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AU SABLE LIGHT STATION, PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL  
LAKESHORE: THE LIFE OF THE KEEPERS AS REFLECTED  
IN THEIR OFFICIAL JOURNALS

David A. Clary  
Regional Historian  
Midwest Region  
National Park Service  
Omaha, Nebraska

April 1975

PLEASE RETURN TO:  
TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER  
DENVER SERVICE CENTER  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## Note

This report pretends in no way to be a history of the Au Sable Light Station. It is based solely on the journals of the lighthouse keepers in the Records of the U. S. Coast Guard, Record Group 26, at the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland. Since the purpose was to provide a selection of suitable quotations for interpretive displays, the report consists largely of journal entries which must be placed in the context of the site's history when employed in interpretation. The connecting text is intended to summarize and draw conclusions about the life of lighthouse keepers as reflected in the journals. It was a life of little excitement.

The report was prepared in response to a request from the Superintendent that happened to dovetail with a scheduled trip to Washington. However, when a historic structure report is prepared, a careful examination of the journals will be essential to an understanding of the physical history of the light station. The importance of the journals, as well as of other documentary material, should be explicitly noted in programming requests for a historic structure report.

All quotations are given verbatim, retaining original punctuation and spelling.

David A. Clary  
Regional Historian  
April 11, 1975

The keeper of a lighthouse on the Great Lakes had to be a man who appreciated isolation and was willing to undertake an enormous burden of heavy labor. His station was his responsibility; failure to keep it serviceable could threaten the property and the lives that passed by on the lake. In reviewing his burdens, the keeper had to recognize that his most important and obvious responsibility--the lamp that must burn each night during the navigation season--accounted for only a small part of his work. He must maintain as well an extensive physical plant that included the light tower, quarters, a fog whistle and its housing, several utility structures, and a few acres of grounds. Far from the image of the sedentary philosopher who had only to watch the waves and ships go by, lighting his lamp once each evening, the keeper was a mechanic, carpenter, painter, gardener, and roustabout who labored, often around the clock, seven days a week.

The keeper was also an administrator. chief of his station. He managed his accounts and the public property in his care, supervised one or more assistants, and kept his records religiously. One of those records was his journal, for which the Light House Service issued long and detailed requirements. With other burdens, the requirements for journals grew more demanding through the years.

As reflected in the journals of the Au Sable Light Station, a life that had its rewards was nonetheless a monotonous and arduous one. The bulk by far of the ink entered into the journals tersely indicated the weather of the day. Most of the remaining inscriptions logged the physical labor performed by the keeper and his assistants. The almost unending litany of the routine points up the rarity of major events like shipwrecks and makes them seem more obvious and important than they were. If a wreck were not due to the failure of his station, a keeper might almost welcome the change of pace.

But even the weather could break the routine, and when it diverted from the normal, some keepers were drawn to comment beyond simple acknowledgment. December 8, 1876, was such a day:

A. M. South light breezes cloudy Snowing and freezing.  
P. M. 5 oclock almost a hurricane frightfull Storm it  
blew down 50 trees or more close by the light house and  
tower would blow down as they shouk like a leafe the  
wind was N. W. by West Snowing and freesing it was the  
worst Storm I ever Saw on lake Superior

N. Beedon Keeper

Nature is changeable, however, and the following winter proved more of a treat for Keeper Napoleon Beedon. The journal is filled with remarks extolling the virtues of the weather. That on February 28, 1878, is typical: "This month that has passed has been as a summer month. Sutch wether never was Known on Lake Superior before." The conclusion of the season called for a special remark in the journal:

Notice

I have been a light Keeper for over 25 years on Lake Superior and I never Saw sutch a mild winter no ice in the lake and boats could /\_illeg.\_/ all winter if they only wished to do So.

N. Beedon  
Principal Keeper

But a year later, things had altered for the worst. "The Month of February 1879 has been stormey Most all the Month it is one of the stormeys Month I have ever Seen," Beedon remarked on the last day of the month.

