

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

8-12-92

No. 32

Vol. XIV

OAK ORCHARD PORT LIGHTHOUSE



Oak Orchard Harbor is bordered by two communities. The residential complex to the west side is named Oak Orchard-On-The-Lake, and it is on this side the lighthouse was located. The community at the east side of the river is named Point Breeze. It was named this in 1888 when a former post office was established there. Prior to that time the community on the east side had been originally called Manilla, named by surveyor Joseph Ellicott, in 1803, in his plans to lay out a town at that spot.

Although Oak Orchard Harbor was a popular refuge in storms, its importance as a port was insignificant. It received various federal grants for improvements and in the mid-1800's was somewhat of a shipbuilding port.

In 1867 a grant of \$87,000.00 was made to the port. The channel was dredged to a depth of 13-feet and two piers, each 1,600-feet in length, were constructed. In 1871 the lighthouse and a keeper's dwelling were built at the cost of \$4,000.00. The lighthouse was at the north end of the west pier.

The harbor piers and lighthouse were main-

tained until 1905 when they were abandoned by the U.S. Government, due to the River and Harbor Act. During a 1914 February storm, a large hole was washed through the west pier, and on December 15, 1916 during another storm, the lighthouse was swept away, as were the remains of both piers.

Lysbeth A. Hoffman, Carlton Historian

The top photo circa 1910, shows the lighthouse in the distance. The bottom photo shows the west side of Oak Orchard Harbor in the "teens." The little iron building in the center was used to store canisters of oil for the beacon light in the lighthouse. It was built by the Federal government in 1871 using boiler plate with a brick inside. In 1920 Ed Archbald and his father moved this building which is eight feet square, up to their barnyard for a storage shed. At that time the brick inside was dismantled. In 1983 Mr. Archbald gave this unique piece of marine utilitarian architecture to the Cobblestone Museum where it is located behind the historic Cobblestone Church at Childs.