



ADVOCATES FOR NORTH CAROLINA LIGHTHOUSES

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Restoration of the Bodie Island Lighthouse Begins

by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

One hundred and thirty-eight years ago, a third lighthouse was placed in the vicinity of Oregon Inlet near old south Nags Head. Bodie Island had earned its finest light in history and joined the ranks as a lighthouse of the first order, meaning it was the best the U.S. Lighthouse Service could provide. Why was a light on this spot so important?

Today in our age of instant messaging and GPS navigation and droid phones, it's difficult for us to realize that not long ago—perhaps only 70 years ago, a wink in time—that water served as our highways to move passengers and cargo. And, just as dangerous as our Interstate highways can be today, traveling by water carried even higher risks. We still treasure shipwreck stories and drama on the high seas including pirates, hurricanes, sea monsters, and mysterious disappearances of ships and their crews. And it wasn't that long ago that Bodie Island gained its own legends including the ghost ship *Carroll A. Deering*.

It just so happened that Bodie Island lay at the point that southbound ship captains had the opportunity to set their sails to head east further out into the Atlantic Ocean. Oh, but it was very tempting to stay close to shore and ride that southbound cold current and make better time.

But the Bodie Island Lighthouse was present to warn these reckless captains that if they didn't haul east, they were in for a deadly surprise just 35 miles south at Cape Hatteras: Diamond Shoals. Mountains of sand just below the surface of the sea sticking their dangerous fingers a dozen and more miles offshore where captains expected deep, safe waters.

It is impossible to calculate how many ships and lives were saved at this spot where Bodie Island Lighthouse warned ships away from shore. But combining this light's purpose and

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Above is the 12-story, 2,000-piece scaffolding that now surrounds the lighthouse and allows access to all exterior areas of the tower. The tall crane is one of only a few in the country that can reach 165-foot heights. The keepers' quarters and grounds remain open at Bodie Island.

The Most Unusual Climb of a Life Time: Bodie Island Lighthouse

By Bob DaVia, OBLHS Membership Director

Since moving to North Carolina, it has been my desire to climb the seven lighthouses that protect our coast: Currituck Beach, Bodie Island, Cape Hatteras, Ocracoke, Cape Lookout, Oak Island, and Old Baldy. Until recently, I had climbed all but two—I'll climb Ocracoke at the annual Lighthouse Keepers' Weekend October 8-10. And Bodie Island, I climbed in early March.

Well—*kind of*. Keep reading because I have a story to tell you.

Bodie Island Lighthouse has never been open to the public for climbing; visitors were allowed to go into the base of the tower and look up the spiral staircase when a volunteer was present. Then, in 2004, pieces of the metal fell from the gallery deck to the ground due to deterioration, and the area around the base was closed for safety reasons. After all, lighthouses were built to save lives, not take them.

Late last year, with federal funds in place, restoration work began with the dismantling of the first-order Fresnel lens. Workers from the Lighthouse Lamp Shop accomplished the arduous task of safely taking the lens apart, lowering the panels and frames to the ground, and transferring all to a warehouse for safekeeping. Outer Banks Lighthouse Society and National Park Service volunteers cleaned the panels and packed them until restoration of the tower is complete.

Scaffolding rose around the tower, signaling the official start to the restoration project. Next, a weatherproof-canvas "shroud" enclosed the lantern room area to contain any sandblasting debris as well as to protect workers and the exposed lantern room from the elements.

March 5th was a beautiful, sunny Friday. Although a bit chilly, it was perfect weather to climb. Six members of the OBLHS board of directors were allowed to scale the outside scaffolding to the top of the lighthouse and observe the tower's condition and observe ongoing restoration work. Joining us were Cape Hatteras National Seashore Supt. Mike Murray, Cultural Resource Specialist Doug Stover, and Public Affairs Specialist Cyndy Holda. Ken Mann, host of *"My Heart Will Always Be In Carolina,"* and OBX-TV joined us, too.

We gathered at the contractors' office area and looked at some of the cast-iron pieces waiting to be sandblasted before being sent to a foundry for melting down and recasting. Sporting our hard hats in this full-blown construction site, we walked toward the base of the tower. Joining us were Jeff Ashton and Johnny Moore, safety and quality officers for the contractors. As we ascended the metal staircases, we were in awe: we still couldn't believe we were about to take this journey—and the view! Tundra Swan and Snow Geese lounged in ponds to the east; beyond lay the restless Atlantic Ocean.

After climbing eleven levels, we stuck our heads under the shroud, and stepped onto wooden planks that provide a safe, level work platform. Right from that point, we could see how badly restoration has been needed. The corrosive deterioration of the support braces is unbelievable. Some of the brackets are nearly half eaten away from rust. Also visible is the original bricks that help support the lantern room. It is really hard to believe the shape they are in, considering they are 138 years old! But we now know that these very bricks are

where most of the stress of the lantern room is being shouldered and repair is greatly needed in this particular spot.

After walking around the underside of the lower gallery deck we climbed a vertical ladder to the service room level. The level of deterioration here is just as bad. Inside the work room, paint is peeling from the walls. Overhead there are missing deck prisms that provide some light from the lantern room. These round sets of hexagonal prisms are set flush in the lantern room floor and gather light from the huge lantern room storm panes or the lens itself when it is working to illuminate the service room. During the late nineteenth century, keepers only had small kerosene lanterns as a source of light at night. Some of the prisms are missing, but part of the restoration plans include replacement of these unique prisms.

We then climbed the stairs to the lantern room. Normally, there would not be a lot of room to move around because the lens dominates that space. But since the lens and pedestal had already been removed in preparation for ironwork restoration, there was plenty of room for our group. We noted many of the glass storm panes are broken or chipped, or missing all together. Because the ironwork at the lantern room level has been weakened by age and corrosion, stress cracks are everywhere and in every component at that level.

