

## = Black Rock Harbor Light =

Black Rock Harbor Light , also known as Fayerweather Island Light , is a lighthouse in Bridgeport , Connecticut , United States which stands on the south end of Fayerweather Island and marks the entrance to Black Rock Harbor . The first lighthouse at the site , built by Abisha Woodward under contract with the United States government , was a wooden tower that was lit and made operational by 1808 . A storm destroyed the tower in 1821 and the current , stone lighthouse was erected in its place in 1823 . The Black Rock Harbor Light was an active navigational aid until 1933 when it was replaced by two automatic lights offshore . The beacon was subsequently given to the City of Bridgeport in 1934 . Two significant efforts during the 1980s and 1990s served to restore the aging tower and the light was relit as a non @-@ navigational aid in 2000 . Black Rock Lighthouse is listed as a contributing property for Bridgeport 's Seaside Park historic district .

## = = Construction = =

In 1807 , the United States government bought the 9 @.@ 5 acres ( 3 @.@ 8 ha ) of land upon which the lighthouse stands from Daniel Fayerweather for \$ 200 . The government appropriated \$ 5000 for the light station in February 1807 and contracted Abisha Woodward to construct the light . The first Black Rock Harbor Light was a 40 foot ( 12 @.@ 1 meter ) octagonal wooden tower built in 1808 . Abisha Woodward , who previously constructed the 1801 New London Harbor Light and the 1802 Falkner Island Light , constructed a wooden tower that was lit and made operational by October 1808 . The lightkeeper 's home was a small one and a half story home built on the opposite side of a marsh , several hundred feet away from the tower . Another brick structure was built to house the oil . The total cost of the wooden lighthouse , and likely the accompanying keeper 's house and oil house , was listed at \$ 4604 @.@ 69 .

On September 3 , 1821 , the wooden tower was destroyed in the Norfolk and Long Island hurricane and was replaced with a 40 foot ( 12 @.@ 1 meter ) octagonal stone tower at a cost of \$ 2300 @.@ 53 . Completed in 1823 , the new tower was made of coursed sandstone ashlar and rubble mortar and was claimed by its builder to " withstand the storm of ages . " This boisterous claim was countered by Edmund Blunt , an American Coast Pilot , who stated , " a more contemptible Lighthouse does not disgrace Long Island Sound , most shamefully erected and badly kept . " In 1835 , \$ 2052 @.@ 63 was used to preserve the buildings on Fayerweather Island , including the lighthouse . Three years later , in 1838 , on the report of a Captain Gregory , another \$ 1529 @.@ 60 was used to build a seawall to protect the buildings . Another \$ 15 @,@ 000 would be used from 1847 through 1849 to complete the seawall . The original keeper 's quarters , then referred to as a " dilapidated old edifice " , was replaced in 1879 .

## = = Service = =

The lighthouse originally had a whale oil spider lamp from the Stratford Point Light , but it was upgraded to a system with eight lamps in 1830 . In 1838 , it was reported by Lieutenant George Bache that the reflectors were out of alignment and the light was barely visible in hazy conditions . In 1854 , a fifth @-@ order Fresnel lens was installed . The Black Rock Harbor Light was deactivated in 1932 following the construction of two offshore automatic lights .

## = = Restoration = =

The lighthouse was given to the city of Bridgeport , Connecticut in 1934 and became a part of Seaside Park . In the following years , vandals " gutted the interior " of the lighthouse . In 1977 , the keeper 's quarters building was destroyed in a fire . The first restoration effort came in 1983 when the Friends of Seaside Park restored the tower . Fayerweather Island was cleaned of debris , landscaped and established as a nature preserve . They installed steel " windows " and also secured the entry with a steel panel , but vandals again forced their way into the lighthouse .

A second effort was mounted by David Grant Grimshaw and Patricia Roche in 1993 . A sum of \$ 25 @, @ 000 cash and in @-@ kind services was raised with fundraising and annual Preservation Balls ; it was later matched by the City of Bridgeport 's Board of Park Commissioners with another grant of \$ 25 @, @ 000 . During the night of the 1996 Preservation Ball the lighthouse was mysteriously lit , but Grimshaw did not arrange the illumination . D 'Entremont writes that " maybe the spirit of Kate Moore had grown tired of waiting for the restoration . " The 1998 restoration was conducted under the direction of David Barbour , a local architect . The restoration included masonry repairs , reglazing the lantern room , rust removal from the railings , new doors and windows with vandal @-@ proof steel panes . The lighthouse was repainted with graffiti @-@ resistant paint in the original paint and mortar colors . The light , relit in 2000 , does not serve as an active navigational aid . The light is powered by solar panels on the top of the lighthouse ; it was donated by United Illuminating and Bridgeport Energy . In 2004 , vandals smashed the solar panels and new panels with protective cages were installed in 2007 .

= = Access = =

The lighthouse is listed as a contributing property for Bridgeport 's Seaside Park historic district , which was listed on July 1 , 1982 . The grounds are accessible by parking at Seaside Park and crossing a breakwater , but the lighthouse is not open to the public .

= = List of keepers = =