

MANITOWOC BREAKWATER LIGHT STATION
North breakwater at mouth of the Manitowoc River
Manitowoc
Manitowoc County
Wisconsin

HAER WI-111
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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MANITOWOC BREAKWATER LIGHT STATION

HAER No. WI-111

- Location: North breakwater at mouth of the Manitowoc River, Manitowoc County, Wisconsin
- Date of Construction: 1918
- Designer: U. S. Lighthouse Service
- Present Owner: U. S. Coast Guard
- Present Use: Exhibit
- Significance: The Manitowoc Breakwater Light Station was needed to mark the harbor of Manitowoc in Lake Michigan at the mouth of the Manitowoc River. Manitowoc was an established shipbuilding center from the late 1840s until 1970. Previous towers dated back to 1840 and 1850. The current light, constructed in 1918, contained a fifth order Fresnel lens built in Paris, France. The light was automated in 1971.
- Description: The Manitowoc Breakwater Light Station was integrated into the breakwater at the mouth of the Manitowoc River. Constructed on a concrete pier foundation, the design was essentially a cylindrical steel tower placed on a square steel house. The second story is smaller than the first and supports a cylindrical watch room surrounded by an open air gallery. Standing 40' tall, the tower was capped with a cast iron lantern room equipped with a fifth order Fresnel lens. The fifth order lens had a height of 21.3" and a useful range of up to ten nautical miles. This type was commonly used to mark breakwaters.
- Project Information: A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office, and the Door County Maritime Museum (DCMM) outlined the removal and relocation of Fresnel lenses from the Sherwood Point Light Station and the Manitowoc Breakwater Light Station. The MOA stipulated photographic documentation, in accordance with Historic American Engineering Record standards, of the lens in its historic location. The lens was removed in 2002.