior were enclosed. Raspberry Keeper Charles Hendrickson, master pilot and inventor Alexander McDougall, and Bayfield and Duluth customs collectors also sent letters that supported a fog signal. Keeper Hendrickson's letter stated,

"In regard to the establishment of a fog signal at Raspberry Island. I have the honor and Respectfully state that during my time of service at Raspberry Island Light-Station which is two seasons, I have find times when a fog signal would have been of very much service to the navigation, there is times when vessels in this fog and out of their course have been asst. by me blowing the fog horn or using the megaphone, though, cases of that kind is very few.

In regard to the number of vessels passing between Raspberry Island and the mainland, during any specific time, I have seen at time from fifteen to

twenty vessels pass during 24 hours, there is also times when weeks go by with very few vessels passing.”

Commander J. C. Wilson, Eleventh District Lighthouse Inspector and Captain Lansing H. Beach, Engineer, responded on January 29, 1902. They concurred with the lake captains and others who urged establishment of a fog signal.

“The amount of shipping making use of the passage between Raspberry Island and the mainland of Wisconsin on Lake Superior is very considerable at the present time, and constantly increasing, and in our opinion the establishment of a fog-signal in connection with the light on Raspberry Island, Wisconsin, would be of great assistance to navigation in these waters; and that the commercial interests are sufficient at the present time to justify the establishment of such a signal.

It is estimated that a fog-signal and the necessary appurtenances can be constructed at the light-station on Raspberry Island at a cost of \$6,000...and it is recommended that the construction of this signal be authorized.”

At issue was whether the new fog signal would run on steam or compressed air. On February 12, 1902, Inspector Wilson and

Engineer Beach, Eleventh District, prepared a joint report for the Lighthouse Board.

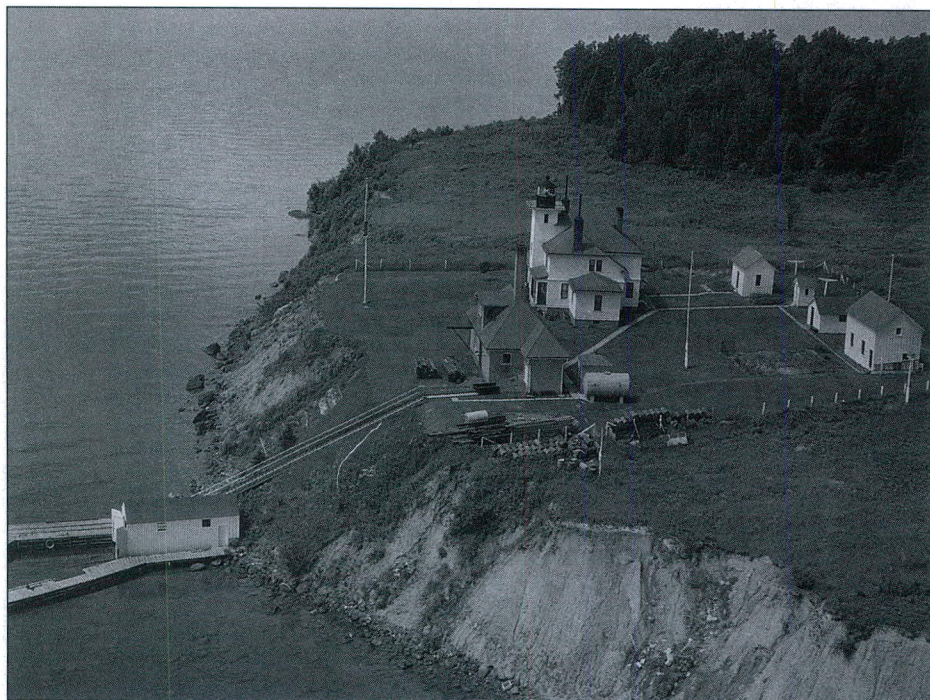
“...There are no compressed fog-signals in use in this District, but all the data we have on the subject of compressed air fog-signals, with Hornsby-Akroyd Engines, is to the effect, that while more economical in operation they are more expensive in construction, more liable to get out of order, require more care in handling and to be kept above freezing temperature at all seasons when they may be required for use; and that the signal can not be heard under the most favorable conditions for a distance of over two and a half miles. We are also unofficially informed that those in use in the Ninth District are not satisfactory. A fog signal for Raspberry Island Station should be heard for at least a distance of seven miles under ordinary conditions of thick weather. If a compressed air signal worked by the Hornsby-Akroyd Engines can be established on Raspberry Island, which can be heard under ordinary conditions of thick weather for a distance of seven miles, we recommend, in view of the fuel supply, that such a fog signal be established there; otherwise, that a steam fog-sig-

nal be established...”

Discussion ensued as to whether the fog signal should have a siren or whistle. They decided to install a ten-inch steam whistle. Since there were fog signals at three other stations in the Apostle Islands (Devils Island, La Pointe – Long Island, and Outer Island), the blasts emitted from the new Raspberry signal needed to be distinct. It was suggested to sound “three 3 sec. blasts every minute, with silent intervals intervening of 17 seconds.” Two bids were received from manufacturers for the boilers and related operating machinery. John P. McGuire of Cleveland, Ohio bid \$4500. Optenberg and Sonneman of Sheboygan, Wisconsin bid \$2807, which was the lowest bid, and was accepted. Optenberg and Sonneman may have made a math error on their bid, or perhaps learned their bid was much lower than the other as they claimed to have made a mistake and requested their bid be increased by \$100. Engineer Beach wrote to the Lighthouse Board on June 18, 1902, and requested authority to make a surprise visit to the company headquarters to ascertain whether a math error was made or if Optenberg and Sonneman were trying to bilk the Lighthouse Establishment.

