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REPORT, AUGUST, 2014

Status of Three Decommissioned USCG LIGHTSHIPS Sold / Transferred To Two South American Countries.

By J. F. "Jay" McCarthy

After Decommissioning, a number of former USCG Lightships were sold / transferred to Foreign Governments. They continued their Lightship duties in their new countries.

While researching the current status of the 17 Surviving USCG Lightships, I happened across the fate of three of these former USCG Lightships.

*Sadly, two of the former USCG Lightships are beyond salvage.
The third has already been scrapped.*

We just want to take a moment and share with you the fate of these three fine Lightships!

LV-106 / WAL-528, Transferred to Suriname, abandoned on overgrown Suriname River bank.

LV-109 / WAL-531, Transferred to Uruguay, abandoned on overgrown Suriname River bank.

LV-111 / WAL-533, Transferred to Uruguay, stranded ashore after storm, scrapped 1973.

We are most interested in hearing from anyone that may have any additional updates, information or photos regarding any of these three ships.

Unanswered Question - Why, When, and How, were the (former USCG) Lightships LV-106 and LV-109 abandoned on the riverbank of the Suriname River?

Maybe someone may know or even have a recent (or past) photo of the ships?

May, 2013 – we received very significant clues from a link that William Van Dorp aka "The Tugster", provided to us. Please see the bottom of the 106 and 109 History pages for more details.

We are very grateful when folks contact us, as we are always happy to hear from you.

Please contact LSA Webmaster at; webmaster@uscglightshipsailors.org

LV-106/WAL-528 and LV-109/WAL-531

Are sister ships, built exactly alike, and at the same time. I am combining their basic facts.

The following information obtained from; <http://www.uscg.mil/history/weblightships/LV106.asp>
The following information obtained from; <http://www.uscg.mil/history/weblightships/LV109.asp>

YEAR BUILT: 1923

BUILT AT: Bath Iron Works, Bath (ME)

SISTER VESSELS: LV 106, 107,108, 109, 110, 111

DESIGN: Diesel propelled; steel hull; steel pilot house and deck houses; 2 masts with lantern galleries; stack amidships

LENGTH: 132'4"



LV-106/WAL-528



LV-109/WAL-531

USCG photos, no caption, undated, no number
Both are sister ships and built exactly alike.
Source; <http://www.uscg.mil/history/weblightships/>

LV-106/WAL-528

STATION ASSIGNMENTS:

Nantucket Shoals (MA)
Relief (MA)

LV-109/WAL-531

STATION ASSIGNMENTS:

Relief (6th District)
Savannah (GA)
New Orleans (LA)

**RETIRED FROM USCG LIGHTSHIP DUTY:
LV-106/WAL-528**

1967; AGE: 44

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSITION:

Decommissioned Oct. 17, 1967

June 4, 1968, transferred to Agency for International Development (AID) for further transfer to Suriname; in use in Surinam through 1981.

**RETIRED FROM USCG LIGHTSHIP DUTY:
LV-109/WAL-531**

1966; AGE: 43

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSITION:

Decommissioned Dec. 8, 1966

Feb. 20, 1967, transferred to Agency for International Development (AID). Sold to Uruguay and served as *Rou Banco Ingles* Lightship for several years until retired in Uruguay.

*She was replaced by the LV-111/WAL-533 on the *Rou Banco Ingles* Lightship Station in 1969.*

Thanks to William Van Dorp for this link; <http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/lighthouse/sur.htm>

The following is an excerpt from the above link;

Suriname, the former Dutch Guiana, is an independent nation on the north coast of South America, located between Guyana to the west and French Guiana to the east. Although it was colonized first by the British, Suriname was conquered by the Netherlands in 1667 and remained a Dutch colony until it became independent in 1975.

Remarkably, **the shores of Suriname shelter the remains of three historic lightships**. Thanks to Iris Klempau and Michel Forand for researching these vessels.

Lightship Suriname 1, is identified as a sailing ship with 2 masts, that later had her masts removed, and replaced by a light tower.

