

## Frequently Asked Questions

**How long did it take to build the breakwater and when was it completed?**

*The breakwater took eighteen years to build and was completed in 1900.*

**How long is the breakwater?**

*The breakwater extends 4,346 feet or eight tenths of a mile from Jameson Point into Rockland Harbor.*

**How much granite was used to build the breakwater?**

*Nearly 700,000 tons of granite was used, much of it quarried in Vinalhaven. It is shaped like a trapezoid, 45 feet wide at the top and 175 feet at the base, built in 9 sections.*

**How much did the breakwater originally cost?**

*The original cost of the breakwater was \$750,000.*

**When was the first light erected on the breakwater?**

*A small portable light was erected on the south end of construction in 1888. Between 1888 and 1895 the light station was moved four times as the construction continued until the final lighthouse was completed on the site of today's light.*

**When was the lighthouse erected?**

*After a number of temporary lights, which were placed at the breakwater's end during construction, the permanent lighthouse was built between 1900 and 1902.*

**Who were the first keepers of the light?**

*Eba Ring, a laborer, was charged with maintaining the temporary beacon during breakwater construction, beginning in April of 1888. Llewelyn Charles Ames succeeded him in 1895, receiving \$25 per month for lighting the lamp. The first official keeper, employed by the U.S. Lighthouse Service, was Howard P. Robbins, who began his service on June 14, 1902, initially being paid \$500 per year, which was later increased to \$540 per year. His son, Clifford M. Robbins, was appointed assistant keeper on November 1, 1902, at a salary of \$450 per year.*

**When was the light fully automated and the keeper's house vacated for good?**

*The Coast Guard occupied the keeper's house for a number of years in the 1940s and 1950s, finally vacating the quarters in 1963. The light was fully automated in 1964.*

**Who owns the lighthouse today?**

*In 1998 the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse, as part of the Maine Lights Program, sponsored by Rockland's Island Institute, was deeded to the City of Rockland.*

**Who is responsible today for the lighthouse's operation and maintenance?**

*As an important aid to navigation, the operation of the beacon and foghorn of the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse remains the responsibility of the U.S. Coast Guard. However, the restoration and preservation of the lighthouse tower and keeper's house is the responsibility of the **Friends of the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse**, having leased the lighthouse from the City of Rockland.*

**Who are the Friends of the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse?**

*The "Friends" group, a chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation, is made up of concerned individuals, corporations and organizations who, working cooperatively with the City of Rockland, seek to assure the restoration and preservation of this coastal treasure.*

**Was there anything before the Breakwater?**

*Jeremiah Berry constructed a small seawall in 1832. The original plan was to have two sections. The second one was to start at the south ledge but was never completed.*

**How high is the light tower?**

*The tower is 25 feet from the base, and 39 feet above mean (average) high water.*

**Who owns the Breakwater?**

*The Army Corp of Engineers, except for the portion on which the lighthouse is located, owns the Breakwater.*

**How far is the light visible?**

*The present lantern, a VRB-25 made by VEGA Industries, Ltd. Of New Zealand, is visible for up to 17 miles.*

**What was the source of fresh water at the lighthouse?**

*Rainwater was collected from the roof in a large cistern in the basement. Buoy tenders delivered water during dry seasons.*