In the unvaried life of a lighthouse keeper, little events assumed importance that would for others pass unrecalled. For a lighthouse keeper, they were worthy of recordation in the journal. The following is a random sample of journal entries at Au Sable over several decades.

July 11, 1877--

Reseived a new sail boat a Splendid boat just the boat for this Station

August 30, 1879--

The Government Boat visied the Big Sable Light House Station and found everting correct.

September 28, 1879--

My Family arrived hear on the 20th of September 1879 and i feel Contented with my lonely station  
Frederick W. Boesler Sr.

October 13, 1879--

Mr. Baily the Light House Superintendent Visited Big Sable Station on the 13 day of October 1879

July 15, 1880--

Mr. J. Lauzan arrived here at Big Sable L. H. on the 3rd of July with three Employees for Painting the Tower and other improvements and left on the 15th day of July 1880

F. W. Boesler Keeper

July 18, 1880--

The Supply Vessel arrived here at the Light House on the 18th day of July 1880 who brought the Supplies for the Light House Department  
F. W. Boesler Keeper

August 23, 1880--

August 23, 1880 the Supply Vessel visited the Station with Lime and Wheelbarrow  
F.W. Boesler Sr. Keeper

May 1881--

I the Keeper grafted 24 fruit Trees 12 of Cherry and 12 of Apples the first part of May 1881  
Frederick W. Boesler Sr.  
Light Keeper

July 27, 1882--

The Steamer Daliha visited Big Sable Light Station on the 27th of July 1882 and furnished us with supplies and new Kerosene Lamps  
Frederick W. Boesler Sr.

August 15, 1882--

Found an Indian Bark Canoe on the Beach Aug 15th/82 with a Box of supplies in it.  
F. W. B. Jr.  
Assistant Keeper

October 10, 1883--

The Government Boat Warrington arrived here on the 10th October to paint the Tower and done some repairing it took them one day and a half  
Frederick William Boesler Sr.  
Light Keeper

May 21, 1884--

I and my wife arrived here and the assistant the 21st day of May 1884, and I feel contented and satisfied with the Station  
Gus Gigandet

May 16, 1885--

On the 16 day of May 1885 we accidentally lost the anchor of the Sail boat belonging to the Station, it was lost near the Shore and we expect to find it yet it was blowing fresh breeze from the South  
Gus Gigandet  
Keeper in charge  
of the Station

The above mentioned Anchor has been found again  
Gus Gigandet

August 1887--

On August the 8th, and Old Gentelman, watch man in a Lumber Camp 7 miles West of the Station, came here to the Light House at 2 o'clock P. M. Sick and unable to go farther, it was blowing a gale wind from the South so we could not take him away in boat and at 9.30 P. M. he was dead, the Man was about 70 years of age belonging to Canada

I notified the Justis of Grand Marais, the next day, who came and took the corps a way to Grand Marais, to bee buried

Gus Gigandet,  
Principal Keeper

March 1888--

From November 1st 1887 to April 1st 1888, the Robin has been seen a round the Light Station 13 in Number

Gus Gigandet  
Keeper

September 1, 1889--

On September 1st, the Assistant Keeper Mr. George Wilson, Accidently lost the sail, Mast, rudder, and foot board of the Sail Boat, comming from Grand Marais. it was blowing a Moderate breeese from the S. E.

July 24, 1893--

During a Thunder Storm July 24th the Lightning Struck the tower at 9 O'clock P. M. boring two holes in the bottom of the tower right at the foot of the Stairs, burning and damaging the paint in several places a bout the floor

October 14, 1893--

On the 14th day of Oct. 1893 the top of the boat landing crib got washed a way, during a hurricun gale from the North, the biggest Storm I have seen for twenty two years

Gus Gigandet Principal Keeper

May 1895--

Steamer Warrington arrived at the Station on the 14th of May with Material for Oil house, also two mens for errecting the same. Mens finished work on the Oil house on the 22d of May

July 3, 1897--

We had two Men here for Dinner to day they had been lost in the Woods for 12 hours

April 18, 1898--

I had Considerable trouble with the light last night I had to take her apart twict there Seamed to be Some thing rong that I could not get the float to work and I worked about 1 hour before I got it to work

June 1, 1910--

Received letter from Inspector to day, changing name of Station to Au Sable.

