



THE OSWEGO WEST PIERHEAD LIGHTHOUSE

CONSTRUCTION & OUTFITTING

In 1930, the Federal Rivers and Harbors Act was approved which included plans for the expansion of Oswego Harbor to accommodate larger deep-draft Great Lakes commercial vessels. Included in that plan was funding for the 1934 Oswego West Pierhead Lighthouse. Designed by the Office of the Superintendent of Lighthouses, Tenth District, in Buffalo in 1932, the Lighthouse was placed at the end of the new West Arrowhead Breakwater – contracted to the Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co. – and replaced the Oswego Breakwater Beacon.

In 1933, construction of the Lighthouse's caisson was completed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and construction of the Lighthouse's superstructure began by the US Lighthouse Service. Completed in 1934, and built of riveted steel plates and resting 17 ft. above the waterline, the Lighthouse was built to withstand the high winds, heavy surf, and destructive ice commonly associated with Lake Ontario.



Construction of the Lighthouse Crib-1931
From the Iskander Photograph Collection



Construction of Superstructure-1934



The Lighthouse was originally outfitted with a Forth-Order Fresnel Lens (as seen here), a fog horn, and in 1936 a radio beacon transmitter was added to enable ships with a radio direction finder to take bearing on the Lighthouse in poor weather conditions. At this time, the Lighthouse was staffed by a US Lighthouse Service Keeper, and a 1st and 2nd Assistant Keeper.