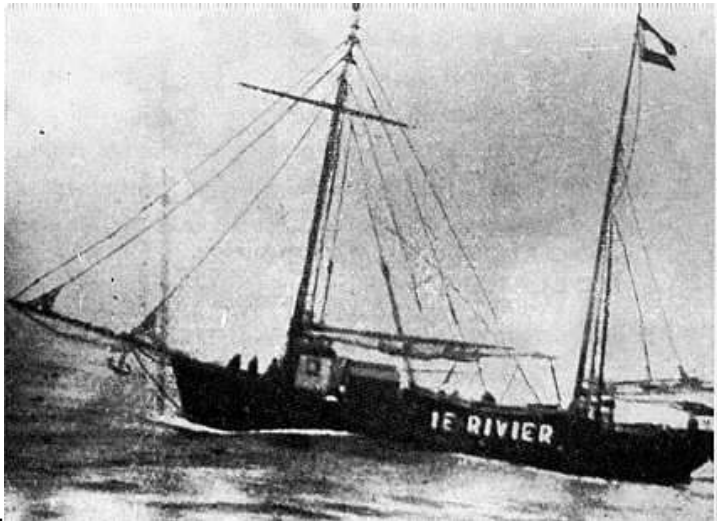
Lightship Suriname 2, is identified as (ex U.S. LV-106/WAL-528)

Lightship Suriname 3, is identified as (ex U.S. LV-109/WAL-531)

So perhaps we should first look back and identify the **Lightship Suriname 1**

There is a historic [photo](#) of the ship, rigged as a sail-driven vessel, leaving the Netherlands for Suriname in 1911. The light tower was added after its arrival. It is beached in the historic fort of Nieuw Amsterdam, on the east bank of the Suriname River opposite Paramaribo. Site open, vessel closed.

Restoration attempts are now being made to restore her to the point that eventually visitors may go aboard.



The "Suriname Rivier" when leaving Ymuiden, Netherlands



aka; Lightship Suriname - 1
Courtesy of Nicholas Picasa
April 2009 photo



SURINAME - 1, with brush cleared away



SURINAME -1, with restoration underway

Lichtschip Suriname River – 1
ARLHS SUR-004M

Photos courtesy of; LightshipPhotos.Net
World of Lighthouses
Flicker / Facebook

I think, that perhaps this information just might have solved our mystery on how the two sister ships wound up abandoned together on that Suriname River, Riverbank.

The dates for Lightship Suriname 3, (ex-LV-109) are a little off, should be 1969, but I think by doing a little historical research, we can figure things out;

Ex-USCG LV-106, Lightship Suriname 2;
sold to Suriname in 1968,
on station as Lightship Suriname 2 in 1968.
Decommissioned 1981.

Ex-USCG LV-109, Lightship Suriname 3;
sold to Uruguay 1967,
on station as Rou Banco Ingles Lightship
replaced by Ex-USCG LV-111 in 1969
Ex-USCG LV-109, must then have been sold to
Suriname, became **Lightship Suriname 3**.

On station as Suriname River Lightship 3 in 1969, Decommissioned 1981.

I believe **106, Lightship Suriname 2** and **109, Lightship Suriname 3**, relieved each other on the Suriname River Lightship Station till they, and the Station were **Decommissioned in 1981**.

Thereafter, they were abandoned together on the Suriname River, riverbank!

This makes the most sense to me and explains how the 109 wound up abandoned next to her sister ship the 106 on a Suriname River, riverbank!



LV-106/WAL-528 as Lightship Suriname River 2
Photo source; date & photographer unknown



LV-106/WAL-528 as Lightship Suriname River 2
Color Photo source; Lightphotos.net, World of Lighthouses



The ex-LV-106 foreground & the ex-LV-109 background
shortly after they were abandoned along the banks of the Suriname River, 1981?
Photo source; Lightphotos.net, World of Lighthouses flicker / facebook



Pictures of Suriname-Wrecked Lightships, Suriname River

Courtesy of; <http://www.travel-pictures-gallery.net/suriname/suriname-0036.html>

Time has passed since they were abandoned; I would guess this photo is probably late '90's or early 2000's?

Sadly, Mother Nature has taken its toll.



Photo courtesy of; Anton Rijdsdijk photographer – Surinam **2008**

<http://www.shipspotting.com/modules/myalbum/photo-805028-Overbridge#>

The overgrown riverbank has fully encroached on the two deteriorating Lightships.



LV-109 (former Lightship SURINAME 3) on left, LV-106 (former Lightship SURINAME 2) on right

Different view and close up taken at low tide with much of the hulls exposed.

Photo taken on December 6, 2010 by gibute
Paranam, Para, Suriname

Both sister lightships LV-106/WAL-528 and LV-109/WAL-531, lie as abandoned rusting hulks on this overgrown Suriname River bank near the Overbridge Resort about 30 miles south of Paramaribo, Suriname

*If you have any information or photos regarding these two Lightships;
Please contact LSA Webmaster at; webmaster@uscglightsailors.org*

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LIGHTSHIP No. 111 ROU BANCO INGLES

Formerly;



LV-111/WAL-533

AUGUST, 2014

The following information obtained from; <http://www.uscg.mil/history/weblightships/LV111.asp>

YEAR BUILT: 1926

BUILT AT: Bath Iron Works, Bath (ME)

SISTER VESSELS: LV 106,107,108, 109, 110

DESIGN: Diesel propelled; steel hull; steel pilot house and deck houses; 2 masts with lantern galleries.