September 12, 1923--

Pollishing whistles and cleaning in tower fisherman from Grandmarais wind-Bount at station had to pul his Boat up on Boatway. Blowing hard from W  $\frac{1}{2}$  Gale

September 13, 1923--

Fisherman lift for grand marais this morning had to walk and leaving Boat at station and are glad for saving the Boat and nets. Blowing Gale.

September 14, 1923--

General station work Grand marais Coast guard taking the fish Boat of beach and taking it to grand marais all in good shape wind W Brisk.

August 27, 1928--

Working in yard. a porcupine visited station (didnt invite him back).

January 12, 1931--

Made bird house

Life at the light house had its human, and therefore sometimes sad, side as well. On October 29, 1896, a cryptic entry noted that "on the 29th day of Oct. Gus Gigandet, the Principal Keeper died after an illness of 2 weeks." Two years later, Gigandet's successor had his own tragedy. The entry for September 30, 1898, recorded the event and the normal non-event: "The Principal Keeper left his Station to go to Grand Island at 8 a. m. for to Bury one of his Children. Partly Clear Fresh Breeze North West."

Being human, and isolated ones at that, the keepers could sometimes get on each other's nerves. A reflection of that appeared in the journal on June 9, 1924:

1st Asst left for Grand marais 8 a m locking his quarters so I take it for granted the Keeper or 2d Asst must Be

thieves I like to know which are. Asst returned 4.30 pm with supplies found his quarters were not broken in to. painting in Keeper dwelling and signal

During the some seven decades of Au Sable's active life, the world witnessed many great events. But they passed seemingly unnoticed at the lighthouse, if the journal be an indication. Only one war, the Spanish-American conflict that began in 1898 with the sinking of an American battleship in Cuban waters, drew notice in the journal (June 30, 1898):

There has been Some great Changes during the year Some very Sad hapenings. The Most and terribl thing Was the Reck of the Main and loss of the crew. But Revenj is Sweete and the Same the United States will Repay.

Not only was the rest of the world far away, but it could not intrude upon men working to exhaustion on the construction and maintenance of their extensive station. During the 20th century the journals become more inclusive while a growing physical plant demanded more intensive maintenance with decreasing assistance from the outside. The construction of a steam fog signal housed in a substantial brick structure in 1897 multiplied the maintenance responsibilities of the keepers to a remarkable degree. The journals indicate that throughout the 20th century the fog signal accounted for more of the men's time as it grew in navigational importance. Ships became larger and avoided the coasts. The light was often of less service to them than the signal that could alert them to the proximity of fog-shrouded shores.

Improving technology added ever more burdens to the keepers, who during the 20th century added radios, automobiles and trucks, and motor boats to their complement of maintenance responsibilities. Maintenance of an active light station became more than a full time job for three men. In the journal it occupied more attention in the 20th century than even the weather. The following is a minimal selection.

August 1885--

Some painting done at the Out Side of the Big Sable Light House--The top of the tower and the first deck and realing the second deck, for the House all the Window Shutters, frame and Sash and outside doors.

We put in 80 hours work in painting the above Mentioned Places

Gus Gigandet  
Light Keeper

April 15, 1897--

The Assistant and My Self Painted the inside of the tower to day We Seen a Tug come out of grand-morais and Come up the lake on the 16th

April 27, 1897--

We Whitewashed the inside of the tower to day

May 13, 1897--

The Amaranth Stopped hear on her Way up and unloaded a Fog Signal for this Station

May 21, 1897--

The Amaranth arived at this Station at 8.40 With Brick and lumber for the fog Signal.

November 5, 1928--

Working on radio.

The journal was largely a litany of painting, cleaning, servicing equipment, masonry work, gardening and yard care, wood cutting, hauling, and other labor.

