



BHC-MSS 0047

Guide to the Records of the U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses - Black Rock
Lighthouse, Third District
By Meg Rinn, June 2019

Descriptive Summary

Creator: U.S. Bureau of Light Houses - Black Rock Lighthouse, Third District

Title: Records of the U.S. Bureau of Light Houses - Black Rock Lighthouse, Third District

Dates: 1873-1933

Quantity: 2 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize box

Abstract: Originally built in 1807 by Abisha Woodward, the Black Rock Harbor Light, also known as Fayerweather Light, is one of the iconic buildings of Bridgeport. The records of the light which run from 1873 to 1933 give insight into day-to-day operations of the light from the tenure of Stephen and Catherine Moore to the last official keeper, John D. Davis.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Administrative History:

The Black Rock Harbor Lighthouse, also called the Black Rock Harbor Light and Fayerweather Lighthouse, was originally built in 1807 with funding from the United States government. Abisha Woodward was responsible for construction, and the original building stood until a hurricane struck in September 1821. A new light was built and completed in 1823.

Operational until 1832, the light house had eight official keepers, and one caretaker who looked after the structure from 1933 to 1952. Most noteworthy of this group is Kathleen (sometimes given as Catherine) Moore, known as Kate. The daughter of keeper Stephen Moore, Kate began performing keeper duties at the age of 12 and continued until her own retirement in 1878. A full biography of Moore is [available here](#). She is credited with saving an estimated 21 lives during her tenure.

The light house was decommissioned in 1932 and given to the City of Bridgeport in 1934, which in turn made the light house a part of Seaside Park. Unfortunately the building suffered for a time after that, with the interior sustaining damage and the keeper's quarters destroyed by a fire in 1977. Restoration efforts began in 1983, with subsequent efforts following in 1993 and 1998. The light house was relit in 2000, although it is no longer a functioning navigational aid as it once was.

The light house is not open to the public at this time.

Scope and Content note:

The bulk of the collection is made up of daily records of the light house, made by each subsequent keeper. It provides insight into the daily lives of both the keepers and Bridgeport's harbor for the last quarter of the 19th century and first quarter of the 20th. It also serves as a means of examining weather patterns over that same period of time. The accounts list the supplies and materials used

over the years, again giving insight into daily operations of a busy harbor.

Arrangement note: Daily records placed first, then arranged chronologically. Additional manuscript records follow, also arranged chronologically. Printed material has been placed last.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Unknown.

Preferred Citation:

Records of the U.S. Bureau of Light Houses - Black Rock Lighthouse, Third District (BHC-MSS 0047), Bridgeport History Center.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Clark, Leonard.

Clark, Mary E.

Davis, John D.

Moore, Kathleen.

Subject tracings

Black Rock Harbor (Conn.)

Bridgeport, Conn.

Lighthouses--United States.

Lighthouse keepers--United States.

Women lighthouse keepers--United States.

Detailed box and folder listing

Box 1

1. Journal of Lighthouse Station at Black Rock, March 1, 1873-August 31, 1891. Miss Kathleen More, keeper until January 29, 1879. Leonard Clark, keeper from February 1, 1879.
2. Journal of Lighthouse Station at Black Rock, September 1, 1891-January 31, 1902. Leonard Clark, keeper.
3. Journal of Light Station at Black Rock, February 1, 1902-March 31, 1910. Leonard Clark, keeper until March 13, 1906. Leonard J. Clark and Mary E. Clark, acting Keeper between March 13 and May 12, 1906. John D. Davies, keeper from May 13, 1906.

Box 2

1. Journal of Lighthouse Station at Black Rock, April 1, 1910-December 5, 1917. John D. Davies, keeper.
2. Journal of Light House Station at Black Rock, December 1, 1917-April 16, 1933. John D. Davis, Keeper.
3. Record of Absences of Keepers at Black Rock Light Stations, Third District. From March 13, 1926 to April 16, 1933. John D. Davies, keeper. manuscript.
4. Record of Inspections. Including instructions for keeper. Black Rock Light Station, Third District. From March 13, 1926 to November 15, 1932. John D. Davies, keeper.

5. Laws and Regulations Relating to the Lighthouse. Establishment of the United States. By authority of the Treasury Department. Washington. Government Printing Office. 1880. 155 pgs. 23cm.

Box 3

1. General Account of Supplies, etc., Received and Consumed at the Black Rock light station. June 20, 1897-July 20, 1911. Order of Apparatus: 5th; Characteristic: Fixed White; Number of Lights: one; Kind of lamp: Haines; Number of wicks in burner: one; Diameter of outer burner: 1/8(?); kind of oil used: Mineral. Leonard Clark, keeper--1897-1906. John D. Davies, keeper--1906 .
2. Account of Oil, Wicks, and Chimneys expended daily at the Black Rock Lighthouse, in the month of _____, and showing the time of lighting and extinguishing, and the length of time lighted each night. January 1, 1908-November 20, 1910. John D. Davies, keeper.