

Cape Charles Lighthouse Timeline

(Located on the west side of the south part of Smith Island, seacoast of Virginia, 12 miles NNE of Cape Henry, VA Nat'l Wildlife Refuge – tallest skeletal tower in US)

- 1828** First lighthouse, 51 foot masonry tower constructed.
- 1860** Construction of a second lighthouse begun.
- 1862** Confederate guerillas raid site and steal supplies; construction of tower halted at 83 feet.
- 1864** Construction resumes – 150 foot brick tower completed, 600 feet from shore.
- 1883** Seawalls constructed. Tower 300 feet from shore.
- 1889** Storm washes away protective timbers. Lighthouse condemned.
- 1894** Present 192 foot, octagonal, pyramidal cast iron skeletal tower built, one mile west of 2nd LH. Fitted with 1st order Fresnel lens.
- 1927** Condemned stone tower washes away during severe nor'easter.
- 1940s** Three WWII observation towers built by Navy.
- 1963** Automation. Fresnel lens removed & donated to Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA. Replaced by modern, solar-powered DCB-24 optic.
- 1989** CG does maintenance & renovation – cleaning, scraping & repainting tower. Cracked lantern panels replaced.
- 2000** Brush fire destroys keeper's dwelling.

Source: *Bay Beacons* by Linda Turbyville, and *Lighthouses and Lifesaving Stations of Virginia* by Patrick Evans-Hylton