

### Chronological History

- 1679 - A beacon on Little Brewster Island is mentioned in the diary of a Dutch traveller, Jasper Danker. It was probably erected by the Town of Hull and was on the approximate site of the present structure. (Hull was granted the island in 1641. The group of islands was named the Brewsters for the famous elder of the Plymouth Colony in 1621.) (From the Boston Evening Transcript, April 10, 1920.)
- 1701 - Clough's "New England Almanac" noted, "Whether or no a Light-Houfe at Alderton's point, may not be of great benefit to Mariners coming on thefe Coafts?"
- 1713 - John George, a merchant and a selectman, petitioned for ". . . Proposing the Erecting of a Light Houfe and Lanthorn on fome Head Land at the Entrance of the Harbour of Bofton for the Direction of Ship and Veffels in the Night Time bound into the said Harbour . . ." before the General Corrt of Massachusetts.
- 1713 - Various shipmasters from Boston surveyed the islands in the harbor and chose. . . "That the Southernmost Part of the Great Brewfter called Beacon Island is the most convenient Place for the Erecting a Light Houfe, which will be of great use not only for the Prefervation of the Lives and Eftates of Perfons defigning the Harbor of Bofton and Charleftown but of any other Place within the Maffachufetts Bay."
- 1715 - The First lighthouse in America was authorized on July 23, "Whereas the want of a lighthouse at the entrance to the harbor of Boston hath been a great discouragement to navigation by loss of lives and estates of several of His Majesty's subjects. . . Be it enacted. . . That there be a lighthouse erected at the change of the Province, on the southernmost part of the Great Brewster called Bacon Island, to be kept lighted from sun setting to sun rising."
- 1716 - George Worthyake was chosen as the first keeper of Boston Light, and he lit the tower for the first time on September 14. He was originally from George's Island, also in Boston Harbor. Worthyake and his family were drowned in 1718, and were buried at the Copp's Hill Burial Ground. Benjamin Franklin, then 13 years old, wrote a ballad about the accident entitled "The Light House Tragedy." This tower was constructed of stone.
- 1719 - The second keeper, Captain John Hayes, asked for a Gallery to be built on the seaside of the tower, and that a cannon be provided to answer "ships in the Fogg". (This cannon is now located at the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Conn.) "To prevent any possible surprize from an Enemy, there is a Light-House built on a Rock, appearing above Water about two long leagues from the Town, which in Time of War makes a Signal to the Castle, and the Castle to the Town by hoisting and lowering the Union Flag, so many Times as there are Ships. . ."
- 1720 - Fire damaged the light "by the lamps dropping on ye wooden benches and snuff falling off and setting fire". This fire caused ever-widening cracks in the masonry walls, further hampered by a storm in 1723.

- 1723 - A great storm damaged Boston Light. The 16' tide caused by the storm is still the highest recorded in Boston's history.
- 1726 - Extensive repairs were made to the exterior of the tower.
- 1733 - Robert Ball replaced Hayes as keeper. He died in 1774.
- 1738 - The tower was repainted white.
- 1740 - "About two leagues from the Castle on a rock, stands an exceeding fine lighthouse, . . . from whence they make signals to the Castle when any ships come in sight."
- 1751 - Another fire damaged the lighthouse so badly only the walls remained. A temporary light was built on a pole until repairs were made.
- 1775 - American troops burned the lighthouse so the British could not use it.
- 1776 - The British blew up the lighthouse when they left Boston Harbor.
- 1780 - John Hancock, Governor of Massachusetts, addressed the Senate and the House of Representatives, pointing out that "without a lighthouse to guide shipping to Boston, the people could not expect a return of the days of good shipping." According to the Christian Science Monitor, 3/23/1917, the present structure was built and finished by November 1783, although other sources record it as 1780.
- 1790 - All lighthouses in Massachusetts were ceded to the federal government. Also built were: single family dwelling, 2 story wood frame, 2931 sq. ft.; boathouse, 1 story wood frame, 600 sq. ft.; storage, 2 story wood frame, 180 sq. ft.; paint shed, wood 4' x 4' hut; oil house, 1 story masonry, 6' 8'; port facilities, cost \$100,000; and a launchway. The 75' stone tower included a 15' lantern (lens room); 25' diameter at its base (including walls) and 15' diameter at its top; 10' in diameter for the stairs. The first lantern was four lamps, each with four burners, and each held one gallon of oil. (Christian Science Monitor, March 23, 1917).
- 1844 - Many improvements to the lighthouse were made, including a cast-iron stairway, a cast-iron balcony and scuttle, iron window frames, a large iron door, and an inside door. (Most of these remain intact today.)
- 1856 - Fourteen 21" reflectors were installed in the lantern. The light had a visibility of 16 miles.
- 1860 - The tower was raised to 98', and the lantern was equipped with a revolving apparatus (Christian Science Monitor- March 23, 1917).
- 1916 - The \$35,000 light has 100,000 candlepower. Its keepers were Captain Hart, Mr. Howard and Mr. Small.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY: (continued) page 3

- 1920 - Boston Light celebrated its 20th anniversary on September 25th. Among others, on the honorary committee were: Henry Cabot Lodge, Mayor James Michael Curley and Sen. John Weeks. The Boston Evening Transcript, April 10, 1920, noted that the tower was made of granite and it sat on a ledge 19'6" above high water. As early as the 1920's, cracks in the masonry walls were held together by bands of iron encircling the tower.
- 1941 - Maurice Babcock became the twenty-fifth and last keeper before the Coast Guard took control of lighthouses.
- 1960 - The two-family dwelling was razed.
- 1981 - The Coast Guard proposed that essential repairs be made to the tower, "museum house", and dwelling.
- 1982 - Proposed repairs begun.

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