

Historical Marker - L394 - Holland Harbor Lighthouse / Holland Harbor (Marker ID#:L394)



Front - Title/Description

Holland Harbor Lighthouse

The first lighthouse built at this location was a small, square wooden structure erected in 1872. In 1880 the lighthouse service installed a new light atop a metal pole in a protective cage. The oil lantern was lowered by pulleys for service. At the turn of the century a steel tower was built for the light, and in 1907 the present structure was erected. Named the Holland Harbor South Pierhead Lighthouse, it has a gabled roof that reflects the Dutch influence in the area. The lighthouse, popularly referred to as "Big Red," was automated in 1932. When the U.S. Coast Guard recommended that it be abandoned in 1970, citizens circulated petitions to rescue it. The Holland Harbor Lighthouse Historical Commission was then organized to preserve and restore this landmark.

Significant Date:

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

Registry Year: 1976 **Erected Date:** 1987

Marker Location

Address: 2398 Ottawa Beach Road

City: Holland

State: MI **ZipCode:** 49424

County: Ottawa

Township: Park

Lat: 42.77146300 / **Long:** -86.20971600

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Holland Harbor

When seeking a location for his Netherlands emigrant followers in 1847, the Reverend A. C. Van Raalte was attracted by the potential of using Black Lake (Lake Macatawa) as a harbor. However, the lake's outlet to Lake Michigan was blocked by sandbars and silt. Van Raalte appealed to Congress for help. The channel was surveyed in 1849, but was not successfully opened due to inadequate appropriations. Frustrated, the Dutch settlers dug the channel themselves. On July 1, 1859, the small steamboat Huron put into port. Here, in 1886, the government established the harbor's first life-saving station. By 1899 the channel had been relocated and harbor work completed. This spurred business and resort expansion. In 1900 over 1,095 schooners, steamers and barges used the harbor.