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Bodie Island Lighthouse Restoration Extended

by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

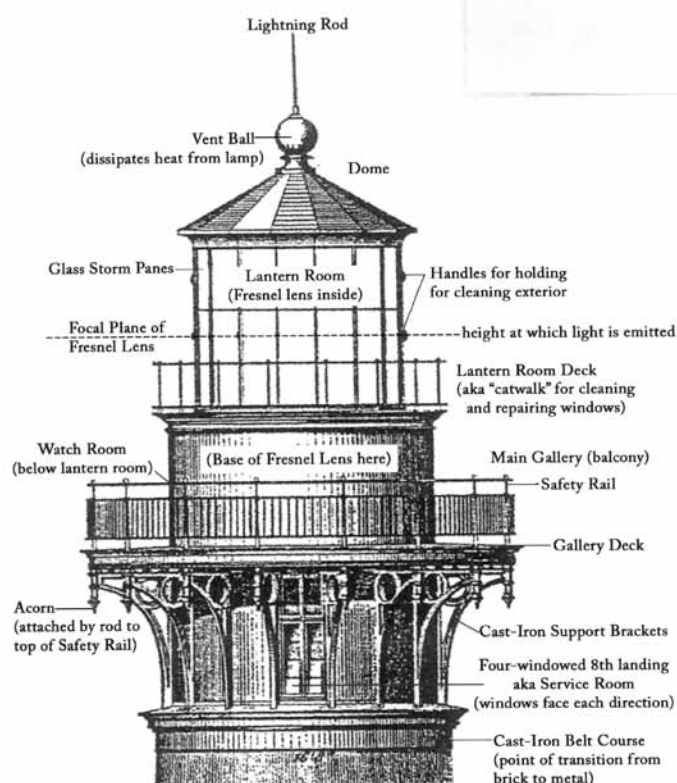
At the onset of this prodigious lighthouse restoration project, National Park Service engineers, contractors, and restoration experts knew that the problems at the gallery deck level were severe. They also knew that until ironwork, including the 16 support brackets, was closely examined—even removed—that the extent of deterioration from battling Mother Nature for 138 years would not be fully realized. Interior restoration of stairs, handrails, and brickwork has been equally challenging.

During the summer, each bracket was examined. One-by-one these brackets were determined to be in need of replacement because they were not supporting the gallery deck and the lantern room above. Another load the brackets must support is the 2,840-pound, first-order Fresnel lens in the lantern room. Something had to be done or restoration would have come short of the original goal to completely restore the lighthouse.

Alternative plans were drawn up as well as the scope of what a “complete” restoration would require. The decision was made to replace all the brackets and add new ones in between to correct a flaw in the 1872 construction plans. The brackets will be treated the same as all ironwork that is being replaced: selected ironwork will be melted down and strengthened during the molten state. Molds made from the original will be poured with the molten iron, allowed to cool, and then shipped back to be put back in place.

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society salutes all who are involved in this tremendous project. Most of all, we thank the National Park Service for finding needed funding to complete the job as it was initially intended instead of simply applying band-aid patches and closing the tower down.

The project should be completed in fall 2011; however, a homecoming for descendants will be postponed until spring 2012. Watch for updates at <http://www.oblhs.org>.



To order a DVD on the restoration work, please see back page

The man who chose the first Bodie Island Lighthouse Site

Captain, N.L. Coste, United States Revenue Cutter Service

by Cornelia Austin

*Editor's note: The following article was written by Capt. Coste's great-great granddaughter who has been researching her ancestor and his role in the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service. The Service was established by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton in 1790 as an armed maritime law enforcement service to collect tariffs. These tariffs on imports were critical to the economy of the newly established United States with its central government and bank. Hamilton's mind was the new nation's first computer; he crunched the numbers and figured a way to pay off Revolutionary War debts that otherwise would have choked the country's budget and halted any efforts to grow this nation's own economy. (See article in *The Lighthouse News* Vol. XI no. 3). Throughout its entire history, the Revenue Cutter Service operated under the authority of the United States Department of the Treasury. In 1832, Secretary of the Treasury Louis McLane ordered revenue cutters to conduct cruises during winter in order to assist mariners in need; further, in 1837, Congress made the practice part of the Service's official instructions. This was the beginning of the life-saving mission that the U.S. Coast Guard would become best known for all over the world. In 1915 the Service merged with the United States Life-Saving Service to form the United States Coast Guard. In 1939, the Coast Guard absorbed the responsibilities of the U.S. Lighthouse Service—bringing full circle the history of all these outstanding services into one organization. Read about one man who was part of the early history of these services. As with many loyal government employees and soldiers, the Civil War served as a deterrent in many otherwise great careers of well-intentioned men. Those who chose to support the Confederacy either were excluded from post-war government jobs or, at best, their chosen professions were derailed.*

Captain, N.L. Coste, Napoleon Louis Bonaparte George Achilles Coste, was the son of Louis Coste, a French Huguenot from Montpellier, France, who became a U.S. Citizen in Charleston, S.C. on April 9, 1808. Louis was the owner and operator of a crockery store on Queen Street in Charleston. His mother was Lucinda Mackey, whom we believe was the great, great granddaughter of Rob Roy Macgregor, the Scottish folk hero referred to as the "Scottish Robin Hood."

Coste joined the Revenue Service (also known as the Revenue Cutter or Revenue Marine Service) in 1830. November 3, 1830, he was commissioned as second lieutenant and served on the cutter *Marion*. On June 4, 1833, he was commissioned first lieutenant. In February 1837, he was made captain of the cutter *Campbell* and directed by Levi Woodburn, then Secretary of the Treasury, to examine the sea-coast south of the Chesapeake Bay and "recommend locations of additional light-houses [sic], beacons, and buoys." On Captain Coste's recommendation,

Congress was advised to install the following aids to navigation: 1. A new light-house [sic] at the mouth of Tampa Bay; 2. A light-boat in the northwest passage of Key West; 3. On the coast of Florida, several new light-houses, and various other important improvements; 4. A new light-house on St. Simon's Island; 5. At Charleston five beacons and three additional buoys; 6. A small beacon-light on Wilkinson's point on the Neuse River; and 7. A light-house on Bodie Island. In regards to Bodie Island, Coste stated, "Bodie Island is the next place, and one of great importance. More vessels are lost there than on any other part of our coast. It is the eastern most point of land on the coast of North Carolina, forming, in fact, a cape. It is my opinion, that, by the erections of a light-house on it, much property would be saved, and navigation of the coast facilitated."

