

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0280178 DATA SHEET

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Sand Island Light

AND/OR COMMON

Sand Island Light

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Mouth of Mobile Bay, 3 miles south of Mobile Point

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ft. Morgan

VICINITY OF

first

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Alabama

01

Baldwin

097

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

__BUILDING(S)

__PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

__OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

U. S. Coast Guard, Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District

STREET & NUMBER

423 Canal Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

New Orleans

VICINITY OF

Louisiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

HACR Inventory 10/30/75

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sand Island Light is located approximately three miles southerly from Mobile Point. Originally located on a low lying island of 400 acres, the light stands surrounded by water and massive stones placed to halt the erosion of the island.

The tower, which is influenced by the Italianate style, is a 132 foot conical masonry structure which tapers from a width of 40 feet at the base to 17 or 18 feet at the top. It rests on a foundation consisting of double course of sill timbers resting on one hundred seventy-one piles overlaid with 12 feet of concrete.

The original entrance was located on the south side but in 1906 this entrance was bricked up and a new door was cut on the north side about 30 feet above ground level. Stairs leading from the keepers house gave access to the door.

The base of the tower is a polygon and is well defined by two courses of granite molding. Four windows pierce the wall of the structure and are located on the north and south sides. The window casings are of granite taken from the earlier lighthouse.

Inside an iron circular stairway is bolted to the brick wall and contains seven landings which are semi-circular in shape. The stairs lead to the watch room which contains a door on the western side leading out onto the balcony encircling the tower. Large brackets are bolted to the wall and support the metal flooring of the balcony. Windows are interspaced between the brackets which have drop finials. Above the watch room is the glass lens room which is topped with a conical copper roof.

The Frensel lens which has been removed was constructed by Barrier and Fenestri in Paris in 1871. Since the construction of the tower several different systems were used for lighting. Originally lard oil lamps were used but were replaced in 1833 by mineral oil lamps. In 1912 an incandescent oilvapor lamp of 17,000 candlepower visible 18 miles at sea was installed and later replaced in 1947 by four nine inch 1000 watt bulbs when the light was automated.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1873

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1873, Sand Island Light is the older of the two remaining lighthouses in the state and is the third to have been erected on this location. A light at Sand Island has marked the entrance to Mobile Bay and the Mobile Ship Channel since 1838. This was the second navigational aid erected for the entrance to the port of Mobile, a light having been established at Mobile Point in 1822.

The first light was replaced in 1858 by a white light shown 152 feet above water from a brick tower. This light was destroyed by Confederate forces in 1862 to prevent its use as a lookout by Union forces, and was temporarily replaced by a small wooden tower with a forth order light.

Between 1867 and 1873, three separate appropriations totaling \$175,000 were approved for the construction of the light, a keepers dwelling, and the range beacons used in connection with the light. Actual construction began in 1872 and the structure along with the keepers dwelling was completed the following year. The light was first exhibited on the night of September 1, 1873.

The island, originally 400 acres, had been eroding and by 1873 was reduced to less than 100. The erosion continued at a rapid pace and between 1873 and 1902 the keepers dwelling was twice removed to more stable ground and several thousand tons of rock were placed around the island and tower. During the hurricane of 1906 the keepers house was destroyed, the assistant keeper and his wife drowned, and the tower damaged. Much of the lantern glass had to be replaced, a new keepers house constructed and the entrance to the tower relocated.

In 1947 the light was fully automated and in 1966 the 60,000 candle power beam was dimmed to 8,000 when the new Mobile Point Light took over. The light was extinguished and the structure abandoned in 1971 and the lens was removed to the nearby Fort Morgan Museum. In 1973 the keepers house was burned.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Annual Reports of Lighthouse Service, Records of Lighthouse Service, Records of National Coast Guard, Record Group 26, National Archives.
 Owen, T. M. History of Alabama, and Dictionary of Alabama Biography. Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1921.
 Ryan, Tony. Interview, August, 1975. (Last Keeper of the Sand Island Light)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	6	3	9	8	8	6	0	3	3	9	8	6	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

C

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

D

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. Warner Floyd, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION

Alabama Historical Commission

DATE

August 21, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

TELEPHONE

832-6621

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery

STATE

Alabama

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Milo B. Howard, Jr.

TITLE

SHPO - Alabama

DATE

August 25, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Active

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/12/95

DATE

NOV 11 1975