NPS Form 10-900
(Oct.1990)

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103

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Breakwater's NW end in Chequamegon Bay, 2 mi N of Bay City Ck.mouth ☐ not for publication

city or town Ashland ☒ vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Ashland code 003 zip code 54806

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title: [signature] PE, CAPT, USCG — Date: 10/13/2006

United States Coast Guard
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official: [signature] — Date: 10/21/06

DSHPO - WI
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper: [signature] Edson H. Beall — Date of Action: 3-1-07

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☒ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☒ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Light Stations of the United States

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
Water-related
Lighthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
Water-related
Lighthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Reinforced concrete
roof Metal
walls Reinforced concrete
other Lantern: Metal, lexan glazing

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Narrative Description

Summary

The Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light is located in western Lake Superior, approximately two miles offshore of the city of Ashland in Ashland County, Wisconsin. It is situated in Chequamegon Bay and marks the northwest end of the 1.4-mile-long riprap breakwater sheltering Ashland's harbor from the open waters of the lower bay. This lighthouse property was established as an aid to navigation in 1915. It includes a rectangular concrete foundation pier, three-story reinforced concrete pyramidal tower, cylindrical watch room and a lantern. The lighthouse is 58 feet tall and is painted white, except for the lantern roof which is painted red. Owned by the U.S. Coast Guard, this automated lighthouse signals a flashing white light with a focal plane 60 feet above lake level. It is identified as number 15310 in the Great Lakes regional Light List. Access to this property is by boat.

The following description is based on historic research and a field visit conducted by Jayne Aaron, architectural historian, and Timothy McGrath, photographer, of engineering-environmental Management, Inc. Background research examined materials such as construction plans, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) maintenance records, and historical documentation gathered from archival collections and government agencies.

Contributing Resource (Lighthouse)

This property consists of one contributing resource, a lighthouse built in 1915 located in western Lake Superior at Chequamegon Bay. It is situated offshore, approximately two miles north of the mouth of Bay City Creek in the city of Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin. The lighthouse stands atop a rectangular concrete pier at the northwest end of the 1.4-mile-long riprap breakwater that shelters the port of Ashland from the open waters of lower Chequamegon Bay. This supporting pier rises to approximately 6 feet above water level and is part of the lighthouse property. The breakwater is oriented northwest-southeast and is not connected to shore. Access to the lighthouse is by boat. This property is owned by the U.S. Coast Guard and is identified as number 15310 on the Great Lakes Light List. It is operated as an automated aid to navigation. The Ashland harbor breakwater is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is not included in this nomination.

Exterior

This lighthouse has two main parts, the pier and the tower. The rectangular pier supports the tower and is constructed of reinforced concrete. It is approximately 28-feet long northwest-southeast by 28-feet wide northeast-southwest. It was built as part of the lighthouse's overall construction project undertaken by the U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses. Today, the pier remains the property of the U.S. Coast Guard. It stands in approximately 20 feet of water and rises to approximately 6 feet above the level of Chequamegon Bay.

The superstructure is a 58-foot tall, five-story tower built of reinforced concrete. The lower three stories are octagonal in plan, having the form of a square with clipped corners. The first story has vertical walls and measures approximately 17 feet on each of its longer sides. It is surmounted by a cornice. The second and third stories taper upwards in pyramidal fashion. The base of the second story measures approximately 17 feet on its longer sides. The top of the third story measures approximately 14 feet on its longer sides. A cornice separates the third story from the fourth story.

The fourth story is the lighthouse's cylindrical watch room. It is 13 feet in diameter and sits centered atop the third story. The fifth story is the lighthouse's lantern. It is cylindrical and approximately 10 feet in diameter. The lantern sits centered atop the watch room. It is surrounded by a circular open-air gallery approximately 3 feet wide. The gallery's perimeter corresponds to the perimeter of the circular watch room. It is bounded by a 31-inch tall metal guardrail. The railing is made with stanchions topped with ball finials and three flat bars. The space between the second bar from the top and the lower bar is filled with closely-spaced vertical metal bars. A solar array is attached to the guardrail on the south side. The lantern includes a cast iron parapet lower wall below its glazing. A soffit above the glazing supports the roof which rises from decorative cornices and is surmounted at the apex by a vent ball and lightning rod. The lighthouse's exterior is painted white, except for the lantern roof (painted red) and the lantern gallery guardrail (painted black).

The lighthouse's single entrance is on the first story's southwest façade. It is approximately 6 feet wide by 8 feet tall. It is fitted with a metal vertical-retracting overhead door. The structure's fenestration is on the longer northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest façades. The narrower, clipped-corner elevations have no wall openings. There are two rectangular windows on the first story, four rectangular windows on each of the third and fourth stories, and four circular port-light windows on the fifth story. The first story windows are on the structure's southeast and northwest façades. They are each covered with lexan sheets. These windows were originally fitted with two-over-two double-hung sash. In the first story's northwest window, only the upper sash remains in place. The second story is pierced with rectangular windows on its northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest sides. Original two-over-two double-hung sash remains, but each window has been modified to accommodate a louvered vent. The third story is pierced with rectangular windows on its northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest sides. These windows are smaller than on the second story, and all retain original two-over-two double-hung sash. The fourth story watch room is pierced with circular port-light windows on its northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest sides. The original brass-framed port-lights have been removed. The openings are now glazed with lexan. The lantern's glazing consists of triangular and diamond-shaped panes framed by mullions arranged in a helical pattern. The original glass has been replaced by lexan.

Interior

The first story interior is accessed by way of the 6-foot wide doorway that pierces the southwest elevation. Inside, this entry is flanked by two concrete columns. The first story's interior consists of a single room with concrete floor, walls and ceiling. A steel manhole cover sits atop a 20-inch diameter floor opening in the room's western corner. The ceiling is 13 feet, 3 inches above the floor and is supported by reinforced concrete beams that span the room from southwest to northeast. The room is mostly empty. A joined pair of side-by-side, wood-frame storage closets stands next to the wall in the room's eastern corner. These closets form a single unit that measures approximately 10 feet wide by 8 feet deep by 7 feet tall. Lexan has been installed on the inside of the first story's two windows. The window openings are 2 feet wide by 4 feet tall and have poured concrete sills and pediments. There is a 29-inch by 36-inch curbed area with 2-inch piping on the floor next to the southeast wall. The first story's northwest and southeast walls both have a single rectangular recess at floor level. These recesses measure 2 feet, 4 inches high by 18 inches wide by 12 inches deep.

