



Lighthouse Photo Album pages 2-3 • Updates for Each N.C. Lighthouse Inside

# LIGHTHOUSE NEWS

DEDICATED TO THE

UNITED STATES LIGHTHOUSE ESTABLISHMENT

Volume XII Number 2

Summer 2006

## *Fight Over Lighthouse Ends* **Peace Comes To Currituck**

*By Cheryl Shelton-Roberts*

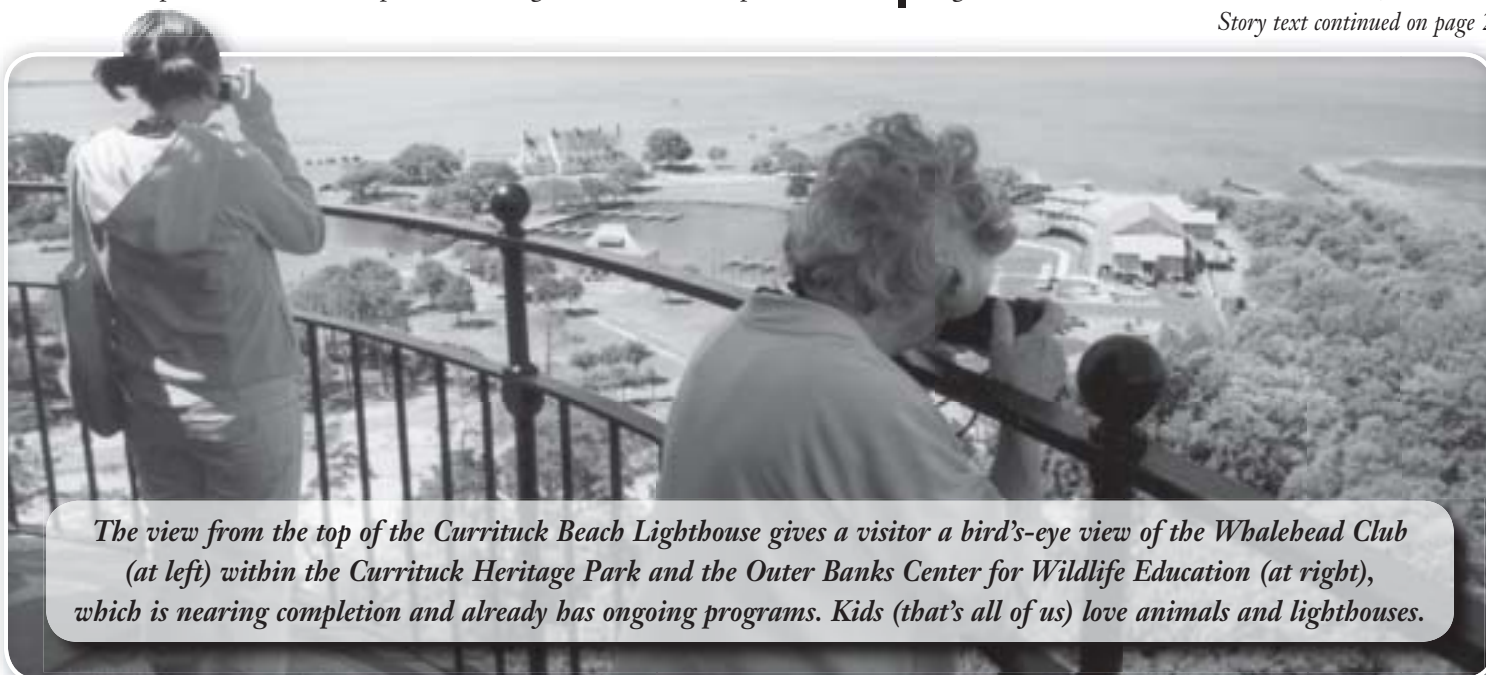
A press release dated April 21, 2006, by the Currituck County Commissioners announced an agreement that ends lawsuits concerning ownership of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse by the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. and a land dispute involving use of parking and restroom facilities by lighthouse visitors. The two parties have reached a compromise.