It is to prevent against shipwrecks that lighthouses exist. And it is the romance of shipwrecks that is part of the romance of a lighthouse. But the lighthouses of the Great Lakes, including Au Sable, were evidently effective, because wrecks were rare events for the average keeper. When they did come to his notice, they were worth attention in his journal, partly by regulation and partly because of the excitement. Their infrequency is indicated by the fact that the following are all of the entries in the Au Sable journals that treat or allude to marine disasters from the 1870s to the early 1940s.

July 4, 1883--

On the 4th day of July 1883 the Steam Barge Mary Jereki run on the Schore. Sche is a Totel Wreck here Commander was Capitain Everett from Kanosha Wisconsin no Life was lost.

Frederick W. Boesler Sr.  
Light Keeper

September 25, 1883--

Mary Jereki wend to Pieces from the 24 to the 25 of September 1883

Frederick William Boesler Sr.

July 1891--

On the 17th of July, the Passenger Propeller Empire State run on the reef 1 mile N. W. of the Light House, bound East, in Thick Fogg, she had on board

24 passengers, 16 male, & 8 female and 40 in the crew, and all came a shore to the light house on the 18th, at 3.30 A.M. it was blowing a fresh breeze from the North West. All passengers got passege a board passenger Propeller India at 8 O'clock P.M. on the 18th the crew did not leave the Light House till the 20th at 4 O'clock A. M. on the 22d day of July, the Empire State was pulled of the reef at 10.30 P.M. bound for the Sault St. Marie

Gus Gigandet  
Principal Keeper

July 1896--

The Schooner Volunteer was wrecked on the beach 4 miles west of the Light house on the 15 in a gale from the N. W.

November 20, 1905--

Sawing & Wheeling up wood Mr. A. Bennet arrived at 3. P. M. with repair crew of 4 men. Steamer Portage up bound, ran on reef about 3/4 mile N.W. of light at 9.25 P.M. 2d Asst and myself rowed out and offered our assistance, send 2d Asst to Grand Marais with 2 seamen for tugs & life savers. I worked on her lightering salt. wind S. lt. and part cloudy.

November 21, 1905--

Steamer Portage still on reef. tug Westcott with 25 laborers and life saving crew arrived at 10. A. M. to lighter her cargo. Capt Truedell and 7 life savers had dinner at station left here 4. P.M. to stand by steamer, still working on her at mid-night wind S. & S.W. mod to strong at night and clear.

November 22, 1905--

Steamer Portage got off safely at 5.30 A.M. and went to Grand Marais, 2d Asst returned with provisions & mail 1. P.M.

June 12, 1908--

2d Asst. ret. 9.A.M. Mr Wm Van Dusen of Grand Marais reported a Light House boat ashore with dead man in her about 9 mile W. of Station. I sent 1st Asst. to report it to Life Saving Station, crew arrived here 9 P.M. I went up with them and brought boat to station, they took body to Gd. Marais, man apparantly died from exposure, as he was lying under the forward deck, foremast gone,

mainmast standing boat was in good shape only one small hole in her. I think it is from Grand Island Light Station.

November 28, 1910--

2d L. Mosen of Grand Marais found a bottle with a slip of paper containing the following Lake Superior Aug 4th 1901 To those who finds this Gone down with all hands Steamer Mappleton Lord have mercy on us a.l. Capt Stinson,

October 1, 1918--

Steamer Gale Steeples of Port Arthur Canada coal laden grounded on the reef about half or three quarters of mile North west by north in plain sight of the Station 1st and 2nd assistants went out to sea if they could render any assistance.

October 2, 1918--

Coast Gards from Grand Marais took of the crew of the stranded Steamer at 5 PM one of the Yawl boats broke away and washed ashore east of the Station Keepers had hard time to save it from being pounded to pices among the rocks.

October 4, 1918--

Sending signal got up steam wind south rain weather threaten. Tug and Lighter arived at the wreacked Steamer at 10 am and comenced removing her cargo left for the Harbor at 5 P.M.

October 6, 1918--

General duties. Steamers upper cabin gone apperes to have broken in tow forward of the Cabin.

October 7, 1918--

Painting flagpole. Tug and Lighter abandoned Steamer at 6 PM and proceeded up the Lake.