We then climbed another vertical ladder and found ourselves looking at the vent ball and lightning rod-- we were looking down on the top of the lighthouse. We stood next to the vent ball and touched the top of the lightning rod. This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We then assembled for a group picture **at the top** of the lighthouse.

After milling around and taking numerous pictures, we realized it was time to make our descent. It seems the trip down the scaffolding took about half the time it took us to go up. But what a view.

A great deal of work must be done before the lighthouse will be opened for climbing. In fact, as the work progresses, the damage that has been done over the years is being found to be even worse than anticipated. It can only be hoped that the money will be in place to get the problems fixed right the first time.

When the lens is back where it belongs, atop the lighthouse where it can warn mariners at sea, we can rest assured the Bodie Island Lighthouse will be around for another 138 years. And when the tower is once again open for the public to climb to the top, for me, going up using the inside stairs will not be as exciting as having climbed the outside via the scaffolding!

Our thanks to the National Park Service; Progressive Contracting Company, LLC from Edenton, N.C., and United Builders Group, LLC from New Bern, N.C., for allowing us to climb with them. We realize it was a unique opportunity, and were very thankful. Ken Mann, well-known OBX TV host and PBS program producer is a native and has walked every inch of these shorelines and the villages. He has done just about everything that can be experienced on this coast. Ken put the experience in perspective when he said, "This is the best Outer Banks experience I've ever had."

Restoration of Bodie Island Begins

its sturdy beauty, it has earned the reward of being restored. And what a challenge the project is proving to be! Little has been done since its completion in 1872 to keep its cast-iron support system healthy. Silently during all these years, corrosion became the predator that surrounded the tower and slowly has been devouring it.

For restoration work, the project managing company hires contractors with specialties in glass, brickwork, ironwork, painting, doors, etc.

The elaborate, 12-story, over 2000-piece scaffolding was the first challenge. Next is the weather. At more than 160 feet in the air, it can get rough up there. The last four stories of the scaffolding were covered to offer some protection for crew members working outside.

Ironwork restoration begins with the creation of a pattern of each cast-iron component to be restored. Each piece is disassembled, shipped to a foundry and melted down. Imbalances of silicon/iron/carbon are adjusted. The molten iron is poured into sand molds made from the wooden pattern. Each molten piece cools for 24 hours in the sand molds; the molds are broken open and the new, stronger iron component emerges. Finally, each piece is returned and reassembled in its original place. Ironwork from the dome of the lantern room to the gallery deck is to be reworked with the gallery deck itself to be restored in place.

Inside the tower, a unique interior scaffolding design is used for paint and lead abatement. Nearly two dozen steps will also be melted down and recast. Electrical lines, interior lights, and lightning protection will be replaced. A fire detection and suppression system will be added.

Restoration contractors working in partnership include Progressive Contracting Company, LLC from Edenton, N.C., and United Builders Group, LLC from New Bern, N.C.

One of the crowning touches: patterns of the original windows will yield reproductions that will look and feel as they did in 1872.



At the very top of Bodie Island Lighthouse within the safety of a weatherproof enclosure are six OBLHS Board members (l-r) Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Judy Moon, Bob DaVia, Bett Padgett, and Diana Chappell. Climbing the outside scaffolding proved a memorable experience all the way up--and all the way back down. These Society members had the opportunity to see the ongoing restoration in progress.

Photo courtesy NPS



Above, workers use a gigantic wrench to persuade one of the corroded support brackets to give up its pointed "acorn." It will be removed, a wooden pattern created around which a resin-coated sand mold is made. It will be melted down at a foundry and strengthened. Corrosion, commonly known as rusting, typically produces oxides and/or salts of the original metal that build up around the iron, causing a loss of the original iron, also called "loss of historic fabric." Each acorn originally was attached by an iron rod to the top of the safety rail at the gallery deck level, but these rods have corroded to the point of being virtually nonexistent. A corroded part within another makes the work doubly difficult.

Photo courtesy of Johnny T. Moore, quality control officer for United Builders Group, LLC

The Search for the Federal Point Lighthouse



The foundation of the first Federal Point Lighthouse at Ft. Fisher was uncovered in a recent excavation on Battle Acre.

Archeological dig photos courtesy of Barry Nelder

By Rebecca Taylor with Gayle Keresey

About six years ago, while I was working as supervisor of the Carolina Beach Library, the branch manager told me that she'd seen a picture of a strange old house with what appeared to be a lighthouse lantern room on the top hanging in a corridor at the County Administration Building. It was captioned Federal Point Lighthouse. Neither of us had ever heard of a Federal Point Lighthouse. I managed to discover that the Cape Fear Museum owned the original photo, and that they'd be more than willing to make us a copy for at the library where it still hangs.

Our first source for all things on lighthouses in North Carolina was David Stick's *North Carolina Lighthouses* where we found that indeed there had been a lighthouse at Federal Point; in fact, there had been a succession of three different structures erected to guide ships through the "New Inlet." This significant opening between the Atlantic Ocean and the Cape Fear River had formed during a storm in September of 1761 about 5 miles above the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

For several years our research stopped there, but in 2007 I retired from the library and took a new part-time position at the Federal Point History Center, a small museum and visitors' center run by the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society. I was surprised to discover that the Society's logo showed a lighthouse, one that looked nothing like the photograph hanging in the Library. The Society's old-timers told me that the depiction was of the first Federal Point Lighthouse, created by a member, who had taken descriptions in historical records and created the logo. I found a lighthouse folder in the History Center's files that included a detailed history along with pictures of the three successive lights. The Local History Room of the New Hanover County Public Library also held a number of sources, including the Bill Reaves Files which are extensive newspaper clipping grouped by subject that go back to the early 1800s. Our problem was that no two sources agreed on exactly where this lighthouse stood. Over the next two years we managed to piece together the history of this almost forgotten light.