Outer Banks Conservationists (OBC) have restored and maintained the Currituck Beach Light Station for more than two decades. OBC's superior preservation record and application won OBC permanent stewardship of the tower. However, county commissioners held the opinion that the county should own the lighthouse even though it had never done anything to help. In fact, during the 1980s, the county wanted the keepers' quarters destroyed because it was considered a hazard. OBC stepped in, saved the beautiful keepers' home and opened the lighthouse to the public after

restoration. That OBC was awarded ownership by the Department of the Interior wasn't enough proof for the county that it should leave matters alone and act like a good sport. Currituck County commissioners embarked on a four-and-one-half-year mission to win the lighthouse one way or another. Lawsuits, expensive litigation, landed on OBC's desk regularly.

In the last suit filed by the county against OBC, Judge Terrence Boyle ruled that since the government still has interest in the lighthouse (it would revert to the government if it is not maintained according to National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act standards) that the

*Story text continued on page 2*



*The view from the top of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse gives a visitor a bird's-eye view of the Whalehead Club (at left) within the Currituck Heritage Park and the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education (at right), which is nearing completion and already has ongoing programs. Kids (that's all of us) love animals and lighthouses.*

# Currituck Peace

(Continued from Page 1)

county would have to sue the federal government over county ordinances. But the county didn't take this ruling as a large hint to end the new suit. The commissioners announced they would indeed sue the federal government. Fortunately, the commissioners' counsel advised a more cooperative effort. Here are the details of the compromise:

- ✦ The Currituck County Board of Commissioners voted 3-0 (Commissioners Paul Martin and Owen Etheridge were absent) to accept a settlement concerning land use. The lighthouse is immune from county's land use regulations as long as the U.S. government holds an interest in the historic structure.
- ✦ All litigation was ceased by all parties.
- ✦ OBC can share parking and restroom facilities next to the lighthouse.
- ✦ Beginning in July '06, OBC must deposit 17% of its gross annual revenues from the lighthouse into a fund managed by the Whalehead Preservation Trust for maintenance on the restrooms and parking.
- ✦ OBC will retain one-half of its annual contribution to the fund for reimbursement for expenses up to \$200,000 realized in legal expenses while defending lawsuits by the county. The county may use the fund for the same type of past expenses.
- ✦ The Executive Director of the Whalehead Preservation Trust will serve as an ex-officio non-voting member of OBC's Board of Directors and the Executive Director of OBC will serve in the same capacity for the Whalehead Preservation Trust.

This case has had far-reaching effects on other nonprofits applying for ownership of lighthouses being transferred from the U.S. Coast Guard all over the country. Other nonprofits that have taken care of American lighthouses for many years feared that any entity with political clout could simply declare its wish to own the lighthouse and claim them. Lighthouses have become top vacation destinations and are generating good revenue for their own restorations, making them an attractive piece of real estate. But justice prevailed and the lighthouse community will be glad to read the following quote. "Putting an end to the lawsuit and dispute with OBC is what's in the best interest of Currituck County," said Commissioner O'Neal. "...I believe it's time we get this issue behind us and move forward."

After all this tension and emotionally expensive trials, Melody Leckie, financial officer for the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc, stated, "...Now it's on to a brighter future for the [Currituck Beach] Lighthouse!"

OBC Director and great grandson of Keeper Homer Treadwell Austin, John Wilson, stated, "Again thank you for all [OBLHS'] support and encouragement over the four-and-a-half years of this struggle. We are indeed relieved that it is over. The reimbursement plan will return \$200,000 over time. And for that we are grateful. It would be so easy to get caught up in the disappointment that nearly \$500,000 has been spent by OBC when it could have been spent on the very reasons we exist, conservation and preservation. But we must move beyond that and not look back. We will now focus upon how the lighthouse can contribute to the visitor's experience at Currituck Heritage Park. And we can get back to work on finishing the restoration and opening Island Farm to the public. Come see us." ✦

*Peace at last. Onward.*

# Lighthouse





# Photo Album from OBLHS

*(At right) Wayland Baum is now over 100 years old and is thought to be the oldest surviving lighthouse keeper in America. He often substituted at different N.C. lights and as son of Keeper Thomas Hardy Baum, he knew the routine well. He still lives in Wanchese, N.C., which was home to as many as 11 keepers at one time. The lamp is an original post lantern often used to mark river channels on inland waterways.*