October 8, 1918--

General Duties rained all day Coast Gards called at Station for Steamers life Boat taking it to Grand Marais.

October 13, 1918--

General duties wind N.W. blowing gale seas running over wrecked steamer moving her shore word.

December 1, 1929--

Sunday about 2 PM a boat came to station telling us that a boat got ashore last night Some time

between 7-8 PM Weather clear at the time 5 man  
lost their lives Started to sound signal for  
Coastguard at 2 PM did not come Thil dark Send  
1st Asst in Station gas boat and row boat all so  
the hunting party in their gas boat got the crew  
of 15 man of before the Coastguard Hove in sight.

October 12, 1933--

North West Gale Keeper going to Grand Marais and  
reporting to Coast Guards lots of Wreckage--  
Pontoon's coming Ashore also Gasboat Tow, Sien.  
Little East of North 12 M Apperantley Makeing  
Bad Weather.

October 13, 1933--

Coast Guards helping Tug to Pick up floting  
Pontoon's lots of them strong along Beach.

November 13, 1940--

Fresh South West wind Cloudy with Light Snow 1st  
Asst. and 2nd Asst went 4 miles /\_illeg.\_/ and 1  
mile South looking for dead Bodies of some Canada  
boat went down at /\_illeg.\_/ Orders from Commanding  
Officer patrol beach 4 mile North 2 mile South from  
Light, and fix boat room door.

For the long periods between such excitements, the life of  
the keeper is reflected better in the entry for August 31, 1879:  
"Noting happened everting in good Order." The life had its  
devotees nonetheless.

Lighthouse keepers were dedicated and professional as a general  
rule. Those who become principal keepers achieved their stations  
through the seniority that came with years of service. One of  
those at Au Sable, Napoleon Beedon, reflected on his contribu-  
tions when he noted his retirement from the service in the  
journal entry for August 15, 1879:

N. Beedon Resined his Position Att Big Sabel Light House  
Aug the 15, 1879

N. Beedon has Been in the employ of the government for  
28 years has resined twice during that time I have been  
instrumental in Saving Many a person from a watery grave  
during the time I have been in the imploy of the govern-  
ment I have cleared up many an acher of land for the  
government. I have cleared up 5 different light House  
Stations, that I found in a State of wilderness.

N. Beedon  
Principal Keeper  
Mich.

Appendix

Material Germane to this Report



# United States Department of the Inte

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL LAKESHORE  
MUNISING, MICHIGAN 49862

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H2215

January 6, 1975

## Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Midwest Region  
From: Superintendent, Pictured Rocks  
Subject: Au Sable Point Lighthouse History

Pictured Rocks staff is planning an interpretative display at our headquarters building with emphasis on the theme "Man and the Lake"; which will relate to Coast Guard, lighthouse, and shipwreck history on Lake Superior.

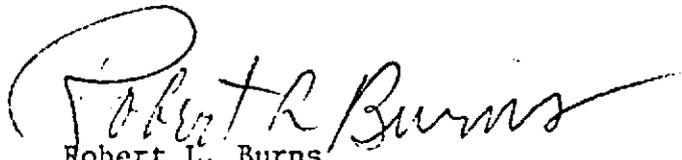
In this regard we are extremely interested in history of the Au Sable Point Lighthouse. Specifically we would like to obtain by some means, important entries from the lightkeeper's log books during the period 1876 through 1947.

We have been in contact with the National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland, where these records are kept and they tell us that the cost of reproducing books on 35mm microfilm would be \$232.50. To spend all this money for page upon page of entries which have no real meaning to the history of the lighthouse would be a waste of money.

We would be interested in pertinent entries of the following nature:

- involvement in shipwreck rescues
- eventful storms on the lake
- typical 24 hour work period in the early days
- unusual incidents, etc.

By advance arrangements these records can be researched in the Reference Branch at the Center. We are wondering if you could help us in obtaining this historic information. Possibly a Park Historian or interested college student in the D.C. area could go the Records Center and tape record, or by some other means, get this historic material for us.

