



Wistaria, 1882

Wistaria: a climbing woody vine of the genus *Wistaria*, with compound leaves and drooping purplish or white flower clusters.

Builder: Pusey & Jones Company, Wilmington, Delaware

Length: 167' 6"

Beam: 41' 4"

Draft: 10'

Displacement: 450 tons

Cost: \$54,455.65

Commissioned: 1882

Decommissioned: February 1911

Disposition: Transferred to the Public Health and Maritime Hospital Service on 24 February 1911

Machinery: Condensing beam steam engine; coal-fired return flue boiler; 355 BHP; side paddle wheels

Performance & Endurance:

Max:

Cruising:

Deck Gear: Wood derrick

Complement: 23

Armament: None

Tender History:

The *Wistaria* entered service in 1882. She was built as an inspection tender and was assigned to the 6th Lighthouse District and was home ported in Charleston, South Carolina. She carried out her aids to navigation duties and also assisted after the 1886 earthquake that devastated Charleston. She had new boilers installed in 1887 and 1892 and two new engines installed in 1899.

She was transferred to the Public Health and Maritime Hospital in 1911 where she was used as a floating hospital and later a detention barge at Key West, Florida. She eventually sank where she was moored and burned to her waterline. What was left of her was covered over with harbor dredgings and landfill to become what is now known as Wisteria Island, also known as Christmas Island.

Sources:

Douglas Peterson. *United States Lighthouse Service Tenders, 1840-1939*. Annapolis: Eastwind Publishing, 2000.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis: Eastwind Publishing, 1982.