In 1814, the U.S. Congress, responding to cries from seagoing navigators as well as merchants in Wilmington, authorized the construction of a beacon at Federal Point. By September 1816, Robert Cochran, Collector of Customs at Wilmington and superintendent of the lighthouse on Bald Head Island, signed a contract with Benjamin Jacobs for the construction of the beacon. The land upon which the light would stand was acquired by the Federal Government in April 1817 when New Hanover County deed books record that “Charles B. Gause deeded an acre of land on Federal Point to the United States Government for the erection of a lighthouse.”

U.S. Lighthouse Service records from 1816 and 1817 described the light as a “conical brick beacon standing forty feet in height to the base of the lantern.” It is also recorded that “at the base it measured six [sic] feet across with walls three feet thick.” The tower was also described as having a shingled roof and an exterior that was plastered and painted white.

This first light served its purpose well, and there are continuing mentions of it in both Blunt’s *American Coast Pilot* and the annual Treasury Department Reports to Congress throughout the next 20 years. In 1832 Robert Mills provided the following description in his book *American Pharos, Or Lighthouse Guide*. “This is also a stationary light, erected on Federal Point, in latitude 33.58 and longitude 78.06.” Sadly, the *Wilmington Advertiser* of Friday April 22d, [1836] reported that “The Beacon at Federal Point was destroyed by fire on the night of Wednesday the 13th.”

The light must have been an important aid to navigation because by May 1837 the Wilmington Port Collector’s Office was advertising for bids to rebuild the light. “Proposals will be received ... for building a Light House and Dwelling House at Federal Point.”

This time those building specs give us a very good idea of just what the Lighthouse must have looked like. “The tower to be built of hard brick, the form round; the foundation to be sunk three feet deep...the diameter of the base to be 18 that of the top 9 feet.” The specifications go on to detail everything from the size and placement of the windows and circular iron stairs to this description of the lantern. “The height and diameter of the lantern to be sufficient to admit an iron sash in each octagon, to contain eighteen lights, eleven by nine glass...” For the first time a brick keeper’s cottage is also included. “thirty-four feet by twenty feet, one story, of eight feet height, divided into two rooms...”

For the next 25 years this lighthouse and keeper’s quarters stood vigil beside New Inlet, though records show that “A complete renovation of the lighthouse [Federal Point] and the keeper’s dwelling was made during the years 1843 through 1847

With the coming of the Civil War in 1861, the Confederate Governor John W. Ellis ordered all of North Carolina’s costal lights “destroyed, rendered inoperative, or have their lanterns removed.” From records of the war we know that Col. William Lamb, commander of the growing fortification at the tip of Federal Point, had originally used a platform built against the lighthouse to watch for the swift and sure merchant ships running the Union blockade to bring arms and supplies into the port of Wilmington. This platform is clearly visible in a painting done in 1863 by Captain George Tait of the 40th North Carolina shortly before the lighthouse was pulled down in 1863. Interestingly, for the first years of the war, this light was so important to the blockade runners that each was expected to contribute one barrel of sperm oil each time they used the passage and protection of Fort Fisher.

However, by early 1863, the Union blockade had closed in on the Cape Fear and Union ships began to use the lighthouse tower to target the fort and particularly Lamb’s headquarters located in the keeper’s quarters just below it. In the military record of North Carolina Troops we came across the following: “Campen, Alfred, Private. Enlisted in Beaufort County at age 19, September 30, 1861 for the war. Killed at Fort Fisher, New Hanover County, January 30, 1863 ‘by the falling of the lighthouse.’”

After the war, it didn’t take long to replace this vital aid to navigation. In the spring of 1866, a notice appeared that “the new Federal Point Light-house on the north side of New Inlet” would be in service by April 30. This third lighthouse designed very differently. Here, finally was the 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.

Throughout the 1860s and 70s there was considerable activity at Federal Point and along New Inlet. A group of men from Beaufort established a mullet fishery on the beach near the lighthouse. Hunting appears to have been good, too. On January 2, 1878, the *Wilmington Star* reported “Mr. Taylor, the keeper of the Federal Point Lighthouse, dined on a fine, fat duck for his dinner on last Saturday, although it was a rather costly duck to the government. On Friday about midnight, Mr. Taylor was attending to his light, when a duck came crashing through

one of the large glasses, falling at his feet dead...valuable glass was shattered beyond repair. This was the second time that a bird had crashed into the Lighthouse.”

But there were soon to be other changes in the area of New Inlet. By 1871, the Federal Government had conducted a study of the various channels and shoals, sand banks, and inlets that made up the navigation network from the mouth of the Cape Fear to the Port of Wilmington. As a result, a series of projects attempting to close New Inlet lasted throughout the 1870s. The hope was that by pushing more water through the mouth of the Cape Fear River between Bald Head Island and Oak Island, those navigational channels would deepen and become more stable.

With the closing of New Inlet, the Federal Point Lighthouse’s days were numbered. In the 1877 Annual Report of the Light-House Board, this ominous note appears: “The station needs extensive repairs, but in view of the probable discontinuance of the light on the closing of New Inlet, works to accomplish which are now in progress, nothing has been done toward making them.” By 1879 the Federal Point Lighthouse was no longer a listed “aid to navigation,” and in 1880 the Bald Head Light was re-lighted because New Inlet had been closed and the Federal Point Lighthouse had been found to be “useless.”

One final record of the light appears in Wilmington papers. “August 23, 1881: The lighthouse at Federal Point was destroyed by fire late this afternoon. This lighthouse had not been in use since the closing of New Inlet, but it was occupied as a dwelling by Mr. Taylor, the former keeper.”

Now we knew the chronology and what had happened to each of the three Federal Point lights. We even knew what each had looked like, but where exactly had each of these lighthouses been located?

