



National Archives and Records Administration

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001

The Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board, 1852–1935

Annual reports contain facts about an agency rather than information about specific employees. The annual reports of the Lighthouse Board discuss Federal policy, conditions, and general activities at lighthouses, as well as special reports of the Lighthouse Board.

Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board

The Treasury Department produced the Lighthouse Service annual reports from 1852 to 1903. Between 1852 and 1876, the Secretary of the Treasury's annual finance reports included a section on lighthouses; between 1877 and 1903 the annual reports of the Lighthouse Board were published separately. The Department of Commerce and Labor began generating the reports in 1904 (reports were created under both agencies in 1903).

The Lighthouse Board annual reports contain a detailed narrative summary from the chairman of the Board, reporting on improvements being made as well as on recently erected lighthouse structures. The early reports contain the bulk of information on the Lighthouse Board and its creation, such as the 1852 report, which includes the Board's laws and official instructions for lighthouse keepers and other personnel.

Throughout the 19th century, the Board's reports include the annual reports of the superintendents of each lighthouse district, which usually contain an overview of conditions of every lighthouse in the district, including improvements made or needed, as well as lists of new lighthouses. The District reports also detail supply needs, such as light vessels, buoys, oil, and lamps. Occasionally, reports include drawings of lighthouses or lightships. The 1876 and 1891 reports include maps of each district, noting the location of each lighthouse.

Beginning about 1904, the reports provide less detailed information, focusing more on appropriations for desired improvements, with some mention of notable progress for the last fiscal year.

Locating the Annual Reports

The annual reports are often available in large university and public libraries across the country designated as U.S. Government Depository libraries. To identify a local depository library, go to the Government Printing Office web site at <http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp> and select the link to "FDLP Public Page."

Superintendent of Documents Numbers (SuDoc. No.)

Annual reports have a Superintendent of Documents [SuDoc.] number assigned to them to organize the reports. You will need that number to locate the reports at the National Archives or another Government Depository Library.

1852–1876

The annual reports are included in the Treasury Department's annual report to Congress. SuDoc. No. T1.1.

1877–1903

The Lighthouse Board reports are separate government publications published by the Treasury Department. SuDoc. No. T25.1.

1904–1935

The Lighthouse Board reports are separate government publications published by the Commerce Department. SuDoc. No. C9.1.

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