The revenue cutters *Campbell* and *Marion* were placed under Naval control in 1838 and sent to the Florida Keys to patrol the coast line. They arrived in February with an assignment to prevent arms smuggling and to

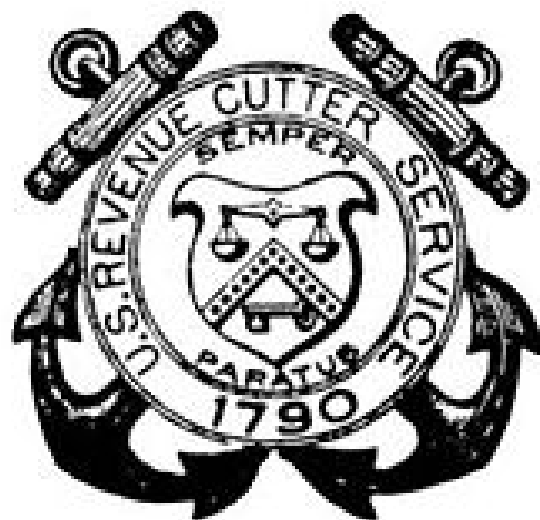
protect shipping and settlers. The *Campbell's* crew was sent out on reconnoitering expeditions getting a taste of the hardships and frustrations of chasing Seminole Indians along the south Florida coast. Coste created a shore base to stock supplies and maintain his boats on Tea Table Key. After more than a year of chasing Indians in the keys and south Florida, in May 1839 with a boat in very poor condition, he was ordered to return north.

It seems that Capt. Coste became friends with noted ornithologist John James Audubon. While he was captain of the *Nimrod* in 1832, Mr. Audubon was a passenger. On that trip Audubon had several barrels of bird skins packed in rum; however, during a sudden gale his barrels went overboard. Capt. Coste went overboard after them and was able to salvage a barrel containing Herons, Cormorants, and two red-headed vultures. As he wrote about one trip, Audubon noted, "On April 16, 1837, my good friend Napoleon Coste shot 3 individuals of this species on an immense bar in the Gulf of Mexico while I was on board his ship the *Campbell*. They were larger and perhaps handsomer than any I had ever seen." In another section of his notes he mentioned that Coste had given him much valuable information on the habits of birds living on the keys. On June 20, 1842, Coste married Sarah N. Bolles of Charleston, S.C.

He was commissioned captain on Oct. 28, 1845. During the war with Mexico, he commanded the steam cutter *Legare*. The *Legare* supported the fleet at Brago Santiago at the mouth of the Rio Grande, then at Vera Cruz, and finally at Anton Lizardo. December 15, 1847, he was in Washington "Awaiting Orders."

After the war, Capt. Coste commanded the *Crawford* and *Washington*. In 1853 he superintended the construction of the *Caleb Cushing*, *James C. Dobbins*, *Robert McClelland*, and the *James Campbell* at Somerset, Massachusetts. From 1854 to 1860, he commanded cutters in Savannah and Charleston.

In December 1860, he was in command of the *William Aiken*. Capt. Coste had been in the service for 30 years and had taken an oath of alle-



Above is the insignia for the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, also known as the Revenue Marine Service

giance to the U.S. Government as well as to the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service. He had been one of the best cutter officers the service had known. However, he was a Southerner, born and raised in Charleston, and he decided that he could not and would not turn his sword against his home and neighbors. December 20, Capt. Coste tendered his resignation to the U.S. Treasury Dept. Soon thereafter, on the 27th, he hauled down the American flag and the Revenue Cutter flag, paid off the officers and crew, and turned the boat over to the Confederacy. Records from the National Archives list all of the ships on which Coste served, even the dates when he took leaves of absence. The last entry stated, "Having tendered his resignation as Captain which was received on this date, it was not accepted, but it was ordered that his name be at once stricken from the rolls of the Revenue Marine Service. Dated Dec. 29, 1860."

All of the crew except three northern officers signed back on. These were replaced by southern officers, one of which was his son, 3rd Lt. N.E. Coste.

For most of 1861, Capt. Coste superintended the transporting and mounting of guns along the South Carolina coast. During most of the rest of the war he served as acting military storekeeper at Central Ordnance Depot. He requested that his position be made permanent. It appears that he was recommended by Col. A.I. Gonzales, Chief of Ordnance and Artillery South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

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The folder cover that holds these records is signed by G.T. Beauregard, apparently as an endorsement. The reply he received from the Secretary of War, April 1, 1863, stated “the law only provides for 6 military store keepers and those are all filled; there is, therefore, no vacancy.

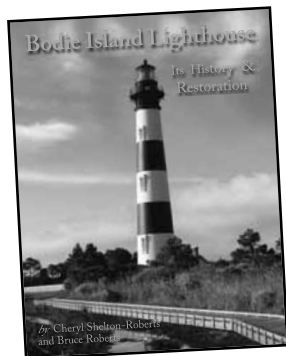
Coste was a charter member of the French Huguenot Society of South Carolina in April 1885. His obituary read, “Capt. Coste served actively 35 years in the U.S. Rev. Marine Service from which he withdrew in 1860. At the time of his death he was employed in the U.S. Lighthouse Service in charge of the *Relief Lightship* in Charleston Harbor. He was a man of high character, well-known in his community and universally respected.”

Editor's note: First, when Coste claimed that Bodie Island, then known as Body's Island, was the easternmost point on the coast of North Carolina, consider that coast surveying was in its early days. It was during the 1840s that A.D. Bache and his brothers and first cousin took up the trade with intensity and would correct this fact. Next, traditionally, any Confederate supporter could not be hired in a post-war government position. Why, then, does Capt. Coste's obituary by the French Huguenot Society state that he was in the employment of the U.S. Lighthouse Service during the 1880s? Since he was turned down for a position under Beauregard's supervision, perhaps he was not judged to have been in the Confederacy's employment. Ms. Austin is in search of this and other information on her great-great grandfather as well as an extant photograph of him, which she has not located to date. Thank you to Sandra MacLean Clunies, certified genealogist, for her assistance with this article.

