



Stannard Rock

LAKE SUPERIOR

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On August 26, 1835, while piloting the American Fur Company vessel *John Jacob Astor*, Capt. Charles C. Stannard blew off course during a storm and discovered a previously unrecorded reef about 25 miles from the Keweenaw Peninsula. Thereafter, the reef was known as Stannard's Rock.

The need for a light at the reef became critical after the increase in maritime traffic following the opening of the new State Locks in Sault Ste. Marie in 1855. The light was not completed, however, until 1882. The light earned a reputation for loneliness due to its

remote location. Coastguardsman gave the light station the nickname "Stranded Rock" to underscore the isolation, and it was designated a "stag station," meaning no wives or other family members could be stationed there.

In 1961, almost 80 years after the light station was put into service, a horrific explosion in the Fog Signal Building killed one coastguardsman and left three others stranded on the deck for two days while the fire burned. They were eventually rescued by the Coast Guard Cutter *Woodrush*. This was the same year the light was set to be automated.



Of the more than 120 lighthouses in Michigan, approximately three dozen are considered offshore lights—those constructed on isolated, uninhabited islands, or on shoals or reefs. To help residents and visitors discover these offshore lights, learn their history and understand their important role in Michigan's maritime past, the State Historic Preservation Office secured funding from the National Park Service National Maritime Heritage Program and the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program for a Historic Structure Report and Public Education Project. The project includes the four offshore light stations featured on this 2019 Michigan's Historic Lighthouses Map. The reports will guide preservation of these unique structures.

Historic photographs and information are taken from the Historic Structure Report for Stannard Rock Light Station that was completed by OJX Studio and Smay Trombley Architecture with funding from a National Maritime Heritage Program grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service and a Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program grant from the State Historic Preservation Office, Michigan State Housing Development Authority.



SAVE OUR
LIGHTS