



LIGHTHOUSE NEWS

DEDICATED TO THE
UNITED STATES LIGHTHOUSE ESTABLISHMENT

Volume XIX Number 2
Summer 2013

Bodie Island Lighthouse Open for Climbing

For the first time since its completion in 1872, this lighthouse is open for public climbing of its 214 iron steps to a view of the Outer Banks at its best

by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

This lighthouse has always taken a back seat to the grand Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. You can call Bodie Island the underdog, second best, third wheel, a wallflower, or just the “forgotten one.” But now? Now, she looks all dressed up for the ball with thousands waiting in line to court her—to climb, that is.

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society (OBLHS) was founded in fall 1994 and secured nonprofit status in 1995. The society’s initial purpose was to see the Bodie Island Lighthouse, then an undiscovered Outer Banks treasure, restored to its earlier beauty and strength. To have this process completed to the point of allowing public climbing was, in the words of a dear friend, “only a pipedream.”

But before we could do much more than open the door and allow visitors into the lower portion of the tower—the stairs were chain-linked-off to the public by then owners, the U.S. Coast Guard—the controversy over relocating the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse began in mid 1990s. All our spare time went into letter writing, emails, phone calls, and meetings having to do with the relocation of the lighthouse. Meanwhile, Bodie Island sat in a deteriorated condition with each day and each storm taking further toll on the masonry and ironwork. Failure of these two components pulled the gallery deck out of round and, thus, threatened the wellbeing of the irreplaceable first-order Fresnel lens.

Fortunately, common sense ruled and the Cape Hatteras tower was relocated in 1999. To commemorate the tremendous event and the efforts by the National Park Service (NPS), the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society hosted 1,149 direct descendants of Cape Hatteras keepers with the support of community organizations including Bank of America.

Following that successful event, our attentions then turned back to Bodie Island Lighthouse.

We knew time was of the essence following two structural reports created by lighthouse restoration expert Cullen Chambers that were sponsored by OBLHS. The Park was advised to put a fence around the tower because pieces of corroded ironwork threatened to fall off at the gallery deck level.

But another event happened that expedited our efforts to push for restoration: in late 2003, an alarm was sounded in the form of a tip shared with OBLHS. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) planned to remove the first-order Fresnel lens and put it in a museum—in another state and far away from its home in North Carolina.



The exciting pinnacle of a relighting ceremony held at the Bodie Island Lighthouse April 18, following complete restoration of the tower, was when six descendants of Keeper Peter Gregory Gallop turned the light on. All six had to touch buttons simultaneously to complete the circuit. The brilliant glow within the restored, crystalline first-order Fresnel lens brought a simultaneous sound of satisfaction from the hundreds in attendance. Left to right: Lauren Quinn, Sarah Kate Quinn, Sam Dough, Lea Bonner, Laney Bonner, and Logan Bonner. At center is Cape Hatteras National Seashore Superintendent Barclay Trimble and at right is NPS Master of Ceremonies, Patrick Gamman.

Photo courtesy of John Havel

The following is an excerpted letter to then N.C. Senator Marc Basnight, which succinctly represented what our concerns were about not only the lighthouse but especially the fate of the lens:

February 14, 2004

Dear Marc,

...Although we have had assurances from our political representatives in Washington that the historic Bodie Island Lighthouse's first-order Fresnel lens will not be given to the U.S. Lighthouse Museum in New York, it is becoming apparent that the U.S. Coast Guard is planning to remove the lens from the lighthouse and replace it with a "modern optic." Realizing your love for this lighthouse, it is important that I solicit your help. At one time, we were trying to get help in securing restoration money; now, we find ourselves in a struggle to keep the soul of the lighthouse from being taken away.

We have discovered that the USCG has been engaged in the wholesale removal of the magnificent first-order Fresnel lenses from our East Coast lighthouses... This doesn't bode well for our Bodie Island Lighthouse....

Letters also went to Senators Dole and Edwards as well as Congressman Walter B. Jones. With the quick action of these representatives, cooperative efforts of OBLHS, the NPS, Dare County Commissioners, and concerned citizens, things started to happen rapidly for this lighthouse.

April 25, 2005, then Rear Admiral Sally Brice-O'Hara, commander, Fifth Coast Guard District, United States Coast Guard, transferred the Fresnel lens and the operation of the lamp as an active aid to navigation to the NPS. This was a huge step that helped stop the automatic removal of priceless lenses from lighthouses where there were responsible stewards to take ownership.



Marilyn (Austin) Meads has a good reason to smile other than the fact that she is standing with her grandson, John Stolarczyk. They attended the Bodie Island Lighthouse Relighting Ceremony April 18 and witnessed the rekindling of the extraordinary, restored first-order Fresnel lens at the top of the restored lighthouse. Marilyn's father was Keeper Julian Austin, Sr.; she spent ten years of her childhood growing up at this light station helping her father and brother with duties even as a young child. Marilyn carefully kept her father's U.S. Lighthouse Service records from which we can learn details otherwise that would have been lost to history. Marilyn will be on the panel of "older ones" at the BOLD homecoming as well as speak with children on a special Sunday that OBLHS is planning at the lighthouse as part of the homecoming weekend for our younger generations. Marilyn will share stories with them about what it was like to grow up at the lighthouse during the 1930s.

Photo courtesy of Diana Chappell

During 2009-2011, restoration of the lighthouse from top to bottom was achieved in two phases with money appropriated by Congress. Primary contractor was United Builders Group, LLC from New Bern, North Carolina. The restoration contractor was Progressive Contracting Company, Inc. from Owings Mills, Maryland, and metal restoration was handled by Enberg Mold and Tool from Jacksonville, Florida. The delicate—yet physical—work to remove the 2,800-pound first-order Fresnel lens and frame, get it to ground level, pack, and to store it until after restoration and then reassemble it in the lantern room in reverse was entrusted to Lighthouse Lamp Shop conservators of North Carolina and Florida.



USCG Captain George Bonner IV, great-great grandson of Keeper Peter Gallop, and wife, Andrea, stand with their children (left to right) Logan, Lea, and Laney in front of the Bodie Island Lighthouse following the April 18 relighting ceremony. These three young Gallop descendants helped to reactivate the lighthouse's lamp. Capt. Bonner will speak at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Descendants (BOLD) homecoming in October.