There is a two-flight, L-shaped steel stairway in the room's northern corner. Markings indicate it was manufactured by the National Iron Company. This stairway includes decorative newel posts and pipe handrails. It leads up to the second story through an opening in the ceiling. The first flight rises alongside the northwest wall and ends at a rectangular landing. From this landing, the second flight rises along the northeast wall to the second story. This stairway is painted a silver color.

According to Donna Peterson, the first story served as the lighthouse's machinery room (Merkel 2001). Ms. Peterson is the daughter of a former keeper and visited this lighthouse when it was manned. From 1915 to 1961, Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light was operated by keepers who resided onshore in Ashland. The lighthouse contained minimal living quarters providing accommodations for personnel there on duty.

The stairway leading up from the first story ends at a foyer on the second story. On the right is a doorway providing access to the second story room. According to Ms. Peterson, this room contained the lighthouse's kitchen. From the foyer, another metal stairway with steel pipe handrails leads up to the third story. It has two parallel flights connected by a landing halfway up. The second story room is separated from the stairways by two partition walls made with structural terra cotta block (tile block). The second story's walls are plastered and painted white. The plaster is cracked and parts have fallen away in several places. Wooden baseboard extends along the foot of each wall. Wood molding surrounds the doorway between the second story room and the two stairways, and around a closet doorway inside the room. The baseboard and molding are pained brown. The floor is concrete. The ceiling is 12 feet, 3 inches above the floor.

There are four rectangular windows on the second story. Two light the stairways, the others light the room. These windows retain their original two-over-two double-hung metal sash and metal frames, but are covered with lexan. The remaining original glazing has chicken wire incorporated into the glass. The room includes a closet that occupies space beneath the landing of the stairway leading to the third story. This closet is approximately 7 feet tall with a 2-foot by 5-foot door. Inside the room, a square, 8-inch by 8-inch cast iron stove is set into the wall. It vented through a flue inside the wall. The stove door opens into the room. Other walls are pierced a short distance above the baseboard with 7-inch by 9-inch heating registers. Marks on one wall and a drain hole in the floor indicate where a sink was formerly located.

The lighthouse's third story includes a stairway landing with a pipe banister next to a stairwell. A single-flight metal stairway with pipe handrails extends from the landing up to the fourth story. It is directly above the stairway leading up to the landing from the second story. This stairwell and landing are separated from the third story room by a partition wall made with structural terra cotta block. The second story room served as a bedroom, according to Donna Peterson. The third story walls are plastered and painted white. The plaster is cracked and portions have fallen away. There is wood baseboard painted gray at the foot of each wall. The wood molding surrounding the doorway to the room is painted brown. The floor and ceiling are concrete. The ceiling is 12 feet, 1 inch high. There are four rectangular windows on the third story. One lights the stairway landing, the others light the room. These windows are smaller than the second story windows. They retain their original two-over-two double-hung metal sash and metal frames. They are glazed with glass panes containing chicken wire.

The room is vacant except for a 9-inch diameter column made with metal pipe that extends from floor to ceiling at the center of the third story. This column is hollow and includes a metal access door on one side near its base. It accommodated the weight and pulley mechanism that operated the clockwork machinery that controlled the lighthouse's original optic. The access door was used to move the weights up to their top position. The third story room's walls are pierced a short distance above the baseboard with heating registers. Various pipes and electrical conduit extend vertically next to the walls and across the ceiling. A rectangular flue enclosed with masonry extends from floor to ceiling in one corner of the room. It is pierced with a circular hole for a stovepipe. This flue vented through a horizontal metal pipe that extends from its top near the ceiling. This pipe extends across the room and through the partition wall. It turns upward and pierces the ceiling above the stairway landing.

The flight of metal stairs leading up from the third story has 19 steps. It provides access to the fourth story, which is the lighthouse's watch room. The watch room is circular and 12 feet, 3 inches in diameter. Its floor, ceiling and surrounding wall are metal. A pipe banister surrounds the stairway opening in the floor. The ceiling is 8 feet, 4 inches high. The wall and ceiling are painted white. The floor is painted black. The watch room is lighted with four 16-inch diameter circular port-light windows. The original port-light hardware and glazing have been removed. The existing glazing is lexan. These windows are set into 22-inch by 22-inch square recessed openings that are painted black. A 16-inch by 16-inch rectangular opening in the wall on the north side is covered with a metal plate. It was formerly occupied by the lighthouse's fog signal, which has been removed.

The watch room includes five features. One is a 9-inch diameter hollow column in the center of the room. It includes decorative circular molding at the ceiling and floor. This is a continuation of the third story's column that accommodated the weight and pulley mechanism for the clockwork machinery that operated the lighthouse's original optic. Another feature is a 6-inch diameter metal pipe that extends from floor to ceiling next to the head of the stairway leading up from the third story. It vented the flue that extends up from the second story room. A third feature in the watch room is a metal ship's ladder with a single pipe handrail that extends from the floor to an opening in the ceiling. It provides access to the lantern room, and is built with a slight twist due to the watch room's confined space. These three features are painted black. Another feature is a two-door wooden cabinet measuring 4 feet long by 20 inches wide by 34 inches tall. The fifth feature is a wooden storage box measuring 35 inches long by 37 inches high by 6 inches wide.