*(At left, below) Cape Hatteras Principal Keeper Unaka Jennette, the last U.S. Lighthouse Service keeper at Hatteras plays with his cat and dog. In uniform, this picture may have been taken while District Inspector Harold King (left, above) was visiting. King loved to visit Cape Hatteras, often bringing his children and friends. Jennette tamed his own wild Banker horses and King enjoyed a good ride. King served many years as District 5 Inspector and went on to become Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Lighthouses until he was appointed Commissioner by President Roosevelt in 1935.*

Pictures courtesy Lynne Jennette



*Emmett Wiggins (below right) successfully moved the Roanoke River Lighthouse (below, as it looked 20 years ago) from its original location near the mouth of the river to a spit of land he built up in Edenton. Wiggins' son inherited the little lighthouse, but it has been steadily deteriorating.*





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*Updates on the area lighthouse events & schedules*

Summer 2006 Vol. XII no. 2

News and articles <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org>:

VISIT US! Contact [Info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org](mailto:Info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org).

Also on NCOB at <http://www.outer-banks.com/lighthouse-society>;  
[society@outer-banks.com](mailto:society@outer-banks.com).

All correspondence to OBLHS can be made to P.O. Box 1005, Morehead City, N.C. 28557.

Give a gift membership, a memorial, or a donation. All are promptly acknowledged. Thank You!

Here is a special, illustrated section for updates this summer. Over a decade ago, we were lucky to get a half-page of news. Look at it now! People are visiting lighthouses, reading about them, and donating to their preservation. Special groups are working hard to keep them in good condition as well as open them to the public. Bodie Island Lighthouse is our main concern now. Do you know what a “cathode reaction” means and how it adds to the deterioration of this lighthouse?

Here’s a look at the state of our lights, summer 2006.

## *Bodie Island Lighthouse*

**Bodie Island Lighthouse** is one of the few lighthouses that still has its original lens in operation. The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society has donated \$10,000 from its special Bodie Island Fund and has applied for a matching grant from the Dare County Visitors Bureau for emergency repairs by International Chimney that will open the lower portion of the tower to the public around July 1. Plans are for opening the entire tower in 2010 if funding is available during FY 2007-08. The grounds are open all year; the visitors center and bookstore are open from 9 am - 6 pm in summer, 9 am until 5 pm the rest of the year and are a must see! For information call the Bodie Island Visitor Center (252) 441-5711. For information on Bodie Island, Cape Hatteras, and Ocracoke Lighthouses, all part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, see <http://www.nps.gov/caha>. To volunteer at Cape

Hatteras National Seashore, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Maggie Tyler, at (252) 995-6018 during normal working hours, or apply online at [www.volunteer.gov/gov](http://www.volunteer.gov/gov). Please designate Bodie Island, Cape Hatteras, or Ocracoke Lighthouse. **To date, only band aid repairs have been made to this lighthouse.** Iron pieces fell from the

*Iron pieces fell from the top of the Bodie Island Lighthouse during fall 2004.*

*Although all pieces fell within an existing wooden safety fence, a larger safety fence was installed and the lower portion of the lighthouse and its immediate*

*perimeter were closed. It is hoped this part of the tower can be re-opened this summer so visitors can see beautiful details like the stick style decoration (left) on the oil entryway that has been copied on many Outer Banks structures, both historic and modern.*