Using the clue about Battle Acre we began researching the plot of land that is now within the North Carolina State Historic Site. Documents showed that in the early 1960s eminent archaeologist Stanley South had begun his career as manager of the site. He’d gone prospecting in Battle Acre and found the brick foundation of a building that exactly matched the historical record of the second light keeper’s cottage. An extensive excavation found a number of artifacts both from the Civil War era and from earlier occupation. But he failed to find any sign of the actual lighthouse foundation and concluded that over time it had washed away into the ocean along with almost all of Fort

Fisher’s sea-facing revetments. We managed to meet Dr. South when he came back to Fort Fisher for a program, and in the few minutes we had with him he confirmed his belief that the foundation of the second lighthouse seemed to have been washed away. He also told us that back in the sixties he’d found the foundation of the first lighthouse located within the boundaries of the historic site but closer to the river. Earlier, everyone we interviewed had assumed that the foundation for number two had been laid atop the foundation of the first lighthouse.

Then in November 2009 I received a call at the Federal Point History Center. The staff of the Historic Site, with the help of members of the North Carolina Office of Archaeology, had uncovered a round brick foundation that matched the measurements of lighthouse number two perfectly. It had been there all along located just a few feet east of the Keeper’s Quarters.

Jim Steele, the current manager of the Fort Fisher Site, told me that they had been working on adding ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access walkways to Battle Acre. Because it is a registered historic site, they had to do test holes to be sure that the new construction won’t disturb any existing historic structures. One of the test holes had taken them down to a brick foundation, so they stopped and asked the North Carolina Office of Archeology to come down and help them find what was down there.

What they found was a foundation that extended exactly three feet below the base, and which matched the dimensions of second lighthouse perfectly. It was situated dead center in that original acre of land bought by the Federal Government in 1817, and it was accompanied by artifacts not only from the Civil War era but also from family life as early as the 1840s.

Sadly for lighthouse enthusiasts the site remained open only two days. The foundation was immediately reburied, due to considerations about how long it might remain intact exposed to the wind and weather, as well as for its safety from tourists who might chip off a piece as a memento. Steele hopes to eventually find a way to interpret the site though with the current budget woes that may be awhile in coming.

The exact site of the third light remains undiscovered. In an *Island Gazette* story Mark Weaver, a local Civil War buff, says “I have roamed through the woods, all through the Fort Fisher area looking for the lighthouse ditch and couldn’t find it. I searched and searched for some clue to where the exact spot of the lighthouse was. I guess it’s

under the foundation of the Aquarium.” Another local historian swears that he’s seen it, and that it’s buried in the briars and brambles deep in the woods of the aquarium property.

Although there is nothing to see at the original sites, you can see the photo of lighthouse number three at the Carolina Beach Branch Library at 300 Cape Fear Blvd., just two blocks west of US 421 In downtown Carolina Beach. Be sure to call 910-798-6380 for hours as the latest round of budget cuts have seriously curtailed their hours. Or stop by the Federal Point History Center, at 1121 S. Lake Park Blvd., just south of the Carolina Beach Town Hall where you can see pictures of all three lights as well pictures taken of the 2009 excavation. Check its hours by calling 910-458-0502.

The next time you come across a picture or reference to a lighthouse you’ve never heard of don’t hesitate to dig in and discover its history. You just might find a lot more than you expected.



Above is the only known photograph of the third Federal Point Lighthouse that served as an aid to navigation from 1866 to 1880 when New Inlet was officially closed. It burned in 1881.

Just prior to its destruction (below left) is an 1863 painting of the second tower by Ft. Fisher Capt. George Tait. Courtesy of the NC Office of Archives and History. At lower right is an artist’s rendition of the first tower, circa 1817, that is the logo of the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society.