  
Robert L. Burns

Enclosures



April 10, 1972

REFERENCE SERVICE REPORT

INQUIRY: Records relating to Au Sable (Big Sable) Lighthouse on Lake Superior.

Report: The records cited below are from records of the United States Coast Guard (Record Group 26). An examination of these records shows that this lighthouse was called Big Sable until June 1910, when its name was changed to Au Sable. The cost of reproductions is shown following the description of the record. The minimum charge for an electrostat order is \$1.00.

I. Records Suitable for Reproduction:

A. "Clipping file", Consisting of excerpts from the Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board pertaining to the lighthouse at Big Sable, Michigan  
Electrostat copies: 20 cents.

B. Selected records from lighthouse Site File, Michigan No. 2.

1. Deed, dated September 6, 1872, giving land at big Sable, Michigan to the United States. Photostat copy: \$1.00.

2. Map of Big Sable Light Station, Michigan, dated December 11, 1909, showing lighthouse buildings. Photostat copy: \$1.25.

3. Questionnaire pertaining to lighthouse reservation at Au Sable, Michigan dated June 18, 1930. Electrostat copies: 20 cents.

4. Quitclaim deed to property exchanged by the United States at Au Sable for a site for a road right of way for access to Coast Guard Light Station Reservation at Au Sable, Michigan, dated December 30, 1942. Electrostat copies: 20 cents.

5. Early section map of Public Lands near Point Au Sable (Lake Superior Township No. 49, North of Range No. 15, West principal Meridian, Michigan surveyed December 24, 1852. Photostat copy: \$1.25.

6. Section Map showing proposed site for lighthouse at Point Au Sable dated August 24, 1872. Photostat copy: \$1.00.

II. List of Keepers at the Lighthouse at Big Sable, Michigan.  
The following list has been compiled from various series of lighthouse personnel registers. Information on the cost of photostat copies of the entries for any keeper will be furnished upon request.

<u>Name of Keeper</u>	<u>Date of Appointment</u>
C. Kuhn	(Acting July 7, 1874)
C. Kuhn	September 29, 1875
Napoleon Beedon	(acting July 8, 1876)
Napoleon Beedon	November 16, 1876
Frederick W. Boesler, Sr.	July 19, 1879
Gus Gigandet	April 30, 1884
Heibert W. Weeks	April 1, 1897
Otto Bufe	September 9, 1903
Thomas E. Irvine	October 20, 1905
James Kay	May 3, 1910

Kay was still listed as Keeper of the lighthouse in 1912, the latest date for which lighthouse personnel registers are available. If the names of later Keepers are known verification of their dates of service may be available from the National Personnel Records Center, 111 Winnebago St., St. Louis, Missouri 63118.

### III. Large Series of Records:

1. Correspondence, 1872-1939
2. Logbooks, 1876-1947 (these records are now located in the Washington National Records Center Building, Suitland Maryland 20409).

It is not feasible for us to search for general information among records listed in part III of this report, but by advance arrangements the correspondence can be made available for use, in the research rooms of the National Archives and the logbooks in the Reference Service Branch research room in the Washington National Records Center. Copies of records listed in part I can be purchased by sending a check or money order payable to the General Services Administration (NATL) addressed to the Cashier, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. 20408.

*Lockwood Wright*  
 Lockwood Wright  
 Legislative, Judicial and  
 Fiscal Branch  
 Civil Archives Division

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Service  
Washington, DC 20408



DATE: April 10, 1972

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: NNFL

SUBJECT: Information on the history of the Au Sable Lighthouse (Your letter of March 16, 1972).

Mr. Norman H. Davidson  
National Park Service  
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore  
Box 40  
Munising, MI 49862

We regret that regulations do not permit us to do the extensive research necessary to answer your question about the Au Sable Lighthouse. However, the enclosed Reference Service Report lists some of our major sources of information on the structure, and the names of keepers, 1875-1912.

