

1871 - 1893

To Move Or Not To Move? That is the Question!

The Sea Threatens to Overcome the Lighthouse

No sooner had the new Lighthouse been built than its survivability was tested. In August of 1871, a strong storm submerged everything around. The Lighthouse and Keepers were fine, but salt water flooded and spoiled the lamp oil and drinking water. They also lost about 50 feet of beach. Just 5 years later, in 1876, a hurricane destroyed all of the buildings, except the Lighthouse. The Keepers' cottages weren't rebuilt until 1883. To add insult to injury, an earthquake from Charleston, NC, rattled the Lighthouse on August 31, 1886, causing temporary damage to the clockwork and the Fresnel lens.



Cottages, Fuel and Drinking Water Flooded

The Lighthouse Fights Back

The Lighthouse Board decided to fight to protect the Lighthouse following the hurricane. Wooden jetties were constructed in 1885 to protect from erosion. Additional jetties and seawalls were built from both wood and stone. But in November 1887, 200 feet of the sea wall and the original wooden jetty were destroyed. The sea came to within 165 feet of the tower. They realized the Lighthouse was just too close to the ocean and were very happy it had been designed to be easily moved.



Remnants of jetty or seawall

The Keepers Plan a Strategic Retreat

Another 500-foot seawall was built in 1888 to protect the Lighthouse while they looked for a new site. The current location was selected – about a mile away from the ocean. The money to move the Lighthouse was approved in February 1893. Work began that same year.

They decided to save money by blowing up the original Lighthouse and reusing the brick rubble to create the foundation for the iron Lighthouse at its new location, rather than investing in a new granite foundation.



Original granite foundation on first site of the iron Lighthouse



Bolts that held the iron Lighthouse to the granite foundation can be seen



Site of the first Lighthouse, blown up to make foundation for new site of the iron lighthouse

Current site of iron Lighthouse

Original site of iron Lighthouse



Brick showing white paint of first tower