

**Historic Preservation Plan for
The Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station
The Town of Swan's Island, Maine**

IV HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Introduction

The historic research on the Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station was largely completed by Amy Cole Ives of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in her report of March 20th 2006 and this forms the primary reference for the overview of historic research included in this section. No additional primary research was completed as part of this Preservation Plan, however, additional historic photographs and oral histories being prepared under a separate contract have contributed to the understanding of the chronological development of the Light Station. Summarized below is the sequence of development of the site plan based on the historic chronology of construction and changes. HBA felt that it was important to understand the previous work completed on the buildings at the Light Station and the sequence of their construction because this impacts the preservation of the site and its adaptive use, especially as it relates to the landscape strategic plan and to the preservation priority recommendations. Often treatments applied to buildings are inappropriate, not because they are deliberately done, but because those involved were not familiar with the historic materials and the impact of a particular restoration treatment, which at the time may have been considered highly appropriate. Understanding the chronological development of the Light Station and the interventions that occurred helps us to understand more clearly the causes for deterioration, which is critical when developing recommendations for appropriate preservation treatment. This section, therefore, provides a summary of the chronology of changes that occurred to the Light Station with a series of site plans. This is then supplemented with historic maps and photographs and followed by a bibliography of referenced documents.

Chronology of Construction

The Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station has evolved since its inception in 1872. The following table lists the changes to the site and its buildings from 1872 to 2006:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 1872 | Light Tower and Keeper's dwelling built, second light tower built where Bell House stands. |
| 1881 | Covered Passage way built to connect the 2 light towers. |
| 1882 | Window added to front tower. Masonry foundation rebuilt for Keeper's dwelling. |
| 1884 | Front Range Light discontinued and removed. |
| 1885 | Boat House built. |
| 1890 Survey | Piazza on Keeper's dwelling connected to upper light tower with a workroom and the lower tower with a covered walkway. North side of the property, there is a boundary fence and hen house. |
| 1895 | New Oil House built. |
| 1897 | Rough post and wire fence appears, boundary fence rebuilt. |
| 1900 | Old Fuel House adjacent to Keeper's dwelling repaired and used as a barn. |
| 1900-1904 | Kitchen chimney alteration. Railing on the piazza. Trim a dark color. |
| 1902-1905 | Covered walkway removed. |
| 1905-1910 | Bulkhead appears on Keeper's dwelling. |

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- 1908-1911 Bell Tower built.
- 1939 Coast Guard takes over from US Lighthouse Board.
- c. 1964 Boat House removed from site.
- 1965-1970 Height of Bell House lowered.
- 1974 Keeper's dwelling is still connected.
- 1975 Burnt Coat Harbor Light was automated Original 4th Order Fresel Lens was removed.
- 1982 Coast Guard removed paint and coats Light Tower with clear waterproof.
- 1983 Coast Guard repaints Light Tower.
- 1987 Site listed on National Register as part of the Multiple Property Listing – Light Stations in Maine.
- 1994 July 20th Light Station deeded from Coast Guard to Town of Swan's Island
- 1996 International Preservation Masonry Institute repairs to Light Tower and Keeper's dwelling foundation walls.
- 1999 Lighthouse Committee appointed by Town of Swan's Island.
- 2006 - Ongoing exterior and structural restoration of the Keeper's dwelling.