Point No Point MD History

Historical Information:

- Like the Hooper Island Light, Point No Point light was built to compensate for a lack of lighted navigational aids in the 30 mile stretch of the Chesapeake Bay's main shipping channel between the Smith Point and Cove Point lights. An appropriation was requested as early as 1891. Despite repeated requests, Congress did not approve funds until 1901. Given the exposed location, a caisson structure was decided upon. The construction contract was awarded to Toomey Brothers of Connecticut who had recently built the Hooper Island Light. Like the Hooper Island Light, the Point No Point caisson was set pneumatically. Work assembling the caisson began in the Summer of 1902 at Solomons, MD. It was towed to the site in April the following year. Numerous problems were encountered during construction. Almost immediately after the caisson arrived at the site, a storm caused the temporary work pier to collapse. This flipped the caisson which drifted free approximately 40 miles down the Bay to the mouth of the Rappahannock River. The half submerged caisson had to be towed back to Solomons for righting and repairs. It was re-towed to the site and sunk in its proper location October 1903.
- The following year ice flows destroyed the second construction pier and many of the materials, including a number of the caisson cylinder plates. It's interesting to note that because of the two disasters, some of the iron plates of this light had to be ordered three times. By July 1904 the caisson foundation was set and filled and work had begun on the dwelling / tower. The light was finally commissioned, and a fourth order Fresnel lens exhibited, on April 24th of 1905.
- In 1938, the light was fully automated, but remained manned.
- In 1962 it was converted to unmanned status. The original Fresnel lens has, since, been replaced.