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LIGHTHOUSE NEWS

DEDICATED TO THE

UNITED STATES LIGHTHOUSE ESTABLISHMENT

Volume XVII Number 2
Summer 2011



CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL BEGINS: BATTLES ON THE ISLANDS

North Carolina Lighthouses 1861-1865

by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts and Bruce Roberts

The Confederate capture of Ft. Sumter was akin to a cataclysmic earthquake that split the country into two distinct areas: the North and the South. The tsunami of deaths that followed was not expected by either side, neither of which believed the war would have a lengthy duration. When the constitutional convention of Southern leaders convened in February 1861 to form the Confederacy, most Southern leaders thought there would be a peaceful succession akin to gentlemen agreeing to disagree. But the Rebel victory in South Carolina became a lightning rod for states-rights philosophy that ripped a nation apart and set father against son and brother against brother and led to the bloodiest events ever on this nation's soil. Lighthouses and their Fresnel lenses were some of the first victims of the American Civil War, also known as the War Between the States.

With the outbreak of hostilities in April 1861, the Confederate States of America created a "Light House

Bureau" within its Treasury Department headquartered in Richmond. It made every effort during the early months of the war to darken all the major lights along the Confederate coast from Virginia to Texas on the assumption it would hinder the Union Navy in its blockade of Southern ports. It was also assumed that Confederate ship captains and navigators knew the coastline well and would have no problem navigating familiar waters while Union ships were sailing in unfamiliar locations.

The Southern government feared that the beautiful and expensive Fresnel lenses located in lights like Cape Hatteras, Bodie Island, and other coastal locations might be taken by Union troops or raiding parties. As a result, Confederate authorities ordered the removal of the lenses to safe hiding places inland where they would be kept for the duration of hostilities. Of course, the idea was that the

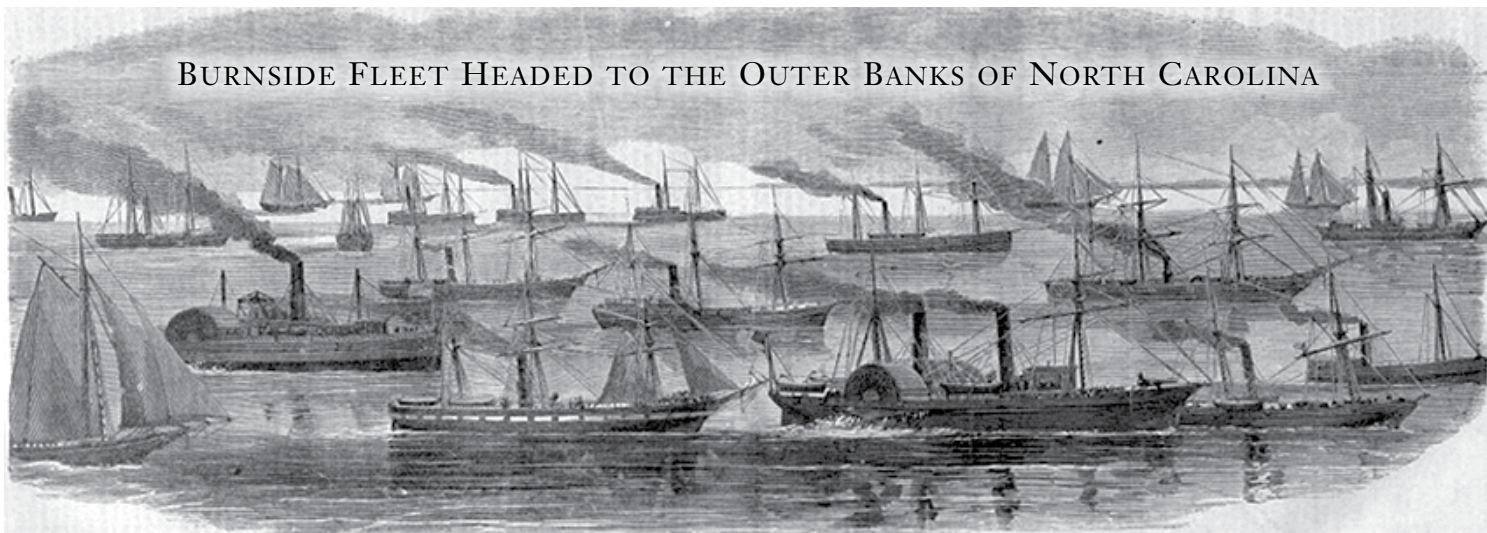
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The Civil War in North Carolina began when Union troops came ashore in Hatteras Inlet to capture Forts Hatteras and Clark on August 28, 1861. This largely overlooked battle was in reality significant in many ways. It was the first notable Union victory of the war; the first amphibious operation, and the first combined operation of utilizing both units of Union Army and Navy. Union forces landed a short distance from the forts and attacked from behind while the Navy bombarded the fortifications from the water. This effort was part of a campaign to blockade the Carolina coast, beginning at Hatteras Inlet, a notorious sanctuary for blockade runners.

Illustration "The Capture of the Forts at Hatteras the First Day" reprinted in Pictorial War Record 1882

BURNSIDE FLEET HEADED TO THE OUTER BANKS OF NORTH CAROLINA



In February 1862, an impressive fleet of 63 Union naval vessels arrived off Roanoke Island carrying General Burnside's expedition. As each inlet fell under Union control, supply lines to General Lee's armies to the north were seriously compromised, thus rendering control of the Carolina coast vital to Union success. Once Roanoke Island fell to Union control, Burnside's next objective was New Bern. Next, he moved on to Morehead City and Beaufort, which were guarded by Fort Macon. Confederate forces occupied the ungarrisoned fort earlier. In preparation for a Union attack the Bogue Banks front and rear range lights were taken down to allow a clear line of fire into Beaufort Inlet and beyond. – Engraving from Harper's Weekly January 4, 1862

lenses would be replaced as soon as the South had won the war. After the war, General William Sherman's troops found many of the North Carolina Fresnel lenses hidden in the capitol in Raleigh. At Cape Hatteras, the first-order Fresnel lens with its hundreds of crown glass prisms had been disassembled by the keeper and others, packed into 44 wooden boxes, and shipped inland for safekeeping. Following official orders, the panels of prisms were carefully handled and packed with cotton to prevent breakage.

HATTERAS ISLAND INVASION!

Union troops came ashore first at Hatteras Inlet. Ships unloaded armed troops, turning the Outer Banks into a war zone. The second (1859) Bodie Island Lighthouse was destroyed by Confederate forces after the Fresnel lens had been removed; rebels made sure the tower could not be used by Union forces to spy on Confederate defense activities on Roanoke Island. A Confederate colonel ordered his regiment south on Hatteras Island and reported, "If nothing else we will destroy the lighthouse at Hatteras." Fortunately Union troops arrived, surrounded the lighthouse, and protected it. Other lights were not so lucky including the Bogue Banks range lights at Fort Macon. Included in war-time destruction were confiscated lightships at Fort Fisher and from throughout the sounds that were taken from their locations and sunk to create obstacles for attacking Union vessels.

As Union troops occupied more and more of the Outer Banks and coastal areas during 1861-63 the U.S. Lighthouse Service sent inspectors on lighthouse tenders to replace lenses as soon as it was safe. It was a contest between Confederates who persevered to darken the coast and Union forces who tried to keep the lights burning as navigational guides. The turning point came the last week

in June 1863 when Engineer Jeremy Smith lit a new first-order Fresnel lens in the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the beam swept over the Graveyard of the Atlantic. A week later Vicksburg fell, the Mississippi became a Union supply waterway, and Gettysburg a Confederate defeat. But the war in the Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds continued on with sailors from the Confederate Ram *Albemarle* burning the Croatan screw-pile lighthouse near Roanoke Island.