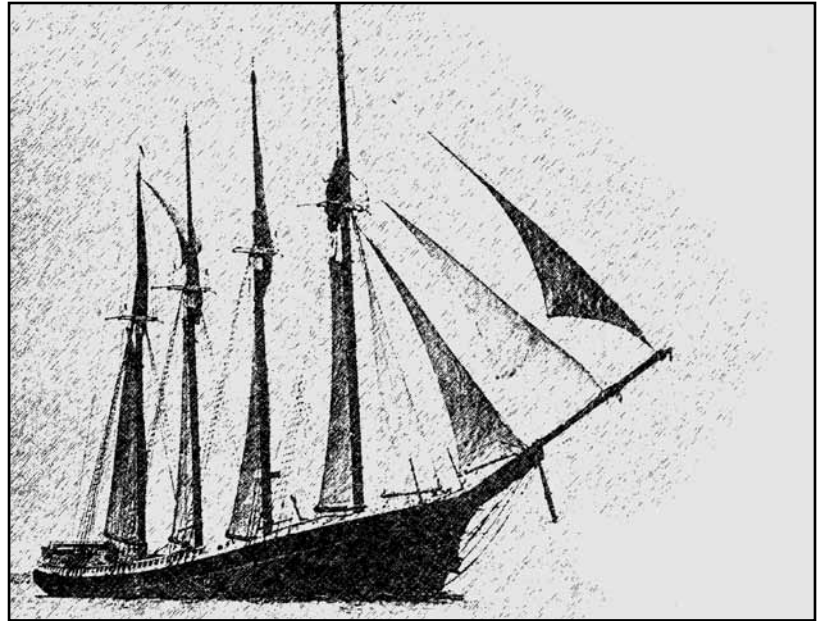


There are no known photographs of Captain N.L. Coste, but above is a Revenue Cutter Service captain wearing his dress uniform, identical to the one Coste would have worn when he hauled the Service's flag and turned his vessel over to the Confederacy.

Photo from <http://www.usmilitariaforum.com>



Recently The North Carolina Society of Historians, Inc. presented Cheryl Shelton-Roberts the prestigious Willie Parker Peace History Book Award for *Bodie Island Lighthouse: Its History & Restoration* and for the valuable contributions she has made toward the collection, preservation and perpetuation of North Carolina history. The committee wrote, “The last section of the book deals with the restoration of the lighthouse, including the irreplaceable Fresnel lens. The details of the restoration process were absolutely fascinating...so detailed and tedious but a very worthwhile effort. We thoroughly enjoyed reading this entry. It has appeal for historians, researchers, anybody interested in lighthouses in general, architects...the list goes on. It is a beautiful book that contains some truly valuable information about a structure that is a North Carolina treasure. Extremely well done!”



Above right is a drawing of the schooner *Laura Anne Barnes* that ran aground at Bodie Island in heavy wind and fog during the early morning hours of June 1, 1921. Above left is a 1963 photograph by Bruce Roberts of the ruins of the schooner at its original wreck site.

Dig These Bones

During the summer, the remains of the shipwreck *Laura A. Barnes* received a great deal of attention. Students from the Field School of Maritime History and Underwater Research with East Carolina University, the National Park Service Submerged Cultural Resource Unit, the UNC-Coastal Studies Institute, the NC State Underwater Archeology Unit, and NOAA Monitor National Marine Sanctuary joined efforts to form a working partnership project entitled “Shipwrecks of the Graveyard of the Atlantic.” The team of archeologists, with the help of some interested park visitors, have excavated remains of the three-masted schooner that wrecked off Nags Head in 1921. The wreck was moved from direct ocean exposure by the National Park Service several years ago; however, it eventually became buried in damp sand that increased the deterioration rate. Uncovering the wreck’s old bones will help it dry over time and last longer for beachcombers to walk around and wonder how the wreck occurred and what happened to its passengers. Walking the Outer Banks beaches is a walk over and through time.

Details of the working partnership courtesy the NPS Cape Hatteras Group

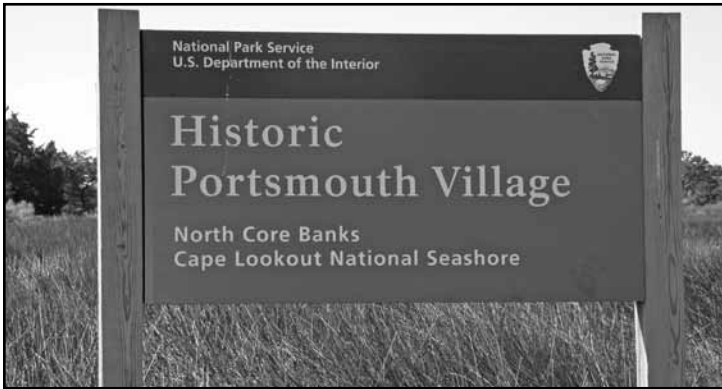




Above, OBLHS members gathered Friday at the Portsmouth Village Post Office. Jim White, author of “Portsmouth Island: A Walk in the Past,” served as our excellent host and tour guide. The Outer Banks were spared any strong storms this summer, but recent rains nourished huge mosquitoes just in time for our visit, so--no, these are not beekeepers, it’s mosquito-netting-clad members. The rain afforded photo ops at the village’s lovely Methodist Church (opposite page, upper left). Below right is one of the new exhibits in Portsmouth Village’s school house. New exhibits allow visitors to see what island life was like several decades ago before all residents moved from the village.

Captured moments of the Keeper’s Weekend (pp. 7-9) are by Bob and Nicole DaVia, Diana Chappell, Judy Moon, and Dr. Laddie Crisp.





Pictured above are Jinx Caylor (left) and OBLHS board of directors member Audrey Conner who are recipients of the 2010 Cape Hatteras Award. Winners of the President's Award (not pictured) are Marjorie and Dallas Spruill. Also, the grandest of congratulations to our Founder's Award recipients: Rick and Theresa Ward. All these winners are outstanding volunteers for NC lights and other historic sites.

Annual Keeper's Weekend Oct. 8-10, 2010

Whether it was a boat ride to Portsmouth Island on a beautiful fall day, bird watching on the beach, an early shelling trip with friends, observing a sunset dropping into a red-orange horizon, laughing with others until tears spilled, or climbing lighthouse steps while hearts pounded with anticipation, the weekend was a traditionally wonderful success. During the three-day event, everyone flowed from Portsmouth Island to Ocracoke Harbor to the wild pony pen to the beach to dinner and back to Silver Lake. Tables were set up, decorated, and Bob DaVia's video set to music on the restoration work at Bodie Island Lighthouse entertained dinner attendees. Awards were given, applause erupted, and clinking of forks and knives ensued. And the finale: the announcement of raffle winners, the lucky winner of Rick and Theresa Ward's outstanding Bodie Island Lighthouse model, and then the fun auction. Sunday morning a small group gathered to listen to Bruce Roberts give tips on taking pictures of lighthouses. Then we scattered to the four winds to return home and resume our everyday lives. It can be arguably said that there is no finer company than lighthouse enthusiasts—it guarantees a good, uplifting experience. Thank you to Bett Padgett for doing the overall coordination of events; there were many more who helped with details. Since these volunteers often go without recognition, we'll name a few here: Diana Chappell worked on raffle tickets, mailed them, received them back, and took care of proceeds; Kelly Waller and Judy Moon hauled in (and out) the Society's store of goods; Bob and Nicole DaVia and Janice Thomas were everywhere helping; Courtney Whisler, Bill Padgett, and Laddie Crisp helped with the auction. Watch for details on next year's exciting Keeper's Weekend at <http://www.oblhs.org>--and thanks, Virginia for being Keeper of the site!