LENGTH: 132'4"

STATION ASSIGNMENTS:

1927-1932: Northeast End (NJ)

1932-1952: Ambrose Channel (NY)

1952-1969: Portland (ME)

HISTORICAL NOTES:

1935 September 17: as AMBROSE Lightship, collided bow-to-bow with the liner SS *Santa Barbara*, sustained damage above the waterline (see photo below).



LV-111, photo courtesy N.Y. Times Sept. 17, 1935
No photo number, photographer unknown

LV-111 / WAL-533, on Portland Station
USCG photo, sometime between 1952-1969
No photo number, photographer unknown

RETIRED FROM LIGHTSHIP DUTY: 1969; AGE: 43

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSITION: Following source; <http://www.uscg.mil/history/weblightships/LV111.asp>
Decommissioned and transferred to USN Jul 11, 1969; sold to private owner, being displayed at Baltimore Harbor Place 1972-1979; later at Ocean City MD; then at Toms River NJ. Later sold for scrap and was in 1984 at North American Metals, a ship-breakers yard at Bordentown NJ. Still there in 1988. [This is according to lightship historian and authority Willard Flint.]

[NOTE: There is a memo in her file, dated 11 September 1969, from a CDR Corson, inviting RADM Ellis, District Commander, to a ceremony on board the "former Coast Guard lightship" prior to her sailing to Montevideo, Uruguay. A hand-written letter, also in the file, noted: "the Coast Guard intends to transfer Coast Guard Lightship WLV-533 (PORTLAND) to the U.S. Department of the Navy on a reimbursable basis [\$7,500] for ultimate sale to the Government of Uruguay, on 11 July 1969 at the U.S. Coast Guard Base, Boston, Massachusetts." According to other documentation, the WLV-533 was accepted by the Navy at 1430 on 11 July 1969 and the lightship was then transferred to LCDR Carlos Marx Olivera Axor, Uruguayan Navy, at 1900 on **11 July 1969** at the Boston Navy Ship Yard.]

UPDATE: Apparently, Mr. Willard Flint was provided erroneous information on her final status. She was not scrapped in the 1984-1988 time period as noted above.

Rather, the hand written memo in her file dated 11 Sept. 1969 contains the correct information. The Lightship was transferred to the Uruguayan Navy, 11 July 1969.

The following information is courtesy of;

<http://www.feuerschiffseite.de/SCHIFFE/USA/lv111wal533/wlv111wal533gb.htm>

The former USCG LV-111 / WAL-533, was assigned to the ROU BANCO INGLES Lightship Station until stranded in 1973. In a heavy storm the anchor chain broke and the Lightship was stranded near Montevideo, Uruguay. Later it was scrapped.

The only two things left are the Fog Signal Bell, which is reported to be on display at the Faro (Lighthouse) Jose Ignacio Punta del Este, Uruguay today.

And, a plate with the inscription "Lightship No. 111, Hull built Bath Iron Works - 1924- Machinery installed by U.S. Lighthouse Service, Third District - 1926", which can be seen in the Maritime Museum in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Uruguayan Lightship No. 111 ROU BANCO INGLES stranded ashore 1973.



Above photo courtesy of; Miguel G. Lescano Photo courtesy of the Ron Janard (LSA Historian) Collection
<http://www.feuerschiffseite.de/SCHIFFE/USA/lv111wal533/wlv111wal533gb.htm>



ROU BANCO INGLES Lightship Models

<http://surinconnaval.blogspot.com/2010/12/buque-faro-rou-banco-ingles.html>



LS-111 Fog Signal Bell, which is on display at Faro (Lighthouse) Jose Ignacio near Montevideo.



Faro (Lighthouse) Jose Ignacio with LS-111 Fog Signal Bell displayed at its base.

Faro Jose Ignacio, Punta del Este, Uruguay; photos courtesy of Willysancarlos

Flicker – 04 Dec. 2011

www.flickr.com/photos/willysancarlos/sets/72157628505920161/

LS-111 Fog Signal Bell photos found by friend of the LSA, Carlos Riveira

Note:

The Maritime Museum in Montevideo, Uruguay is reported to have the Builders Plate of Lightship No. 111 on display. The inscription reads as follows;

“Lightship No. 111, Hull built Bath Iron Works - 1924- Machinery installed by U.S. Lighthouse Service, Third District – 1926”

As of this date, we are still attempting to obtain a photograph of this wonderful “Builders Plate” artifact to show in this space.

If you have any information on how to obtain a photo; Please contact LSA Webmaster at; webmaster@uscglightsailors.org

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