

Blackistone Lighthouse Timeline

(Located on the southern tip of St. Clement's Island, St. Mary's County, MD, on the mouth of the St. Marys' River at the Potomac River. AKA Blakistone Island)

- 1851** Two story brick dwelling with integral tower built on Blackistone Island by John Donahoo. 2nd last lighthouse built by Donahoo.
- 1857** Tower fitted with Fresnel lens.
- 1859** Jerome McWilliams, son of the island's owner appointed head keeper.
- 1864** Confederate troops destroy lens and lantern, but spare lighthouse building on behest of keeper McWilliams. Repairs made quickly and lighthouse back in service.
- 1875** Josephine McWilliams Freeman named head keeper.
- 1911** Keeper Freeman retires, having served as lightkeeper for 37 years. One of only 49 women to serve as a keeper in U.S. history.
- 1919** U.S. Navy purchases island for ballistic testing. Piers and landing strip built.
- 1932** Lighthouse fully automated.
- 1934** 40-foot cross erected to commemorate 1634 landing of MD colonists.
- 1956** Fire of mysterious origin rages across island and destroys lighthouse, leaving a burned, roofless shell. Navy demolishes remains.
- 1961** Property renamed St. Clement's Island and leased to the state of Maryland.
- 2007** St. Clement's Hundred launches drive to build replica lighthouse, 150 yards from original site.
- 2008** Replica lighthouse completed and opened to the public.

Source: *Maryland Lighthouse of the Chesapeake Bay* by F. Ross Holland, St. Clement's Island Museum and Chesapeake Chapter, U.S. Lighthouse Society.