Photo courtesy of the NPS

Work was extended through 2013 due to damage found at the gallery deck level. Then, finally, after the \$3.1 million, two-phase restoration process, the Bodie Island Lighthouse was relighted April 18. The following day, the tower was opened to the public for climbing. To celebrate the new era for this lighthouse, plans for the Bodie Island Lighthouse Descendants (BOLD) homecoming October 18-20 are in full swing to honor the keepers and their families who faithfully served at this light station.

The icing on the cake? OBLHS has been invited to keep the lens sparkling clean. "Gladly," we respond.



On April 19, the Bodie Island Lighthouse door was opened for public climbing on a regular basis for the first time in its history. Completed in 1872, this lighthouse has seen many storms and shipwrecks and even warfare off the coast during WWII. A good summary of what a tremendously positive time this is for this lighthouse that waited patiently for repairs and renewal is said by Keeper Lloyd Vernon Gaskill's son, John: "Thank you for all you've done to save this place I call home. Daddy would be mighty proud that the light is back on and things cleaned up for visitors now."

Photo courtesy of John Havel



The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society began in fall 1994 with its first goal to help gain support for restoration of the Bodie Island Lighthouse. Over the past 19 years, the society has enjoyed the sustained encouragement from a diverse and talented group of Board of Directors and members. Attending the ceremony left to right: Bill Parrish, Diana Chappell, Betty Parrish, Judy Moon, Beverly Fawcett, Bob DaVia, Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Nicole DaVia, Bruce Roberts, Bett Padgett, Aida Doss Havel, Bill Padgett, Pat Whitaker, Gayle Keresey, and John Havel.

OBLHS photo

Bodie Island Lighthouse Tour Information for Summer 2013

Guided tours for the Bodie Island Lighthouse will run from 9:00 AM to 5:45 PM daily, seven days a week. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for senior citizens (64 or older), children 11 years of age and under, and for those holding a National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Access Pass. Tour tickets may be purchased on site the day of the tour or may be reserved in advance.

Tours start every 35 minutes and are 45 minutes in length. Each guided tour is limited to 22 people. Children must be at least 42" tall. Children under 12 must be escorted by a person at least 16 years old. For additional tour information, check the park website at www.nps.gov/caha. Reservations for a tour can only be made between one to seven days in advance of the tour date by calling (252) 475-9417. Don't forget your camera!



Bodie Island Lighthouse Restoration: Before and After

Dramatic results are seen in these pictures that serve as examples of corroded, broken parts of the lighthouse that are now brand-and-shiny new.



Lantern room deck railing (above left) at the top of the tower before restoration is weak from rust and corrosion. At above right the restored railing is now safe and protected by a fresh coat of paint.

Tower windows (below) before restoration were in poor condition and held together with hastily blown-in insulation and duct tape. All windows have been replaced by new ones like the one at left.

Photos courtesy of Kim Fahlen, Diana Chappell, and John Havel



A Homecoming at Bodie Island Lighthouse:

An Introduction to Some Keepers Who Served

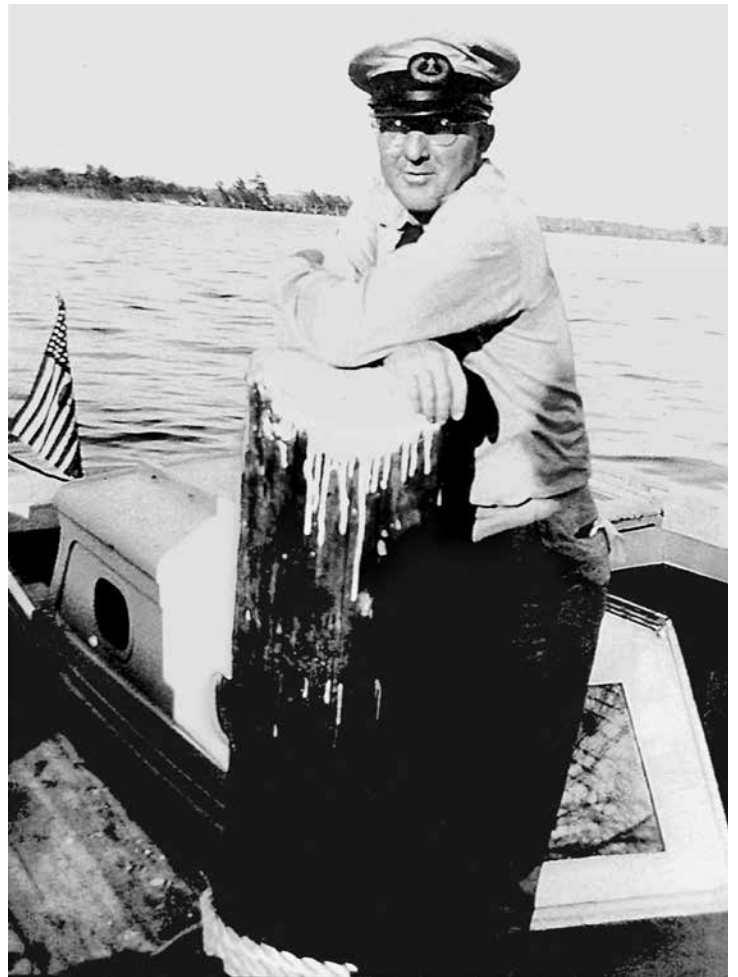
By Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

Today in the 21st century, we have no surviving U.S. Lighthouse Service keepers. Further, our keepers' first-generation offspring are growing rare as well. But descendants, "children and grandchildren" of our keepers, hold memories and have saved treasures from their keeper ancestors and are now our last direct connections with lighthouses including Bodie Island.

Like many people who became victims of the "digital" age and have had to retrain abruptly in other jobs to survive, so have our lighthouses had to "retrain" to find new roles in today's society in order to be maintained. Yet, they have survived an age when the U.S. Coast Guard tagged them as outmoded. They have witnessed lonely vigils as family life at the light stations ended when the USCG took command of all American lighthouses in 1939 for economic reasons and to prepare for WWII. How have these towers survived and surged into the forefront of maritime history?