TWO INLETS: A BLOCKADE-RUNNER'S CHOICE

Finally, in the Wilmington area beginning in 1862, the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron struggled to close the port of Wilmington. Wilmington was perfectly positioned for Confederate blockade-running. North Carolina kept General Robert E. Lee's back, so to speak, and also was the main artery for the flow of supplies so vital to Lee's armies. The port's protection was always a priority to the general. Wilmington is situated over 25 miles up the Cape Fear River, which rendered it safe from federal assault as long as Forts Holmes, Caswell, Campbell, and Fisher at the entrances to the river were held by Confederates. Two navigable, marked channels, Old and New Inlet, were separated by ten-mile-long Bald Head (Smith's) Island in the mouth of the river. North of the island lay New Inlet and Old Inlet to the south. The distance between the two inlets was only six miles, but lying between and protruding into the Atlantic for 25 menacing miles lay Frying Pan Shoals. Cordons of blockaders had to cover a 50-mile arc while keeping out of range of Confederate shore batteries.

Blockade runners preferred New Inlet so it received the heaviest protection. Confederate Major General W.H.C. Whiting used his West Point engineering skills to use sand and logs to design Fort Fisher, built on Federal Point, and

stretched it out along the beach called “Confederate Point.” At the pinnacle of Fort Fisher was the “Mound Battery,” which appeared on every blockader’s map, proving its formidable significance. On the Mound Battery were two cannon and a device to exhibit a light for blockade runners. The cannon kept blockaders at a respectable distance and the light was ignited to provide a guide for incoming blockade runners, messages sent in flashes of code. A light was set on the beach on a given signal and became a front range light for the Mound Battery light, the rear range light. This was essentially the light of the Confederacy. Shipments of cotton and other staples were slipped out of the Cape Fear River, taken to England and exchanged for clothing, armaments, and used as monetary sources to provide provisions to General Robert E. Lee’s armies of Northern Virginia. During the last months of the war, more than half of all supplies to Lee came through the port of Wilmington. The Mound Battery Light was significant enough that after the fall of Fort Fisher to the Union, Admiral Porter, commander of the Union navy, ordered the light to be continued for several months until a new Federal Point Lighthouse was completed in 1866.

While walking peacefully along the edge of the Atlantic Ocean and listening to nature’s rhythms in endless waves embracing the shore, imagine the soldiers who walked those same paths of sand. The sounds of rifle fire, cannon shot, screams of instructions, screams of injury for a brief but intense time moment echoed across the sands of Ocracoke, Hatteras, Bodie, and Roanoke Islands. Surreptitious plans were afoot to destroy the Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout Lighthouses. Payments were exchanged for assurance that Fresnel lenses would be removed and hidden from the enemy. War walked these beaches and fear stalked these dunes. Step back for a moment to learn the history and appreciate those who fought for a passion judged neither right nor wrong. Learn of the struggle that it took to rejoin bitter enemies, heal the physical and emotional wounds. Put yourself in a soldier’s boots during a time when only determination and a will to live pulled you out of the fray alive. For the North. For the South. For the Union.

Each lighthouse had its own story during the war and here is the list light-by-light and a few of the major battles along coastal North Carolina.

The Lighthouses and Light Vessels*

PRICE’S CREEK FRONT RANGE LIGHT

At right is a post-war photograph of Price’s Creek showing some of the damage incurred during the war. Price’s Creek was comprised of two lights. A sixth-order Fresnel lens was exhibited from the second level of the keeper’s quarters and served as a rear range light; a second sixth-order Fresnel lens was lighted in the brick tower as a front range light (at right). Pilots lined up the two lights to find the navigable channel. But these lights were also used to flash code to blockade runners as to which of two river entrances to use for the best chance to slip through the Union blockade. Added information about this lighthouse is found in a letter to Rear Admiral W. B. Shubrick, Chairman of the Light-House Board, Washington, D.C., from Edward Cordell, Acting Lighthouse Inspector, Fifth District on the Lighthouse Schooner *Lenox*, Wilmington, NC, March 23, 1865. Cordell’s letter to Admiral W.B. Shubrick, Chairman of the U.S. Lighthouse Board reported the first contact that the Lighthouse Service had with its lights on the Cape Fear River after the war. The keeper, Hanson K. Ruark, apparently saved the building from destruction by staying with it during the hostilities. Unfortunately, one sentence in this letter prevented Ruark’s being rehired. He had kept the lights burning for eight months after the war started and, thus, technically was working for and aiding the Confederate government. Ruark was not rehired because Price’s Creek Range Lights had served as a signal station for blockade



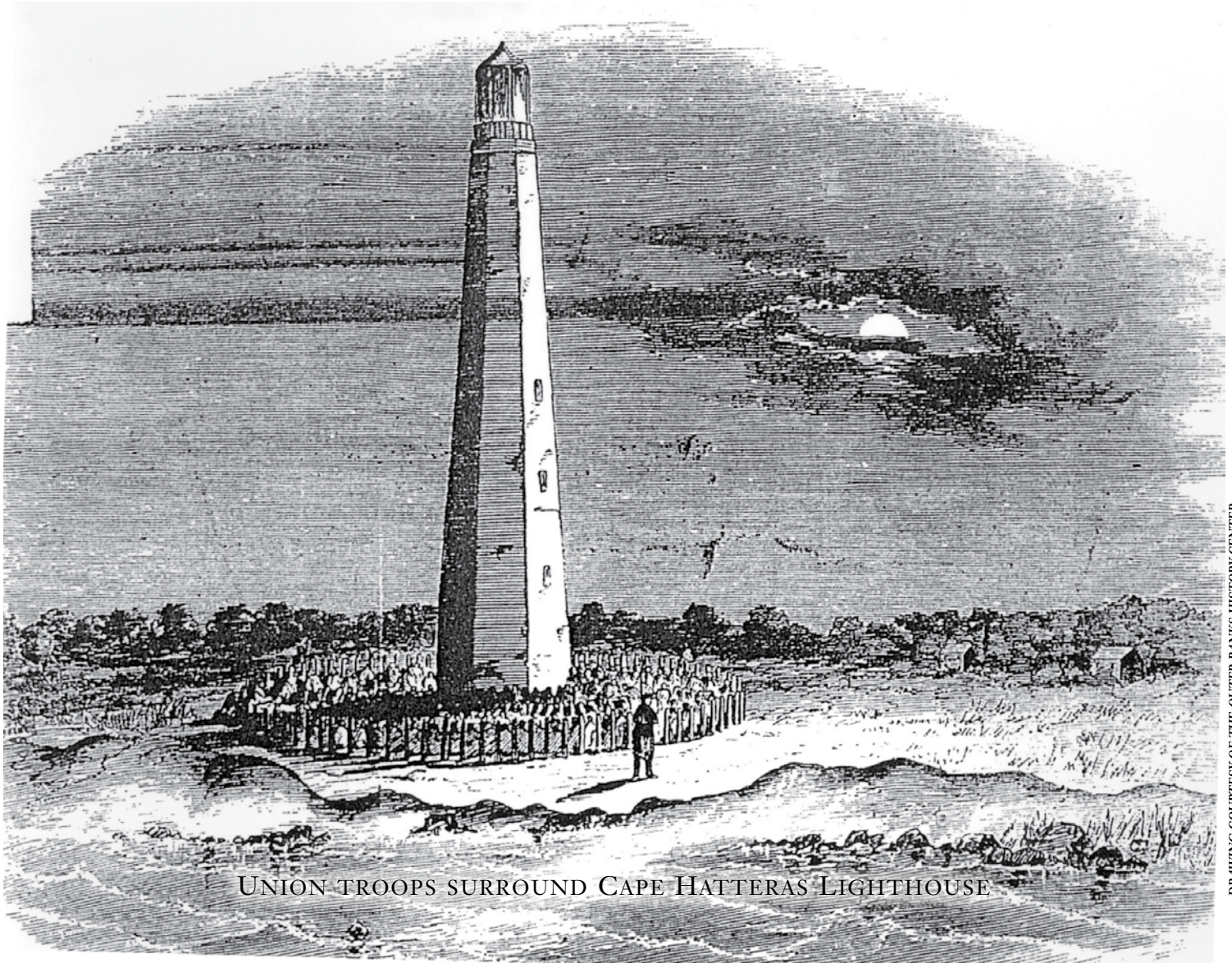
runners, and his association with the light during hostilities tainted his service record. Anyone who worked for the Confederate government could not work again for the United States, thus ending a number of lighthouse careers.