Editor's note: On September 15, an era ended for Portsmouth Island. Dot Salter Willis, the last living person to have been born on Portsmouth crossed the bar. She was loved by many, and she helped preserve the history of this charming island and, thus, has allowed its legacy of once-upon-an-island to continue to be enjoyed by all who visit the village. She loved her island home, its people, her family, and attending its one-room schoolhouse. She and her father, Ben Salter, coauthored Portsmouth Island Short Stories and History. Their memories will live forever.



Above left, Kati Wharton and Courtney Whisler enjoy the dinner and auction activities. Below is an overall shot of the ongoing auction. Above right is one of Laddie Crisp's wonderful lens images that he creates with special photographic equipment. And below right are some of the Ocracoke wild horses, cared for by the National Park Service. Ranger Laura Michaels informed us that new genes are being introduced to the herd from Shackelford Banks wild horses in order to increase the Ocracoke herd's size and its chance for survival.



There's a Light in the Harbor

Lyrics by Bett Padgett ©2010

There's a light in the harbor; shone since 1823
Guiding ships through the inlet, 'brought them safely in from sea.
My kin swam through the darkness, the night as black as my own mane
Their blood still spills on this island & runs deep within my veins.

I feel the wind on my face and the sand 'neath my feet ---I run free
Just as my ancestors did when they fought and came from the sea.

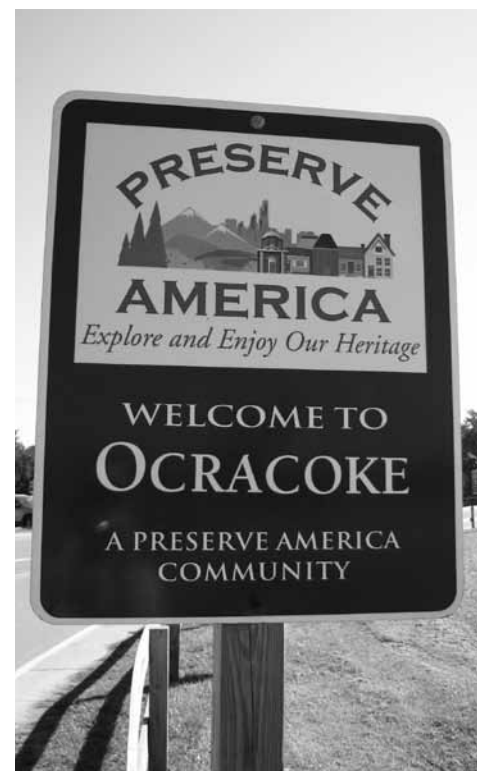
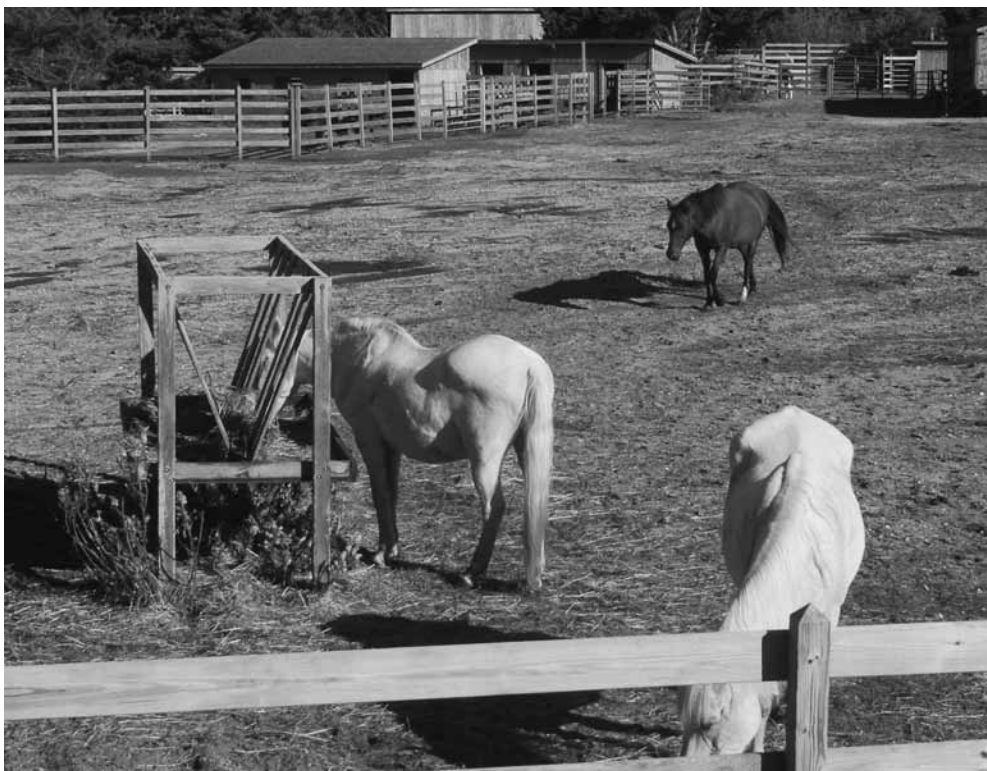
They were here to greet the settlers; they saw when Blackbeard was slain.
They mourned the soldiers from Great Britain; in World War II their lives were claimed.
No one knows where I came from, but it is sure where I'm bound
My home is Ocracoke Island where that white light can be found.

We both have stood strong through the storms and weathered the gales
And just like that light, we've been worn, but our courage prevails.

There was no light in this harbor when my family sought dry ground
Just the pale moon and the starlight, no guiding light could be found.

They felt the wind on their face and the sand 'neath their feet, they ran free
I will stay in the gaze of the light that brings comfort to me.

There's a light in the harbor; shone since 1823;
It brought ships safely through the inlet ----



Lighthouses and Forts: Odd But Ideal Partners

by Bruce Roberts and Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

The strategic locations of lighthouses also attract another kind of structure — forts. A visit to the lighthouses of our area can be a time to discover military history as well. Conventionally, lighthouses have been located at the mouths of rivers, central locations entering a port, on islands laced with dangerous shoals, and major sites of protection. From lighthouse sites along the Outer Banks of North Carolina to the military installations at Cape Henry, Virginia, to Fort Sumter, South Carolina, and beyond, we find unlikely companions in these fortifications whose histories represent war and peace and once existed in harmony.