Part of the reasoning is that the lighthouses were built stronger after the mid-eighteenth century and have managed to hang in there until new stewards came along to consider their restorations as priorities. Another reason is that they are situated on some of the most beautiful coastal sites in the world.

Kids find them "awesome" because of their height. And if you've ever climbed a coastal light, you know what you find at the top: satisfaction for having made the journey and a grand bird's-eye view that stretches from land to sea. Finally, at dusk when the light comes on and the glow of a Fresnel lens fills the lantern room and sends spars of light seaward, it's a magical moment that touches a chord in our mariner's gene. And you can feel satisfaction that for a modest climbing fee that you are helping to keep the lighthouse maintained. We are *all* keepers in this sense.



Julian Haywood Austin, Sr., served at Bodie Island Lighthouse as assistant keeper 1930-40 following one year at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. He is seen here in his summer khakis uniform and white cap standing by the U.S. Lighthouse Service boat he used when he served at Wade's Point Lighthouse in 1943; he retired from the service in 1950 and was decorated for his excellent service record. Julian had three children: Julian Haywood, Jr., Marilyn Ione, and Verna. Julian Jr.'s daily task was to keep the wood box by the kitchen stove full and ready for use and to help his father with cleaning in the lantern room. Marilyn learned to cook from the time she could reach the stove while her mother was away for tuberculosis treatment. Little Verna initially lived with her grandmother and came to the light station to join her family during the mid 1920s. "Our family worked hard together, but as long as we were with Daddy and helping at the lighthouse, we were happy," Marilyn stated.

Photo circa 1931 and courtesy of Marilyn (Austin) Meads



Orphia and Homer T. Austin probably never realized how many people in the future would admire a large portrait of this image which hangs in the Keepers' Quarters at the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. Homer also served at Bodie Island under Principal Keeper Vernon Gaskill.
Photo courtesy Hilda (Austin) Williams



Lloyd Vernon Gaskill served as the last primary keeper at the Bodie Island Lighthouse 1919-39. He is pictured here with his favorite Chesapeake retriever, Dixie, who followed him faithfully to and from the lighthouse several times a day. Note that Dixie is "standing" with her master and affectionately has her left paw on his right hand. Gaskill enjoyed an outstanding career as a lighthouse keeper and we have many stories about him thanks to his children, John Gaskill, Dorothy (Gaskill) Sullivan, and Erline (Gaskill) White.

Photo courtesy of John Gaskill and restored by John Havel

SPEAKING FROM THE PAST

At present, we cannot "hear" our keepers' voices literally, but they do speak to us in whispers through poems and journals and their children's memories of them passed on to other grandchildren. These bits of the past that are treasured by their descendants will help us to gather information that will comprise a commemorative event book. Copies of *Bodie Island Keepers Oral and Family Histories*, edited by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts with family histories by Sandra MacLean Clunies, will be given to each attending direct descendant at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Descendants (BOLD) Homecoming October 18-20.

As of this printing, Sandy and I would like to recognize and thank some of the Bodie Island Lighthouse (BILH) keepers' descendants who have been very helpful: Lou Lou (Daniels) Quinn shared her hard-earned research on the Daniels and Gallop families. Lou Lou also has been ready to help in any way including sharing pictures she has stored away for safekeeping as well as anecdotes on the "older ones" of her family—she has seen the importance of this event from its conception; Marla Beasley together with Kay Midgett Sheppard, co-authors of the fabulous websites on Dare County obituaries and newspapers. Barbara Rawl Basnight, great granddaughter of Keeper Ephraim Meekins, has shared personal writings of Cap'n Eph, helped with fundraising, and has been an all-around source of enthusiasm early into the homecoming planning. Another Meekins direct descendant who has been helpful is Karen "Kaggie" (Etheridge) Jackson.

And Jacqueline "Jacque" Gates, a cousin within the John B. Etheridge family and other keepers, was the first to alert Sandy to the John B. Etheridge Estate file online and continues to stay in communication. Jenny (Creef) Rawls and brother Miles Creef, great grandchildren of Keeper John "Jack" Shannon, and their mother, Ruth (Gallop) Creef, shared memories of Keeper Shannon and Ruth's mother, Mollie—Keeper Shannon's daughter. Direct John B. Etheridge descendant, Bethany Westcott Becker (coming in all the way from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada to the Homecoming!), has sent Sandy tremendous information on her keeper ancestor as well. Sybil Tiedemann shared great Gallop family information and was kind when I misplaced her disk with images she had sent me. And even though Amy Midgett Gamiel is a Cape Hatteras keeper's descendant—not

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BILH— she has remained a great resource for Sandy because of the book that she co-authored with Lois Johnson Meekins, *Sacred To Their Memory*, which contains valuable and numerous Dare County cemetery records.

For lack of space, we will simply name the other family members who have been gracious to talk/email with us, welcome us into their homes, and to share records on their keeper ancestors: Donna Tillett, Jewel (Tillett) Mavormmatis, Margaret Joy Toler, Kim O'Malley, Robin (Greene) Etheridge; Lillie Wynonna (Daniels) "Doll" Gray, Ken and Fay Mann, and Jimmie Tucker Daniels—all of the Gallop family.

We have discovered some interesting things about our BILH keepers. Sandy summarizes that, so far, the keepers with the most descendants already registered to attend are Benjamin and Peter Gallop and Loren Tillett. And, since Keeper James Duncan Wilkins married Martha Caroline "Moth," Keeper Benjamin Gallop's daughter (and Keeper Peter Gallop's sister), all of the Wilkins descendants can also claim Benjamin Gallop.

Something that most of the Loren Tillett family didn't know before is that Loren was the grandson of Josiah Holly Tillett, an assistant keeper at the second BILH 1859-1860. Loren was the son of Josiah's son, Timothy. And Josiah's son, Titus, is the ancestor of others coming to the Homecoming.

And we have descendants coming from all over North America! This is going to be a great event and all OBLHS members deserve to feel proud to be supporters of this organization that has done a great deal to save the history of our lighthouses and honor our keepers and their families.