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top of the lighthouse during the fall of 2004. Although all pieces fell within an existing wooden safety fence, another temporary safety fence was installed. The roof was stabilized late 2004 without replacement of pieces. According to at least one expert, the belt course section initially cracked due to rust jacking and was dislodged due to wind. Evidence of movement between deck plates has been detected, meaning that one or more of the brackets have moved. The cables will help to restrain the iron, but it will stretch with additional rust jacking and wind related movement. How long it lasts depends on the forces it is subjected to. So far so good, but funding will not be available for at least another year, perhaps more. Congressman Charles Taylor (R-District 11) stated on his website, "I have the distinct honor of serving as Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment which funds over twenty-six billion dollars of federal government activities, including many important to Western North Carolina such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Carl Sandburg Home and the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. from western NC." Now, let's hope Taylor supports funding for the Bodie Island restoration next year in eastern NC if re-elected. Read on, there's more to this dire situation. The roof is in poor shape with portions open to the wind. The cables were installed to keep the roof sections from blowing off. ***Beyond the breaking point:*** The **cathode reaction** in the curtain wall (the glass of the lantern room, set into the vertical styles and mullions that is structural [supports the roof as well as being a window]) is extensive. A section of glass has already broken, probably due to **corrosion jacking between the iron and bronze** rather than impact damage. If conditions worsen, the Fresnel lens would be endangered. One expert would like to see the lens encased with protective material until complete restoration is accomplished. As another frustrated expert stated, "...we don't need anymore drawings, photos, or fancy documentation--we need cast iron, bronze, brick, and glass...." Our representatives must support the needs of the National Park Service. There is discussion that our public parks ought to go on the auction block and more parks should become self-sufficient. It's up to us to help. OBLHS's \$10,000 will help with emergency repairs for this summer and open the lower portion to the public. Next year? The restoration needs to start asap. Let's see if our representatives will help put priorities into perspective and stop the deterioration of this American treasure.

**Bodie Island Life-Saving/Coast Guard Station** is located near the lighthouse on Highway 12 in south Nags Head. Stabilization of the building will begin in June in preparation for its relocation (still to be announced). This process will cost ~ \$1 million. Years ago, OBLHS shared the dream with the Park of getting the old life-saving station off the oceanfront and away from the harsh elements and across the road at the entrance of Bodie Island Light Station. Stay tuned!

*A group of Lighthouse Depot tour participants from all over America gathered at the keepers' quarters at the Bodie Island Lighthouse in May. They listened intently during a rare opportunity to hear keeper's son John Gaskill relate stories about growing up at the lighthouse from 1919 until 1934.*



*(Left) Keeper Julian Austin Sr.'s children, Julian Jr. and Marilyn, are with their Uncle John (left) and a friend visiting the lighthouse. During the 1920s, a "call bell" was installed in the lantern room and warned a keeper if the lamp's flame was not operating correctly. This technology allowed only one keeper to stay on duty while the other keeper and family went home for a while.*

Picture courtesy of Marilyn Austin Meads



# LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

Updates on the area lighthouse events & schedules

## Old Baldy Lighthouse & Smith Island Museum

**Old Baldy Lighthouse & Smith Island Museum** is one place all lighthouse enthusiasts must visit. For information, call (910) 457-7481 or see <http://www.oldbaldy.org>. The Old Baldy Foundation (OBF) owns, maintains, and staffs this historic lighthouse. Ann Mills, Executive Director and Keeper, has updated spring/summer hours beginning March 14: open Tuesday-Saturday 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday 11 am to 4 pm. **Closed on Mondays.** Summer events: **Moon Crawls Begin June 10, 2006** when the lighthouse will be open for the full moons of summer 7:30 pm until 10 pm on June 10, July 11, August 9 and September 7 to see the view from the top of Bald Head Island's only high-rise. **National Lighthouse Day 2006** on Aug. 4-5, 2006, at the lighthouse. This year's theme is "The Pirates are Coming." The weekend events will begin at 6:30 pm on Friday, August 4 when pirates invade Bald Head Island at the Bald Head Island marina. Rumor has it if the pirates don't have a great time at Pirate Pub Night they might kidnap the village mayor and hold him for ransom. On Saturday, August 5 the Old Baldy Lighthouse will offer entertaining and educational pirate activities for families. Event times: 10 am to 4 pm. Admission is \$5/adult, \$3/youth 12 and under. Call 910-457-7481 for info. Old Baldy Foundation volunteers are planning restoration fundraising and educational programs. See Keeper Ann Mills' article on the life-saving station logbook donated to OBF below.

**A Twist: A Ship Sunk Purposely on Frying Pan Shoals As Memorial:** Forty-nine-year-old Greg MicKey was separated from his diving buddies due to strong cross currents last June 18 near Frying Pan Shoals, about 30 miles southeast of Bald Head Island. He was never seen again. Family and friends raised funds to buy a 183-foot former fishing vessel that will be rechristened the *Captain Greg MicKey* and sunk June 18 near where he was lost to form an artificial reef in memorial to MicKey.