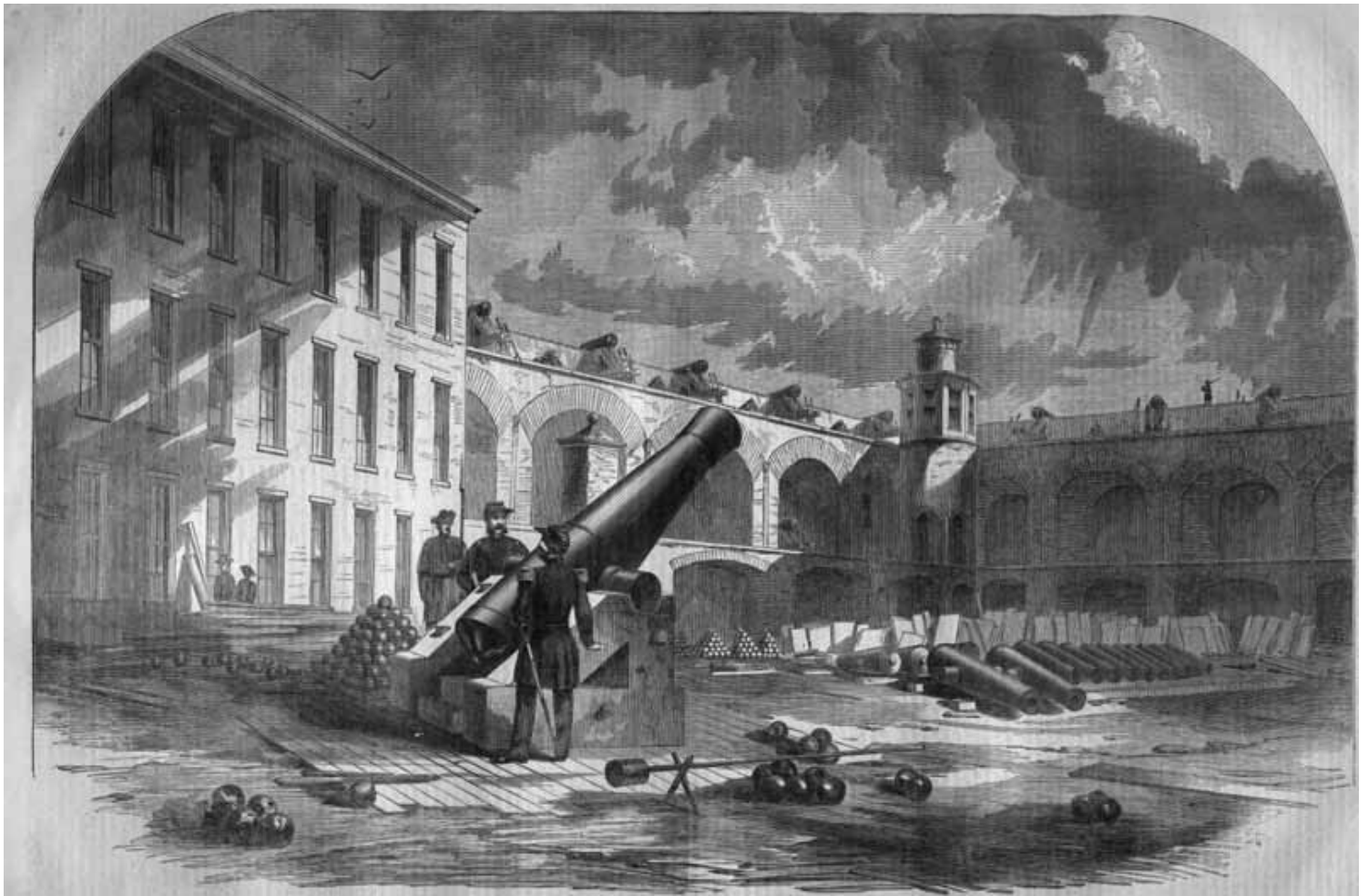
The Federal Point Lighthouse was in the center of Fort Fisher during the Civil War. The tower was ordered to be taken down by Confederate Commander Col. William Lamb because it was drawing fire from blockading Union ships that made it a target. Lamb used the keeper's house as his headquarters; however, he moved his wife to a safer home outside the fort. Col. Lamb often entertained the captains of blockade-running ships at his headquarters in the old keeper's house, which he decorated with a British flag since many of the Southern-sympathizing, blockade-running captains were English. Near this keeper's quarters is the foundation of the lighthouse tower which was recently discovered and excavated in the center of "battle acre" at Fort Fisher, the South's largest fort (See article by Taylor and Keresey Vol. XVI No. 2).

In close proximity on Bald Head Island is Old Baldy Lighthouse that once resided inside the grounds of Fort Holmes. Built by Confederates to protect the old Cape Fear River Inlet from Union ships, the fort was destroyed in January 1865 on orders from Major General W. H. C. Whiting to prevent it from falling into Union hands. Earlier in the war, Whiting had thought it necessary to destroy Old Baldy, but instead he was able to move troops onto the island, which gave protection to the lighthouse. Two years before hostilities erupted, Whiting served as a captain in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at his headquarters in Wilmington. He had supervised the design of the Cape Lookout Lighthouse and announced its activation in 1859. Six years later as a Major General he was mortally wounded at Fort Fisher. Two structures that he designed and for which he supervised construction are now destinations for tourists on the North Carolina coast—Cape Lookout Lighthouse and Fort Fisher.

