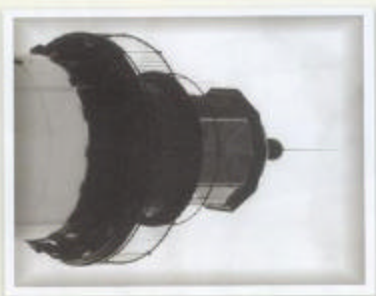


Big Sable Point Lighthouse



Big Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association
 P.O. Box 673
 Ludington, Michigan 49431
 Telephone: 231 845-7343
 www.bigsablelighthouse.org

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 2001



Originally called Grande Pointe au Sable the lighthouse was completed in 1857.

Big Sable Point



BIG SABLE POINT LIGHTHOUSE

yesterday and today

an *Lightwave* re-visit

Originally called Grande Pointe au Sable the lighthouse was completed in 1857.



Originally called Grande Pointe au Sable, the lighthouse was completed in 1857. On the first of November that year, keeper Alonzo P. Hyde illuminated the tower for the first time.

Alonzo P. Hyde



The third order Fresnel lens was lit with a French three-wick kerosene burner fueled with lard oil.

Fresnel lens

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In 1928, there were over 600 visitors to Big Sable Point Lighthouse

The tower which is 112 feet tall, was built 500 feet from the shore of the lake. One of the tallest towers on Lake Michigan, its light was visible up to 20 miles out on the water. Until a road was constructed in the 1930s, the light station was accessible only by boat or via the beach.

accessible only by boat or via the beach



wide black band



The black tower was partially encased in steel cladding in 1900. At this time, the wide black band was painted on the tower, making it a distinctive day mark. In 1905, the remainder of the tower was clad in steel, and in 1916, the lantern room was also painted black.

A brick fog signal building was added to the light station in 1908. Shoreline erosion destroyed this building in 1941. The small white building on the right housed the new telephone horn.

Stephene Korn

The keepers' dwellings were enlarged in 1948 to accommodate three keepers and their families.

In 1948,

provides and in



The keepers' dwelling was enlarged in 1908 to accommodate three keepers and their families. In 1948, further renovations provided central heating and indoor plumbing. In 1953, power lines were extended to Big Sable Point.

no central heating or indoor plumbing before 1948



The 1941 fog signal building, the oil house, generator building, barn, boat house and storage building were either torn down or lost to shoreline erosion.

Shelene Evgin



Foot of the tower base

From 1867 until 1968, keepers and their families lived and worked at the lighthouse. In 1968, the light was fully automated, and keepers were no longer needed. The U.S. Coast Guard continued to staff the light station until it was closed in the early 1970s.

Kristy-Rice Keepers



In the 1970s and 1980s, the keepers' quarters were vandalized, and the interior was severely damaged. At the same time, shoreline erosion, rising lake levels, and the collapse of the sea wall seriously endangered the tower. In 1987, the Big Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association was formed with a charter membership of 13.

The first of many restoration projects over many years was the repair of the steel sea wall to save the tower.

charter membership of 13

Due to shoreline erosion, the lake

From 1867 until 1968, keepers and families lived and worked at the lighthouse. Light was fully automated and keepers were no longer needed.



Today, Big Sable Point Lighthouse is listed on both the state and national registers of historic places. Under the stewardship of the Big Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association, the lighthouse has been completely restored and stands as an important example of the role that lighthouses played in Michigan's maritime history.

completely restored

- 1986 Sea wall repair begun
- 1989 Tower painted
- 1995 Roof repaired and shingled
- 1998 Building exterior restored and painted
- 1998 Sinksinks replaced
- 1999 New electrical wiring installed
- 2000 Wood floors refinished in head keeper's quarters
- 2001 Floors refinished in first assistant keeper's quarters
- 2001 Tower repainted