## Historic Wreck Report Donated to Old Baldy

By Ann Mills, Keeper Old Baldy Lighthouse

*"On the morning of the 5th - I had the surfboat launched and after practice I [had] taken the mail to the P.O. in Smithville [now Southport]. While at Smithville the Schr. Samuel J. McMannemy ran aground on the bar at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. The Schr. was in sight from Smithville but I did not know that she was aground until some time after she had grounded. The Capt of the Schr spoke of setting a signal for assistance but his Pilot who knew that our boat had gone to Smithville told him that it was not necessary as we would be along in a short time on our return to the station therefore he set no signal."*

These are the words of Dunbar Davis as recorded in the **Copies of Wreck Reports Station: Cape Fear N.E. District: No. Six**. The entry is dated November 9, 1883.

This faded and fragile Wreck Reports book was recently donated to the Old Baldy Foundation by long-time Southport, N.C., resident Tom S. Bowmer. Mr. Bowmer is not quite sure how the log book came to be a part of his family. His best recollection is that when his family first moved to Southport in 1929 they rented a house from a river pilot. When they moved into another house some years later, the log book must have been mixed in with the family belongings. Bowmer came across the book many years later after the death of his mother as he was going through some boxes before throwing them out and found the log book tucked in with her personal belongings.

The Wreck Reports spans over 15 years and includes some 50 entries. Each entry includes details on the vessel including rig and tonnage, official number, nature of cargo, and number of crew and passengers. At the end of each entry is a narrative written by Life-Saving Station Keeper Dunbar Davis. He was at the Bald Head Island station until 1890, and all the entries until September 1890 are in his hand. Following that date, the next entry is September 16, 1892, and was entered by J. L. Watts.

"We are delighted and excited to have been given this Wreck Reports book to add to our collection of Bald Head history," says Ann Mills, Executive Director of the Old Baldy Foundation. "Our plan is to transcribe the entries and make them available electronically," she added.

**Editor's note:** *Many exceptional historic records, that otherwise would be lost forever, are found the way Mr. Bowmer discovered this priceless life-saving station logbook. Look in your attic or carefully go through books, papers, and objects of your relatives' estates before disposing of them. If you find something of interest but do not know what to do with it, ask your local librarian to put you in touch with someone who can advise about preservation/donation. You may save an important and irreplaceable part of history.*





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**Unexpected Delights...** Members of the Outer Banks lighthouse tour sponsored by Lighthouse Depot, lead by Cheryl and Bruce Roberts last month, voted the stops at the Roanoke River Lighthouse in Plymouth and the Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station in Rodanthe (MP 39.5) as the best unexpected surprises of the trip. James Charlet's story of the *Mirlo* rescue should be heard by everyone interested in Outer Banks history.

**Roanoke River Lighthouse (reproduction)** is located on the town of Plymouth's beautiful waterfront about halfway between the northern and southern Outer Banks. Enough donations have been made to purchase furniture to be placed inside the lighthouse. OBLHS will have a display with all N.C. lights in the maritime museum (opening fall 2007) located near the lighthouse. Summer hours: 11-3 Tuesday-Saturday; 1-4 Sunday. Special group tours can be arranged by calling (252) 217-2204. A small fee is charged. Visitation continues to increase and the regional phone book has a picture of the lighthouse on its cover. Stop by on your way to the Outer Banks, there's a great deal going on here!

**Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station** is located in Rodanthe, just north of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse at Mile Post 39.5 and is a must-see! For info on this beautifully restored life-saving station see url <http://www.chicamacomico.net> or call the Chicamacomico Historical Association at (252) 987-1552. See exhibits, artifacts, photographs, video presentations, uniforms, and displays through self-guided tours; programs are offered during summer months including "Living Descendants of the *Mirlo* Rescue" (August '06) and "Heroes Day" (September '06). The site is open from mid-April through November. James Charlet and Linda Malloy are two of the passionately dedicated staff members at this historic site. Plan a visit to meet them and experience their professional programs. Two new jewels are the fully equipped 1911 cookhouse and the furnished 1907 Midgett house, making five buildings now open to the public.