As of this printing, the descendant with the most BILH keepers in her direct lines is Andrea Tillett McConnell of New Bern, North Carolina with five: John B. Etheridge, Josiah Holly Tillett, Christopher Columbus "Lum" Midgett, Cap'n Eph Meekins, and John W. Ward.

Now, meet a few of our keepers and excerpted submissions by their direct descendants. Keep the information coming!



The above picture of Keeper Ephraim Meekins was originally part of a portrait of him and his wife, Margaret "Maggie" or "Mag" (Dough). Meekins was Principal Keeper at Cape Hatteras for six years and transferred to Bodie Island Lighthouse from 1906 until 1919 in the same position. "A man of character with a handlebar mustache, always smoking a pipe. He had a friendly attitude, a sense of humor, and no hesitancy about expressing himself... While at Cape Hatteras, he was selected to represent the Lighthouse Service at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1900... In 1926 having served a few years as keeper of the nearby Croatan Light, he retired," wrote Arvin Odell Basnight, Meekins' grandson. And thanks to copies of personal writings by Meekins shared by Barbara (Basnight) Rawl, we also get a glimpse into his creative mind. "There can be no doubt that a keeper's family had to have courage, strength and faith. All traits I'd like to think I have been blessed with. Thank you Eph and Granny Mag!" states this great granddaughter.

Writings shared by Rawl will be part of a chapter on Meekins in the BOLD homecoming commemorative book Bodie Island Keepers Oral and Family Histories edited by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts with family histories by Sandra MacLean Clunies this October.

Information from biographies on Keeper Meekins and "Granny Mag" by their grandson, Arvin Odell Basnight, provided by Barbara (Basnight) Rawl, Meekins' great granddaughter; photo provided by Karen "Kaggie" Jackson and restored by John Havel.

Peter Gregory Gallop (1843-1921), was the oldest son of Benjamin G. Gallop and Director (Gregory) Gallop, and was born in Harbinger, Currituck Co., NC. He married Caroline W. Daniels (1848-1918) circa 1864 and together they brought ten children into the world, nine of which survived to adulthood and seven of which were daughters. Peter's career as a lighthouse keeper included serving as assistant keeper at Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse from 1873-74 and then as primary keeper from 1874-78. He then transferred to Bodie Island Lighthouse as primary 1878-1906, making him the longest serving keeper at BILH. He earned respect from the U.S. Lighthouse Service, even gaining permission to build stables at the light station. He left a legacy of stories that have been passed down through generations of his children and grandchildren.

Information by Bodie Island Lighthouse Keeper Peter Gallop's great-great granddaughter, Sybil Potter Tiedemann, on a photograph taken circa 1890 and posted at <http://www.ncgenweb.us/currituck>.



In the photo below, Bodie Island Keeper John "Jack" Shannon is fishing in a suit and dress hat. In the 1880s it was common among the fishermen for their Sunday suit to become fishing clothes after becoming old and worn. John grew up in the Shallow Bag Bay area near Manteo and listed his occupation in the 1880 census as a boatman. He was accepted by the U.S. Light-House Board as a keeper on December 27, 1886. His appointment to Bodie Island lasted for a decade 1887-1897 as documented by records held in the National Archives.

Photo and information courtesy of Jenny (Creef) Rawls and Miles Creef, Keeper John Shannon's great grandchildren.

"My Great grandmother Mollie Shannon remembered playing on the shores at Bodie Island as a child. Also I found it interesting that John Shannon rowed in a boat all the way from Shallow Bag Bay [Manteo] to Bodie Island with his family for his lighthouse shift."

— Quote from Jenny (Creef) Rawls,
Keeper Shannon's great granddaughter



Who may attend the BOLD homecoming?

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society is partnering with the National Park Service along with sponsors including The Outer Banks Community Foundation, The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, The Outer Banks History Center, and others to make the Bodie Island Lighthouse Descendants (BOLD) homecoming a memorable experience for all who attend. Descendants will pay a fee in order to enjoy food, entertainment, and activities planned specially them. For more details on what is planned, see <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org/BOLD/bold-info.html>. If you think you are a direct descendant of a Bodie Island Lighthouse Keeper, you will find all the details you need to make an application; each application is reviewed by BOLD's project genealogist, Sandra MacLean Clunies. If you are approved as a direct descendant, you will receive more information on how to officially register and pay to reserve your seat(s) at the homecoming. If you would like to become a sponsor or simply make a donation to the BOLD homecoming to help defray expenses, please contact Bruce Roberts at (252) 247-5436 or broberts2@ec.rr.com. We'd love to have your continued support!

Finding Bodie Island Lighthouse Keepers' Kin:

The Success of a Grand BOLD Homecoming in October

*By Sandra MacLean Clunies,
BOLD Homecoming Project Genealogist*

Are you “Keeper Kin”? As I search for the direct descendants of the Bodie Island Lighthouse keepers, we are finding more every day! Some know they have a link to at least one keeper, but are thrilled to find out that indeed there may be several more in their family history.

We are tracking the families of thirty-three men and one woman who were recorded in federal records as appointed primary or assistant keepers at one or more of the three lighthouses that have stood at Bodie Island.

One woman? While wives were certainly a part of lighthouse life, they were generally the “silent partners” when it came to federal employee recognition. But Rebecca Piggott Hatsel did receive an official appointment as an assistant keeper for a few months from November 1872 to February 1873. She was the wife of the first primary keeper of the current Bodie Island Lighthouse, William Fuller Hatsel who served from 1872 to 1878 before being transferred to Cape Lookout. They had four children, and were primarily residents of Carteret County. Extensive research and consultations with historians there has failed to reveal that any of the Hatsel children became parents themselves. Alas, no “keeper kin” to attend the Homecoming.

The largest group of known living descendants to date are from Primary Keeper Peter G. Gallop (1843-1921), who followed William Hatsel and served from 1878 to 1906. But many do not know or remember that his father, Benjamin G. Gallop (1815-1878) also served as an assistant keeper in 1874. So that's two for one! Benjamin's daughter and Peter's sister, Caroline Gallop married James Duncan Wilkins (1850-1915) who served as an assistant keeper in 1873.

