Spanish Explorers

Narváez Expedition 1528

DeSoto at Apalachee Bay 1539
Spanish Fort

San Marcos de Apalachee 1679
Territory of Florida
1st Lighthouse

Commerce Committee

Report Jan 21, 1828

Act Passed March 1828

$6,000 Appropriation

To Mr. Woodbury, Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, in the Senate.

Sir: Believing that some explanation of the utility of the measure proposed by me as the Delegate of the Territory of Florida, in relation to the establishment of a port of entry at St. Marks, the erection of a light house, and the improvement of the harbor, might be acceptable to your Committee, I take the liberty of addressing you on the subject. It is one, I conceive, of great importance to Middle Florida, and the adjoining counties of the State of Georgia. From St. Andrew’s Bay, which, perhaps, next to that of Pensacola, is the most important on that part of the coast, to Tampa, there is no place, with the exception of St. Marks, likely to be of any great importance as a harbor. The coast is generally shallow, and the land low and marshy. The Apalachee Bay, formed by the rivers Oclockney and St. Marks, is a wide and spacious inlet, the shores trending inwards until they narrow to the point which forms the entrance of the river St. Marks. The entrance of this river is, however, not easily found without the aid of a pilot, on account of the great width of the bay and the shallowness of the channel...
Contract with Winslow Lewis

- Contract signed 1828
- Tower finished in late 1829
- Customs Collector Refused-hollow walls
- Calvin Knowlton rebuilt tower
- Accepted in 1831-total cost $11,765.
2nd Lighthouse 1831-1841

- Samuel Crosby
  1st Keeper

- 2 Hurricanes Aug 1837
  10ft wave - killed 8

- 1841 Calvin Knowles
  rebuilt in new location.
Lighthouse Legend #1: The original location of the 1829-1831 Lighthouse was offshore 100-200 yards.
Artifacts
Excavated in 1994 near current lighthouse site.
Lighthouse Establishment Marker
3rd Lighthouse - 1842

- Capt J P Hungerford 2nd Keeper 1839
- Bertrand’s “View of Florida” 1842.
Lighthouse Runaway: Alonzo De Milt
Lighthouse Legend #2:
The tower was built with stone from Ft San Marcos.

Letters to the War Dept.
in 1844 asking for stone
to use in sea wall.
1843 Hurricane: Catastrophe at the Lighthouse

The dreadful catastrophe at the Light-House.

Those saved, at the Light-House are Capt. Hungerford, his wife and two children, Dr. Tradewell’s youngest child, Messrs. Oglesby, Blethen and Kennedy, pilots, and five negroes. After the high water had rendered the lower story of Capt. Hungerford’s house untenable, he retreated, with his family, to the attic. In a few moments the roof was torn...
The Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the memorial of Ann Dudley, have had the same under consideration, and report:

The memorialist has been for several years keeper of the light-house at St. Mark’s, Florida. She, with her family and several boarders, resided at the light-house, about ten miles from St. Mark’s, at which latter place she obtained her supplies of provisions, except what she was able to raise from her garden. She also raised hogs, poultry, &c. By the unusual gale of August, 1851, which submerged a large portion of the town of St. Mark’s, the breakwater which protected the light-house was washed away, and nearly all of Mrs. Dudley’s improvements, stock, furniture, and provisions, amounting, as she says, to the value of $1,113, were swept away and destroyed; and she prays that Congress will grant her relief.
The Civil War and the Lighthouse
Lighthouse Legend #3:
The Confederates hid the lamp in the swamp during the war.
Civil War: Ft Williams at the Lighthouse
CSS Steamer Spray

- Invoice for use of steamer *Spray* for transportation to the Lighthouse
St Marks Lighthouse April 1862
The Blockade: USS Tahoma

Shelled Ft. Williams in June 1862, forces then burned fort and lighthouse.
Battle of Natural Bridge March 1865
Col. Scott’s Map
Lighthouse Legend #4:
The Confederates blew up the lighthouse to keep the Union from using it as a lookout.
Post War Repairs & New House

- Photo Ca 1885
- Hurricanes:
  - Sept 2, 1837
  - Sept 30, 1837
  - Aug 30, 1850
  - Aug 30, 1851
  - Oct 1, 1852
  - Sep 1873
  - 1883
1892- Keeper Fine & Family
1892 Keeper Fine & Family
1904 Mrs Sarah Jane Fine
1914
Lighthouse keeper’s Daughter

• Vera Gresham
1926
1937
Road open
1941
1940s - Lighthouse Island
1940s-Lighthouse Island
1946-1948
Alton Gresham
1960- Light Automated
1983

- Coast Guard Repairs
- 1983
St Marks Lighthouse