



***Rhode Island Lighthouses***

**A Pictorial History**

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**A Pictorial History**

**Richard Holmes**

## **Rhode Island Lighthouses: A Pictorial History**

By Richard Holmes

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This book is dedicated to my family and the lighthouse keepers  
who served at Rhode Island Lighthouses.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year of our Lord 1869, by  
Manchester Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court  
of the District of Rhode Island.

**IDA LEWIS,**

In Costume as in the Rescue of March 23rd, 1869.

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# Beavertail Lighthouse

**Location:** Beavertail Point on the southern tip of Conanicut Island

**Established:** 1749

**Current Lighthouse Constructed:** 1856

**Automated:** 1972

**Original Illuminating Apparatus:** Third-order Fresnel lens

**Current Illuminating Apparatus:** DCB 24

**Height:** 45 feet

**Status:** Active aid to navigation - Museum in assistant keeper's dwelling

**Light Characteristic:** Flashing White every 6 seconds

**Range:** 15 miles



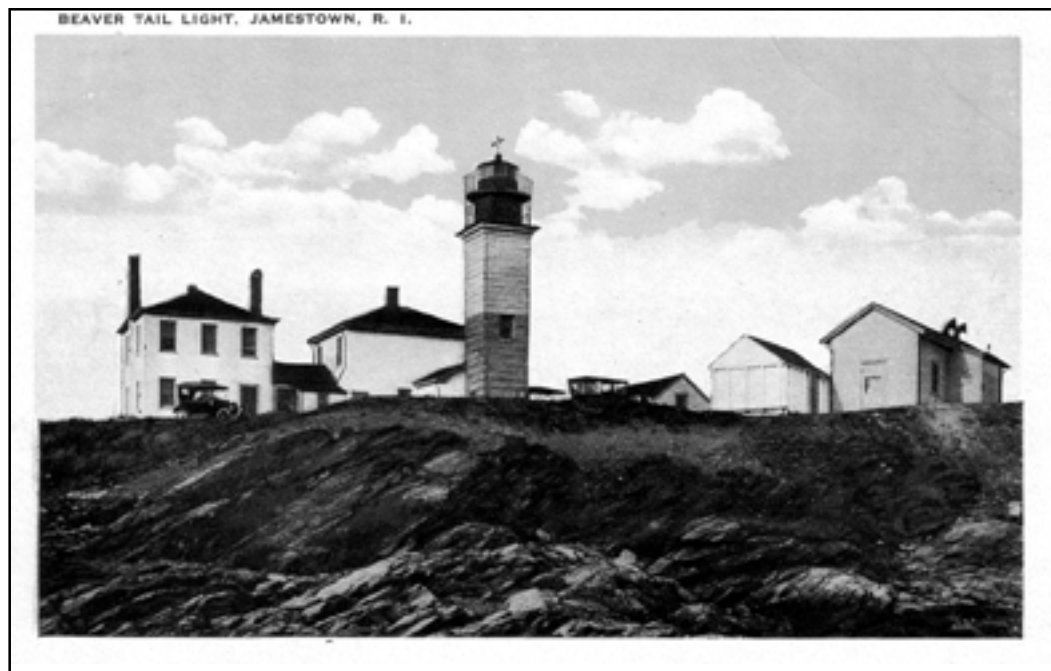
Beavertail Lighthouse in 1898.

Courtesy of N.L. Stebbins

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Beavertail Lighthouse in the 1890's.



Beavertail Lighthouse in the early twentieth century.

## Beavertail Lighthouse



The 1856 Beavertail Lighthouse's keeper's dwelling and granite light tower.