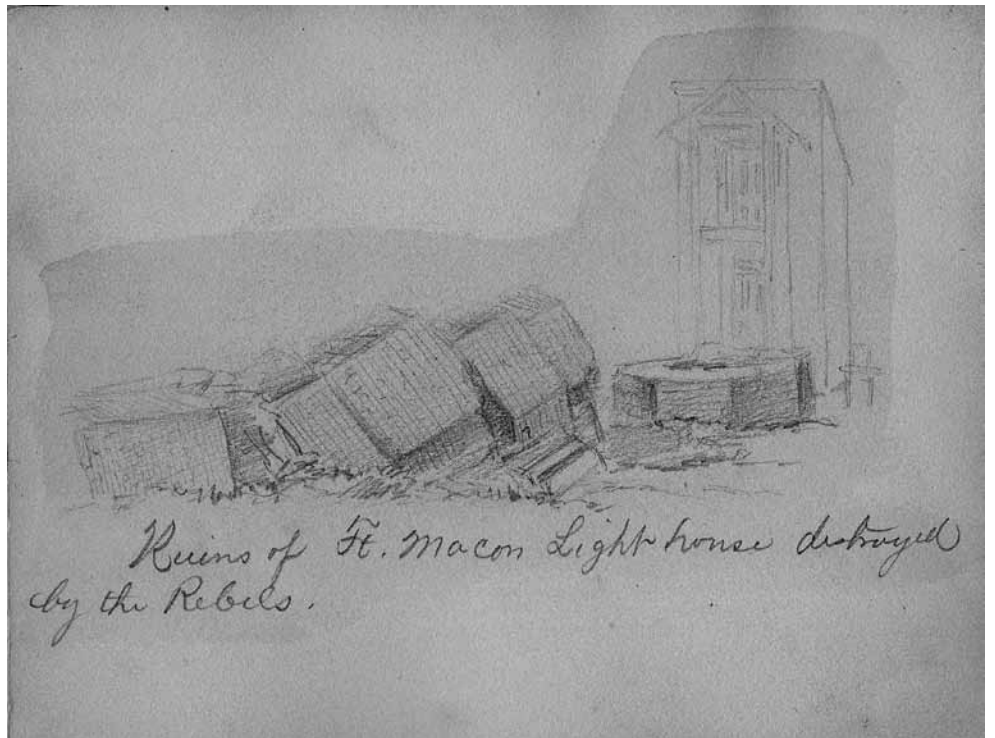
Fort Macon lies at the easternmost point of Atlantic Beach on Bogue Banks Island. The Bogue Banks Rear Range Light was located two-hundred yards northwest of the fort. It was a fifty-foot-tall, red-brick lighthouse that housed a fourth-order Fresnel lens. The smaller front range light was a sturdy timber tower which housed a sixth-order Fresnel lens 30 feet above sea level. It was located about 50 yards southeast from the front of the fort (looking towards the ocean). The front range light was positioned one-quarter of a mile away from the rear brick range light at the fort, about the distance of four football fields. Ship navigators lined up the pair of lights with a third light on an outer channel buoy to mark the way into the harbor.

The front range light was on a moveable wood frame, or "skids," that could be adjusted as the inlet channel shoaled and moved. The pair of range lights guided ships through Beaufort Inlet to Beaufort Harbor while the fort defended against intruders using the inlet to attack the port at Beaufort. Its only keeper, Thomas Delamar, had kept both lights in good working order until the Confederate Light House Service ordered them turned off at the beginning of the war. The Confederate defenders took both lights down in 1862 to provide a clear line of fire for the fort's guns. This represents the essence of the relationship between lighthouses and forts. Lighthouses guided friendly traffic into the port while the fort defended against unwanted visitors. Lighthouses became a focal point for coastal defense because whoever held control of the lights fared a far better chance of controlling the flow of soldiers and supplies.

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Fort Sumter parade ground: The first Union shot of the Civil War was fired by Captain Abner Doubleday. He was the second senior officer at Fort Sumter, under Major Robert Anderson under whose command this drawing was made. A ten-inch Columbiad was mounted as a mortar to lob cannonballs over the fort's walls to rebuke attacking Confederate vessels. Note the lighthouse on one upper corner of the fort. In a photograph within the editors' collection, the lighthouse was toppled to the ground immediately below inside the fort. At many southern sites including Bodie Island and Cape Lookout, lighthouses were victims of the war. Photo from Harper's Weekly April 12, 1861



Edwin Graves Champney, a union soldier who happened also to be an artist, sketched the ruins of the Bogue Banks Rear Range Light after the fort was captured by General Burnside's troops. The tower had been toppled before the battle by Confederates to allow a clear line of fire from the fort towards Beaufort Inlet.

Drawing courtesy of the Outer Banks History Center

At Cape Lookout, a fort preceded a lighthouse. Fort Hancock was built in 1778 to offer protection to the “lower banks” from British raids. Led by Captain John Tillman, it was deemed a success for there were no British raids during the next two years. Subsequently, the state legislature in Raleigh decided that the expense was no longer necessary and the fort was abandoned; however, the site afforded an excellent view of Core Sound and all vessels entering there. Cape Lookout would be built on a nearby site to be of service to both coasting as well as coastal maritime traffic.

In 1861 the Confederate Light House Service, which claimed authority over all lighthouses in Southern hands, ordered Cape Lookout’s first-order Fresnel lens removed and taken to the Capitol in Raleigh for safekeeping. The plan was to replace the lens after the war ended when Confederates were again in charge. But Union forces occupied Beaufort and the Cape Lookout area and a new third-order Fresnel lens was installed by Acting Engineer Jeremy P. Smith of the U.S. Lighthouse Service. Beaufort became a coaling station for blockading ships and the light was needed to guide ships from ocean to sound. A Union warship was ordered to guard the lighthouse, but the Confederates surprised everyone and arrived by land in a daring attempt to destroy both towers. The old 1812 tower, then already out of service, was partially destroyed, and only a portion of the stairs in the 1859 tower was damaged. Legend has it that faulty gunpowder prevented the blast from doing too much damage. The attack was reported up the Confederate chain of command to General Robert E. Lee as if the tall tower had been destroyed. Lee sent a message back that some gold might be appropriate for these brave men. Fortunately, the 1859 tower survived the attack, the stairs were repaired, and a new lens was put in place.

Later, during WW II, the attack on Pearl Harbor brought truckloads of Army troops to occupy both Fort Macon and Cape Lookout. The Bight of Cape Lookout, west of the lighthouse, was a deep-water haven where tankers and other ships could hide from German U-boats. Large cannon were brought to the island near the lighthouse to fire on subs attempting to enter the Bight. Later, a submarine net was placed across it to ensnare any of these enemy vessels. At Cape Lookout there was no fort,

but, among the sand dunes nearby, concrete foundations can still be found for the big guns placed there in 1942 that was part of a network of coastal defense.

In 1789, Virginia ceded two acres of land at Cape Henry for *the* first lighthouse built by the newly formed U.S. Lighthouse Service—not with colonial states’ monies. Just before World War II, Virginia ceded 1,000 acres to the government to enlarge Fort Story which engulfed the little two-acre lighthouse plot. Fort Story protected the Norfolk Navy base, the James River, and the Chesapeake Bay. After Pearl Harbor, top priority was given to saving the rest of the American fleet of naval ships which were largely at Norfolk. The *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch* reported that “nestled among the towering sand dunes within the fort’s area are four, sixteen-inch howitzers with giant gun barrels more than 30 feet long that can hurl a 2,000 pound projectile more than twenty miles.” Additionally, hundreds of other guns were brought in on special railroad cars. The article noted “that despite its peaceful appearance to the thousands of motorists who drive through it on the shore drive each day, [Fort Story] is one of the most powerful fortifications on the East Coast.” Most of the guns are gone now, but there is still an armed guard at the gate with heightened awareness of protecting the lighthouse and naval site that also serves as an amphibious training area, especially since 9/11.