Sincerely,

MARK G. ECKHOFF  
Chief  
Legislative, Judicial and  
Fiscal Branch  
Civil Archives Division

PICTURED ROCKS

APR 17 1972

Superintendent  
Manager - *MHD*  
Administration

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

Box 40

Munising, Michigan 49862

S4619

PIRO

April 19, 1972

Mark G. Eckhoff, Chief  
Civil Archives Division  
National Archives and Records Service  
Washington, C.D. 20403

Dear Mr. Eckhoff:

Thank you for your letter of April 10, 1972 regarding our request for information about the AuSable Lighthouse.

We would like to obtain electrostat copies of the following items:

1. "Clipping files", consisting of excerpts from the Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board relating to the Big Sable (name of lighthouse before 1910) Lighthouse.
2. From the records of the Lighthouse Site File, Michigan - No. 2, send us electrostat copies of questionnaires relating to Lighthouse reservation at AuSable, Michigan dated June 18, 1930.
3. Electrostat copies of all entries made by keepers during their times at AuSable.

Please let us know how much this service costs so that we can prepare a purchase order.

Thank you for your help.

*2* / Sincerely yours, *[Signature]*

Norman E. Davidson  
Park Manager

RR

Ile Royale NP - Pictured Rocks NL  
Houghton, Michigan 49931

May 10, 1972

PICTURED ROCKS

Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District  
Federal Office Building  
1240 East 9th Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44199

MAY 11 1972

Superintendent  
Manager ✓

RR  
GJ 92

Dear Sir:

In 1968 the United States Coast Guard transferred the lands and facilities, with the exception of the light tower, at the Au Sable Coast Guard Station on Lake Superior to the National Park Service. This light station plays an important role in the Master Plan for the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. It is our intention to provide various visitor use, interpretive and administrative facilities at this site.

The interpretive emphasis will be placed on the theme of "Man and the Lakes". We propose that the exterior of all historically documented structures and the grounds will be restored to their original appearance. The first floor interior of the building attached to the light tower will be converted into a small interpretive center with an information desk, and three or four exhibits relating to the history of the light station and the Coast Guard history on Lake Superior.

We appreciate the cooperation of the Coast Guard in transferring the site, with the exception of the light tower, to the Department of the Interior, and in assisting us with historical research which is already under way. We will probably need additional assistance in the future to obtain more data or to locate sources of photographs or exhibit material which could be invaluable for this project.

While we realize that the Coast Guard retained the light tower and must maintain it as an aid to navigation, we are concerned about modifications which might affect our interpretive program. We have heard that the existing light assembly is to be replaced with a more modern device. Hopefully this will not significantly alter the appearance of the tower nor allow the entrance of water into the tower structure which could affect the structural integrity of the tower and of the contiguous building.

The old prism light mechanism which is to be removed would be of great value as a display in our interpretive center. Consequently we would be pleased to have it transferred to the National Park Service for this purpose if this is possible.

We would also like to locate additional authentic display items which could be installed at this site. These might include such items as line throwing cannon, breeches buoy equipment and line flaking apparatus, fog signal apparatus, surf boats and any other types of display material which would be of value for our purpose.

We would be pleased to have your observations regarding the problems and programs discussed above and an expression regarding the extent to which the Coast Guard may be able to cooperate in the establishment of a meaningful interpretive program at the Au Sable Light Station.

Sincerely Yours,

(363) HUGH P. BEATTIE

Hugh P. Beattie  
Superintendent

cc: NERO

PIRO Files  
Supt. Pink File

HPB:eeb



5720  
20 June 1972

Mr. Hugh P. Beattie  
Superintendent,  
U. S. Department of Interior  
National Park Service  
Isle Royale NP - Pictured Rocks NL  
Houghton, Michigan 49931

Dear Mr. Beattie:

In response to your letter of 10 May 1972, I have enclosed a memo from our Aids to Navigation Division. This memo gives some of the background regarding the light station and its lens.

Your request that the old lens be transferred to the National Park Service has been passed to our Comptroller Division, where I'm sure it will receive consideration.

So far as other equipment is concerned, I know of no listing of such gear. Much of it has been donated by the Coast Guard to such institutions as the Great Lakes Historical Society Museum in Vermilion, Ohio and the Marine Museum in Port Huron, Michigan. There is a Coast Guard Museum in New England, operated under the auspices of the Commander, Third Coast Guard District, JFK Federal Building, Boston, Massachusetts.