The lighthouse's circular lantern rests atop the watch room. The lantern room is 7 feet in diameter. The floor, parapet wall and ceiling are metal. The parapet wall is made with curved metal panels approximately 3 feet tall. The parapet wall is pierced with 8 evenly-spaced vents. The lantern's glazing is above the parapet is approximately 3 feet tall and consists of triangular and diamond-shaped panes held by metal mullions arranged in helical fashion. The original glass has been replaced with lexan. A full-height rectangular door on one side of the lantern holds a rectangular lexan pane above a solid metal panel. A modern aluminum pipe pedestal stands in the center of the lantern room floor. It supports a modern 250-millimeter acrylic lens optic. This optic's focal plane is 60 feet above water level. It signals a white light that flashes once every 6 seconds and is visible for 9 miles in clear weather. This optic is powered with batteries recharged by the solar array mounted on the lantern gallery railing.

Changes in appearance and integrity issues

The exterior appearance of Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light has remained virtually unchanged since it was constructed in 1915. The most obvious exterior modifications are changes to the window glazing by replacing or covering glass with lexan, and the attachment of a solar array to the lantern gallery guardrail. Changes have also been made to the lighthouse interior. These relate largely to fixtures, equipment and furnishings. The lighthouse was automated in 1961. Its original fourth order Fresnel lens was removed in 1967 and replaced with a modern optic. Machinery associated with the original optic such as its clockwork mechanism and generator for emergency electrical power have also been removed. Other original equipment that has been taken away includes the lighthouse's fog signal and air compressor machinery. Furnishings in the second and third story rooms relating to the lighthouse's operation prior to its 1961 automation have also been removed. It appears that the watch room's brass-framed port-lights were removed by vandals in 1983, along with other items. Other vandalism incidents caused broken windows. The various changes that have occurred since 1915 appear to be reversible. They have not compromised the lighthouse's overall integrity.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or a grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Maritime History
Transportation
Architecture
Engineering

Period of Significance
1915 to 1956

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses, 11th District, Detroit, MI

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☒ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository:

USCG District 9 HQ, Cleveland; Wisconsin Historical Society; Ashland Historical Society; Wisconsin Maritime Museum; USCG HQ Historian's Office, Washington, DC

Narrative Statement of Significance

Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light marks the breakwater at the entry to the port of Ashland. It is significant in the local history of Ashland County. This property's period of historic significance begins in 1915 when its construction was completed and ends in 1956, the most recent year of its operation 50 years before the present. The lighthouse was an important local aid to navigation throughout its period of historical significance. It continues serving this function today for both commercial shipping and recreational watercraft. This property is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is significant in terms of Criterion A for its association with the efforts of the Federal government to provide for safe maritime transport on the Great Lakes. This property exemplifies how the long-term Federal program for establishing an integrated system of navigational aids throughout the United States was manifested in the Ashland County locality. Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light is significant under Criterion C because it represents and embodies early twentieth century lighthouse architecture and engineering. It exemplifies design and construction methods used in building reinforced concrete lighthouses on piers and breakwaters during that time period. This structure includes two principal components, a concrete pier foundation and light tower. The property possesses qualities of original location, setting and design. It embodies historical qualities of integrity in materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The character and appearance of Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light are largely unchanged from when it was established as an aid to navigation in 1915. Its existing structural integrity attests to the lasting value of its design, as well as the high quality of its materials and construction. The changes that have been made include replacing the lantern's original optic with modern equipment, removing its fog signal and other machinery formerly used in operating the lighthouse's aids to navigation, and removing interior furnishings associated with the lighthouse's operation by onsite keepers. Despite these changes, the property's character and appearance remain essentially the same as during its 1915 to 1956 period of significance. This lighthouse has been an operating Federal aid to navigation and local landmark in the Chequamegon Bay vicinity for more than 90 years. It continues to evoke feelings that recall the dedication to duty that characterized United States lighthouse keepers throughout the country's history.

This property's nomination to the National Register is submitted as an individual registration associated with the overarching *Light Stations of the United States* multiple property documentation form (MPDF). The following discussion focuses on the nominated property. Information and historic contexts presented and available in the *Light Stations of the United States* MPDF are not repeated here. This submission focuses on additional facts and details linking Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light with the history of its geographic location and that support the significance of this specific property.

Significance under Criteria A and C:

This property qualifies under criterion A for its association with events related to Federal government efforts to provide for an integrated system of navigational aids throughout the United States, and for promoting maritime safety on the Great Lakes. Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light has been an important aid to navigation since it was built by the U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses in 1915. It is historically significant because of its contribution to the broad historical patterns of maritime transportation and commerce associated with Wisconsin and Lake Superior. Lighthouses such as this have enabled safe passage for thousands of ships and demonstrate the Federal government's role in providing a system of navigational aids. The signal light and daymark of this lighthouse have guided mariners along Lake Superior and been an important enhancement to navigational safety in and around the port of Ashland from 1915 to the present.

This property also qualifies for National Register listing under criterion C. It embodies distinctive characteristics of early twentieth-century breakwater lighthouses in the Great Lakes region. Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light is representative of the design and engineering of American lighthouses built of reinforced concrete on piers and breakwaters in the region during the early 1900s. It was constructed during the time period when lighthouse construction in the U.S. was transitioning from an emphasis on light towers made of cast iron to ones built of concrete or steel. The harsh winter weather associated with this locality's environmental setting required a lighthouse design that could withstand the forces of strong waves and inclement weather. This structure's durable, compact and water resistant character embodies the success of its design, its appropriateness to this natural setting, and its high quality of construction. The property's good state of preservation embodies the permanence and durability of breakwater lights throughout the Great Lakes. It stands as a monument to this locality's maritime and commercial history, and is widely regarded as a landmark in the city of Ashland and the Chequamegon Bay vicinity.