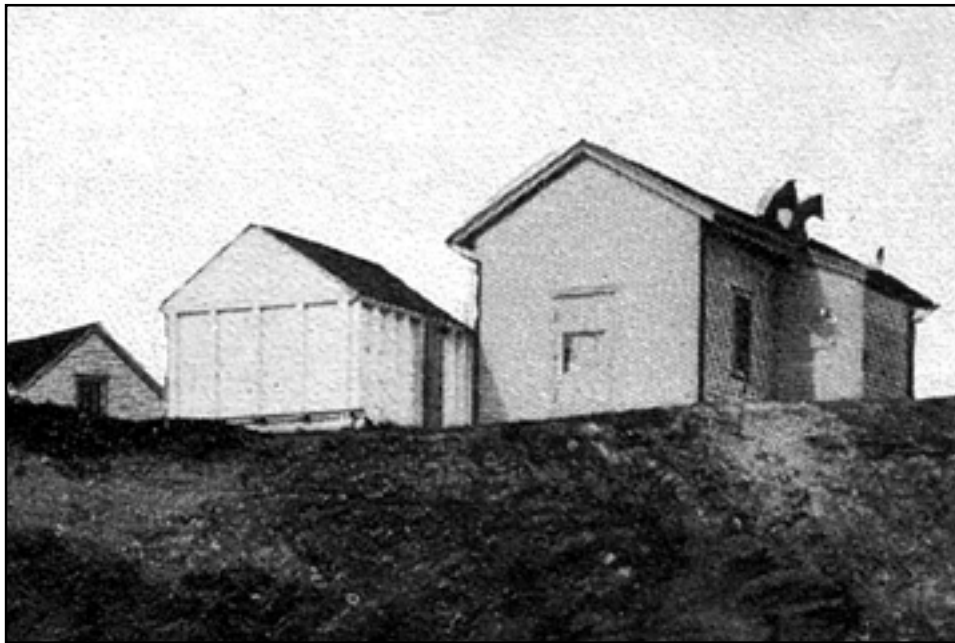


Beavertail Lighthouse in the 1920s. In 1898, a brick addition, an assistant keeper's dwelling, was built on the left side of the 1856 Beavertail Lighthouse keeper's dwelling and granite light tower.

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The fog signal building at Beavertail Lighthouse in the 1890s. It was equipped with two ten inch steam whistles.



The fog signal building at Beavertail Lighthouse in the early twentieth century. In 1900, the fog signal was changed from two ten inch steam whistles to two second class automatic sirens.

## Beavertail Lighthouse

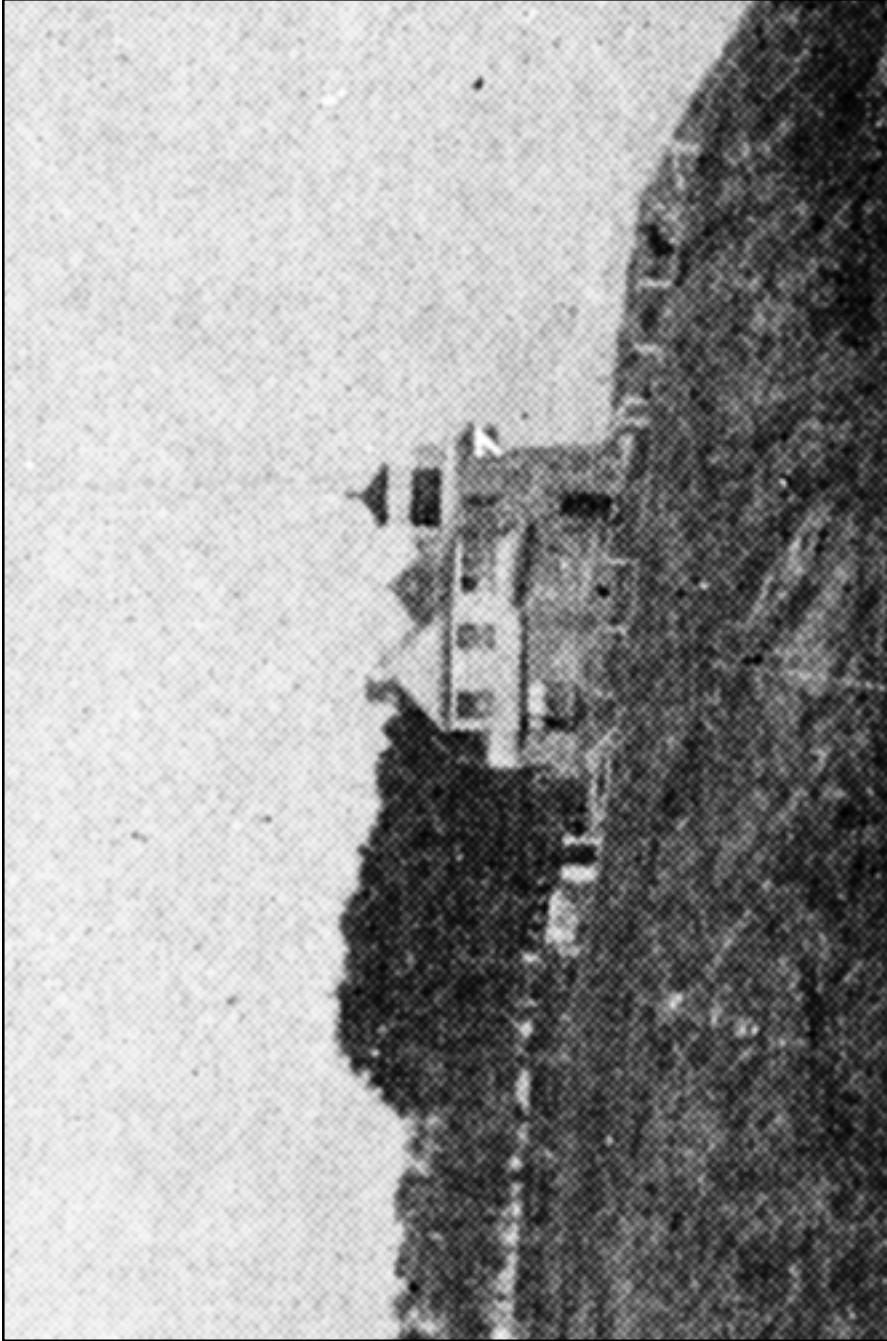


The lantern at Beavertail Lighthouse. In 1991 the fourth order Fresnel lens was removed from the lantern. It was replaced with a DCB-24 search light.