*Light vessels stationed in North Carolina sounds and at the mouths of rivers were not as large as sea-going lightships that had to be built for extreme weather conditions to stay on station.

BODIE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE *(est. 1859- 2nd of 3 lights)*

Completed just two years before the War, the third-order Fresnel lens was removed by the Confederate Light House Bureau at the beginning of hostilities. Confederates blew up the tower in the fall of 1861 when they abandoned nearby Fort

Oregon. The Union had already captured Forts Hatteras and Clark to the south and the retreating Confederates feared that Union forces could use the tower as a lookout point for their anticipated attack on Roanoke Island.



DRAWING COURTESY OF THE OUTER BANKS HISTORY CENTER

CAPE HATTERAS LIGHTHOUSE, 1803 *(raised to 150 feet in 1854)*

At the beginning of hostilities the light was darkened and the magnificent first-order Fresnel lens was dismantled and taken inland to Tarboro. There, the hundreds of glass prisms were repacked into 44 boxes lined with cotton and taken by railroad to Townsville, N.C., where they were hidden by a Confederate officer acting under orders from the Confederate Light House Bureau. When Union

forces occupied Hatteras Island, a first-order replacement Fresnel lens was installed in June 1863 by the U.S. Light-House Board and re-lighted. A guard of Union soldiers was maintained until danger of Confederate raids ended. The original lens was later recovered, returned to Paris, France, for restoration and installed in the new 1870 tower.

BALD HEAD LIGHTHOUSE

(est. 1817- 2nd of 2 towers)

Like the situation at other major coastal lighthouses during the war, the third-order Fresnel lens at the Bald Head Lighthouse was removed early during hostilities and the light was darkened by Confederates. This lighthouse marked the original entrance to the Cape Fear River. However, New Inlet to the north, on which Ft. Fisher was located, became the preferred route for blockade runners. W.H.C. Whiting, in charge of Wilmington defenses, had ordered the lighthouse destroyed; however, it is surmised that since the tower was within the protection of surrounding Fort Holmes that the old veteran was spared such a fate. In 1866, a new lighthouse was established at Federal Point and Bald Head Lighthouse was officially decommissioned, though it was relighted in 1880 after New Inlet closed.

BOGUE BANKS RANGE LIGHTS

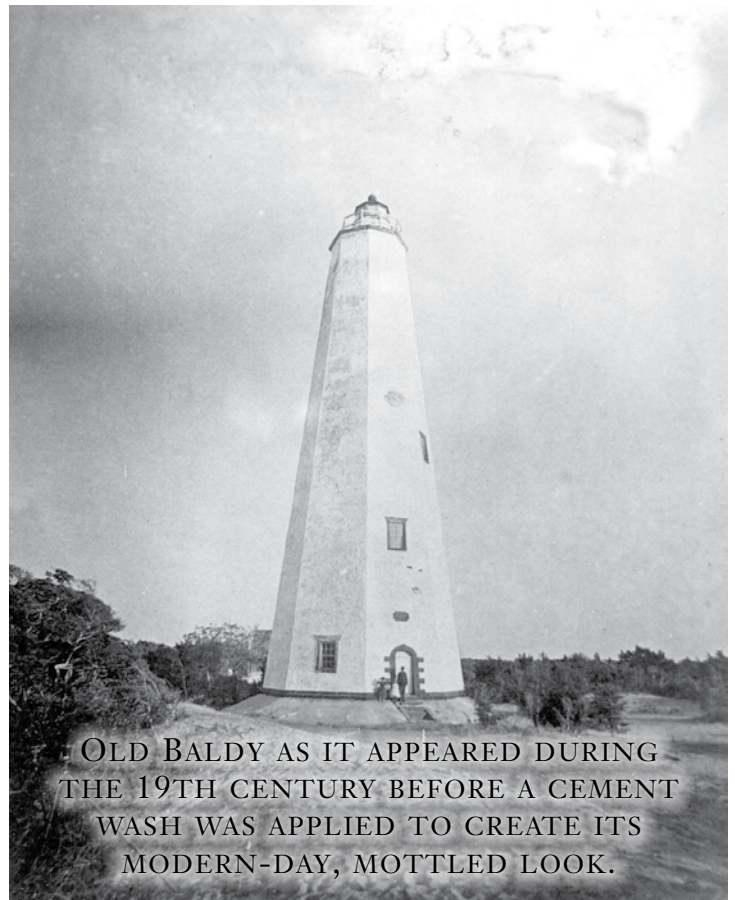
(est. 1854-55)

When approaching Beaufort Inlet, a mariner lined up the taller rear range light over the shorter front range light. The rear range light was an octagonal, 50-foot-high brick tower with a fourth-order Fresnel lens, located 200 yards northwest of Fort Macon. The front range light, also known as the Bogue Banks Beacon, was a 30-foot timber tower with a sixth-order Fresnel lens. Confederate forces took over Fort Macon at the beginning of the war and moved the lenses to safety. In March 1862, both towers were toppled in preparation for defense of the fort; however, Federal forces took control. The range lights were never rebuilt.

PAMLICO POINT

(est. 1828- 1st of 2 lights)

Confederates darkened the fifth-order Fresnel lens of this sound light at the start of hostilities. The 1863 U.S. Light-House Board's Light List reported the light was operating; however, by 1865, it was reported "extinguished." This light was rebuilt in 1867 and operated for many years.



OLD BALDY AS IT APPEARED DURING THE 19TH CENTURY BEFORE A CEMENT WASH WAS APPLIED TO CREATE ITS MODERN-DAY, MOTTLED LOOK.

PHOTO IS BY HENRY BAMBER 1893 AND COURTESY OF THE OUTER BANKS HISTORY CENTER

FEDERAL POINT LIGHTHOUSE

(est. 1817; rebuilt 1837, 2nd of 3 lights)

On 7 June 1861, the Confederate Light House Bureau ordered the removal of Fresnel lenses and other fixtures at the Federal Point, Oak Island, and Cape Fear Lights. Further, Confederate Governor John W. Ellis ordered all of North Carolina's coastal lights "destroyed, rendered inoperative, or have their lanterns removed." The equipment was taken to the Customs House in Wilmington where it was recovered after the Civil War by Union forces. Federal Point Lighthouse was taken down to keep it from being a target for blockaders. During the War, at least for a time, the keeper's quarters at the 1837 Federal Point Lighthouse (renovated 1843-47) became the headquarters for the fort's commander. Fort Fisher was located on Federal Point as an earthwork fortification built of sand and logs. It became the guardian of the Cape Fear River and kept the port of Wilmington open for blockade runners until January 1865. Keeping this port open was militarily significant since it was the lifeline for supplies to General Lee's armies. The lighthouse was rebuilt in 1866 as a two-story, wooden-framed house with the light apparatus on its roof. The light was also in a new location further south and closer to the edge of New Inlet.

CAPE FEAR LIGHTS

In April 1861, the Confederate Light House Bureau ordered all “lenses & fixtures and appurtenances” of the lighthouses in the Wilmington District to be taken to a place of safety. Confederate military authorities objected, wanting to keep the lights burning for blockade runners. Gradually, however, the lights fell dark as they exhausted their supplies of oil. Only the ruins of Price’s Creek can be seen today.

CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHTHOUSES

(est. 1812 & 1859 both towers standing during war)

The new 165-foot-tall Cape Lookout Lighthouse had been lighted only two years before the outbreak of hostilities. Josiah Bell, in charge of lighthouses in the Beaufort District of the Confederate Light House Bureau, reported in November 1861 that the new lighthouse was dark and that the first-order Fresnel lens had been removed for safekeeping. The following year, Beaufort and Cape Lookout were occupied by Union troops after the fall of Ft. Macon. A third-order Fresnel lens was installed and the new Cape Lookout Lighthouse was relighted to aid Union ships. In 1864, a small group of soldiers from the 67th N.C. Regiment led by L.C. Harland, aided by Confederate spies including Bell, was guided through Union lines near Kinston and across Core Sound to Core Banks Island where they attempted to destroy both towers. Union commanders had expected the lighthouses to be attacked by Raphael Semmes’ sea raider *Alabama* and had alerted nearby warships to protect the lighthouses; however, there were no Union troops in place on the island to guard the towers. Semmes never showed up, and Confederates succeeded in blowing up the old tower via their land assault. Fortunately, the 1859 tower suffered damage only to the first two flights of wooden steps. The raiders escaped back to Confederate lines.

OAK ISLAND RANGE LIGHTS

(est. 1849- 1st of 2 sets)

These 27- and 37-foot-high range lights were originally two brick towers. They helped mariners to cross the Oak Island bar, which marked the main entrance to the Cape Fear River (before New Inlet opened). Confederates darkened and removed the two Fresnel lenses by 1861. According to U.S. Light-House Board Light Lists, these range lights were re-instated in 1866 and built as

wooden structures. The rear range was placed on skids and movable to align with the front range light as the channel moved.

CROATAN LIGHTHOUSE

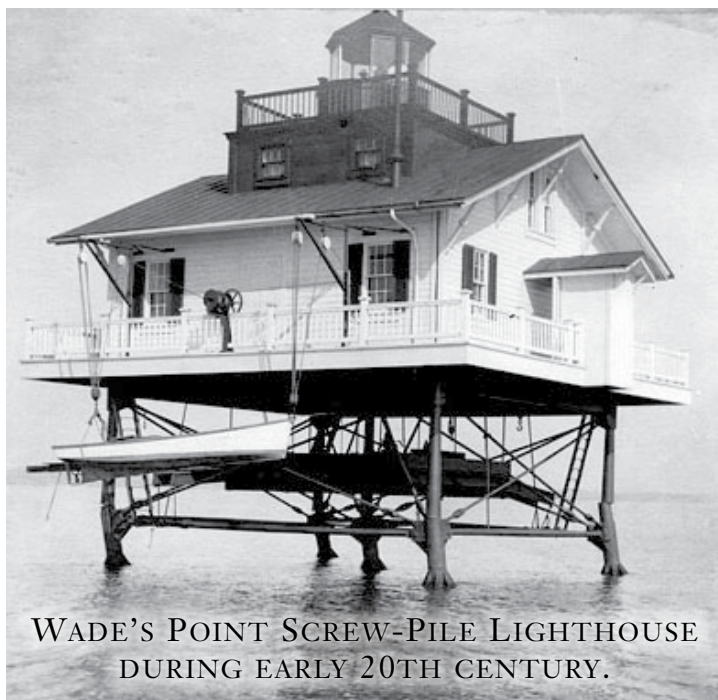
(est. 1860- 1st of 2 lights)

Although darkened by Confederates at the outbreak of the Civil War, the Croatan Lighthouse, which marked the north end of a passage through Croatan Sound, was relighted after Union forces occupied nearby Roanoke Island. In October 1864, a raiding party from the Confederate Ram *Albemarle* captured the assistant keeper and his wife and burned this screw-pile light. Keeper Tillet was taken to the Confederate prison in Salisbury, but his wife was released. The last word about Keeper Tillet’s fate was a letter he wrote from prison on a scalloped-edged, blue piece of gold-flecked stationery that is now preserved in the National Archives. The letter is addressed to the U.S. Light-House Board informing board members that he was a prisoner of war and begged to be exchanged for a Confederate prisoner in order to gain his freedom. The light was rebuilt in 1866.

WADE’S POINT

(est. 1855- burned and rebuilt)

This Albemarle Sound screw-pile lighthouse was located at the mouth of the Pasquotank River, which led to Elizabeth



WADE’S POINT SCREW-PILE LIGHTHOUSE
DURING EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

PHOTO FROM EDITORS’ PRIVATE COLLECTION

City. The Fresnel lens was removed and the lighthouse was badly burned; thus, taking the light out of service early in the War. It was restored and continued in 1866.

OCRACOKE LIGHTHOUSE

(est. 1823)

The Ocracoke Lighthouse was one of the first towers to be darkened when the Civil War started. Confederate Light House Bureau authorities ordered the removal of the costly, new fourth-order Fresnel lens before Union forces attacked and occupied Forts Hatteras and Clark on Hatteras Island. After Union occupation of the island, the U.S. Light-House Board refitted and re-lighted Ocracoke in 1863.

HARBOR ISLAND LIGHT VESSEL

1836

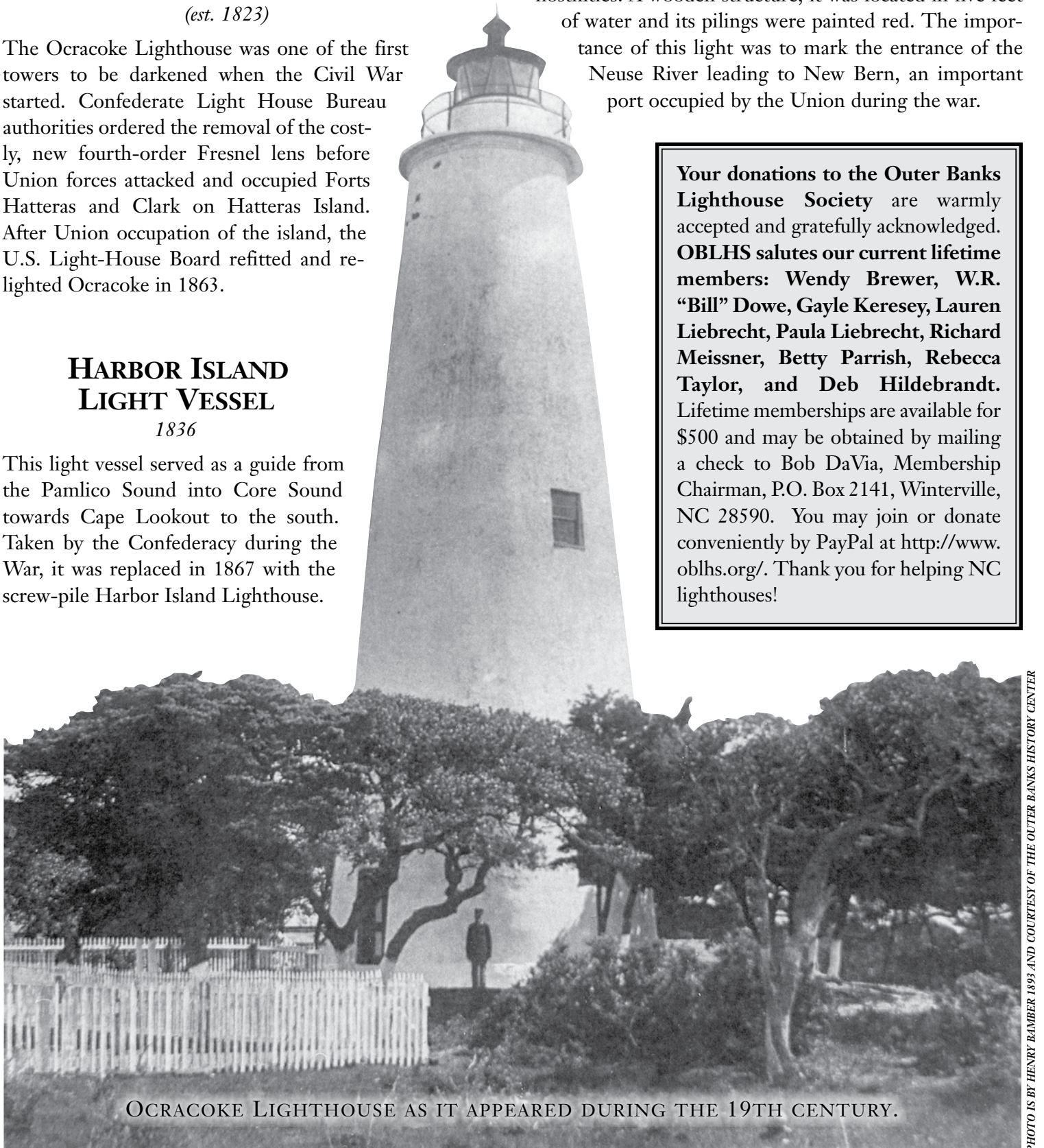
This light vessel served as a guide from the Pamlico Sound into Core Sound towards Cape Lookout to the south. Taken by the Confederacy during the War, it was replaced in 1867 with the screw-pile Harbor Island Lighthouse.