Listing all the currently known descendants of Benjamin Gallop, through keepers Peter Gallop

and James Wilkins creates a chart of over 700 names and that will be too big to hang on the wall at the Homecoming! So I shall create sections so that everyone present can be sure to find his or her own name on the chart.

Other keepers have left no known direct descendants. The very first keeper at the first lighthouse, Samuel Tillett, appointed in September 1847, was a lifelong bachelor. No doubt he was a part of the larger Tillett family that remains today, but remaining records do not reveal any exact relationships.

Outer Banks families honor their ancestors by carrying the same names forward from generation to generation. We have three separate keepers named William Etheridge, with different middle initials, but since many records are handwritten, it is challenging to distinguish one from the others. And for some of these men, no records have yet been located to link them to living kin.

Ephraim Mann Meekins, born in 1825, served as an assistant at the second Bodie Island beacon in 1860, just before the Civil War. However, research has revealed that he is not the father of a later keeper, Ephraim Meekins whose nickname was “Cap'n Eph,” pronounced by friends as “Cap'n Eef” (1861-1940) who was primary keeper from 1906 to 1919.

Several “keeper kin” descendants have done their own family history research and I am indebted to many for sharing their information with us for this huge project. Where else do I find families?

The federal census records, vital records (over two million North Carolina death certificates from 1909-1975 are digitized and online at a subscription website), cemetery records, archived newspaper articles and obituaries are just some of the resources I study.

My computerized genealogy database for lighthouse families now exceeds 17,000 individuals who belong to families of keepers who served in the USCG Fifth District, than runs from the Delaware border of the Chesapeake Bay to North Carolina. Is your name in there?

Even if you have not yet submitted your interest form at: www.outerbanks.com/bodieislandhomecoming I may know your name and a lot about you already! But do submit that form now, to learn about your siblings and cousins and children and grandchildren so we can share and increase our joint knowledge and appreciation of these wonderful families whose

light still shines today in the shadow of their Bodie Island Lighthouse keeper ancestors.

All the info and forms you need for the BOLD homecoming October 18-20 are available at <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org/BOLD/bold-info.html>. Also join us on Facebook at the page set up for Bodie Island Lighthouse Keepers' descendants by Keeper Gallop's great-great granddaughter, Marti Etheridge, who is traveling from Texas to attend the homecoming.

See you online and at the homecoming!

Lillie Wilson "Mom Lil" (Gallop) Daniels, Keeper Peter Gallop's daughter, sits surrounded by her granddaughters. "I am told that every year on Mom Lil's birthday everyone would gather for a cookout. This picture was taken at one of the cookouts. I am amazed at how nicely dressed the girls are," states Lou Ellen "Lou Lou" (Daniels) Quinn, Peter Gallop's great-great granddaughter. Granddaughter and namesake for Mom Lil, Lillie Wynonna "Doll" (Daniels) Gray adds, "Lillie was the daughter of my great grandfather, Peter and Caroline Gallop. And she's the one who was very special to me. Not just because she was born at the Bodie Island keeper's station but because she was my 'Mom.'"

Picture courtesy of Lou Ellen "Lou Lou" (Daniels) Quinn. Oral history tape transcribed by Rebecca Taylor; photo restored by Virginia Howell.



Bringing Home the Prisms

2013 Update

By Kim Gottshall

In 2009 the Old Baldy Foundation purchased much of the Cape Fear Lighthouse's First-Order Fresnel Lens from Labriola's Antique Shop in Wilmington, NC. Following that purchase, the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society was a tremendous help as we packed and moved the massive base, metal framework, and glass prisms (about 30% of the original glass) back to Bald Head Island. The members of the OBLHS have graciously listened to our plans and offered ideas.

Several articles about the Cape Fear Lighthouse and its lens have appeared in earlier OBLHS Newsletters. This is the next chapter in the history of this incredible engineering marvel. Although the Cape Fear Lighthouse has been gone for 54 years the Old Baldy Foundation wants to bring back the history of that lighthouse and tell its story to visitors to Bald Head Island. When it was built in 1903 the Cape Fear Lighthouse helped protect seamen from Frying Pan Shoals, the dreaded Cape Fear. The constantly shifting shoals stretched thirty miles out to sea and were the cause of innumerable shipwrecks. The First Order Fresnel Lens in the Cape Fear Lighthouse could turn a small light source into a 160,000 candlepower beacon that shone 19 miles out to sea. Flashing on for 2.3 seconds, eclipsing for 7.7 seconds, and repeating every 10 seconds for 6 flashes per minute it warned mariners of the danger.

The Old Baldy Foundation plans to build a small building in which to display the cleaned and reassembled lens. While missing prisms will not be copied, efforts are being made to find and conserve the prisms that were purchased from Labriola's store. Even those prisms whose owners do not wish to return them are being documented – their stories make for a richer understanding

of the history of the lens and the appeal it holds for people. The following are some of the prism stories that we know:

Since Dr. Stratton C. Murrell donated back the first prism this story can start with him. A lifelong resident of Onslow County and an optometrist he bought one of the optical quality prisms in 1967 and took it home. He kept it carefully for 48 years and then returned it to Bald Head Island.

In the early 1980s there was a trailer on Old Baldy's grounds where the island caretakers lived. The wife's father bought a prism and gave it to her. She now lives in the Southport area and treasures this memory of her father.

A couple who lives in the Wilmington area purchased two bulls eye panels and have had them built into first one house and then a second house on either side of a stained glass window. The first location was on an exterior wall where the bulls eyes did exactly what they were designed to do — focus the light — and by focusing the sun's light set the spindles on an interior staircase on fire. The bulls eyes' current location is on an interior wall where there will be no repeat of the fire incident. The owners do not want to have the panels removed from their house now but have promised to give them to the Old Baldy Foundation at some point in the future.

Mary Strickland gave a prism and wrote: "family members had been friends with Captain Charlie Swan's (the keeper of the Cape Fear Lighthouse) family for many years. Enticed by the lighthouse display at Labriola's

Antiques in Wilmington, we bought a small prism always supposing it to be from the Cape Fear Lighthouse. We opened the Southport Maritime Museum in June 1992, and displayed the prism in a case directly beneath a portrait of Capt. Charlie. When it was decided that the light would come home to Bald Head, we felt that our precious prism should be with its kin, and so sent it on its happy trip back across the Cape Fear. Please enjoy it, we did."