*New exhibits at the beautifully restored Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station in Rodanthe (between Cape Hatteras and Nags Head) includes the 1911 cookhouse.*



*A reproduction of the original Roanoke River Lighthouse is located on the waterfront in Plymouth, N.C. Predicted to be the main contact center for tourists traveling to the northern Outer Banks via U.S. 64 East, the lighthouse is drawing delighted visitors to its doorsteps. This group rated their visit as one of the best surprises on the Outer Banks.*



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## *Currituck Beach Lighthouse*

**Currituck Beach Lighthouse** re-opened April 10 for the 2006 season and remains open through the weekend after Thanksgiving until November 26. The light station's hours of operation are 10 am to 6 pm daily. The cost to climb is \$6 for anyone 8 years or older, children 7 years of age and under are admitted free. Reduced rates are available to school groups, tour companies, and non-profit groups who make advanced reservations. Email [info@currituckbeachlight.com](mailto:info@currituckbeachlight.com) or call (252) 453-8152. During March, restoration specialists from International Chimney made repairs to the lantern room, spending 2 months replacing lantern glass. CONGRATULATIONS TO Outer Banks Conservationists (OBC), who has preserved, restored, and maintained the lighthouse and keepers' houses for more than two decades. After over four years' struggle to gain ownership of the lighthouse over the county and find a compromise on parking and restroom usage with the county, a compromise has been reached. Please see the front page article of this issue. *Congratulations again* to OBC and the Currituck Beach Lighthouse for having been chosen to participate in Heritage Preservation's Conservation Assessment Program 2006 (CAP). CAP is supported through a cooperative agreement with the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. CAP assists museums by providing funds for professional conservation and preservation specialists to identify the conservation needs of their collections and historic buildings and recommend ways to correctly improve collections and building conditions. Heritage Preservation's President, Lawrence L. Reger, praised the OBC for its efforts at its Currituck Beach Lighthouse for "making the vital work of caring for collections and sites a priority at their institution and for helping ensure that they are available to present and future generations."

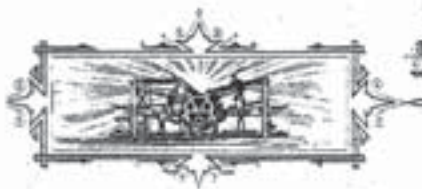






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AN ILLUSTRATED EVENING NEWSPAPER

39 & 41 PARK PLACE



All the News  
Four Editions Daily

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1878.

512 Per Year in Advance.  
Single Copies, Five Cents.



## The Trees Came Later

Visitors at the Currituck Beach Lighthouse often ask how the lighthouse can be seen with all the trees between it and the ocean. Of course the light is much higher than the trees that have grown up in recent decades, but in 1875, when the lighthouse was completed, there were no trees between it and the ocean as the drawing (above) published in a New York newspaper in 1878 shows. Only grass and brush appear in this later 19th century photo (opposite page). The building of the dunes for beach protection in the 20th century enabled the trees to grow by providing protection from salt spray.

Image courtesy of the Outer Banks History Center

A view inside the first order Fresnel lens at Currituck Beach Lighthouse (at right) looking up into the lens shows the two 1,000 watt quartz lights surrounded by the original prisms. A keeper tended a lamp or incandescent vapor lamp (akin to a Coleman lamp) for a half-century before the light was electrified and automated.