Of course, some gear does occasionally turn up at Coast Guard Stations, and often museums or local communities will request this gear for display purposes. If you should be fortunate enough to locate something of this nature, this office would be glad to process your request. However, our work makes it impossible for us to contact all our units and track down existing artifacts.

For additional leads you may want to contact the official Coast Guard historian, Mr. Truman Strobbridge, c/o Commandant (API), U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 400 Seventh Avenue, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20590.

I hope this information is of some value. I expect our Comptroller will contact you.

Sincerely,

JAMES O. CASTAGNERA  
Lieutenant (jg) USCGR  
Public Information Officer  
By direction of Commander,  
Ninth Coast Guard District

Encl: (1) (oan) memo 3260 dtd 23 May 1972

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Service

Washington National Records Center

Washington, D.C. 20409



June 22, 1972

PICTURED ROCKS

JUN 27 1972

Mr. Norman H. Davidson  
National Park Service  
Pictured Rocks National Seashore  
Box 40  
Munising, MI 49862

Superintendent

Manager *MHD RR*

Administration

Dear Mr. Davidson:

Our Legislative, Judicial and Fiscal Branch has sent us a copy of your letter of April 19 for a separate reply with respect to log books for the AuSable (formerly Big Sable) Lighthouse.

The records of the United States Coast Guard in this Division include log books for the AuSable Lighthouse, October 1876 through June 1937 (9 volumes). The pages are too large for electrostat copies, but we can furnish 35 mm. microfilm of these log books for \$232.50. If you wish to order please send a check or money order (payable to GSA-NNG) to the General Archives Division, National Archives (GSA), Washington, D.C. 20409.

Also of possible interest, is a new publication, America's Lighthouses, Their Illustrated History Since 1716, by Francis Ross Holland Jr., The Stephen Greene Press, Brattleboro, Vermont, 1972, pages 186 and 187, shows the following:

"The AuSable light, a few miles west of Grand Marais, went into service August 19, 1874, to light the darkened coast between Whitefish Point and Grand Island Harbor."

"Big Sable Light Station, Michigan, in 1914. This light is still active as one of the most prominent coastal lights on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. U.S. Coast Guard photo 26-LG-69-1 in the National Archives."

Sincere

*Edward*  
EDWARD  
Acting  
General

Northern Mch. University

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392

Isle Royale NP - Pictured Rocks NL  
Houghton, Michigan 49931

H14  
NER(MO)

November 2, 1972

Memorandum

To: Assistant to the Director, Chicago Field Office

From: General Superintendent, Isle Royale-Pictured Rocks

Subject: Proposed acquisition of marine artifacts for Sleeping Bear

We have received a copy of the subject memorandum dated August 24, 1972.

At Pictured Rocks we plan to have a marine historical interpretive exhibit at AuSable Light Station. This would be primarily directed toward the presentation of the U. S. Coast Guard and life boat service story on Lake Superior.

At Isle Royale we plan a marine history exhibit at the Rock Harbor Lighthouse. The story told there will be more in the nature of marine transportation and the wrecks of the Upper Lake Superior area. There would be less emphasis on the U. S. Coast Guard and the life boat service stories.

Consequently we are interested in the collection referred to in the August 24, 1972 memorandum. However, a great number of items listed in the collection inventory would be of no value to us. We are primarily interested in the former U. S. Coast Guard artifacts which have been deleted from the list. We are unable to ascertain what these are because of the efficiency of the deletion and can only wish that a non-destructive method had been employed. Therefore, we would be pleased to have you furnish us the complete list or a separate listing of the deleted U. S. Coast Guard items.

(SGN) HUGH P. BEATTIE

Hugh P. Beattie

cc: PIRO  
NER  
SLEEPING BEAR

Houghton File  
Mott File  
KPB:ecb

PICTURED ROCKS

NOV 6 1972

Superintendent  
Manager *WHD*  
Administrative