One of the classic lighthouse-fort combinations is Fortress Monroe and Old Point Comfort Lighthouse at Hampton Roads, Virginia. Surrounded by a moat, the six-sided stone fort is the only one of its kind remaining in the United States that is still an active Army post, although that will end in September 2011 when the fort will be turned over to the state of Virginia. Its history goes back to 1609 when the first fortifications were established at Old Point Comfort by colonists from the Virginia Company at Jamestown. On their initial exploration, they recognized the strategic importance of the site at Old Point Comfort for purposes of coastal defense. They initially built Fort Algernourne at the location of the present Fort Monroe. On the ruins of a subsequent fort built on the site, the one-man garrison displayed a light for passing ships. The current 54-foot-tall stone lighthouse just outside the fort and moat was completed in 1802. During the Civil War, Fort Monroe on Point Comfort was the only Union stronghold in

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The two Cape Henry Lighthouses are engulfed in a sea of military construction at Ft. Story in November 1940. After December 1941, heavy guns were added to the fort as part of a defense plan to protect Navy ships at Norfolk, Virginia.

Photograph courtesy of the Norfolk Public Library

The old Point Comfort Lighthouse is located on Officer's Row inside Ft. Monroe at Hampton Roads, Virginia. In many ways, it was similar to the lighthouse at Ft. Macon that was destroyed during the Civil War. However, old Pt. Comfort still survives and is lighted each night at the fort.



tidewater Virginia never taken by Confederate forces. The keeper might have seen the *Virginia* sail past to battle with the *Monitor*. After the Civil War, Jefferson Davis was imprisoned in the fort not far from the lighthouse. But there is something else here. General Benjamin Butler on May 27, 1861, made his famous “contraband” order at Fort Monroe: escaped slaves who reached Union lines would not be returned to bondage. The order resulted in waves of slaves from the James River plantations fleeing to the Union lines around the fort and lighthouse and earned the fort its other name, “Freedom Fortress,” as any slave reaching it would be free. And, of course, the lighthouse was called “Freedom’s Light.” It still shines each night across the waters of Hampton Roads in war and in peace.

There is a number of other lighthouse sites across America that served as locations of American defenses. To name just a few on the West Coast: Admiralty Head and Point Wilson in Washington, Point Bonita and Fort Point near San Francisco, and Point Loma in San Diego. And, there are many more—go explore!

Lighthouse Updates

by Bett Padgett

Currituck Beach Lighthouse will be open daily, 9-5, until the weekend after Thanksgiving (closed Thanksgiving Day). The lighthouse will be open from 3:00 – 7:30 on December 1st for a celebration of 135 years of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. At 3:00 pm there will be a commemoration of the beacon's early history. Beginning 3:30 pm well-wishers can climb the lighthouse, meet two uniformed keepers, and enjoy the rare opportunity to see the first-order Fresnel lens up-close. Bring a flashlight. After sunset (4:48pm) the interior of the tower will be dark, just as it would have been when the lighthouse was first illuminated. Visit <http://www.currituckbeachlight.com/> for information.

Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse (reproduction), located in Manteo, is an exterior reproduction of an 1877 screwpile light that was originally at the southern entrance of Croatan Sound into Pamlico Sound located near Wanchese. The lighthouse reproduction is located on Manteo's beautiful waterfront near the Maritime Museum. Both are operated by Roanoke Island Festival Park. The lighthouse is open every day from 9-5, free of charge.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CAHA) and its park visitor centers are open year-round, 9-6 mid-June through Labor Day and 9-5 the rest of the year. For more information call (252) 441-5711 or visit <http://www.nps.gov/caha/>.

Bodie Island Lighthouse grounds are open year-round. The lighthouse is currently undergoing total restoration, but visitors are welcome! As always, there are unseen obstacles that cost extra money and time, which means a delay; completion of work on the tower is expected to be in late fall 2011. It will take several months for clean-up and reinstallation of the lens. Relighting of the 1st-order Fresnel lens and a Homecoming for keepers' descendants are now planned for spring 2012.

Bodie Island Coast Guard Station and Life-Saving Station exterior work has been completed. Plans for the Coast Guard Station are tentative at this time. It could be used for NPS programs or the Fish and Wildlife building on Pea Island might be moved to the site. The Life-Saving Station is to be used as a Ranger Station. Opening date is planned for spring/summer of 2011.

Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station exterior work has been completed (new roof, siding). Interior restoration has been put on hold as it has been placed under a historic leasing program where it can be rented for 50 years if the work is completed by the new tenants. Possible tenants are the United States Life-Saving Association, or maybe a B&B!

Oregon Inlet LSS (not part of CAHA) is under the auspices of the N.C. Aquarium program. Work has begun to restore the building. Sand has been removed from the interior, the exterior and roof have been repaired, and it has been raised. Funding to restore the interior has been delayed.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is closed for climbing until April 2011. Replacement of some metal and repairs to stairs are anticipated for 2012 beginning in October when the lighthouse has closed for the season. Many of the techniques used in the restoration of Bodie Island Lighthouse will be used on Cape Hatteras. The work may extend into the climbing season for 2012.

Ocracoke Lighthouse's work has been completed. New fencing was installed and painted and a boardwalk that leads to the door are in place. Work is presently being done to the sheds. OBLHS Annual Keepers' Dinner weekend participants climbed the tower and found it to be in outstanding condition.

Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station (at right) is located in Rodanthe, just north of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse at milepost 39.5. The Historic Site and museum gift shop are open until Nov. 26th, Mon-Fri, 10am to 5:00 p.m. The site will reopen 2011. Initial planning for the Centennial of the 1911 Life-Saving Station (main bldg) is ongoing. The celebration will be combined with the 6th annual American Heroes Day, Aug 4, 2011. Visit www.chicamacomico.net.

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum is located at the end of Hwy 12 on Hatteras Island near the ferry landing and is now owned and operated by the state of North Carolina. It is open Mon-Fri year-round, 10-4 and Saturdays temporarily. Call the museum for hours at (252) 986-2995 if you plan to visit on Saturday in the fall. The museum operates under the NC State holiday schedule. Visitation is free but donations are appreciated. The Museum opened a new pirate exhibit. The 17th century shipwreck found at Currituck Beach was relocated to the museum in July. They recently opened a display of artifacts from the USS *Monitor*. Follow the restoration on GOA's Facebook page.

Please update your email address! Send to rdavia@seathelights.com. And keep in touch with us by emailing bett@bettpadgett.com. We want to hear from you! Please use enclosed form and return.



Congratulations to the Outer Banks Conservationists, celebrating 135 years of light at Currituck Beach Lighthouse.



Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station celebrates Centennial in 2011.