NEUSE RIVER LIGHT

(est. 1862)

Surprisingly, this screw-pile lighthouse was built during the War. It was needed by Union forces to replace a lightship that had been taken by Confederates at the start of hostilities. A wooden structure, it was located in five feet of water and its pilings were painted red. The importance of this light was to mark the entrance of the Neuse River leading to New Bern, an important port occupied by the Union during the war.

Your donations to the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society are warmly accepted and gratefully acknowledged. **OBLHS salutes our current lifetime members:** Wendy Brewer, W.R. "Bill" Dowe, Gayle Keresey, Lauren Liebrecht, Paula Liebrecht, Richard Meissner, Betty Parrish, Rebecca Taylor, and Deb Hildebrandt. Lifetime memberships are available for \$500 and may be obtained by mailing a check to Bob DaVia, Membership Chairman, P.O. Box 2141, Winterville, NC 28590. You may join or donate conveniently by PayPal at <http://www.oblhs.org/>. Thank you for helping NC lighthouses!



OCRACOKE LIGHTHOUSE AS IT APPEARED DURING THE 19TH CENTURY.

PHOTO IS BY HENRY BAMBER 1893 AND COURTESY OF THE OUTER BANKS HISTORY CENTER

ROANOKE MARSHES LIGHTHOUSE

(est. 1857- 2nd of 3 lights)

This light marked the south entrance to Croatan Sound and the channel between Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds. It was darkened in 1861 and, in November of that year, it was reported to the Confederate Light House Bureau in Richmond that the lens and other equipment had been taken to Elizabeth City for safekeeping. After the Union captured Roanoke Island, the U.S. Light-House Board re-established the light with a replacement lens in 1863. During the following year, a raiding party of ten sailors and an officer from the Confederate Ram *Albemarle*, based in Plymouth, the same group that had destroyed the Croatan Light, was dispatched to destroy the light. However, Union guards reached the Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse in time and the Confederates returned to Plymouth. A month later, the *Albemarle* was destroyed, ending the threat to the N.C. sound lighthouses.

ROANOKE RIVER LIGHT VESSEL

1835

Taken for use by Confederate military authorities at the start of the War, the light vessel was never returned. The Roanoke River Lighthouse was built in 1866, which stood in Albemarle Sound at the entrance of the Roanoke River, and replaced the light vessel.

ROYAL SHOAL LIGHT VESSEL

1825

This light vessel was appropriated by the Confederacy. A screw-pile lighthouse was built to replace it in 1867, named the Southwest Point Royal Shoal Lighthouse. Located nine miles northwest of Ocracoke Light, it stood in seven feet of water in Pamlico Sound to mark a dangerous shoal for passing mariners.

NORTHWEST ROYAL SHOAL LIGHTHOUSE

(est. 1857)

This screw-pile lighthouse was located in seven feet of water in Pamlico Sound. It was darkened in 1861 when its fourth-order Fresnel lens was removed at the beginning of hostilities. After Federal forces took control of the area, the light was restored in 1863.

LONG SHOAL LIGHT VESSEL

1825

This light vessel marked a dangerous sand bar that ran east-west across the northern end of Pamlico Sound. Refitted in 1854, it met its demise early in the war but was rebuilt as the screw-pile Long Shoal Lighthouse in 1867.

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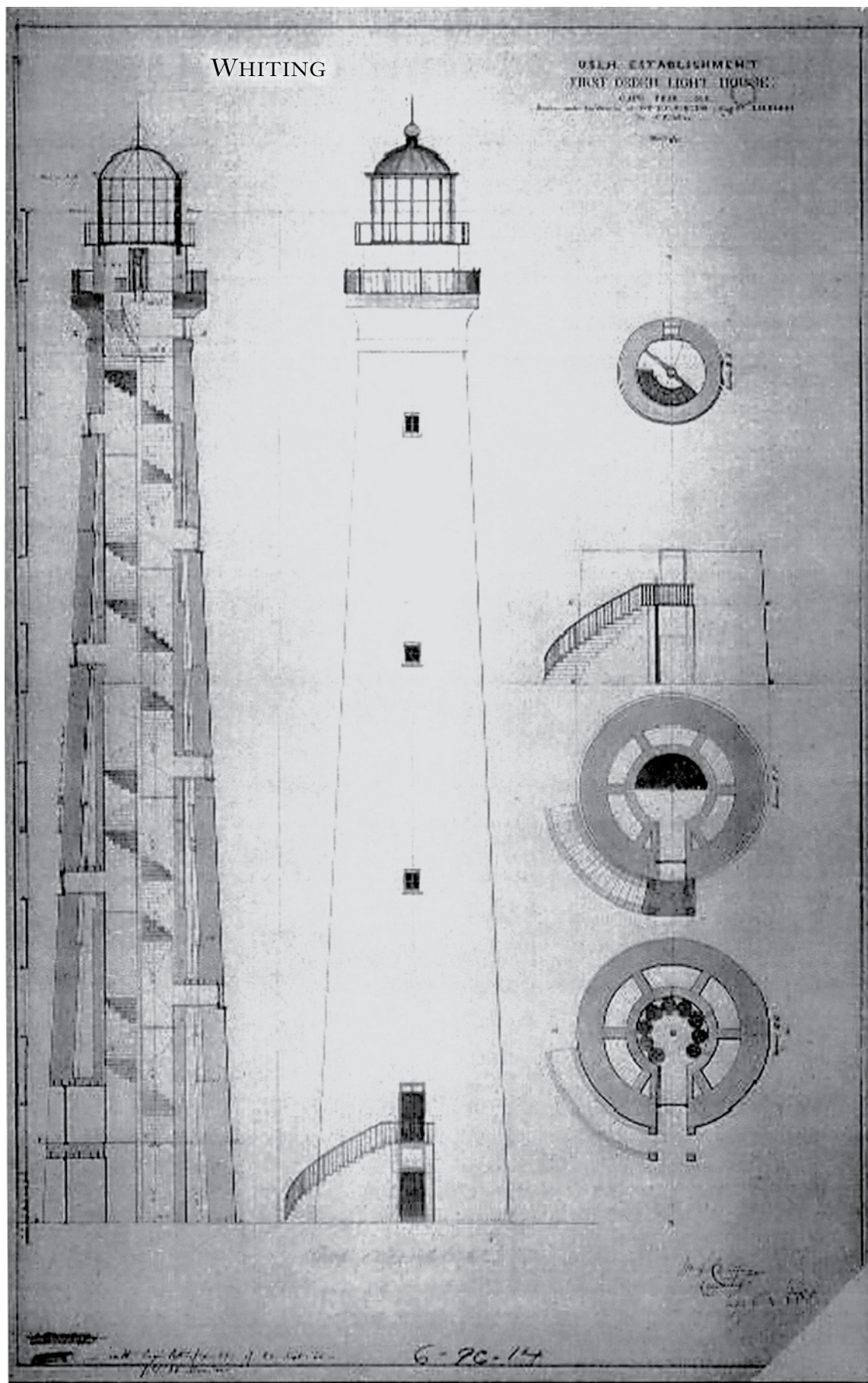
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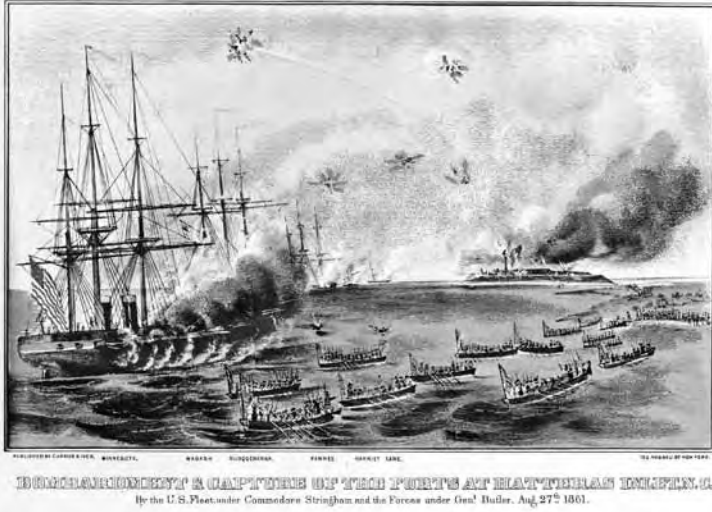
The Lighthouse Never Built



