



# Lighthouse – Light Station History

## Baker Island Light Station

State: Maine

Town: Cranberry Isles, Little Cranberry Island, Islesford

Year Established: 1828

Location: Baker Island, Cranberry Isles

Latitude: 68° 11' 56" W

Longitude: 44° 14' 29 N

Height Above Sea Level:

Map: CS 1887: Baker Island Light

Present Lighthouse Built: 1855

Height of Tower: 43'

Height of Focal Plane: 105'

Original Optic: Fourth-order Fresnel Lens

Automated: Relighted and automated 1957

Other Buildings:

1855: keeper's house

1895: oil house

1905: fuel house, two storage buildings

NRHP: 88000046

Keeper History:

Keeper - 1883-1887: Lopaus - Roscoe G. Lopaus (1845-1912)

Keeper - 1888-1902: Robbins - Howard P. Robbins (1837-1918)

Disposition:

Deactivated: 1955-57

Owned by the Acadia National Park, the National Park Service

Cared for by the Keepers of Baker Island

"Attaining a height of thirty-seven feet from its base to the lens focal plane, the tower, built in 1855, is entered from a door facing the house. Originally covered by a passageway, the door is flanked by the surviving square brick walls which are joined to the round tower. Two window openings, now covered, are located in the tower's south and north face respectively. They illuminate the interior spiral stair. An iron walkway with a railing projects slightly over the walls. An octagonal iron lantern with clear glass panes in its upper section surmounts the tower. It is capped by a domed polygonal roof featuring a spherical ventilator. The 1903 Annual Report of the Light-House Board makes reference to a reinforcement of the tower, but the exact nature of this undertaking is not clear.

Constructed in 1855, the keeper's house is an L-shaped building sheathed in clapboards that rests on a brick foundation. Its three-bay facade has a door at the northeast corner and two window

openings (now boarded over). Shallow pediments frame these openings. A gable roofed dormer surmounts the central window and a brick chimney punctuates the roof ridge. There are four symmetrically placed windows on the west gable end and three on the east end. Originally, a door was located on this tower end. There are two windows on the rear elevation of the main block as well as a second dormer. The short ell has a window and narrow shed roofed vestibule on the east side, a single window at the rear and a door and one window on the wall, A brick flue rises through the ell.

The light station at Baker Island was established in 1828 as a guide to the south entrance to Frenchman's Bay and Mount Desert Island, Its strategic location as a navigational aid is emphasized by the number of coastal communities in the vicinity as well as its role in guiding vessels along the coast between the lights at Saddleback Ledge to the southwest and Petit Manan to the northeast. It was the first light station established in the vicinity of Mount Desert Island. During the late nineteenth century the Baker Island Light guided the numerous vessels which came to Mount Desert bearing tourists for the resorts at Bar Harbor, Northeast Harbor and others.

The tower continues to serve as an aid to navigation under the supervision of the Coast Guard. The keeper's dwelling and ancillary buildings have been transferred to Acadia National Park as has the entire island." – The National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Baker Island Light Station, 01/05/1988.

See: New England Lighthouses: A Virtual Guide, Accessed online 02/05/08 etc.;

<http://lighthouse.cc/>  
Jeremy D'Entremont's web site gives a complete history of the lighthouse, site and keepers - an excellent resource with a good bibliography.

See:

Dolin, Eric Jay. *Brilliant Beacons: A History of the American Lighthouse* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, 2016)

Particularly see Chapter 5. p. 92-102, "Europeans Take the Lead," and Chapter 7, p. 132-156 for the origin of the Fresnel Lens and its use.

And p. 404-405+ for the importance of Senator Olympia Snowe's Maine Lights Program and the effect it has had on preserving lighthouses all over the country.

And p. 415, which brought the Maine Lighthouse Museum in Rockland, Maine to the attention of SWHPL archivists who were unaware that it, "places one in the midst of the single largest collection of lighthouse artifacts and Fresnel lenses in the nation."