Shipping, Commerce, and the Establishment of Navigational Aids on the Great Lakes:

The Great Lakes region includes Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan and Superior, along with their connecting waters and the St. Lawrence River. It is one of the largest concentrations of fresh water on earth. This waterway system has a total shore length of approximately 11,000 statute miles and a total water surface area of about 95,000 square miles. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 linked Lake Erie at Buffalo, New York, with the port of New York City via the Hudson River. This marked the beginning of a period of enormous growth in population, maritime traffic and trade in the Great Lakes Region. In 1829, the Welland Canal opened and linked Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The St. Mary's Falls Ship Canal (the Soo Locks) at Sault Sainte Marie opened in 1855, thus completing one of the last major links in the Great Lakes navigation system. With the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, the industrial and agricultural heartland of North America became accessible to deep-draft oceangoing vessels navigating the Great Lakes. In addition, small craft and barge traffic reaches the Great Lakes from the Gulf of Mexico via the Mississippi River and the Illinois Waterway, and also from New York City by way of the Hudson River and the New York State Barge Canal System.

Commerce grew rapidly in the Great Lakes region throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. The lumber industry accounted for early development and expansion of marine traffic, leading to an increase in aids to navigation. Iron ore production in northern Wisconsin, Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Minnesota, as well as grain from farms and flour from mills in the northwest, furnished cargoes carried aboard southbound vessels. These shipments corresponded with the heavy up-bound movement of coal and manufactured goods from ports in the lower Great Lakes.

By 1910, the amount of goods shipped annually on the Great Lakes increased to 80 million tons. Most of this was bulk cargo such as iron ore and coal. Shipped freight tonnage reached a record of 217 million tons in 1948. The combined movement of lumber, grain, flour, iron ore and coal, together with limestone cargoes from the Lake Michigan area to the centers of steel production, resulted in the greatest bulk freight marine commerce the world has ever seen.

The need for aids to navigation on the Great Lakes increased along with the expansion of shipping and settlement. Seven lighthouses were built in the region between 1818 and 1822, and 32 were completed during the 1830s. From 1841 to 1852, the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment added 33 newlights. Between 1852 and 1860, the total number of aids to navigation increased from 76 to 102. Another construction boom occurred in the 1890s. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Great Lakes had 334 major-lighted aids, 67 fog signals, and 563 buoys.

Several distinct designs or types of lighthouses emerged during the nineteenth century. Until 1870 or so, the most common design consisted of a wood, stone, or brick keeper's dwelling that exhibited the lighthouse's optic in a lantern on the roof or atop an attached square tower. By the 1870s, taller towers that were connected to a keeper's dwelling by an enclosed passageway became popular. From 1870 to around 1910, lighthouse engineers practiced and perfected the construction of light stations built on isolated islands and on crib structures placed atop submerged reefs and shoals. Another widespread lighthouse type in the Great Lakes is the pierhead light, used for guiding vessels into harbors along the coasts. Such lights differ from East Coast lights that serve the same purpose in that they are constructed on piers that project from shore into the lakes rather than on land. Great Lakes breakwater lights are closely related to pierhead lights. Usually constructed of metal plates, they are generally tower-like structures positioned at the head of a breakwater.

Light vessels also served in the Great Lakes region. During the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, they were a substitute for building expensive lighthouses at offshore sites. However, harsh weather in late autumn often forced lightships to leave their stations before the end of the shipping season. In the spring, light vessels often had to wait in port until larger, stronger vessels broke the ice. This sometimes prevented their return to assigned locations by the start of shipping season. Some dangerous areas were thus left unmarked for a period of time near the beginning or end of a year's shipping season. To overcome this, lighthouse engineers worked throughout the late 1920s and 1930s to replace all lightships on the Great Lakes with permanent aids to navigation. This contributed a great deal to enhancing maritime safety and commerce.

Historical Context of the Ashland Vicinity and Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light:

Bands of Chippewa Indian came to the area they called *Sha-ga-waun-il-ong* around the time of Columbus's first voyage to the Americas. This term may mean either "lowlands," the "needle," or "the region of shallow water," where "there are large extended breakers." Chippewa groups established settlement sites on Chequamegon Point and in the Ashland vicinity, as well as on nearby Madeline Island and at other locations in the area. Settlements tended to be occupied intermittently, as groups moved from one locale to another on a seasonal basis such as to the Sault Sainte Marie region at certain times of the year to trade and fish. Their settlement patterning was influenced by the necessities of procuring food resources, as well as interactions relating to other Indian tribal groups such as the Sioux. Chippewa Indian involvement in the commercial fur trade was an important influence from the middle seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century.

Three different nations have controlled the Ashland area since Europeans first arrived there nearly four centuries ago. They include France, Britain and the United States of America. Northern Wisconsin's historical record dates to 1618 when Stephen Brule, a voyager associated with Samuel de Champlain, became the first European to explore the western end of Lake Superior. While visiting the lake's southwestern shore, Brule encountered scattered settlements of Chippewa (Ojibwa) Indians. From them, he learned of a portage that provided a convenient route for travel between Lake Superior and the Mississippi River drainage. It traversed the short overland distance between the headwaters of the Brule River and the St. Croix River. This portage later became an important route used by fur traders.

Other French explorers, missionaries and fur traders visited the Ashland vicinity during the second half of the seventeenth century. French fur traders Pierre d'Esprit, le Sieur Radisson, and Medard Chouart, le Sieur des Groseillers, were the first Europeans of record to visit Chequamegon Bay. They arrived in 1659 and built what has been called the first European dwelling place in Wisconsin. Five years later, the Jesuit missionary Father Claude Allouez arrived. He brought the first word of Christianity to Wisconsin's shores. Father Allouez built a chapel not far from Radisson's and Groseillier's stockade and remained until 1669.

This activity strengthened French colonial influence in the area, which continued until the end of the Seven Years' War (called the French and Indian War in North America). The outcome of that conflict, codified in the 1763 Treaty of Paris, transferred sovereignty over the entire Great Lakes region from France to Britain. This led to a British exploring party commanded by Captain Jonathan Carver visiting the southwestern Lake Superior area in 1767.