Photo courtesy of Cape Fear Museum, Wilmington, NC. www.capefearmuseum.com



Cape Fear Lighthouse Lens Bringing Back the Light

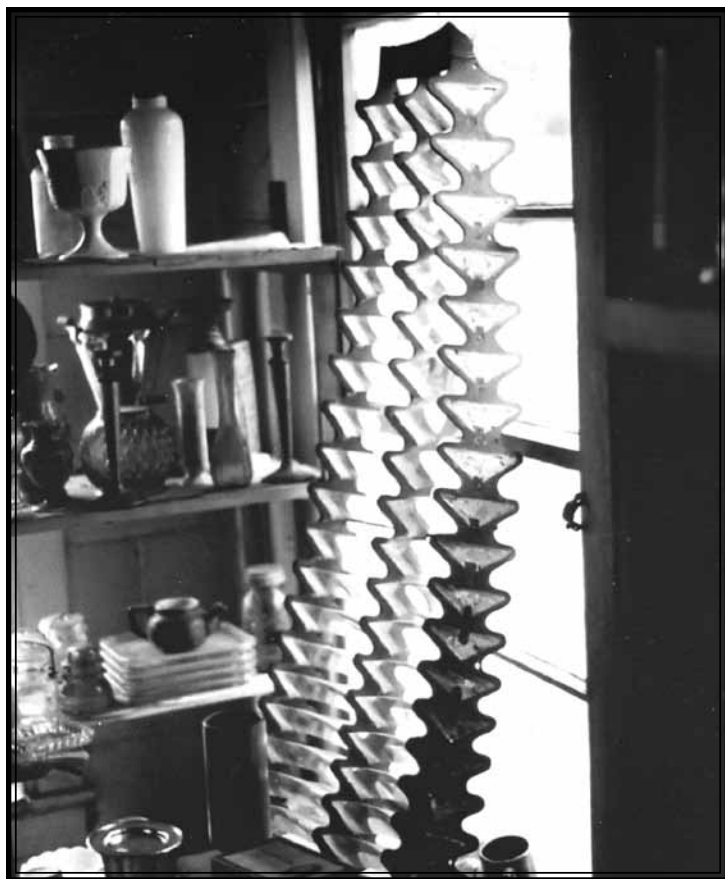
By Kim Gottshall

In 1902 a magnificent First Order Fresnel Lens began the long journey from the factory of Henry LePaute in France to a small island off the coast of North Carolina, Bald Head Island. The 6,000-pound lens measuring over eight feet tall would first be sent to St Louis as an exhibit at the World's Fair before returning to the East Coast where it would be installed at the top of the new Cape Fear Lighthouse to warn ships about Frying Pan Shoals, a hazard which stretched for almost thirty miles out to sea. The lens remained there, lovingly tended by the keepers of the lighthouse, until the lighthouse itself was demolished in 1958. But this was not to be the end of the lens. It was salvaged prior to demolition and shipped from the island to Wilmington, NC, where it remained for the next 51 years. Much of that time, the lens was located in an antique shop where its individual panels and prisms could be purchased. In 2009 the lens was packed and put back on a barge to be returned to Bald Head Island. The Cape Fear Lighthouse Lens had returned home.

The First Order Fresnel Lens had been purchased by the non-profit Old Baldy Foundation which plans to preserve it in order to tell the history of the lens both to our generation and to future generations. The Foundation has already started to reach out to the lighthouse community as well as to the residents of the greater Wilmington area to try to find some of the missing prisms and return them to the lens. Plans have been developed to build a small building on the grounds of the Old Baldy Foundation's Smith Island Museum to display the lens. Plans have also been developed to tell the history of the lens at each stage of its life over the past 108 years. As author Kevin Duffus has said about the Hatteras First Order Lens, "considered a national treasure, the exhibit reveals the artifact's grandeur, but also teaches how greed and disrespect for our heritage can destroy an exquisite machine crafted at the pinnacle of the industrial age."

The Old Baldy Foundation used a combination of its own funds and generous donations to purchase and move the lens back to Bald Head Island. Now the challenge will be to find funding both to restore the lens and to build the building in which it will be displayed. But what does the immediate future look like for the Cape Fear Lens?

By the time you read this, the base will have had its first good cleaning since 1958. In April James Woodward brought his crew to the island to clean the base of any remaining traces of mercury as well as to generally clean and prime the base. The base had been removed from the top of the Cape Fear Lighthouse in 1958, trucked to a boat, taken by boat to



After the Cape Fear Lighthouse was purposely destroyed by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1958, its splendid first-order Fresnel lens lingered in the yard of an antique store on the mainland. Dozens of the prisms were sold as souvenirs over the years. Recently the Old Baldy Foundation rescued the lens frame and remaining prisms. Above is one of 8 upper catadioptric panels that once helped shed light to warn mariners of Frying Pan Shoals. The group will restore the lens and put it on display. www.oldbaldy.org

Photo by Don Kohr and courtesy of *Lighthouse Digest*

Wilmington, put first in one warehouse, moved to a second Wilmington location where the base was placed on top of a column for display, and finally displayed outdoors for half a century.

The mercury float was not original to the lighthouse but rather was installed in 1920. As reported in the Lighthouse Service Bulletin on July 1, 1920, "A 6,000-pound mercury float and pedestal, probably the largest constructed in this country, was successfully installed at Cape Fear Light Station on May 22, 1920, replacing the worn-out lens chariot which has been in constant service since the completion of this station in 1903... This float revolves within a cast-iron tub containing the mercury, with a clearance of one-sixteenth inch around the sides and bottom. The lens is maintained in a vertical position by a tool-steel track, secured to the underside of the lens platen, bearing on six conical, hardened steel rollers, mounted on ball bearings, and is centered by six guide rollers which bear on the outer periphery of the same track. The tub is supported on an

architrave casting provided with four leveling wedges. Four cast-iron columns about 7 feet long, resting on a cast-iron base, support the architrave casting." The float was constructed at the Lighthouse Depot in Tompkinsville, Staten Island, N.Y. According to James Woodward it was, "the last known mercury float to be put into service in the U.S."

Now, if you were to visit Bald Head Island, all that you would see of the Cape Fear Lighthouse are the cement footings. But standing on South Beach some night you might imagine the lighthouse's powerful beam flashing out to sea to guide sailors away from the shoals. According to the 1912 Department of Commerce and Labor "Light List Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the United States" the Cape Fear Lighthouse flashed for 2.3 seconds, eclipsed for 7.7 repeating every 10 seconds for 6 flashes per minute, white light, 160,000 candlepower, visible for 19 nautical miles. While the Cape Fear Lighthouse Fresnel Lens will never again flash its warning out over Frying Pan Shoals, the Old Baldy Foundation is working to restore the lens in order to tell its history and the history of the Cape Fear region.

Kim Gottshall began her working career as an urban planner in New York City. She has been a life-long volunteer for several organizations and especially values her time at Old Baldy. She enjoys researching its history in the National Archives and staffing the lighthouse's gift shop where she has a chance to tell visitors some of the history. Finally, although it is a dirty job, Kim enjoys sweeping the stairs and landings in Old Baldy, done only after closing the tower for the night. She says, "There is something about being in there by oneself that lets you feel the history."

Below is the Cape Fear Lighthouse as it looked after completion in 1903. It was destroyed in 1958 when the Oak Island Lighthouse took over its duty across the Cape Fear River under the direction of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Photo courtesy of the Outer Banks History Center





CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHTHOUSE UPDATES

Open for Climbing...Soon!

by Herb Stanford

Sometime in July, the Cape Lookout Lighthouse will be opened for climbing by the public three days per week, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. After this year, current plans are to have the tower open from May until the end of September.

Once the lighthouse opens for the season, the Cape Lookout National Seashore proposes to sell tickets for lighthouse climbing at the Harkers Island Visitor Center, Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. This will allow visitors to purchase tickets in advance for the same week. The fee proposed for climbing the lighthouse is \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children (less than 16 years of age) and seniors (62 and over.)