This 1860 design for a "First Order Light House Cape Fear, NC" was drawn by C.P. Bolles "under the direction of Wm.H.C. Whiting, Engineer 6th L.H. District." At bottom left in the drawing is stated "with Engr's letter page 49 of 20 Sept. '60, filed 30 Dec. '60." Whiting signed the drawing at bottom right. Faintly written in pencil under the drawing are the words "not accepted." The design is nearly identical to the one Whiting supervised for the 1859 Cape Lookout Lighthouse. While he had been first in his 1845 West Point class, he resigned his commission Feb. 20, 1861, shortly after this drawing was filed, and took an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. Until "The Rocks" were built during the 1880s, the Cape Fear River had serious silt problems and navigable channels changed constantly. Could this be why this light was never built? A new light for Cape Fear was delayed until 1903 when a steel skeleton structure was erected on Bald Head Island.

Copy of the original pen and ink and water-color drawing courtesy of Dr. Goree and Kim Gottshall, Old Baldy Foundation

Some Significant Battles *on Outer Banks Islands*



BATTLE OF HATTERAS INLET

The first major Civil War action in North Carolina was at Hatteras Inlet. On 28 August 1861, Union soldiers came ashore as Navy ships bombarded Confederates at Forts Hatteras and Clark. The troops attacked the Confederate batteries from the rear, forcing the surrender of both forts. From this first engagement until the end of the war, Union forces continued to expand their control of the coastline. Legend has it that Lincoln was awakened late into the night and given the news that the forts had been captured. The President held this area to be the key to controlling North Carolina's mainland ports and preventing critical supplies from reaching Confederate armies. He was so happy that he danced a jig while still in his nightshirt.

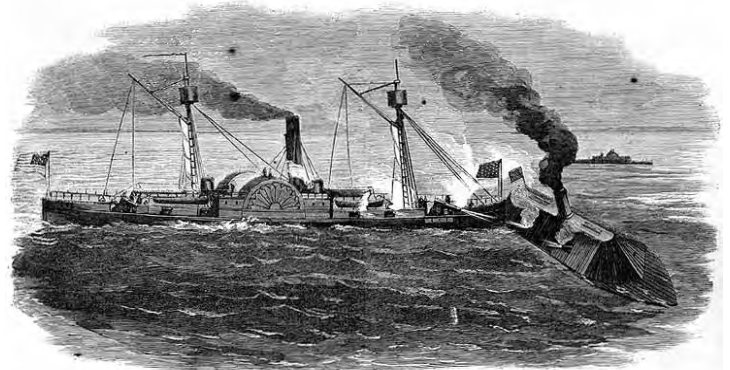
BATTLE OF ROANOKE ISLAND

Union troops launched an amphibious attack 7 February 1862, landing 7,500 soldiers on the southwestern side of Roanoke Island. Supported by gunboats the next morning, Union forces reached the positions held by Confederates. Outgunned and outnumbered, Confederates surrendered the island after sharp fighting. Union forces had secured an important outpost on the Atlantic coast, tightening the Union blockade on the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds.

BATTLE OF PLYMOUTH

Confederate forces under Maj. Gen. R.F. Hoke, along with the firepower of the CSS Ram *Albemarle*, attacked the Federal stronghold at Plymouth on 17 April 1864. The ram sank a Union ship and damaged another on the Roanoke River and forced the Union Navy to retreat to the Albemarle Sound. Meanwhile, Gen. Hoke and his forces occupied Plymouth and claimed one of the few significant Confederate victories in North Carolina.

Photo # NH 59162 CSS *Albemarle* rammed by USS *Sassacus*
THE NAVAL FIGHT IN ALBEMARLE SOUND.



Union ship *Sassacus* battles with the Ram *Albemarle*, the most powerful Confederate threat in North Carolina waters to Union vessels.

DESTRUCTION OF THE RAM *ALBEMARLE*

The ironclad Confederate ram, *Albemarle*, the most powerful Confederate ship to operate in the waters of eastern North Carolina, was blown up at her moorings at Plymouth 27 October 1864 in a daring attack by Lt. William B. Cushing of the US Navy. Using an open launch about 30 feet in length, he attached a spar torpedo on the bow. In the dark of night he stood at the bow, calmly lowered the spar with the torpedo attached, and exploded it under the *Albemarle*. Thus, a major portion of eastern NC again fell to enemy domination.



BATTLE OF FT. FISHER

In December 1864, Wilmington was the last seaport open to the Confederacy. Ft. Fisher, Wilmington's source of protection, had kept the Union Navy at bay for the entire war. Blockade-runners entering the Cape Fear River with cover fire from the fort were successful in supplying General Lee's army with desperately needed weapons and ammunition. On Christmas Eve, Union forces under Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler started to attack the fort, but retreated after Confederate reinforcements arrived.

In January 1865 a second amphibious attack by nearly 60 Navy vessels was launched against Ft. Fisher. Over 100 shells per minute fell on the fort all during the night, literally paralyzing the garrison. In the morning, thousands of Union troops joined by marines and sailors from the Union fleet launched a successful attack that overwhelmed the defenders. The fall of Ft. Fisher closed the South's last open seaport on the Atlantic coast to the Confederacy.

BATTLE OF FT. MACON

At the beginning of the American Civil War, Confederates occupied the ungarrisoned fort. Nearly a year later, in late March 1862, Union Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside's army advanced on Fort Macon, a brick fort completed in 1832 to prevent a sea attack on Beaufort. Although defenders forced Union ships to retreat, Union forces attacking from landward side found a depleted garrison defending the old bastion. Extremely accurate Union artillery fire, lack of mortars, and insufficient ammunition forced the Confederates to surrender.



THE BATTLE OF NEW BERN

On 13 March 1862, a Union fleet steamed up the Neuse River and landed Gen. Ambrose Burnside's troops on the south bank to challenge New Bern's Confederates. After four hours of fighting, Rebels were driven from their positions protecting the town. Despite Confederate attempts to recapture New Bern, Union forces held the town until the end of the war.



SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS ON COASTAL NORTH CAROLINA

Take note during the Civil War Sesquicentennial that in many commemorative celebrations the spotlight is off the big battles that we all learned in school and is turned toward the little known, yet important events that took place on a smaller scale. A sample of these local observances in North Carolina are listed below.

- Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum 252-986-2995 Hatteras Island: A public maritime history museum focused on the Outer Banks
- Aug. 1 (through July 2012) - exhibit "Flags Over Hatteras"
- Aug. 26-28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. - display of exhibits for national "Flags Over Hatteras" conference on Hatteras Island, about the Battle of Fort Hatteras and Fort Clark in 1861 (the 150th anniversary of the Union's first naval victory) Come to a fun filled week at the beach and hear James McPherson, Ed Bearss and Craig Symonds, some of the most respected Civil War historians.
- N.C. Maritime Museum 252-728-7317 Beaufort: A public maritime history museum focused on the Crystal Coast area
- Sept. 24 - opening of exhibit "Watched by Sound and Sea: Occupation of Beaufort, 1862" (open until Sept. 2012)
- Sept. 24, 3 p.m. - free presentation by author Judkin Browning on the occupation of Beaufort in 1862
- Nov. 12, 3 p.m. -free presentation on the USS Monitor by geological artifact analyst Jim Craig
- Dec. 10, 3 p.m. - free presentation on North Carolina Unionists by archivist Chris Meekins of the State Library
- Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex 910-486-1330 Fayetteville: A public museum exploring the history of southern North Carolina
- April 9, 2 p.m. - lecture/PowerPoint/display on Civil War medicine by Dr. Matt Farina (in the multipurpose room)
- April 16-28 - Statewide "Freedom, Sacrifice, Memory: Civil War Sesquicentennial Photography Exhibit" on display with images from the State Archives, N.C. Museum of History and Civil War-related State Historic Sites. <http://www.nccivil-war150.com/>

CURRITUCK BEACH LIGHTHOUSE is open daily, 9 AM - 5 PM. Beginning Memorial Day, it will remain open on Thursdays until 8 PM. climbing fees remain \$7, kids 7 and under may climb free with an adult. Visit <http://www.currituckbeachlight.com/> for more information.

ROANOKE MARSHES LIGHTHOUSE (reproduction), located in Manteo on the waterfront is open daily, free of charge from 9 AM - 5PM, year-round.

CAPE HATTERAS NATIONAL SEASHORE (CAHA) and its park visitor centers are open year-round, 9 AM - 6 PM mid June through Labor Day and 9 AM- 5 PM the rest of the year. For more information call (252) 441-5711 or visit <http://www.nps.gov/caha/> or visit <http://www.nps.gov/caha> for a list of new summer programs throughout the Park.

BODIE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE is not open for climbing but grounds are open year-round; bookstore is in keepers' quarters.

CAPE HATTERAS LIGHTHOUSE Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$3.50 for senior citizens (62 or older), children (11 and under, and at least 42" tall); Ticket sales close at 4:30 PM. in the spring and fall, and 5:30 PM June 8, 2008, through Labor Day. Please visit <http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/climbing-the-cape-hatteras-lighthouse.htm> for more information. During the summer CAHA offers full-moon climbs on June 15, July 15, Aug. 13, and Sept. 12. Two groups climb the evening of full moons aided only by flashlights.

OCRACOE LIGHTHOUSE is not open for climbing but grounds are open year round. During the spring-fall the door to the tower may be open if volunteers are on hand.

CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE Park headquarters and the visitors' center are located in Harkers Island and are open every day 9 AM - 5 PM except Christmas and New Years days. The grounds are open year- round. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/caloc/> or call (252) 728-2250. **CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHTHOUSE** opens for climbing on Thursday, May 19. It is open from 10 AM - 3:30 PM Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Tickets may be reserved for climbing by calling (252) 728-0708 from 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM Tuesday-Friday. (Limit of 5 reservations per call). Reservations can be made for dates within the same week only. Reservations are highly recommended. A fee of \$8 is charged adults, \$4.00 for senior citizens and children under 12 years of age; tickets will be sold on a first come, first served basis on the day of the climb. Tickets will indicate the specific time of the climb. Last day for climbing this year is September 24.

OAK ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE is owned by the Town of Caswell Beach with ongoing cooperative efforts with the Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse (FOIL). Public weekly tours to the second level (12 steps up) will begin May 25th and are available every Wednesday and Saturday from 10 AM until 2 PM through Labor Day. They will continue to conduct tours to the top year- round with at least 2 weeks' notice. A request to climb can be made at their web site

(www.oakislandlighthouse.org). Reservations are required on regular tour days. Children must be 7 years old to climb.

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 & SMITH ISLAND The Old Baldy Foundation (OBF) owns maintains and staffs this historic lighthouse. Hours for climbing are Tuesday through Saturday 10 AM - 4 PM, Sunday 11 AM - 4PM. Beginning May 30 hours of operation are Monday through Saturday 9 AM - 5 PM, Sunday 11 AM - 5 PM. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$3 ages 3-12, under 3 free. Call 910-457-5003 for information or visit their web site at www.oldbaldy.org.

ROANOKE RIVER LIGHTHOUSE (reproduction) is located on the town of Plymouth's beautiful waterfront about halfway between the northern and southern Outer Banks off of Highway 64. Hours of operation are 11 AM - 3 PM Tuesday thru Saturday and by appointment. Call (252) 217-2204 to arrange a group visit. Visit <http://www.roanokeriverlighthouse.org/>

1886 ROANOKE RIVER LIGHTHOUSE IN EDENTON is located in Colonial Park and hopefully will be moved to rest over the water. The Roanoke River Lighthouse will be operated by Historic 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. Once completed, they will provide guided tours to the public there on a daily basis. RRL in Edenton will be moved out on the water this summer. They have a new website: www.edentonlighthouse.org.

Frying Pan Shoals Light Station has been bought from the government by an individual who is in the process of restoring it as a unique bed and breakfast for special events. To know more or request reservations—<http://www.fptower.com>.

OBLHS APPRECIATES A DONATION made in the memory of Margaret Hall of Cherry Hill, NJ.

OBLHS CONGRATULATES Judy Rosson who won the bid for Bruce Roberts's Bodie Island Lighthouse photograph on canvas and Dianne Robinson won the bid for the beautiful "Light and Lace" quilt in our "silent auction." Watch for more auctions.

OBLHS WILL PARTICIPATE in a Dare County-wide event "OBXmas." We need 6-8 volunteers to lead special holiday activities and conduct interpretation for visitors on Saturday, Dec. 17 on a fee-free climbing day. If you would like to help, contact the Society at info@oblhs.org or call Cheryl at (252) 247-5436.

OBLHS BIDS FAREWELL to two old friends, Ebb Rosson and LCDR Baxter Jones, (US Navy Retired). Shine on.

OBLHS Scholarships Sponsor School Groups' Visits to North Carolina Lighthouses

For the fourth year, the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society (OBLHS) has funded the Lighthouse Learners program at the Old Baldy Lighthouse. The Society now offers three \$1,000 scholarships annually to schools who apply for the sponsorship. This year OBLHS also sponsored elementary students from Harkers Island to visit the Cape Lookout Lighthouse. Although all of these students live near one lighthouse or the other, they do not get to visit one. Now they have, thanks to loyal OBLHS members and donations.

Ms. April Lilley, Harkers Island Elementary School principal, wrote a note of thanks that expressed the excitement of the students and teachers who were to take the trip. In Lilley's words, the trip would be "a memorable experience."

Chris Webb, Interim Executive Director of Old Baldy Foundation wrote a summary article about the Old Baldy visitors: "Thanks to the generosity of The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society 117 fourth graders from Southport Elementary School in Southport, N.C., visited

Old Baldy Lighthouse on Bald Head Island. Accompanied by their five teachers and many parents, the students not only climbed to the top of the lighthouse, but visited the museum and learned about the life of a keeper. Susan Grantier, historian and Programs Coordinator for The Old Baldy Foundation, engaged the youngsters in a 'What do you know about Old Baldy?' question-and-answer period before the classes split into a four-part educational experience. They climbed the wooden stairs and the ladder to the top of Old Baldy, marched down the street to Ft. Holmes Battery Four, the Civil War fort, and learned of the military uses of Bald Head Island in the Revolutionary, Civil, and World War II. Amy Williams from Southport Maritime Museum enlisted only "sneaky children" to be blockade runners and to share their daring evasions of the Union Navy. Learning to cook in the Keeper's kitchen, row with the Lifesavers, play Sharks Minnows and practicing their math skills in the gift shop—all in a day's visit to Old Baldy as a Lighthouse Learner."