The American Revolution resulted in a final change in sovereignty over the Ashland area. The 1783 peace treaty between Britain and the newly-independent United States of America included granting ownership of Lake Superior's southern shore to the U.S. This led to American trading activity in the area, followed by permanent settlement. The northern Wisconsin region was part of the original Northwest Territory that was progressively opened up to American pioneer settlement from the late eighteenth century to the middle nineteenth century. In 1847, local Indian inhabitants in the northern Wisconsin area agreed to a treaty with the United States government in which they gave up rights to lands at the southwestern end of Lake Superior. This stimulated pioneer settlement in the area, which led to timber harvesting and mineral deposit exploitation.

In 1854, two settlers from Ohio named Asaph Whittlesey and George Kilborn set out from the settlement at LaPointe on Madeline Island to explore lands along nearby Chequamegon Bay. Whittlesey decided to settle at what later became the site of the town of Ashland. He built a 10-foot by 14-foot cabin and was joined in August 1854 by his wife, Lucy, and daughter Eugenia. Other settlers soon came to the area and a permanent community began to develop at Ashland. The Whittlesey's house was the site of the first community dance, and the Reverend L.H. Wheeler preached the settlement's first sermon on the first Independence Day observed there. The Whittlesey's dwelling also became the location of the community's first post office and the polling place for county offices. Sunday school was also conducted on the premises.

A constraint on the expansion of settlement and economic activity in the area was difficult overland access between Ashland and northern Wisconsin's interior. For nearly two decades, the nearest train station was 150 miles away in Chippewa Falls. A railroad line finally reached Ashland in 1877. It provided the first reliable overland transportation of goods and people to and from the town. Ashland's harbor, however, was accessible to maritime traffic from the settlement's earliest days. Vessels became a major transportation means for the movement of goods and people early on in the town's development. In the years following 1877, the combined advantages of maritime and railroad transportation spurred Ashland's growth. The port town soon became an important commercial center in northern Wisconsin. By the middle 1880's, the community had grown considerably. This led to it being incorporated as a city by the state legislature on 25 March 1887.

The region of northern Wisconsin and Michigan's western Upper Peninsula were endowed with an abundance of commercially-valuable natural resources. The export of timber and iron ore from this area led to Ashland becoming a veritable boom town during the late nineteenth century. Extensive iron ore deposits had been discovered in the area during the 1840s and 1850s. These became known as the Penokee iron range and Gogebic iron range. While they were not immediately exploited, by the 1880s iron ore was being extracted at a rapid pace. The volume and economic value of Ashland's iron ore exports expanded through the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.

The natural setting of Ashland harbor was subjected to strong wave action when the wind direction was from the northeast. This is because the mouth of Chequamegon Bay faces northeast towards Lake Superior. There is an extensive area of open water between there and Ashland at the bay's southern end. These environmental circumstances were hazardous to port facilities along Ashland's waterfront and vessels in its harbor.

The need to improve navigation at the port of Ashland led the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to undertake construction of a massive riprap breakwater there in 1889. Its purpose was to protect port facilities and vessels in Ashland's harbor. This project was part of a larger effort by the Corps of Engineers following the Civil War to build breakwaters and upgrade piers for ports throughout the Great Lakes region.

The project designed for Ashland was to build a linear breakwater that was detached from shore. It was to be oriented northwest-southeast so as to block heavy waves coming from the northeast. This would provide protection for the harbor area and create a sheltered area of refuge directly behind the breakwater for vessels endangered by a storm. The main channel for commercial shipping to and from Ashland ran past the breakwater's northwest end. There was also sufficient water depth off the breakwater's southeast end for smaller commercial vessels and recreational boats to reach sheltered waters from there as well.

By 1893, the riprap breakwater protecting Ashland's harbor had been extended to nearly a mile and a half long. This provided protection to about 1,600 acres of water and 3 miles of shoreline along the harbor. This breakwater was well-placed and served its purpose long before it was completed. However, its length and nearness to the shipping channel caused it to be hazardous to navigation itself. This led to a fixed light mounted on a pole being placed at the end of the breakwater in 1911. In 1913, the U.S. Congress appropriated funds to pay for building a permanent lighthouse there.

Soon after the appropriation was authorized, engineers at the Eleventh Lighthouse District's depot in Detroit prepared plans for the new light at the breakwater's northwest end. They designed it as an integrated structure that included a reinforced concrete foundation pier and light tower superstructure. This was necessary because the lighthouse needed to be built sufficiently strong in order to withstand its location's harsh environment. The riprap materials making up the breakwater were not sufficiently stable to serve as the lighthouse's foundation. The structure's design included a light tower three stories tall, built from concrete poured in place using sectional forms. This would support the lighthouse's watch room and lantern. It was also decided to take advantage of Ashland's electrical grid and power the lighthouse's aids to navigation from shore using a submarine electrical cable. Construction of the lighthouse's foundation pier began in 1914. The superstructure was completed in 1915. The lighthouse's beacon was officially established when it was first exhibited on 15 October 1915.

Ashland's prominence as an important port for shipping iron ore grew substantially in the years following establishment of the Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light. The city's first high-volume dock for loading iron ore was built in 1916. It was 900 feet long initially, and was lengthened to 1,800 feet long in 1925. Four other ore docks of similar size were built along Ashland's waterfront during the late 1910s and 1920s. During the early decades of the twentieth century, more than one million tons of iron ore was shipped from each of these docks per year. In 1918, vessels carrying ore from Ashland transported more tonnage than passed through the Panama Canal. Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light contributed to the safe navigation of these ships. During the period from the end of World War I to the beginning of World War II, iron ore extraction from mines in the Ashland area increased. It finally peaked during World War II. The volume of iron ore shipping from Ashland began to decline following the war's end in 1945. During the 1950s and 1960s, it decreased substantially. The amount of shipping traffic navigating to and from Ashland declined then as well. Today, the port's commercial docks remain largely unused. The vessel traffic that continues is of a seasonal nature, and largely associated with fishing, recreational boating and tourism.

Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light was operated by keepers for 46 years from 1915 until it was automated in 1961. In 1967, the lighthouse's original fourth order Fresnel lens was removed and a modern optic was installed. The Fresnel lens was sent to the USCG Station at Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan, for survey. Its present whereabouts is unknown. The existing optic is a modern 250-millimeter acrylic lens beacon. At the present time, the lighthouse is unoccupied and operated automatically. Its signal light is powered by batteries recharged using the solar array mounted on the lantern gallery. The lighthouse is visited periodically for maintenance by personnel from the U.S. Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team (ANT) responsible for the area.

Today, Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light remains standing in its original position at the northwest end of the harbor's breakwater. Its basic structure, appearance and setting remain essentially unchanged from when it was manned during its period of historical significance from 1915 to 1956. This lighthouse property continues to fulfill its original role of aiding mariners by marking the breakwater and the way to the harbor of Ashland. It remains a prominent aid to navigation associated with the port and is widely recognized by the local populace as a significant landmark.

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_____. 1983. Letter from ANT unit to 9th Coast Guard District, dated 30 September 1983.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	663040	5165830

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the nominated property is the perimeter of the riprap that abuts the lighthouse's rectangular pier foundation on the northwest, northeast and southwest sides. These sides of the lighthouse are surrounded by the waters of Chequamegon Bay. The pier's southeast side abuts the Ashland Harbor breakwater, which is made from riprap. The property's boundary on that side is the exterior limit of the base of the lighthouse's concrete pier.

Boundary Justification: The nominated property is the lighthouse structure that historically has been owned by the U.S. Coast Guard. It consists of the lighthouse's concrete pier foundation and superstructure. These were built as an integrated unit. This structure sits adjacent to the Ashland Harbor breakwater which is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and not included in the nominated property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel Koski-Karell, Ph.D., USCG Environmental Management Div., and Jayne Aaron and Daniel Hart, e^2M. Inc

organization U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (COMDT CG-443) date 4 October 2006

street & number 2100 Second Street SW telephone 202.475.5683

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20593

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Map: A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name United States Coast Guard

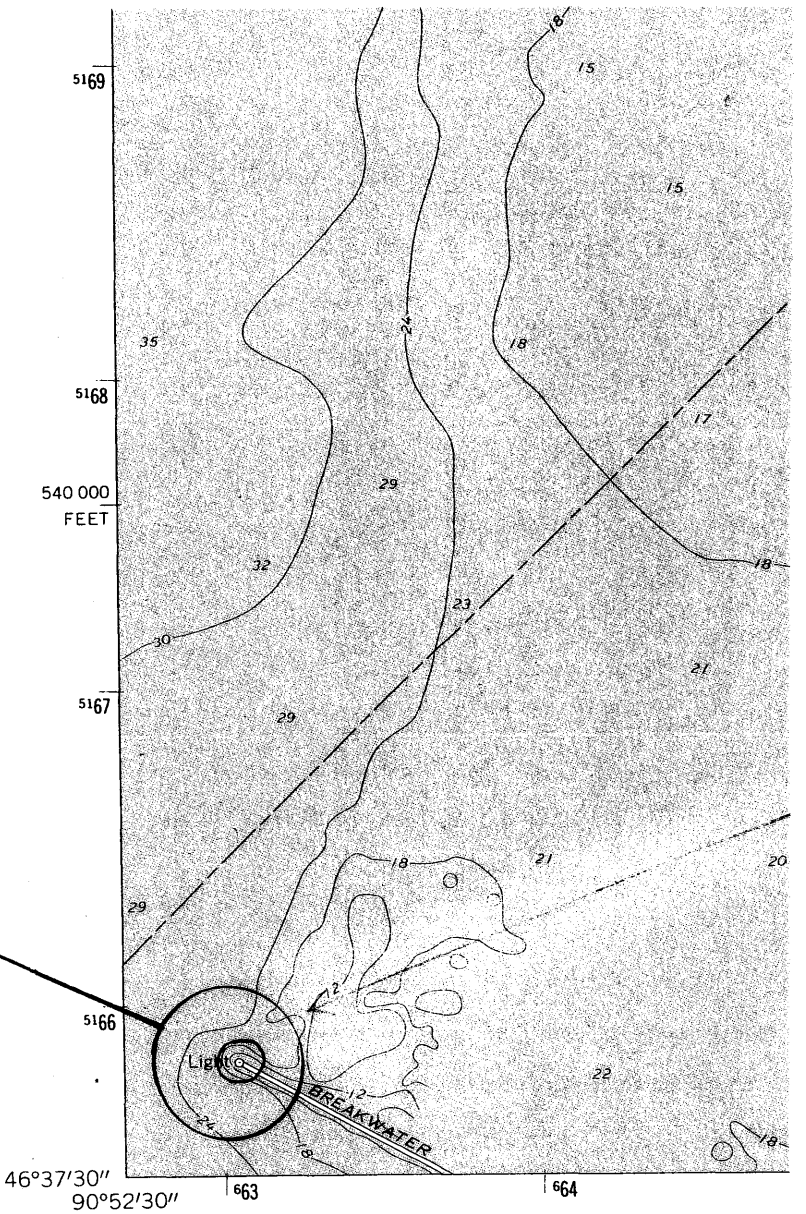
street & number 2100 Second Street SW telephone 202.267.1587

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20593

LOCATION MAP

This is a portion of the "Long Island, Wis." 7.5 minute quadrangle topographic map, scale 1:24,000 (United States Geological Survey 1964).