The foundation of the 1754 Beavertail Light tower.

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Courtesy of N.L. Stebbins

Gould Island Lighthouse was closed in 1947 and was replaced with a skeleton tower.

# Nayatt Point Lighthouse

**Location:** Nayatt Point at the entrance to the Providence River

**Established:** 1828

**Current Lighthouse Constructed:** 1856

**Deactivated:** 1868

**Original Illuminating Apparatus:** Fifth-order Fresnel lens

**Current Illuminating Apparatus:** None

**Height:** 25 feet

**Status:** Private Residence

**Light Characteristic:** None

**Range:** None



Nayatt Point Light and keeper's house.

# GLOSSARY

## A

**Alternating Light** - A light showing different colors alternately.

**Argand Lamps** - They are fountain lamps, consisting of an oil reservoir, a burner with cylindrical wick and lamp chimney, and a reflector.

## C

**Composite group-flashing light** - A group-flashing light in which the flashes are combined in successive groups of different numbers of flashes.

**Composite group-occluding light** - A light similar to a group-occluding light except that the successive groups in a period have different numbers of eclipses.

## E

**Eclipse** - An interval of darkness between appearances of a light.

## F

**Fifth-order Fresnel lens** - It has a height of 20.1 inches and the focal distance of the lens (the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens) is 7.4 inches.

**First-order Fresnel lens** - It has a height of 92.5 inches and the focal distance of the lens (the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens) is 36.2 inches.

**Fixed and Flashing light** - A light in which a fixed light is combined with a flashing light of higher luminous intensity.

**Fixed and Group Flashing light** - A light in which a fixed light is combined with a flashing light of higher luminous intensity, in which a group of flashes, specified in number, is regularly repeated.

**Fixed light** - A light showing continuously and steadily, as opposed to rhythmic light.

**Flashing light** - A light in which the total duration of light in each period is clearly shorter than the total duration of darkness and in which the flashes of light are all of equal duration.



**Fresnel Lenses:** Generally consisting of glass refracting and reflecting prisms mounted in metal frameworks, whose function it is to send rays from the light source in the direction required.

## G

**Group-flashing light** - A flashing light in which a group of flashes, specified in number, is regularly repeated.

**Group-occluding light** - An occulting light in which a group of eclipses, specified in numbers, is regularly repeated.

## I

**Interrupted quick light** - A quick flashing light in which the rapid alternations are interrupted at regular intervals by eclipses of long duration.

**Isophase light** - A rhythmic light in which all durations of light and darkness are equal.

## L

**Lantern** - A structure that protects the lens and other parts of the lighting apparatus from the weather.

**LBP (Length Between Perpendiculars)** - The measurement of a ship from the bow waterline to the aft edge of the rudder post.

**LOA (Length Overall)** - The measurement of a ship from the extreme forward end of the bow to the extreme aft end of the stern.

## O

**Occluding light** - A light in which the total duration of light in each period is clearly longer than the total duration of darkness (eclipses) and in which the intervals of darkness are all equal duration.

**Order** - The rating used to classify the sizes of Fresnel lenses. The order of a lens is classified, by the focal distance of the lens - that is, the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens.

## Q

**Quick light** - A light in which flashes are produced at a rate of 60 flashes per minute.

## S

**Second-order Fresnel lens** - It has a height of 71.6 inches and the focal distance of the lens (the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens) is 27.6 inches.

**Single-flashing light** - A flashing light in which a flash is regularly repeated (frequency not exceeding 30 flashes per minute).

**Single Occulting light** - An occulting light in which an eclipse is regular repeated.

**Sixth-order Fresnel lens** - It has a height of 16.1 inches and the focal distance of the lens (the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens) is 5.9 inches.

**Skeleton tower** - A tower, usually of steel, constructed of heavy corner members and various horizontal and diagonal bracing members.

## T

**Third and half-order Fresnel lens** - It has a height of 43.3 inches and the focal distance of the lens (the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens) is 14.7 inches.

**Third-order Fresnel lens** - It has a height of 55.1 inches and the focal distance of the lens (the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens) is 19.7 inches.

## W

**Whistle** - A wave actuated sound signal on buoys, which produces sound by emitting compressed air through a circumferential slot into a cylindrical bell chamber.

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## **About the Author**

Richard Holmes is the creator of the website [Rhodeislandlighthousehistory.info](http://Rhodeislandlighthousehistory.info).