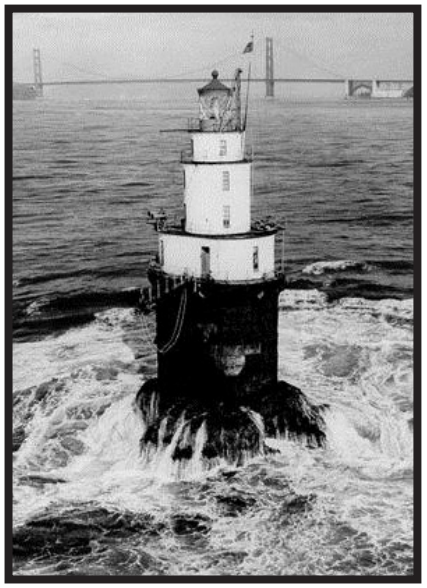
Mile Rocks Lighthouse

At the mouth of San Francisco Bay are two rocks that appear and disappear above the waters with the swelling of the waves. These are the "Mile Rocks". A three-tiered lighthouse was constructed atop the larger of the two in 1904 to guide the way through the Golden Gate.

The lighthouse was built after the deadly wreck of the steam ship Rio de Janeiro in 1901 -- the worst shipwreck in San Francisco's history. At the time, the lighthouse was hailed as one of America's greatest engineering feats.

For over 60 years it was manned by a team of four men who lived in cramped quarters for days at a time, isolated from the city while being within its view.

In 1966, the US Coast Guard automated the lighthouse's functions, and its distinctive top two tiers were replaced with a helipad. The truncated lighthouse with helipad can be seen today from points along the Lands End Coast Trail and Point Bonita, a red and white striped tower among the waves.



Top left: Historic view of Mile Rocks lighthouse with the Golden Gate Bridge behind;Top right: A modern view of the lighthouse Bottom: The lighthouse ca. 1950