0 2000
Feet
North



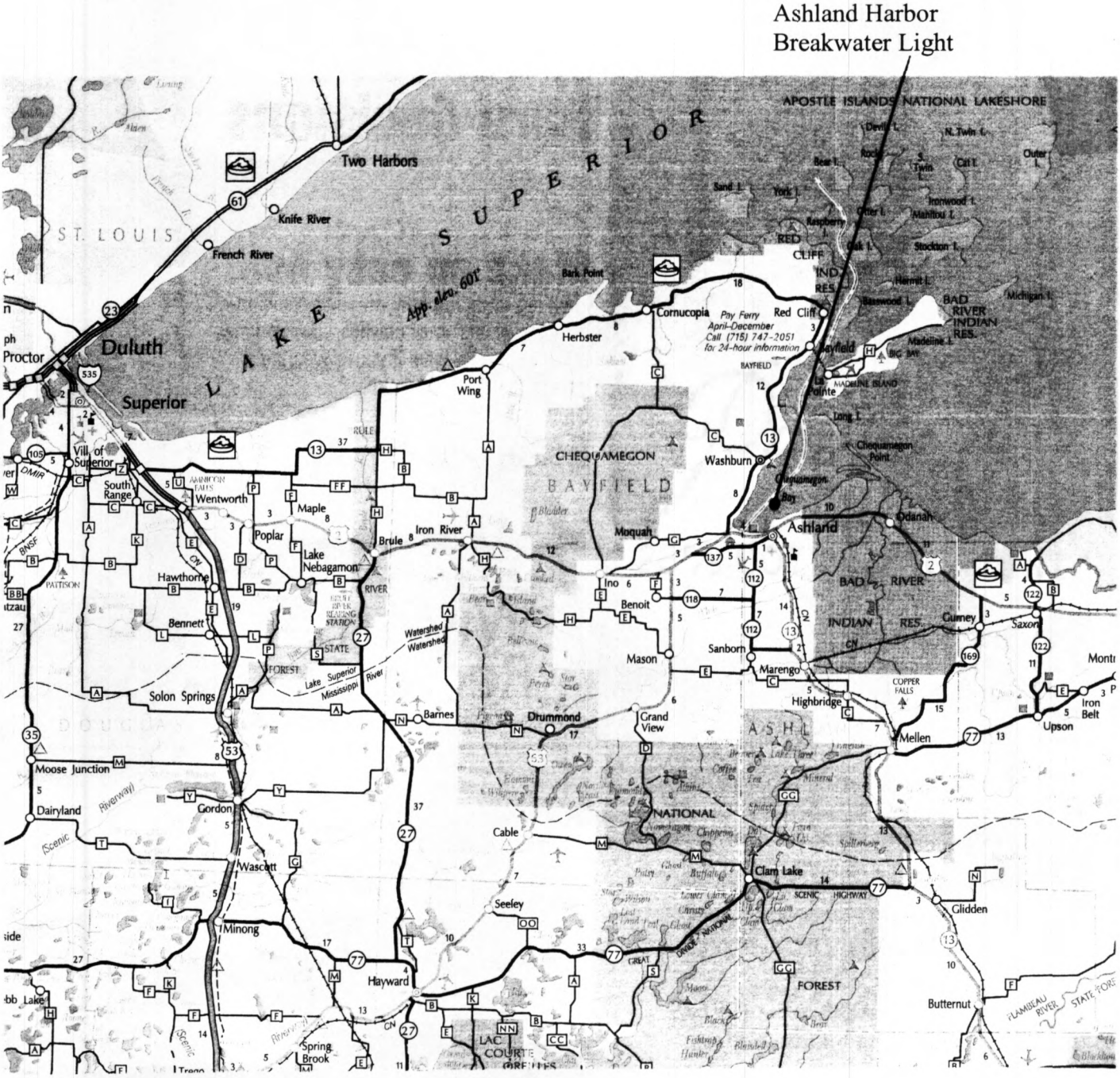
Ashland Harbor
Breakwater Light
Ashland County, WI
UTM: 15 / 663040 / 5165830

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

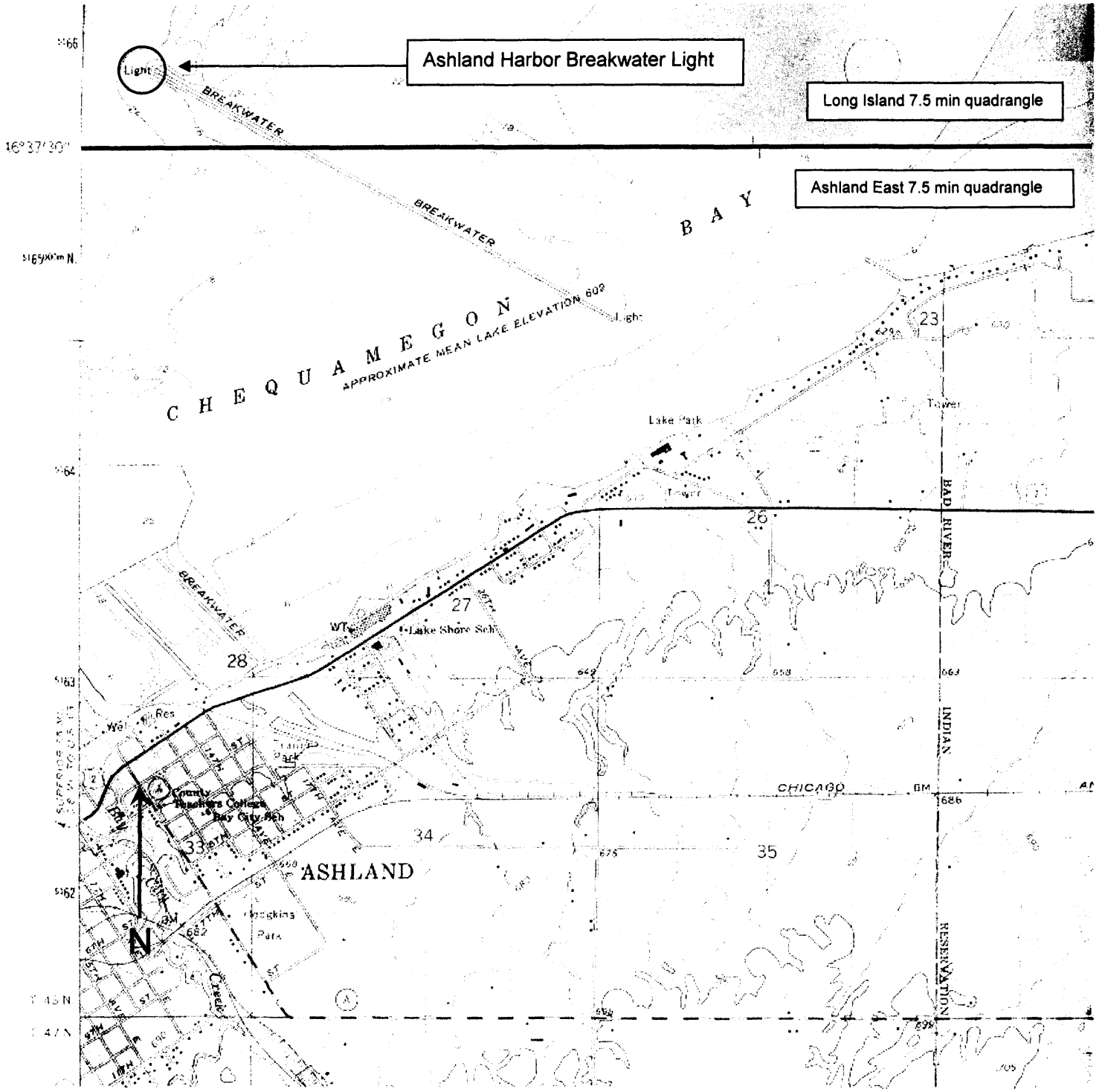
Name and location of property: Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light, Ashland County, Wisconsin
Name of photographer: Timothy McGrath
Date of photographs: 16 September 2005.
Location of original negatives: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office,
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