Cape Lookout Lighthouse is part of the Cape Lookout National Seashore. Park headquarters and the visitors' center are located on Harkers Island and are open every day 9-5 except Christmas and New Year's days. The grounds are open year-round. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/caloc/> or call (252) 728-2250. The Keepers' Quarters Museum and facilities at the Lighthouse (Visitor Center, Keepers' Quarters Museum, and bathrooms) are closed Nov - March. Portsmouth Village Visitor Center will also reopen in April (hours vary). Cape Lookout Lighthouse will reopen for climbing in mid-May 2011 Thurs-Sat. It was a successful climbing season with 5,300 climbers. New displays have been completed at Portsmouth Island in the School House and the Post Office and renovations to the Life-Saving-Station/US Coast Guard Station are complete. A surfboat restored in the Beaufort Maritime Museum will be placed in the LSS/USCG station. An audio tour of the island is planned, downloadable from the NPS website onto a smart-phone or laptop so visitors can have a better understanding of the buildings and life on Portsmouth Island.

Oak Island Lighthouse is owned by the Town of Caswell Beach with ongoing cooperative efforts with the Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse (FOIL). FOIL will continue to conduct tours to the top year-round with at least 2 weeks' notice. A request to climb or tour can be made at <http://www.oakislandlighthouse.org>. Public weekly tours to the second level (12 steps up) have ended for the year and will resume May 25th 2011. Children must be 7-years-old to climb. This year three couples proposed at the top of the lighthouse and all said YES. The oldest climber ever to make it to the top was a gentleman at the young age of 86. Two years ago an 83-year-old lady climbed to the top. FOIL had a great season with nearly 2,000 climbers.

Price's Creek Front Range Light (1850 ruins) is not open for public visitation but you can get a good look at this pre-Civil War tower, the only river light in NC still in its original location, from the Southport-Ft. Fisher ferry.

Old Baldy Lighthouse is owned, maintained, and staffed by the Old Baldy Foundation (OBF). Hours of operation through Thanksgiving are Tues - Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 11am-4pm. Beginning in December they are open Fri and Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 11am-4pm. Call for holiday lighthouse and island tour hours: 910-457-7481. Visit their web site at www.oldbaldy.org.

Roanoke River Lighthouse (reproduction) (at right) and Maritime History Center are projects of the Washington County Waterways Commission (WCWC) and are located on the town of Plymouth's lovely waterfront about halfway between the northern and southern Outer Banks. Wetland landscaping around the lighthouse is nearing completion. Additional parking, accessibility, and interpretive signage are planned. An educational center (The Roanoke River Welcome and Research Center) across the street from the lighthouse and next door to the Maritime Museum will be open in January. The Center will house artifacts as well as be used by students and classes as a research center. The Edenton Historical Commission and WCWC are working together to educate visitors on both lighthouses. They are creating a brochure of the history of the lighthouses that will soon be available online. Hours of operation: 11-3 Tues - Sat and by appointment. Call (252)217-2204 to arrange a group visit. Visit <http://www.roanokeriverlighthouse.org/>



1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse (Edenton) exterior restoration is complete. Funds have been allocated for relocation of the screwpile tower to rest in the breakwater at Waterfront Park. The lighthouse will be operated by Edenton State Historic Site once restoration is complete. The Edenton Historical Commission has a continuing interest in the lighthouse and is a partner with the Department of Cultural Resources. They have agreed to fund its furnishings, under the guidance of the Historic Sites Curator. The plan is to furnish it as quarters for its light keeper and assistant and then give daily public tours.

OBLHS expresses deep gratitude to our Treasurer, **Diana Chappell**, for again gaining a donation to our organization in tribute to her many hours volunteered for lighthouses from her employer **McKesson Corporations' Foundation**. Well done, Diana!

Thank you to those who donated in memory of Margaret Hall who passed away 9/23/10 in VA Beach.

Raffle Winners October 2010

1st White Doe Inn: Beth Liles; Bailey, NC

2nd Beach cottage: Jeff & Peggy Frey; Columbia, PA

3rd Ecology Boat Tour: Jean Mathews; Cary, NC

4th Canvas Print: Rich Perryman; Charlotte, NC

Bodie Island Lighthouse Reproduction by Rick and Theresa Ward: Mike Norfleet; Chesapeake, VA

Congratulations to our winners! If you didn't participate this year, watch for ticket availability next August. You do not have to be present to win. Keep checking our website for events, pictures, and more. <http://oblhs.org>.

We realize that all our members cannot attend our annual Keepers' weekend and auction—we've made plans so that you can! **Early in 2011 we will hold a silent auction on some very nice items.** We will send details via postal and e-mail. Please make sure we have your correct email and mailing addresses. **Check your newsletter mailing label for your expiration date.** Together, we will continue work for our beautiful lighthouses.

Donations are warmly acknowledged, carefully used, and tax deductible. Please remember the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society on your list of charities.

To access the Members Only page at <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org> website, enter the password 10nclights. Keep up to date!

LIGHTHOUSE NEWS OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE OUTER BANKS LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

PURPOSE OF THE OUTER BANKS LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

The purpose of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society is to aid in the preservation of the lighthouses of the area and to work with the National Park Service and other agencies, both government and non-profit groups, to achieve the safe keeping of the buildings, artifacts and records of the U.S. Lighthouse Service.

The Lighthouse News is the official publication of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society.

Editor – Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Design-Bruce Roberts

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Email: lhsociety2@outer-banks.com or info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org or write OBLHS P.O. Box 1005 Morehead City, NC 28557

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logo sticker, newsletter, and membership card.**

The society operates on modest membership fees and occasional donations.
If you would like to renew your membership and/or make a donation, please
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Winterville, NC 28590

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Watch Restoration Work on Bodie Island Lighthouse

Restoration work on the Bodie Island Lighthouse is covered beautifully in Episode #508 in an "Our State" program by UNC-TV in either DVD or VHS format. In the editors' own words, "Built in 1872, the Bodie Island Lighthouse stands as one of our coast's most famous beacons as well as one sorely in need of restoration. Decades of water infiltration and storm winds have battered the lighthouse, but funds have finally become available to repair it. From the delicate removal of the Fresnel lens to stripping the paint, all the way to a Florida foundry for metal casting, we follow the painstaking work of this awesome task. The project's complexity lies not only in stabilizing the actual structure, but doing so while meeting the standards of the Historic Preservation Act. Join us to behold the restoration underway that will give this renowned landmark new life."

You can get a copy of this program by sending a \$20.00 check/money order per episode (#508), date of program (Oct. 12, 2010), list the subject of the episode, along with a note stating intended use (ie; home/educational), your requested program title (Bodie Island Lighthouse), phone number, email address, and return address to the following:

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