As a result of the publicity surrounding the plans to conserve the Cape Fear Lens the Old Baldy Foundation received the following email: "I believe we have one of the 6-7 inch prisms at our home on BHI. My mother bought it about 1975 from an antique shop in Wilmington. Be glad to donate it if it's one you are looking for." The owner said that in 1975 he had fallen in love with Bald

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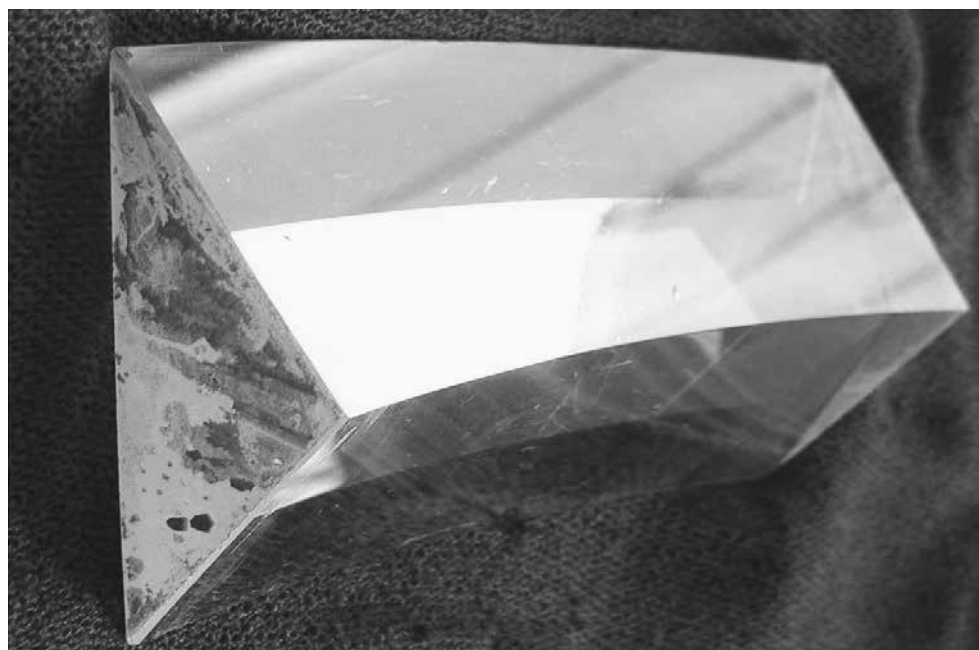


Above: "This lens at Pigeon Point, California, is very similar to the Cape Fear Lighthouse Lens except for the fact that since the Pigeon Point lens remained in its lighthouse, the prisms were never dispersed. The more prisms we are able to find, the closer the Cape Fear Lens will look to this one."

Photo/information courtesy of Kim Gottshall

At right: Have you seen one of these prisms? This is a single prism from the 1903 Cape Fear lens. The Old Baldy Foundation is endeavoring to recover as many of the precious prisms as possible and reassemble the magnificent first-order Fresnel lens and interpret its history for visitors.

Photo courtesy of Kim Gottshall



Head Island but had not yet been able to buy a piece of property. His mother thought that the prism could be his piece of Bald Head until he was able to build a house on the island. That prism is now safely packed and stored with the others awaiting reassembly.

⌚ A year ago we hosted a guest speaker at Old Baldy and of course told him how we were searching for missing prisms. Shortly after his visit we received an email. He had been staying in Southport and his next door neighbor said that he had a couple of the prisms. We have since contacted the neighbor and he will be delighted to give them to us — he just has to find them in his storage unit.

⌚ Finally there is the story of a bulls eye panel that has been returned. You may need a score card to follow this story — but — after being taken from Wilmington to Charlotte to Florida to the Outer Banks by Hatteras — it was found under a bed by a friend of the owner — the friend happened to be the great granddaughter of one of Captain Charlie's assistant keepers. What are those odds....

⌚ In the fall of 2012 the Old Baldy Foundation was contacted by Mike Labriola, one of the Labriola heirs who had sold us the lens. He had found three of the prisms that form part of a bulls eye panel. Those prisms are now safely stored with all the others on Bald Head Island awaiting the reconstruction of the lens.

Now the Old Baldy Foundation needs your help to continue the search for missing prisms. Any time you visit an antique shop won't you please deliver one of our flyers? Most shop owners do not know what these prisms are. You never know when you might run into someone who is interested in helping with the search. In late February I was chatting with a shop keeper in Sun Valley, Idaho,



A panel from the 1903 Cape Fear first-order Fresnel lens has been returned to the Old Baldy Foundation by Wes Lassiter.

Photo courtesy of Kim Gottshall

“The Old Baldy Foundation has created a flyer that we are now distributing to antique stores around North Carolina. The flyer shows pictures, drawings, and sizes for the missing prisms. All the dealers we have spoken with have been fascinated by our story and have promised to be on the look out for prisms. OBLHS has been kind enough to post the flyer on their website.”

whose in-laws live in Calabash and have a model of the Cape Lookout Lighthouse in their front yard. Since they are obviously “lighthouse people” I asked the shop keeper to send them a copy of the flyer — which I just happened to have with me. Did you yourself purchase a prism from Labriola's Antique Shop in

Wilmington? Do you have friends that might have done so? It may be a paper weight on someone's desk or on display in a bookcase or gathering dust in the garage. If you wish to donate the prism to the Old Baldy Foundation so that it can be placed back in the conserved lens you will be recognized on a plaque that will be permanently displayed next to the lens. But

even if you would rather keep your prism we would love to know the story of why you purchased it and what it means to you. Please contact Kim Gottshall, Lens Committee Chair at kimgottshall@aol.com or contact the Old Baldy Foundation's Director, Mary Beth Springmeier at director@oldbaldy.org or 910-457-7481.

Old Baldy's "Light Up the Holidays"

By Kim Gottshall

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving the Old Baldy Lighthouse gives everyone on Bald Head Island (BHI) an early holiday present. As evening arrives the lights outlining the Oil House, in the garlands draping the Keeper's Cottage, and hanging inside Old Baldy seem to grow brighter. Whether homeowner or visitor all are welcomed to share a glass of wine and holiday treats.