1. Northwest elevation, looking southeast.
2. Southeast elevation and breakwater, looking northwest.
3. First story interior showing stairway, looking north.
4. Third story room interior showing column.
5. Fourth story watch room interior showing column and ladder.
6. Fourth story watch room interior showing column, ladder and entry to lantern room.
7. Fifth story lantern room interior showing door and optic, looking north.

MAP 1: ASHLAND HARBOR BREAKWATER LIGHT VICINITY

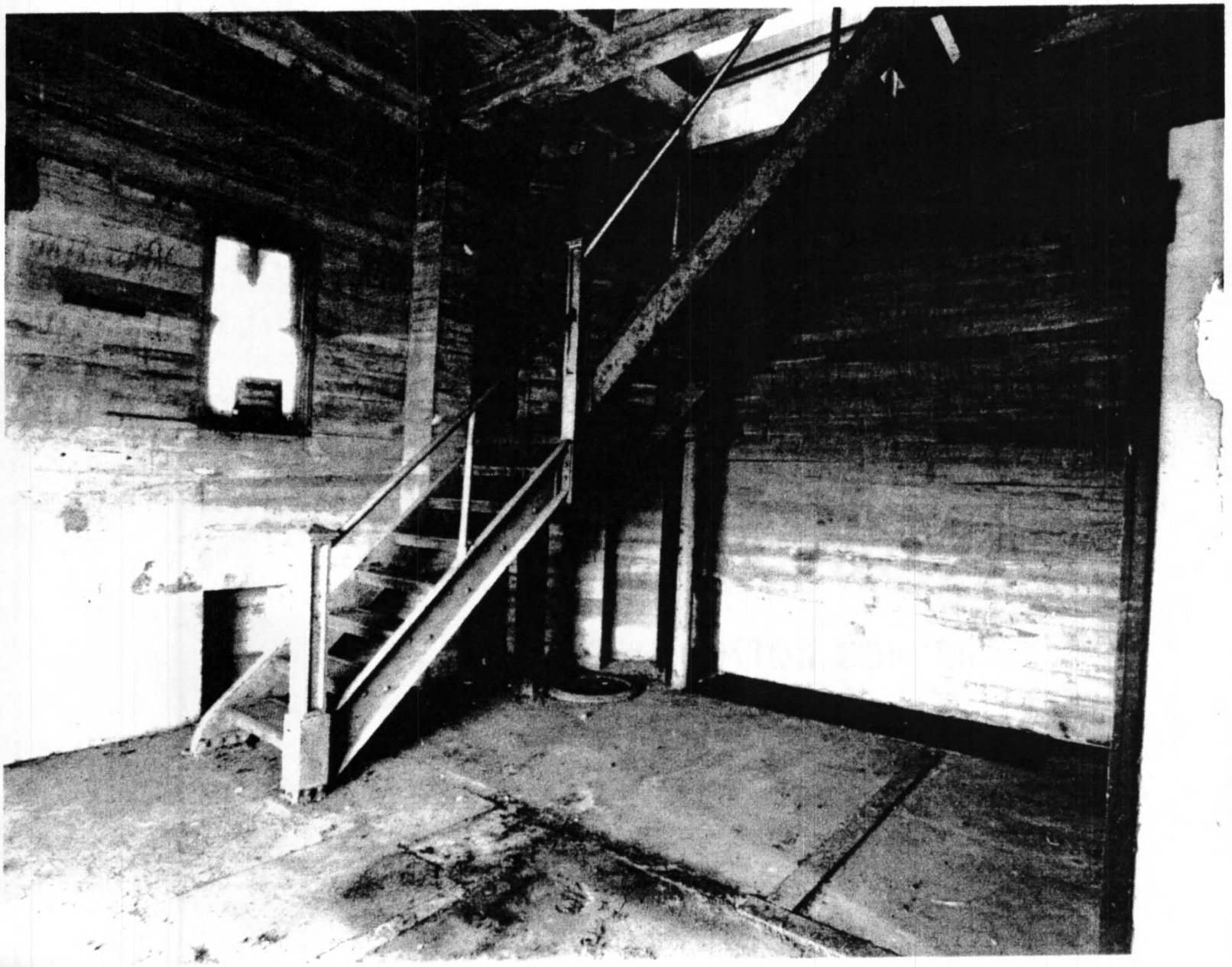


MAP 2: ASHLAND HARBOR BREAKWATER LIGHT LOCATION



PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST

PHOTOGRAPH 2: FIRST STORY ROOM INTERIOR



PHOTOGRAPH 3: FOURTH STORY WATCH ROOM INTERIOR