...It was thought to be much better to proceed to their works at once, and without giving them any warning, appear at the office and request to see the figures and all other data and information on which they make their claim, it being believed that the true state of affairs could be ascertained in this manner more accurately than if they had time, perhaps with the assistance of a lawyer, to put their claim in shape, and if evidence were obtained at the works, it would be of value in case the claim were not granted, and the firm brought suit in the court of claims.

Extant correspondence does not reveal whether or not Captain Beach made his surprise trip. However, a letter from him on February 21, 1903 recommended final payment to Optenberg and Sonneman for fulfilling their contract, albeit one hundred days late. A subsequent letter from the Lighthouse Board to the Secretary of the Treasury, requested payment of \$2807. Apparently the request to increase their bid was never granted.



Raspberry Island station in the 1960's showing the 1902 tramway between the landing and the fog signal building. Behind the lighthouse are sheds, an outhouse and, at right, the barn. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

During the summer of 1903, progress on the new fog signal was recorded in the station's journal. On June 3, "Received notice that 8 men have left Detroit for this station." The *Amaranth* landed on June 4 and the next day, workers undertook the herculean task of getting the boilers up the bank. On June 9 the lightkeeper moved trees from the fog signal site and the next day the men began laying the foundation. By June 30, the north wall was complete and one month later on July 29, the chimney was finished. The *Marigold* delivered twenty-two tons of coal for the fog signal on August 13. Mr. Millar (probably the machinist), finished the pipe fitting by August 19. They were rewarded for their efforts in late August,

"Aug. 29, 1903 – The 10 inch steam whistle at this station has today, for the first time, been sending its sound over Lake Superior, and found to be in good working order."

Perhaps this was too much excitement for the assistant keeper, or maybe he knew the increased workload it would bring,

"Aug. 30, 1903 – Sunday. Assistant Henry J. R. Baker got sick this evening with heart trouble. His pulse beat one hundred and twenty four in a minute. [The journal does not mention him leaving the station to see a doctor, so apparently he recovered. He did not return for the 1904 season.]

Sept. 3, 1903 – Received order from the office of the Inspector, that the fog signal at this station shall sound during thick and foggy weather, after Sept. 1st, 1903, blasts of 3 seconds' duration, separated by silent intervals of 17 seconds. The boilers have been tested and whistle timed today."

The fog whistle was officially used for the first time on September 15, 1903.

After the fog signal was completed, Inspector Winslow recommended to the Lighthouse Board that a second assistant keeper for the station be authorized. Since this was now a fog signal station, the inspector also recommended the first assistant be paid \$425 per annum, and the second assistant keeper \$400 per annum. At this time Keeper Charles Hendrickson was earning \$600 per year.

As the light station operations became more complex, the Lighthouse Board sought more qualified employees. Keepers and their assistants were required to be mechanically inclined and be very self-reliant, as evidenced by two journal entries,

"May 18, 1904 – Fitted up boiler No. 1 and attempted for several hours to pump water from cistern to boiler, but owing to there being but 2 ft. of water in same, the pump was not strong enough to lift it. In afternoon made connections at dock and succeeded in filling the boiler at 7:30 at which time we started fire. Got up steam and was filling tank and cistern when valve connecting forward steam pipe with steam chest blew out at 9:35, the steam burning the Keeper's hands severely. Repaired break and started fire again at 11:00 p.m. Light and fog signal in good condition at midnight. Foggy. Plenty of floating ice in sight.

June 23, 1904 – Cleaned brass and tools in signal house. By making some repair in syphon house, the steam jet was lost out of syphon into the lake. Being that there was no duplicate, the Keeper had to make one. Fog. Started fog signal at 7:10 p.m."

Raspberry Island Light Station, a Lighthouse Odyssey, will continue in the summer Log. The addition of a steam fog signal at the beginning of the 20th century required a second assistant keeper. The keepers needed to be qualified to operate the steam fog signal — mechanically inclined and self reliant.

Originally the quarters were designed for a keeper and his family plus a single assistant. Now, with the addition of the fog signal, quarters were needed for three families.

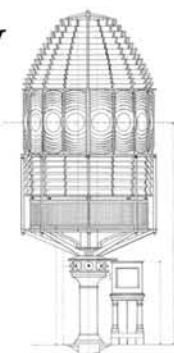
In Part II, our odyssey will detail the expansion of the quarters and examine the lives of the keepers up to automation of the station in 1943. In the 1960's a private firm occupied the station until it was transferred to the National Park Service in 1975.



The workmen who constructed the new fog signal building pose for the camera against the steam boilers for the new fog signal. Note the roof of the fog signal building hasn't been shingled in this 1903 photo. Photo courtesy of the Apostle Islands National Seashore.



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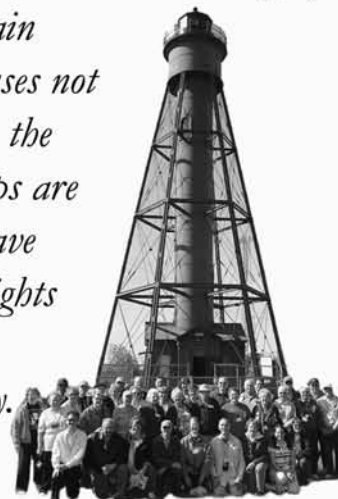
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Tinicum Lighthouse, NJ