**MISPILLION LIGHTHOUSE**

In 1831, Delaware Governor Charles Polk sold the future site of the Mispillion Lighthouse to the Federal government for five dollars. Construction of the lighthouse was authorized by an act of Congress on March 3, 1831, with an appropriation of $1500. A contract was signed with Boston architect Winslow Lewis for construction of the building for $1450 plus "the cost of two oak logs for the foundation, if not exceeding twenty-five dollars." The contract required completion by October 20, 1831 including installation of the light.

The first lighthouse keeper for whom there is a record was Thomas Clark who was appointed January 6, 1854 at an annual salary of $400.

In 1857 a recommendation was made that the light be discontinued. The lighthouse had lost its usefulness over the decades as the inlet continued to infill and ships grew too large for the restricted Mispillion River. At its mouth, the river had diminished to a depth of only one foot of water at low tide. This recommendation was adopted and the light was deactivated in 1859. Local history reports that the building was dismantled and rebuilt on Walnut Street in Milford.

On June 10, 1872, Congress voted to re-establish the Mispillion light, and appropriated $5000 for its construction. In a year's time, the light was once again lighted on June 15. A year later Congress appropriated another $5000 "for the erection of a keeper's dwelling at this station." Work was completed in 1875.

Erosion on the site was a continuing problem. In 1876 a four foot high earth bank with stone facing was constructed. During the remainder of the nineteenth century constant repairs to the site, buildings and road were required.

In 1911 the original oil-powered lighting mechanism was replaced by an automated system. This change made the position of lighthouse keeper unnecessary. A local waterman was hired to live in the keeper's house to prevent vandalism. The lighthouse continued to serve until 1929 when it was deactivated and replaced by a 60-foot steel beacon tower.

The Mispillion Lighthouse was soon sold into private hands and fell into a long period of decline. In 1971, the Racz family from New Jersey, purchased the property and established the Mispillion Lighthouse Marina which included a floating dock, seventy-two dock slips, and a restaurant.

In May 2002, Sally and John Freeman from Bethesda, Maryland purchased the structure. That same day, a bolt of lightning from a supercell thunderstorm struck the tower resulting in extensive fire damage. The Freeman's salvaged as much of the building as possible and relocated this Stick Victorian or Victorian Cottage architectural style house to Shipcarpenter Square in Lewes, Delaware.