Creating this party is a true community effort. Staff, volunteers, and members of the Bald Head Island Garden Club hang the lights and make the garlands and wreaths from local greenery. Board members, spouses, friends, and the executive director make everything from barbeque to crab dip to Christmas cookies to a chocolate fondue fountain. Long-time friends help with clean up.

But the real highlight of the party is inside Old Baldy. In the weeks prior to Thanksgiving anyone can pick up a three foot high artificial Christmas tree at the Keeper's Cottage. These trees are then decorated and displayed all over the island from the Maritime Market to Guest Services to the cart rental shop and both clubs before being returned to Old Baldy for a silent auction the night of the party. This past year there were 33 trees with their lights glowing on display on the lighthouse's ground floor. There was a BHI Quilters tree, a pirate tree, a woodland wonderland tree with gorgeous glass acorns, a tree covered in tiny, white sea shells, trees recalling the nautical heritage of the island, a blue butterfly tree and so many more. By the end of the evening every tree had sold.

The history of this party can be a bit of a lesson in how an event hosted by a nonprofit organization can develop over the years. The first several Light Up the Holidays parties were held in mid December. Each year the theme was different — ranging from gingerbread renderings of island buildings (imagine Old Baldy in gingerbread), to the reading of Civil War soldiers' letters home by costumed interpreters, to a visiting choir. Each event was an enormous amount of work, the date was hard to schedule so as not to conflict with other holiday events, and we all froze to death standing on Old Baldy's brick floor. Once we picked an earlier date for the party — better weather and more people free to come — and once we started decorating the miniature trees, we had an event that could be repeated and enjoyed year after year.

If you are ever in the neighborhood on the Saturday after Thanksgiving please come join us.



Light Up the Holidays on Bald Head Island

Old Baldy Foundation invites you to an early Christmas present on Saturday after Thanksgiving. Light up the holidays, your spirits, and help Old Baldy Lighthouse. "Borrow" a three-foot tree, decorate it, return it, and see it auctioned to benefit Old Baldy Lighthouse.

Photo/information courtesy of Kim Gottshall/
Old Baldy Foundation

Currituck Beach Lighthouse is owned by the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. Hours daily are 9AM-5PM and until 8PM on Wednesdays and Thursdays through Labor Day. Climbing fees remain \$7, kids age 7 and under may climb free with an adult. <http://www.currituckbeachlight.com/>. The lighthouse will remain open until November 23.

Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse (reproduction), situated in Manteo, is an exterior reproduction of an 1877 screwpile light that was originally at the southern entrance of the Croatan Sound to the Pamlico Sound located near Wanchese. The lighthouse is owned and operated by the town of Manteo <http://www.townofmanteo.com/index.asp> and is located on Manteo's charming waterfront near the Roanoke Island Maritime Museum. <http://roanokeisland.com/MaritimeMuseum.aspx>. The lighthouse is open daily, free of charge from 9AM-5PM year-round.

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

Bodie Island Lighthouse grounds are open year-round. The lighthouse was relighted in a special ceremony April 17 and open to the public for the first time April 18. The lighthouse will remain open for climbing until October 14. Tickets may be purchased at the site on the day of the climb, or by reservation up to 7 days in advance by calling (252) 475-9417. Ticket prices are \$8 and \$4 for children under 12, seniors and the disabled. For more information visit <http://www.nps.gov/caba/planyourvisit/bodie-island-lighthouse-tours.htm>.

Bodie Island Coast Guard Station and Life-Saving Station have been completely restored. The Life-Saving Station is currently used as a ranger station. US Fish and Wildlife and National Park Service biologists are using the Bodie Island Coast Guard Station.

Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station has been placed under a historic leasing program where it can be rented for 50 years if the interior work is completed by the new tenants.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse grounds are open year-round. Climbing fees increased this year to \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children, seniors and disabled. Tickets are required; please visit <http://www.nps.gov/caba/planyourvisit/climbing-the-cape-hatteras-lighthouse.htm> for more information. The Park offers full moon tours during the summer months. Restoration of ironwork on the tower will take place after the lighthouse closes for the winter this October 14.

Ocracoke Lighthouse will be open during the summer season for visitors to peer inside the lighthouse if

volunteers are available. It is not open for climbing. CAHA is looking into purchasing land close to the lighthouse for additional parking.

Chicamacomico Life-Saving-Station is located in Rodanthe, just north of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse at milepost 39.5. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 10AM-5PM and will close for the season November 29. Exciting programs are offered at 2PM Monday-Friday through August. Check their website to learn more. 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 owned and operated by the state of North Carolina. It is open Monday-Friday, 10AM-4PM and is open Saturdays during the summer. The museum operates under the NC State holiday schedule. Visitation is free but donations are appreciated. <http://www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com/index.htm>.

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 Monday-Friday 9AM-5PM except Christmas and New Year's days. The grounds are open year-round. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/calco/> or call (252) 728-2250. The Keeper's Quarters Museum and facilities at the Lighthouse (Visitor Center, Keeper's Quarters Museum, and bathrooms) are open from April to November and from 9AM-5PM. Portsmouth Village Visitor Center is open from April to November (hours vary). The lighthouse is open for climbing Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Climbs will begin every 15 minutes from 10AM until 3:45PM. The lighthouse may close at any time if conditions (i.e.: temperature/humidity, lightning, or high winds) are determined to be unsafe. The seashore will announce on Twitter www.twitter.com/CapeLookoutNPS when lighthouse tickets are sold out for the day and when weather related closures occur. Due to the sequestration, tickets are available only at the light station visitor center. 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.

Oak Island Lighthouse is owned by the Town of Caswell Beach with ongoing cooperative efforts with the Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse (FOIL). Tours to the second level (12 steps up to a solid concrete floor) are ONLY offered through the Wednesday after Labor Day on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10AM until 2 PM. NO reservations are required. Volunteers 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. Children must be 9 years old to climb. Please visit their website for further information and to request a special tour.

FOIL is working on a 2-stage initiative of placing informational signs along the walkway from the lighthouse to the beach. The initial topics will cover plants and other wildlife that visitors may see along their walk to the beach. In stage 2 signs will include historical and current info about the harbor and the lighthouses surrounding it.

