

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 88000069

**Date Listed:** 2/17/88

Michigan City East Pierhead Light...  
**Property Name**

LaPorte  
**County**

IN  
**State**

-----  
**Multiple Name**

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Patrick Andrus*  
for Signature of the Keeper

2/17/88  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

In Section 3 of the nomination form, two resource categories are chosen (building and structure). Only one category should be selected, so this is changed to structure (with two contributing structures included in the nomination).

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 5 1988  
DATE ENTERED

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Michigan City East Pierhead Light Tower  
and Elevated Walk

AND/OR COMMON

Michigan City Lighthouse

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Easterly side of entrance to  
Michigan City Harbor

CITY, TOWN

Michigan City N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

CODE

018

COUNTY

LaPorte

CODE

091

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*  
U.S. Coast Guard, Ninth Coast Guard District

STREET & NUMBER

1240 E. Ninth Street

CITY, TOWN

Cleveland

N/A VICINITY OF

Ohio

STATE  
44199

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

LaPorte County Court House

CITY, TOWN

LaPorte

STATE

Indiana 46350

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

NA

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

N/A

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD             RUINS  
 FAIR              UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Michigan City East Pierhead Light is composed of a fog signal building surmounted by a light tower, and attached elevated walks (Photos 1, 2, 4). These structures are supported by a concrete pier which extends approximately 1,100 feet from shore and has a 37° bend near the middle (Photos 5 and 6). The original pier, which was wood (Photo 7), was replaced in the 1930s. The lighthouse services Indiana's major recreational boat harbor, Michigan City Harbor.

The fog-signal building is of steel lined with brick. It is 24 feet square in plan and 14 feet, 10 inches to the plate line of the red hipped roof. A steel, octagonal tower, with a 10 foot, six inch inscribed diameter, surmounted by a black cylindrical lantern, rises from the center of the roof. The height from the base of the lighthouse to the outer ventilator ball of the lantern is 49 feet, six inches.

The lantern is cast iron and plate glass (Photos 1, 2, 4). The lantern roof is cast iron with a zinc lining and is surmounted by a cast iron ventilator ball. The lantern is cylindrical with an inscribed diameter of seven feet, 7 5/16". The gallery of the lantern is of steel plate construction. It has iron posts and railings and is reached from a door on the south side of the floor. Three foot high plate glass glazing with steel cross-supports encloses the lantern. An American Rotating Beacon #2130-C plastic lens sits on a cast iron pedestal in the lantern, placing the focal plane of the light at 43 feet.

Access to the fog-signal tower building is by a small door in a dormer on the roof (Photos 1, 2, 4) on the south side of the level of the elevated walkway, and by a cast iron door on the lower level on the west. Access to the latter is by five steps from either the north or south which rise from a concrete walkway surrounding the building at a level of four feet below the bottom plate line (Photo 1). Electronic navigational equipment is housed in the building, and because of this the lower level door is secured from the inside.

A walkway at the base of the south roof line of the fog-signal building extends from the west edge to the south access door (Photo 1). Six steps lead down from the east end of the walkway, connecting the fog-signal building and light tower to the catwalk. The catwalk extends for approximately 600 feet to the bend and then approximately 540 feet to the shore line (Photo 5). Iron I-beam posts with angle braces support the catwalk. The lower three feet of each beam is encased in a 16" O.D. cement-filled iron tube. Steel supports rise from each post to above the walkway to support three rows of guard rail cables. The floor of the catwalk is made of concrete slabs.

Originally, the fog-signal building and tower were painted buff, but by 1920 they were painted white, as they are today. When built, the fog-signal building housed two Kingsford Foundry & Machine Works boilers that operated a 10 inch Crosby automatic steam whistle located on the north side of the tower roof. The boiler smokestack, 24 feet by 45 feet three inches, was located on the south side of the roof just behind the door dormer (Photo 3). A walkway extended from this to the steam whistle. In 1933, the light was electrified. The present fog signal was installed about 1940. The smokestack, boiler, whistle and small walkway were removed. The large double door just north of the present door on the west side was welded shut. Windows and portholes on the north and west sides have been painted over.

# 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 checked="" 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 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 1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Robert Millen & Co.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Michigan City East Pierhead Light is significant as Indiana's only operating lighthouse, and for its role in the development of transportation on Lake Michigan. It is also important for its aesthetic qualities and as a long-time symbol of the City of Michigan City.