## Cape Lookout Lighthouse

**Cape Lookout Lighthouse** is part of the Cape Lookout National Seashore. Be sure to visit the National Park Service headquarters at the east end of Harkers Island. For more information call (252) 728-2250 or see <http://www.nps.gov/cal/>. Plans are still underway for restoration of the Cape Lookout Historic Village. The Interpretation Division always welcomes volunteers to work in the Harkers Island Visitor Center (meeting the public, answering the telephone, giving programs, etc.). Contact Ranger George Luther at (252) 728-2250. **Climbing dates for the rest of 2006:** Reservations: Wednesday, July 19, 9:00 am 'til noon Eastern Time for climbing on Sat. August 5, 2006 (National Lighthouse Day). Reservations: Wednesday, October 18, 9:00 am for the climbing on Saturday, November 4, 2006 (Honors first lighting of Cape Lookout Lighthouse, Nov. 1, 1859). **For reservations call 252-728-5766. This number is for reservations only-- taken between 9 am and noon.** Call early for reservations as they fill up quickly! A new visitor center, restrooms, and shade shelter have been built at the lighthouse dock. The boardwalk from the dock has been rerouted to the lighthouse side of the keepers' quarters. The keepers' quarters will be renovated during this summer as a museum that will gain new displays to be installed in the fall. Sand pumped from Core Sound has widened the sound-side beach and stopped the erosion threat to the summer kitchen and keepers' quarters. The Park Service, the federal agency that manages Cape Lookout National Seashore, spent \$1 million to pump sand along 2,435 feet of shoreline. The project has built a beach 50 to 75 feet wide to protect the keepers' quarters, a summer kitchen, and ultimately the lighthouse that is approaching 150 years of age. The lighthouse and support buildings stand on the back side of Core Banks, a 55-mile string of narrow islands in the central coast. There are no bridges or roads linking the islands to the mainland. The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse was relocated due to oceanfront erosion; however, the threat at Cape Lookout has been from Back Sound and Barden Inlet, opened in a voracious 1933 hurricane. The inlet began moving toward the lighthouse in the late 1970s and claimed 100 feet of sound side beach, threatening the entire station. The Army Corps of Engineers think that an inlet dredged closer to adjacent Shackleford Banks and sand renourishment will at least stall the erosion. But harsh hurricanes like Isabel in 2004 and Ophelia in 2005 can do great damage. At least the Park is doing its best to protect these valuable cultural resources. The Cape Lookout Lighthouse is one of NC's finest treasures. Take a ferry from Harkers Island or Beaufort and visit the cape and lighthouse. More info: (252) 728-2250.

## A General's Lighthouse

*Lt. William Henry Chase Whiting (at left) graduated at the head of his class at West Point in 1845 and was appointed to the elite Topographical Engineers to explore uncharted lands of the Southwest. He and several other of his colleagues were called back East after the reorganization of the Lighthouse Board (1852) to build tall lighthouses. He personally drew the original plans for the Cape Lookout Lighthouse and supervised the construction while headquartered at the Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington office. The tower was completed in 1859. He fell in love with a Southern belle in that town and married just before the Civil War. This may have influenced Whiting's decision to join the Confederacy, which forged his destiny. At the Battle of Manassas, Whiting was given a battlefield promotion from Major to General. For more than a year he served under Robert E. Lee's command. He returned to N.C. to supervise the construction of Ft. Fisher and the coastal defenses of the Cape Fear River. He lost his life defending the fort but his legacy lives on at Cape Lookout. In the photograph (left), the first order Fresnel lens can be seen, taken in the early 1960s.*

©1962 Bruce Roberts's photo







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## Confederate Light House Service

Confederates removed the first order Fresnel lens from the Cape Lookout Lighthouse at the beginning of hostilities. Kevin Duffus records in detail how the lights were removed along the Outer Banks, one-by-one in his fascinating book *The Lost Light: The Mystery of the Missing Cape Hatteras Fresnel Lens*.

The letter (below) is written by Confederate Secretary of the Treasury Meninger directing Thomas Martin, Acting Chief of the Confederate Light House Bureau to prepare letters to direct collectors acting as superintendents of lights in areas not under Union control to remove the remaining smaller lenses and take them inland to points of safety.

From the editors' personal collection



Famous Light-House Board's official photographer, Henry Bamber, took a photo of Cape Lookout in the early 1890s. Note the curtain that is drawn in the lantern room, which protected the prized first order Fresnel lens from harsh sunlight and cooled the lantern room as a working area by day.

Confederate States of America,  
TREASURY DEPARTMENT.  
Richmond  
MORTGOMERY, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1862

Thos E. Martin, Esq.  
Acting Chief of Light House Bureau.  
Sir,

As suggested by your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup>, you will please prepare letters to the Collectors, who are acting as superintendents of lights, directing them to remove the property belonging to the Light House establishment under their charge to such points as in their judgment may be secure from the approach of the enemy.