Above, Susan Grantier, historian and Programs Coordinator for The Old Baldy Foundation, engaged Southport fourth graders in a "What do you know about Old Baldy?" question-and-answer period. OBLHS sponsored the trip for these students. – Photo courtesy of Marilyn Ridgeway and Old Baldy Foundation

Bodie Island Lighthouse Restoration Update

According to Cape Hatteras National Seashore, “the current status is the same as it has been since March 2011 with the exception of a few contracting issues.” The following information is from Cyndy Holda, Public Affairs Specialist for the Seashore.

- In FY09, Line Item Construction funding of \$3.09 million was appropriated to restore the Bodie Island Lighthouse and correct structural and safety issues. Restoration efforts revealed additional deterioration of the structural components supporting the watch gallery, requiring more funding than appropriated.
- The FY09 Appropriations Bill specifically prohibited reprogramming project dollars to meet the changing needs of this project. [Funds in another Cp. Hatteras NS project were available but were not allowed to be re-allocated.]
- Demobilization began the week of March 7 and was completed late-April. [Removal of scaffolding, etc.]
- There is \$2.964 million in the President’s FY 2012 request to address the conditions that were not discovered until the renovation work was well underway.
- USCG has given approval to decommission the lighthouse as a navigational aid for 2011 while the lighthouse is being restored.
- NPS remains committed to restoring the lighthouse and is currently developing contracting documents in preparation for receiving FY2012 funding.

NOTE FROM EDITOR: *In 1997 OBLHS funded a study in which lighthouse restoration expert, Cullen Chambers reported in his March 15-16, 1997, field notes, “Gallery walk supports: EXTENSIVE, WIDESPREAD, AND SERIOUS DAMAGE TO ALL 16 BRACKET SUPPORTS, DECORATIVE BOXES AND FINALS (END NUTS) HAVE EXTENSIVE AND SERIOUS LOSS.” [caps are Chambers’ and not changed in this article] Five years later OBLHS funded scaffolding erected by International Chimney to enable a closer look at the Gallery Deck level and ironwork damage. The same expert opinion was expressed in concern for ironwork being in a “state of collapse.” Although these reports were shared with the National Park Service, it appears the warnings were not followed because thorough assessment of the brackets’ condition at the Gallery Deck level was not given by contractors who worked on the lighthouse. We can only hope when work resumes that lighthouse restoration experts are on the job and complete the scope of work as it initially needed to be done. As this lighthouse sits dark in the night and in a shroud by day, we are reminded of its intrinsic value to all who visit or pass by. It is a hugely popular destination for Outer Banks visitors and affords the community with heritage tourism business. We want to see it shine again as soon as possible.*

The Outer Banks History Center has an ongoing exhibit about the Bodie Island Lighthouse, its history and restoration. The library is located on Ice Plant Island in Manteo within Roanoke Island Festival Park near the Elizabeth II ship and museum. The free exhibit is open to the public during 2011. (252) 473-2655

Cape Lookout National Seashore Has New Superintendent

National Park Service Southeast Regional Director David Vela in Atlanta, Georgia, has named Patrick Kenney as the new superintendent of Cape Lookout National Seashore. “He is an effective manager who has outstanding experience in natural resources management and park planning. His leadership skills and ability to reach out to engage the public will be great assets for the Seashore.” Kenney is relocating from Denver, Colo., where he has served as the Planning Branch Chief within the National Park Service’s Denver Service Center (DSC) since 1999.

He has managed numerous planning efforts within the National Park Service in a variety of parks including Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve and Badlands National Park. “I am looking forward to working with the team at the Seashore. It is really an honor to be selected as Superintendent of this special place,” Kenney said. “I also look forward to getting acquainted and working with the people in the communities surrounding the Seashore.”

INFORMATION FROM CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE

LETTER FROM THE OBLHS PRESIDENT

Friends,

Spring has been a long and welcome sight to many who endured harsh and long winters. 2010 was a good year for lighthouses in NC: Cape Lookout Lighthouse opened for climbing; Roanoke River Lighthouse in Edenton has received monies for restoration and will be moved over the water in June of this year. Repairs to Bodie Island Lighthouse began. It is our hope that all of the towers in NC will be open to the public by 2012 making 2011 an even more promising year!

OBLHS has gained new members and lost old friends. After seeing each other at Keepers' Weekends for many years you all seem like family members. Long-time member Ebb Rosson of Charlottesville Virginia crossed the bar in November and we will remember him kindly. Ebb and his wife Judy have contributed greatly to our Society in many ways other than just money. Others have contributed as well with hours and substantial donations of items for auctions. Marilyn Ridgeway's crazy quilt wall hanging is proudly hung, donated beautifully framed prints of lighthouses are displayed, Wendy Michaels Brewer's 'encyclopedia' of lighthouses Keep Your Glow On will grace our auction in October and \$100 towards Bodie Island Lighthouse will be put to use (to mention a few). OBLHS treasurer Diana Chappell has been rewarded for her overall volunteer work by her employer, McKesson Foundation, which has made donations to OBLHS for many years. One-week stays at beach homes have been offered for auction prizes. There are many ways members have contributed without opening their pocketbooks and we wish we could acknowledge every one. If you would like to be considered for a Board of Director's position, please send an email to me and I will provide you with the requirements to be submitted to our nomination committee.

We are thankful for you, our members and value your contributions tremendously. In these hard economic times your generosity, many times other than financial, are greatly appreciated. Our lighthouses will continue to shine because of you and the support you give OBLHS.

Bett Padgett,
OBLHS President
bett@bettpadgett.com

And a Note from OBLHS Membership Chair

Thank you to everyone that has sent in their updated membership information! Please remember to let us know when you move, so that you can continue to receive your newsletters. You can send in a note with the change, or go to the members' only section of our website. The password is "10nclights" (without the quotes).

<http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org/form-update-info.html>

We now have a presence on Facebook, with 44 "Members". We know there are more of you out

there. Check out the page at www.facebook.com/groups/oblhs We look forward to seeing you on Facebook, sharing your pictures, stories and anything else related to the Lighthouses of North Carolina.

Finally, don't forget to check your mailing label for your expiration date, and send in your payment to keep your membership active. This is what keeps our all-volunteer group going!

Have a great summer, and don't forget to get out there and see some lighthouses!

Bob DaVia
OBLHS Membership Chair

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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Please make checks payable to OBLHS. Thank You

You will receive a brochure on NC lighthouses,
logo sticker, newsletter, and membership card.

Student membership receives an e-newsletter only.

The society operates on modest membership fees and occasional donations.
If you would like to renew your membership and/or make a donation, please
mail your *membership* correspondence to:

OBLHS Membership Chairman Bob DaVia
P.O. Box 2141
Winterville, NC 28590

General correspondence: OBLHS

P.O. Box 1005
Morehead City, NC 28557

OBLHS 2011 EVENT OCTOBER 7-8

Tours, Keeper's Dinner and Awards

PLANS FOR THIS YEAR'S GREAT EVENT INCLUDE:

FRIDAY AFTERNOON – tour Island Farm in Manteo; tour Pea Island Life-Saving Service Museum & Cookhouse; visit the exhibit at the Outer Banks History Center in Manteo “Bodie Island Lighthouse: Third Time’s the Charm.”

SATURDAY MORNING – tour Currituck Beach Lighthouse and Keepers’ Quarters with Keeper Meghan Agresto. Lunch and tour at the Whalehead Club and Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education and participate in their various intriguing programs.

SATURDAY EVENING – Dinner/awards/auction at Ramada Inn Kitty Hawk.

For more information, email bett@bettpadgett.com or call (919) 787-6378.

This is our main fundraising event, and it is always great fun! Please join us again if you’ve attended before, and if you haven’t, then don’t delay another year to join in the camaraderie and fun and support North Carolina’s lighthouses!