The opening of the Lighthouse is the culmination of 5 years of efforts by the Park Service and volunteers. In 2005, a preliminary engineering study indicated that repairs and improvements required to make the light tower safe for climbing could be implemented at a reasonable cost. A more detailed "Historic Structure Report" was completed in late 2008 and validated the findings of the 2005 study. However, this report did recommend that the number of people in the tower at one time be limited and that is the basis for requiring tickets with assigned times for climbing.

In November 2009, during the lighthouse's 150th anniversary celebration, the Park Service announced that funds to implement the required safety modifications would be made available and, in early 2010, a contractor for the work was selected.

Specific measures that are being implemented include:

- Replacing the outdoor wood stairs and landing to match those constructed in 1859.
- Replacing the door to match the one installed in 1859.
- Strengthening the 1859/1867 cast iron spiral stair treads.
- Repairing the existing stair handrail and adding a new handrail on the center column.
- Replacing several stair treads that were cut or drilled to install the 1916 clockwork mechanism.
- Replacing the handrail on the gallery, including adding safety mesh to make the gallery safe for children.
- Revamping steel bracing at the gallery hatch and adjacent to the stairs between the Storage Room and the Watch Room to provide better, safer access.

For follow-up information, contact the Cape Lookout National Seashore at (252) 728-2250 or at <http://www.nps.gov/calolh-update.htm>.

The Next Step

While the repairs to the steps and handrails and gallery railings, along with removal of some of the structural steel bracing added by the Coast Guard in the early 1990s, will make the tower safe for routine climbing by the public, there remain more serious issues that must be addressed in the future.

The 2008 “Historic Structure Report” identified a number of structural issues with the cast-iron tension ring at the top of the light tower and with the brick walls, some resulting from “repairs” made by the Coast Guard during the 1980s.

Costs for these repairs are significant and a fund-raising effort may be required to make the repairs needed to guarantee that the tower lasts another 150 years.

Changes for the Cape Lookout Light

In 1975, the original 1856 first-order Fresnel lens and its 1933 electric lamps were removed. In their place, the Coast Guard installed two 1000-watt Model BCD-24 airport beacons. The twenty-four-inch diameter beacons each have two lamps, but only one is active at a time...when the active lamp burns out, a drum rotates automatically and engages the electric contacts of the second lamp, effectively changing itself (though manual intervention is required when the second lamp finally burns out).

However, now, being 35 years old, these beacons are beginning to “age-out” and the Park Service and Coast Guard are discussing replacing them with a new LED beacon. This new beacon, while having slightly less range, would be far more reliable, use significantly less energy, and lamp life would be measured in years rather than months.

Return of the Fresnel Lens...Maybe

Efforts by the Park Service, the Friends of Cape Lookout National Seashore, and the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society over the last year or so may result in the return of the original 1856 Fresnel lens to Cape Lookout. While nothing is firm, the Coast Guard, who owns the lens that is currently installed at the Block Island Southeast Lighthouse in Rhode Island, has indicated their support for removing the Cape Lookout lens from Block Island, replacing it with a modern LED optic, and offering it to the Park Service on long-term loan for display.

Herb Stanford

Member, Friends of Cape Lookout National Seashore

Member, Outer Banks Lighthouse Society

Volunteer, Cape Lookout National Seashore

Richard Meissner Receives 2009 Hartzog Award

Cape Lookout National Seashore's Volunteer Coordinator, Richard Meissner, received the 2009 George and Helen Hartzog Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service, Enduring Service Category. George B. Hartzog, Jr. was Director of the National Park Service from 1964-72. Hartzog created the Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) Program in 1970. Richard became Volunteer Coordinator in 1999. After retiring from 30 years as Asheboro's High School English and Theatre Arts teacher, he moved to Harkers Island. He recruits and schedules volunteers to work at six stations in the park, including the Cape Lookout Lighthouse and historic Portsmouth Village. He also portrays a historic-uniformed Lighthouse Keeper at special events. He volunteers with other groups including The Friends of Portsmouth Island, the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society, the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, and Carteret Catch. Cape Lookout Supt. Russ Wilson stated, "Richard's professionalism and love of the Park have had a huge impact on the volunteer program. Not only does he recruit and schedule volunteers, he supports them. The VIP program has flourished under his care and has allowed us to expand park offerings for visitors." Richard, accompanied by Supt. Russ Wilson, Chief of Interpretation Wouter Ketel, and VIPs Dallas and Marjorie Spruill, received his award on May 13 at a ceremony at the historic Willard International Hotel in Washington, DC. Congratulations, Richard!

Photo courtesy NPS



Glenn Eure Chosen Fourth Annual Living Legend Award



The Land of Beginnings Festival has announced that Glenn Eure, generous and talented Outer Banks artist and supporter of the arts has been chosen to receive the fourth annual Living Legend Award on April 12 at the Wright Brothers Memorial Pavilion. Glenn joins other Living Legend Honorees: Omie Tillet, Edward Greene, and David Stick who collectively have made the Outer Banks a better place, each in his unique way. Tireless efforts by community volunteers are invaluable for enabling the arts including “The Lost Colony” to continue. Our society is rapidly losing sight of the value of tradition, history, and our connection to both. It is fitting that those who go above and beyond, sacrifice time and money to see that community programs are not lost in the name of economy be recognized for their endeavors.

Glenn is especially dear to us at the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society. He donated art work for “The Light Was Their Signature” poster for the 2001 homecoming for keepers’ descendants. Each time one of our members visited his art gallery, Glenn made a special welcome, often signing a poster as a gift. We cannot imagine what the Outer Banks would have been like had he not chosen the area for his home and gallery. Behind the witty exterior beats the heart of a brave soldier as well. We hope he continues to enjoy many years of volunteer work.

Meet Wyat Hamilton, OBLHS’s newest member. We couldn’t help but notice the clever details of his Cape Hatteras costume—shining light, black spirals, and red base. He is proudly wearing his Outer Banks Lighthouse Society logo sticker. A future preservationist is always a show-stopper! Welcome aboard, Wyat.