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 range light in NC still in its original location, from the Southport-Ft. Fisher ferry.

Old Baldy Lighthouse & Smith Island Museum: The Old Baldy Foundation (OBF) owns, maintains and staffs this historic lighthouse. The museum and lighthouse climbing hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10AM-4PM & Sunday 11AM-4PM. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$3 ages 3-12, under age 3 free. The Pirates Are Coming again to Old Baldy. This annual event, August 2-4, is a treat for families. Visit their schedule (below). The search for prisms from the Cape Fear Lighthouse lens is still on. OBF's plans are to build a new museum and restore the lens in the new museum as well as displaying many other artifacts and history. To learn more about OBF, see <http://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 Highway 64. Hours of operation are 11AM-3PM Monday through Saturday and by appointment. Call (252) 217-2204 to arrange a group visit. Visit <http://www.roanokeriverlighthouse.org/>. The Roanoke River Lighthouse and Museum are projects of the Washington County Waterways Commission. Boat docks at the Lighthouse are complete. These are intended for extended visits. A Welcome Center adjacent to the museum has been built with showers, laundry facilities and a classroom.

1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse in Edenton is located in Colonial Park on the downtown Edenton waterfront. Construction of the walkway leading to the Roanoke River Lighthouse is behind schedule and is scheduled to

be completed by the end of May. The interior restoration is now scheduled to be completed by the end of October. The 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 who has agreed to fund its furnishings, under the guidance of the Historic Sites Curator. Once completed, guided tours will be provided for the public on a daily basis. Check out their new website: www.edentonlighthouse.org.

Save the date: OBLHS Keepers' Weekend to take place Saturday October 19! This year we will have a Saturday night dinner, drawing for raffle winners, and a small auction. Please visit www.oblhs.org to learn more. Ongoing during that weekend will be a homecoming for Bodie Island Lighthouse Descendants, which we are calling the BOLD homecoming. We hope that our members will serve as volunteers for BOLD. We need volunteers Friday, Saturday, and/or Sunday, Oct. 18, 19, 20. Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering: bett@bettpadgett.com; phone: 919-757-6378; or post mail: 1213 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607.

Thank you for your votes! We heard from many members with acceptance of the changes made in the by-laws and we thank you!

Thank you to Diana Chappell. The McKesson Foundation made a donation to OBLHS in recognition for her volunteer work with OBLHS. Diana is our treasurer and volunteer extraordinaire. She makes things work!

Loss of lighthouse patriots: OBLHS gratefully acknowledges the following bequests in memory of **Scott Lemke:** Brenda Hunt, Donna Peterman, Robert Kannenberg, John and Carol Grehoski.

Additionally, bequests came in memory of **Wilma Morel** from: Stuart Greeter and Philoma Skipper, Patricia Whitten, Margaret Craven, A.M. Weatherly, Bobby and Sandra Therrell, Vendola Russell, Marshall and Verna Snyder, Kimberly Braswell, Maggie Cauthen, and Wallace Grant.



Clayton Elementary Students Become Lighthouse Engineers

By Bett Padgett

Each year the East Clayton Elementary School's 4th grade teachers team up to help their students understand the importance of lighthouses in North Carolina. Students grouped in 3 or 4 study one lighthouse and not only give a report, but build a replica. OBLHS President, Bett Padgett, enjoys visiting the classrooms and giving the students tips on their lighthouse projects. Students are getting ready for their Lighthouse Museum where they proudly display their newfound knowledge in a power point program and lighthouse replicas for the PTA night in April. Parents make donations to the lighthouses, and East Clayton Elementary makes donations to OBLHS. Pictured at top right is Amy Plahuta, this year's team leader for the lighthouse project. The students are quite excited about 'their lighthouses' and want to visit

them. OBLHS offers three grants of \$1000 to help get school children to a lighthouse in North Carolina. Perhaps East Clayton Elementary will be one of them!



Photos courtesy of Bett Padgett



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 and maritime history of North Carolina 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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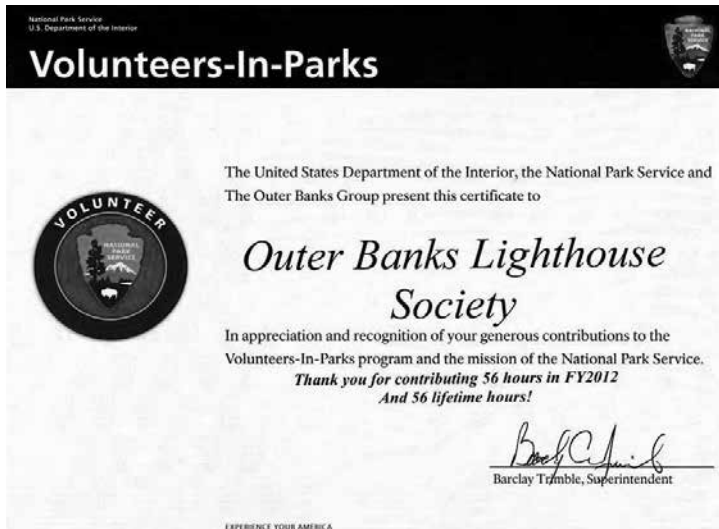
You will receive a brochure on NC lighthouses,
logo sticker, newsletter, and membership card.

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



The Cape Hatteras National Seashore recently gave the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society its Volunteers in the Park recognition award for participating in the OBXmas event held each December. As part of the celebration for the past two years, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse was open to climbing for free; our volunteers supervised the climbing, gave out educational materials, and brought the spirit of the season to visitors by decorating the Double Keepers' Quarters and oil house with wreaths and candles. OBLHS volunteers continuously give additional, untold hours year-round by attending special events all along the coast, participating in numerous events at several lighthouses, and planning special events including the annual Keepers' Weekend and the upcoming homecoming at Bodie Island Lighthouse. Congratulations!

OUTERBANKS LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011-2013

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Dressed in Black and White



*Until April 2013, these Bodie Island Lighthouse stairs were closed to the public.
Today, these stairs are made for climbing. Photo by John Havel*