Head of the Passes, Depot.
(Mississippi River.)

(Built in 1867; enlarged, extended, & improved in 1870.)

Authorized by act of Congress, for

lt-ho. at Head of Passes, - -	Sept. 28, 1850,	$15,000.
" for building sheds, wharves, &c. at the buoy depot at Head of the Passes of the Mississippi River,	July 15, 1870,	12,000.
" for protecting the lt-ho. depot at Head of the Passes, from the erosion of the shore, - - -	Mar. 3, 1873,	10,000.
". for rebuilding breakwater for protection of lt-ho. site at the Head of the Passes, - - - -	Mar. 3, 1875,	3,500.

Buoy Depot.

1867

Depot at head of the passes.—The shed for the protection and storage of materials, tools, &c., was completed in May. It was weather-boarded and provided with large gates, so that boats may be hauled into it for repairs. A platform for coal has been built. To meet all the requirements of the district this depot, so eligibly situated, should be greatly extended. An estimate of the amount necessary for immediate purposes is submitted.

1868

Depot at the Head of the passes.—A substantial wharf was built last year, and is in excellent condition. From a flat-boat loaded with coal, purchased last year, planks were obtained for building a fence around the coal pile and laying a platform. The buildings consist of an enclosed shed, 20 feet by 40 feet, and an old small tool-house built in 1862. The necessity which exists for suitably extending this depot by the construction of proper buildings and accessories, which was reported in the last annual report, still exists, and the estimate of last year is again submitted.

1869

The depot at the Head of the Passes of the Mississippi has been improved during the year. During the month of May the wharf and that portion of the railroad upon it were greatly damaged by the caving in of the river bank above and at the wharf. To prevent loss from a like cause hereafter, it is proposed to construct a floating wharf, at small expense.

1870

The principal depot in this district for the safe-keeping and protecting of spare buoys and for coal for the tender is at the Head of the Passes light station, Mississippi River.

1870.

340. *Head of the passes, Mississippi River, Louisiana.*—The work authorized, consisting of the construction of a wharf, protecting levee, and for a light-house and buoy depot, will be commenced as soon as the prevailing epidemic will allow it to be done. It is expected that work may be resumed in that vicinity by the 1st of October. The breakwater built in 1868 has had a very beneficial effect upon this station. The land within the inclosure has been raised from 18 to 24 inches by the deposition of sediment. Where large row-boats could navigate without difficulty there is now solid dry ground. The danger apprehended from the threatened undermining of the foundation of the light-house by washings of the current of the river seems no longer to exist, and it may be considered as permanently arrested.

1871 *Depot*, at head of the Passes.—The buildings authorized were finished by the end of the year.

1872 *Depot at Head of the Passes, River Mississippi.*—This building is in fair condition, but threatened by the wearing away of the river-bank. The cost of protective works to insure the safety of the building, makes it a question as to whether it would not be advisable to remove the depot back from the river, as in the case of the light-house, or to abandon the site for some other eligible location in the western portion of the district.

The cost of everything that enters into light-house construction on the Mexican Gulf coast is exceedingly high compared with other parts of the Union; the small number of cities where supplies necessary can be obtained at any price, in a district extending over one thousand miles of coast, measured on the shortest line, not taking into consideration the bays, sounds, and estuaries; the delays experienced from illness among working-parties from malarial fevers; the soft and yielding nature of the land and shoals in the greater part of the district, making the operation of putting down foundations difficult and expensive; the unreliable means of communication with distant field-parties, by reason of the deficiency of railroads and packet-lines, have prevented the board from completing many of the works in the eighth district.

1873 *Buoy and Coal Depot, head of the Passes, Mississippi River.*—An appropriation of $10,000 was granted by the act approved March 3, 1873, for the protection of the depot from the erosion of the shore.

Very recently the wharf, which for a long time threatened to give way, at last fell into the river. The great expense of building protective works and their limited duration by reason of the constant changes going on in the banks of the river, and the fact that the head of the Passes is out of the way of communication by either telegraph or mail, make it extremely advisable that the depot be changed to another locality. There seems to be no better one in this portion of the district than at the new light-house at Southwest Pass. The very substantial wharf built to aid the construction of the light-house is still there. It has a front of 67 feet and a width of 32 feet. From it a wooden pier about 700 feet long leads to the light-house. A crane and tramway, provided with trucks, are already there. By extending the wharf some 30 feet on one side would give a good coal-platform, while a buoy-shed, engineer's and inspector's store-rooms might be built on either side of the pier connecting the wharf and light-house. The wharf fronts on a sheltered bayou about three-quarters of a mile from the main channel of the Mississippi, free from all eroding action which has given such trouble at head of the Passes. The place is also in easy communication by mail and telegraph. The buoy-shed and store-house at head of the Passes could be taken down and re-erected at the new depot, and the lumber which is being used for the temporary platforms at Timbalier and Trinity Shoal could be made available when those works are finished. It is therefore recommended that the depot at head of the Passes be abandoned, and a new one established at Southwest Pass, and that the $10,000 already appropriated for the protection of the old depot be made available for the preparation of the new one, and an additional appropriation of $5,000 be made for the same purpose. The combined amount of $15,000 ought to establish a new, commodious and secure depot, better in every respect than the old one, and one which will probably never require protective works, whereas the old one, after the expenditure of the amount already appropriated for works of protection, will require an equal amount next year for a new wharf and general repairs, and a much larger amount within two years for securing it against the washing of the river, a total of probably $30,000 or $40,000.

"The principal depot for this district is on the west bank of South Pass, Mississippi River, and near the Head of the Pass. It comprises a dwelling, store-house, buoy-shed, and an inclosure for coal. The condition of the structures is fair. It will be necessary to remove this depot without delay, as the bank of the pass is, and has been, fast wearing away, more so in recent months on account of the works at the Head of the Pass pertaining to the jetties. The dikes throw a current diagonally across the upper part of the pass, which abrades the bank near the depot. There is reason to fear that at low water a large part of the bank will cave in and carry away the public buildings now there. The most suitable place for the depot is at the lower end of the pass, at South Pass light-station. There is here a sufficient government reservation; the bank is firm and does not wear away. It is recommended that the appropriation, made by act approved June 23, 1874, for a depot at Southwest Pass be made available for a depot at such a place in the district as the board may find suitable for the purpose."

Ann. Rep. 1877.

"Southwest Pass Depot, La.--The sum appropriated (act June 24, 1874) for building a buoy-depot at Southwest Pass, having been made available by the act approved June 20, 1878, for a depot at such a place as the Light-house Board may find most suitable, the light-station at South Pass has been selected as the proper location. As soon as the plans, now under way, are perfected, work will be commenced."

1878.

"South Pass, La.--At the close of the year the depot in course of construction was nearly completed. It will be ready for storing coal and buoys in the early part of August, 1879."

1879.

(See South Pass, La.,depot, Port Eads