Adopted Shackleford Island stallion Wenzel, sired Cape Hatteras National Seashore’s newest addition – a filly named Paloma. Paloma’s dam, Spirit, is a full-blooded Ocracoke mare. The Shackleford-Ocracoke cross provides valuable genetic diversity to the small Ocracoke herd. The Ocracoke School children chose the name of the newest member of the herd which means “dove” in Spanish. Outer Banks Lighthouse Society members attending the Annual Keeper’s Dinner Weekend October 8-10, 2010, will visit the pony pen and learn more about wild mustangs on the Outer Banks.

Photo courtesy of the NPS



When the new Ocracoke Lighthouse was built in 1823, Beethoven was finishing his last overture and the inveterate optics experimenter, Augustin Fresnel, was perfecting the lens that would change the world of illuminating lighthouses. Its light guided ships and valuable cargo through the ever-changing Ocracoke Inlet to mainland ports of North Carolina.

The lighthouse received significant restoration during the past four months including repairs to historic metalwork, new glass in the lens room, and lightning protection. The work has been performed by Alex Klahm Architectural Metal and Design, a Florida firm specializing in lighthouse restoration that also replaced 195 damaged steps inside Cape Hatteras Lighthouse.

Within a special enclosure, the Fresnel lens was also restored to reveal its original beauty. A fourth-order Fresnel lens had been installed in 1854, replacing the old reflector system. Early in the Civil War, the lens was dismantled by Confederate troops but was re-installed in 1864 by Union forces. Originally an oil-burning light, the Ocracoke Light was electrified in the early decades of the 1900s. During restoration work, the beacon was darkened on November 13, 2009, and relighted March 3, 2010. It continues to shine out over Silver Lake and Ocracoke Village. The park plans to open the tower on a regular basis.

In 1854, Ocracoke received a 4th-order Fresnel lens at the request of a scientific-minded Light-House Board. Confederates removed it in 1861 and the classic lens was lost. Union forces replaced it with another Fresnel lens in 1864. The lighthouse was refitted with an improved 4th-order lens in 1899, which was recently restored.

Photo courtesy of NPS

Ocracoke Lighthouse Gets Face Lift



Audrey Connor Outstanding Cape Hatteras NS VIP



Five volunteers were recognized for their achievement of excellence in receiving the President's Call to Service Award in recognition for their donation of 4,000+ lifetime hours, the highest award given to Volunteers In the Park. One of these outstanding volunteers for Cp. Hatteras National Seashore, Audrey Connor, was asked why she chose to be a volunteer for the National Park Service. Of all the sincere reasons she stated, here are but a few: "I've volunteered for nearly 17 years and have to say that is has been a dream come true. Imparting information to visitors, presenting a ranger program that allows children of all ages to create their own original T-shirt, learning the history and culture here on the Outer Banks, listening to people describe why they fall in love with the island and why they come back, year after year—it all melds into why I have continued doing what I love. Some of us volunteers have realized that VIP has another meaning; we are an integral and critical part of what keeps the National Park system a success and stewards for the parks for generations to come.

"And then there's the bit of humor that arises when you don't expect it. For instance, the lovely elderly lady visiting for the first time—'how do I get to the ferry to Ocracoke?'—after intricate directions we asked that she be sure to come back and tell us about her trip—she appeared the next day with a good report but 'wouldn't they have made better time if they didn't back up all the way over to Ocracoke?'

"As I watched the series about the history of our national parks on PBS, I thought about my years of volunteering and realized, without consciously knowing it, I am a small part of that history."

Photo courtesy of Audrey Conner, VIP and OBLHS Board of Directors

Homecoming on Portsmouth Island

Cape Lookout National Seashore and its Friends group held a celebration of Portsmouth Homecoming on April 24, 2010. Held every two years, the theme of this year's event, "Portsmouth Lives," highlighted the grand opening ceremony for new exhibits recently installed by the National Park Service.

The exhibits illustrate the rise of Portsmouth Village as one of the most prominent seaports in North Carolina. Natural causes including the closing of Ocracoke Inlet and the Civil War comprised the changes that lead to the island becoming chiefly a fishing village. As ways to make a living disappeared, so did the number of permanent residents. New Park exhibits save the memories of this island and those who strove to survive even in the toughest of times. Exhibits are featured at the Dixon-Salter Visitor Center, the Post Office, Schoolhouse, Life-Saving Station, and the Methodist Church that still holds its original furnishings.

Five hundred people were treated to demonstration of coastal life including quilting, boat building, net making, and decoy carving. Everyone was delighted to traditional storytelling and hymn singing in the Portsmouth Methodist Church. Twelve 10-foot tables were heaped with homemade food brought in coolers by each attendee. Volunteers including the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society made sure no one left the island hungry.

Richard Meissner, Volunteer in the Park Coordinator for Cape Lookout National Seashore commented on this photo of Mrs. Willis taken as she descended the church steps after hymn singing. "Doris, Dot to everyone, Salter Willis is the only living person to have been born on Portsmouth. There are others in their sixties and beyond whose mothers went to Beaufort to give birth in the hospital and who "grew up" on Portsmouth, but Miss Dot is the only one left who was actually born there. She and her father, Ben Salter, wrote the book 'Portsmouth Island: Short Stories.' We are always happy when she can attend Homecoming."



Carrying out the ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of new exhibits on Portsmouth Island are left-to-right Acting Chief of Interpretation Wouter Ketel, NPS Maintenance Staff Dave Frum, and Ranger Karen Duggan. Dave lives on Ocracoke Island and goes to Portsmouth three days a week to look after the village.



Dot Salter Willis, the only living person born on Portsmouth Island.