When Michigan City was chosen as the northern terminus of the Michigan Road (Indiana's first north-south transportation link, built in 1839) the area around the mouth of Trail Creek was already being considered as a major transportation center on Lake Michigan. On July 4, 1836, the first ship entered the port. In 1837, the first lighthouse was built at Michigan City to guide the growing number of ships on the lake. The 1837 lighthouse was replaced by the 1858 Michigan City Lighthouse, now known as the Old Lighthouse Museum. This structure was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

The structures of the East Pierhead Light (fog-signal building, light tower, and catwalk) were constructed in 1904 as part of the major harbor improvements of that year. At that time, the light from the 1858 lighthouse was moved to the new structure. Lighthouse keepers continued to live in the 1858 lighthouse while tending the East Pierhead Light until 1940. Since that time, the East Pierhead Light has been under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard.

The East Pierhead Light is one of a few lighthouses on the Great Lakes which still have attached elevated walks (catwalks). The East Pierhead Light catwalk is original to the lighthouse and has always been considered an integral part of the structure. Lighthouse keepers used the walk to gain access to the tower at least twice daily: at sunset to light the light and at sunrise to extinguish the light, clean and refuel the lantern, trim the wick, polish the brass and clean the glass. Additional trips had to be made to do additional cleaning and painting and to start up the fog-signal when conditions required. Today's keepers no longer have to make daily trips to the light, which is now operated remotely by electronic equipment installed in 1982-83.

When the East Pierhead Light was built, it was an essential navigational aid for the ships of the time, primarily commercial vessels and excursion boats. Today, the Michigan City harbor is one of the principal recreational boat harbors of Lake Michigan. The East Pierhead Light is used as a navigational aid by sport and commercial fishermen, and pleasure boaters. The structure has been the subject of countless photographs, drawings and paintings. It has also been used as a symbol in letterheads and brochures and as the official insignia for the City, as well as many civic organizations and businesses.

The Coast Guard has recently proposed the removal of catwalks of Great Lakes lighthouses, including the one connected to the Michigan City East Pierhead Light.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	50,7	3,9,0	4,6	1,9	4,9,0	B	1,6	50,7	4,3,0	4,6	1,9	5,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,6	50,7	6,2,0	4,6	1,9	2,6,0	D	1,6	50,7	5,7,0	4,6	1,9	2,4,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	Patricia A. (Mrs. Wm. H.) Harris Curator, Old Lighthouse Museum	DATE	October 27, 1984
ORGANIZATION	Michigan City Historical Society	TELEPHONE	219/872-6133; 872-3273
STREET & NUMBER	P.O. Box 512		
CITY OR TOWN	Michigan City	STATE	Indiana

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X

NO     

NONE     

*John C. Lott*  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is      National      State      Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE See letter dated 11/30/87 for Federal Representative's signature DATE     

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>Patrick Andrews</i>	DATE <u>2/17/88</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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DATE ENTERED

Mich. City East Pierhead  
Light Tower and

CONTINUATION SHEET Elevated Walk ITEM NUMBER 7, 9, 10 PAGE 1

After a violent storm in 1929, which did much damage to the pier structures, the piers were given new concrete superstructures in 1930-31. The bottom floor of the pier was now nine feet below the bottom plate of the fog-signal building. A four foot concrete pier break was installed and the catwalk moved to the top of it. As a result, the catwalk now reaches the fog-signal building to the east instead of the west of the upper door. The first 14 posts and accompanying deck of the catwalk south of the light were replaced in 1931-32 due to storm damage. The I-beam portion of the posts were replaced with 12 inch beams, but otherwise the posts are identical to the originals. The 15th to 28th posts are original and have 10 inch I-beams. From this point shoreward, the 29th to 46th posts and accompanying deck are replacements like the first 14 posts. In 1983, the entire lighthouse building was sandblasted, patched, primed and painted, and new interior wiring and a modernized radio beacon were installed in the tower.

Item Number 9

Various papers from the National Archives Records Group 26, on file with the Michigan City Historical Society at the Old Lighthouse Museum, Michigan City, Indiana.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detailed Feasibility Report - Interim Report on Indiana Shoreline Erosion, 1975.

Michigan City Evening News, March 22, 1904, October 20, 1904, November 18, 1904.

Michigan City News, September 7, 1904, October 24, 1929, June 5, 1930, June 7, 1930.

Item Number 10

Beginning at the shoreline at the northwest corner of Yacht Basin, extending 542 feet north-northeast; then 604 feet northwest and including the lighthouse, the elevated walk, and the pier.