

The River & Harbor



Whaleback
Light



Wood Island Lifesaving Station

The river rushing by is the **Piscataqua**, which at 12 knots, is the fastest current on the Eastern Seaboard and is among the top 10 fastest rivers nationwide. A tidal river, it churns with eddies and whirlpools, making it dangerous for swimmers.

Piscataqua is a combination of Abenaki words meaning “branching river” and “river of strong current.”

At 12 miles long, it forms the boundary between Maine and New Hampshire.

At far left, **Whaleback Light**, marks the mouth of the Piscataqua. The present tower was built in 1872 and stands 75 feet tall. The lighthouse was automated in 1963. Its white light can be seen for 17 nautical miles and Whaleback is equipped with a foghorn. Owned by the American Lighthouse Foundation, it is cared for by the Friends of Portsmouth Harbor Lighthouses.

Left of the pier is **Wood Island Lifesaving Station**. The Station was built in 1908 for the U.S. Lifesaving Service, a forerunner of the U.S. Coast Guard. Brave “surfmen” rowed out in small boats to aid mariners in distress. The station is built in the rare Duluth style, adding to its historical importance. The station and

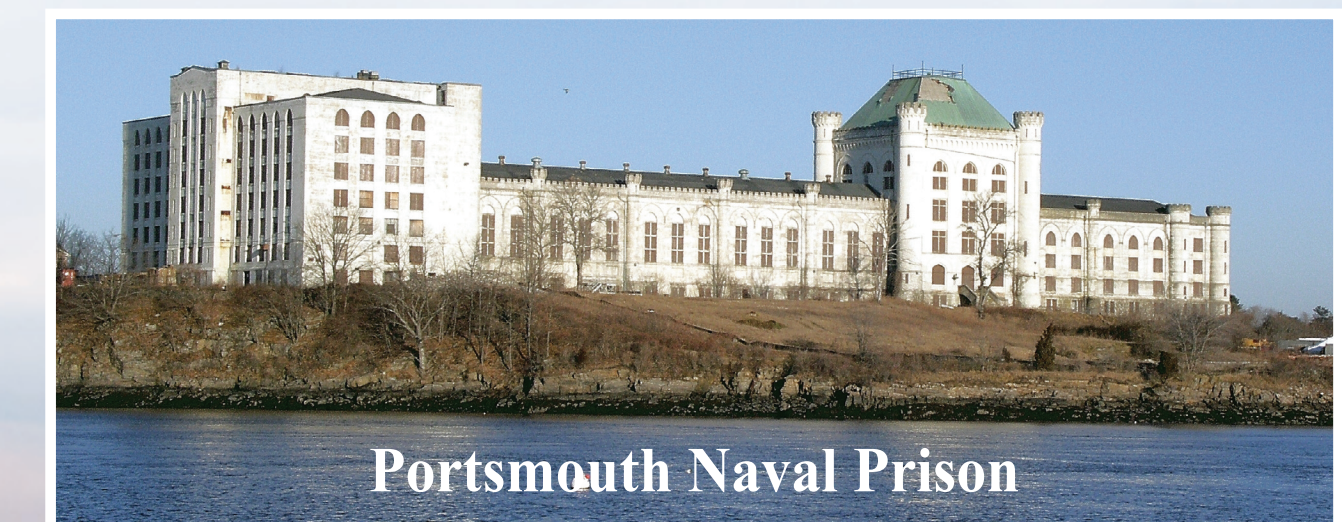
grounds were restored by the Wood Island Life Saving Station Association.

Portsmouth Harbor Light is to the right of the pier. Also known as Fort Point Light, New Castle Light and Fort Constitution Light, it is located within the U.S. Coast Guard Station in New Castle, NH. The lighthouse is adjacent to Fort Constitution, a Revolutionary War fort. The current lighthouse was built in 1877 and stands 48 feet tall, although lighthouses have been at this location since 1771.

To the far right is the **Portsmouth Naval Prison**, located at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and often called “The Castle.”

Built in 1908 on the site of a former fort, it was modeled on Alcatraz and housed U.S. Navy and Marine Corps prisoners from its opening until 1974.

When war with Germany ended in May 1945, captured U-Boat crews were brought to the prison for interrogation while the Navy researched the technology and weaponry of the vessels. The prison now sits vacant as issues with lead paint and asbestos have made renovations unlikely.



U.S. Coast Guard Station



New Castle Light

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