Photos Courtesy of Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

REMEMBER—OBLHS Annual Keeper's Weekend Oct. 8-10. Join us on Ocracoke Island! <http://www.outerbanksighthouse-society.org> or contact Bett Padgett (919) 787-6378 or bett@bettpadgett.com

Lighthouse Updates

By Bett Padgett, President

Currituck Beach Lighthouse is owned by the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. The lighthouse opened for climbing March 29 from 9-5 daily and in summertime the lighthouse will be open on Thursday evening until 8pm. Visit <http://www.currituckbeachlight.com/> for more information.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CAHA) and its park visitor centers are open year-round, 9-6 mid June through Labor Day and 9- 5 the rest of the year. Cape Hatteras National Seashore, a new park partnership with the Field School of Maritime History and Underwater Research with East Carolina University (ECU), National Park Service Submerged Cultural Resource Unit, UNC-Coastal Studies Institute, NC State Underwater Archeology Unit, and NOAA Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. The partnership project, "Shipwrecks of the Graveyard of the Atlantic," will be comprised of a team of underwater archeologists that will dive and document the sunken wrecks of German Subs located off the North Carolina coast and several shipwrecks that are located within 150' of the Pamlico Sound shoreline near the Salvo Day area. The team will also document shipwrecks that are reported and exposed along the beaches within Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The remains of the three-masted schooner *Laura A. Barnes* that wrecked off Nags Head in 1921 will be excavated so it is visible again above the sand.

Bodie Island Lighthouse grounds are open year-round. The lighthouse is currently undergoing restoration. See article this issue. We will have news soon about the new projected relighting which initially was scheduled for May along with a homecoming for the descendants of the lighthouse keepers. You can see updates and photos at www.oblhs.org. Ken Mann's production of the first 3 segments of the restoration was recently shown on WUNC-TV's "My Heart Will Always Belong in Carolina." OBLHS has copies of this on DVD and can be purchased for \$20 including shipping and handling. Please contact Diandmanda@aol.com or (804) 883-6260. There will be two more segments available in the future. Bodie Island Coast Guard Station and Life-Saving Station have successfully been relocated. The roofs and exterior siding has been replaced and the Park is working on funding for the interior restoration. Opening date to the public is projected in spring/summer of 2011.

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

Oregon Inlet LSS (not part of Cp Hatteras National Seashore) is under the auspices of the NC Aquarium program. The exterior has been beautifully restored and is awaiting funds for the interior.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse reopened for climbing on Friday April 17th. It is open for two moonlight climbing tours each night in the summer when there is a full moon. For information about climbing: <http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/climbing-the-cape-hatteras-lighthouse.htm>. It is open for climbing through Columbus Day weekend October 11.

Ocracoke Lighthouse's work has been completed and the light was turned back on March 3. The Park is making an analysis of the parking and hopes to offer more spaces at the site soon.

Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station is located in Rodanthe, just north of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse at milepost 39.5. The Historic Site and museum gift shop are open from April 12-November 26th, Mon - Fri, 10am to 5:00 p.m. Check their website for exciting summer programs: www.chicamacomico.net.

Cape Lookout Lighthouse is part of the Cape Lookout National Seashore. Park headquarters and the visitor center are located in Harkers Island and are open every day 9-5 except Christmas and New Years days. Grounds are open year-round. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/calco/> or call (252) 728-2250. See article this issue.

Oak Island Lighthouse is owned by the Town of Caswell Beach with ongoing cooperative efforts with the Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse (FOIL). A request to climb: www.oakislandlighthouse.org.

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

Old Baldy Lighthouse & Smith Island Old Baldy Lighthouse & Smith Island The Old Baldy Foundation (OBF) owns, maintains and staffs this historic lighthouse. Memorial Day-Labor Day open: Mon - Sat 9 am to 5 pm, Sunday 11 am to 5 pm. Work has been completed on the base of the Cape Fear lens. See article this issue. Restoration work will begin on the lantern room of Old Baldy June 7. Access to the tower will be limited to four landings. No access will be permitted to the top until June 12. There is still time to order your brick paver for the Oil House Garden. Information and purchase forms

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

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

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

General correspondence:

OBLHS
P.O. Box 1005
Morehead City, NC 28557

Lighthouse Updates continued from inside page.

are available at www.oldbaldy.org or call (910) 457-748. Mark your calendar for the 5th annual "Pirates Argh Coming" — a wonderful family event!

Roanoke River Lighthouse (reproduction) is located on the Town of Plymouth's beautiful waterfront about halfway between the northern and southern Outer Banks. The town is putting boat docks in the river in front of the lighthouse. Large boats will be allowed to dock there for two weeks. Hours of Operation: 11-3 Tues - Sat and by appointment. Call (252) 217-2204 to arrange a group visit. See <http://www.roanokeriverlighthouse.org/>

1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse in Edenton will be operated by Historic Edenton State Historic Site after restoration. The Edenton Historical Commission is a partner with the Dept. of Cultural Resources for its care. Guided tours will soon be on a daily basis. See <http://www.edentonhistoricalcommission.org>.

Senator Marc Basnight invited OBLHS to place a 5-foot model of Bodie Island Lighthouse on display at his restaurant in Nags Head, The Lone Cedar to sell as a raffle. The meticulous reproduction was built by Rick Ward with assistance from his wife, Theresa. Proceeds from tickets go directly to OBLHS's Bodie Island Fund to benefit the lighthouse. We have drawn thousands of dollars from this fund for the benefit of the lighthouse. The fund exists and grows due to our members and friends.

General correspondence to OBLHS should be addressed to P.O. Box 1005, Morehead City, NC 28557

Membership correspondence and donations: Bob DaVia, OBLHS Membership Chair, P.O. Box 2141, Winterville, NC 28590. Donations and Membership can also be obtained online at <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org/join-reg-form-intro> through Pay Pal.

Do you have a new email address? Please send it to info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org and please update your information when using your return envelope. Check the date on your address label for your renewal date.