Respectfully  
G. E. Meninger.  
Secy of Treasury

## Oak Island and Price's Creek Lighthouses

**Oak Island Lighthouse** is owned by the Town of Caswell Beach; cooperative efforts are ongoing with the Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse. Take a look at the Friends of Oak Island's exciting new website at [www.oakislandlighthouse.org](http://www.oakislandlighthouse.org). Find out how to join at <http://www.caswellbeach.org/lighthouse.html>. You will find a good history of the lighthouse, terrific photos, directions how to get to the Oak Island Lighthouse, information on merchandise, volunteer opportunities, and more. Contact Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse, 1100 Caswell Beach Road, Caswell Beach, NC 28465 or email [lighthouse@caswellbeach.org](mailto:lighthouse@caswellbeach.org). The Friends held a special event honoring the Founders of their society on Sunday, May 21st. They unveiled their Founders' plaque and attendees were allowed to climb to the top of the lighthouse and received a "Certificate of Achievement" signed by Mayor Simmons for doing so. Other mementos included a Founders' Limited Edition CD featuring the songs that were written about Oak Island Lighthouse by Steve Chapin (Harry and Tom's brother) and Bett Padgett (President of OBLHS). Bett was there to perform her song, "The Path to Our Light."

**Price's Creek Front Range Light (1850 ruins)** is not open for public visitation but you can get a good look at this pre-Civil War tower, the only river light still in its original location, from the Southport-Ft. Fisher ferry. It sits on commercially owned property by Archer Daniels Midland (ADM); no restoration plans by other interested parties have been entertained by ADM. A keeper's quarters once stood behind it with a light on its roof and served as the second light in the pair of range lights for a safe channel in the Cape Fear River as vessels headed for the Port of Wilmington.

*(At left, below) The Price's Creek Light bears witness to Union attacks in the Cape Fear River. The light became a favorite place for locals to explore in the past but now is on private property and off-limits to regular visitors. This brave little light is still standing today, but its future is unknown.*



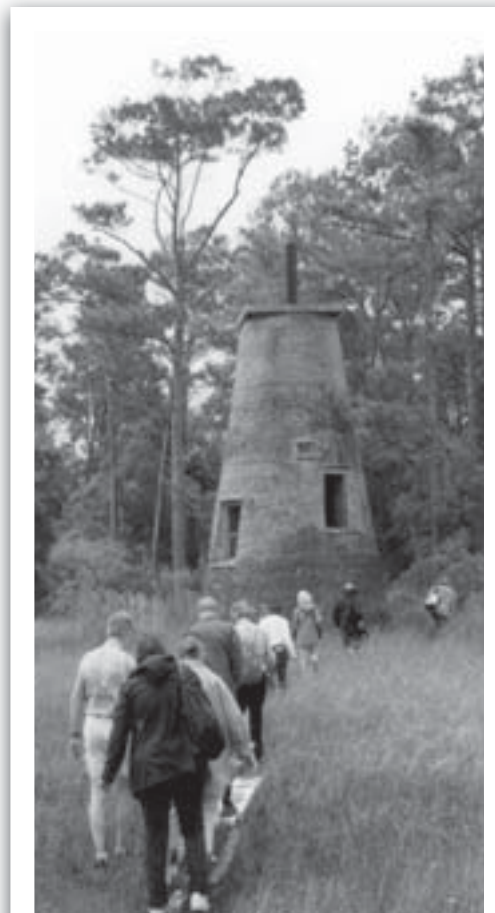


## Price's Creek

### The Little Light That Blinked in Code to Blockade Runners

Early settlers used the Black, Northeast Cape Fear, and the Cape Fear Rivers for trading tobacco, timber, fur, and produce. Wilmington became a point of entry for slaves to be auctioned, started as part of a strategy to gain cheap labor. During the last two years of the Civil War, Wilmington remained the only major Southern port with rail connections open to blockade runners through which supplies for the Confederacy coursed to Petersburg and Richmond. Off the coast of New Inlet, the main entrance to the Cape Fear River leading to Wilmington, Union blockading ships tried to strangle the shipping business accomplished by blockade runners as part of President Lincoln's Anaconda plan. A strong defense at Ft. Fisher's Mound Battery kept blockade runners protected while they dashed in and out of the river to load and unload precious cargo for the Confederacy.

The success of the blockade running was in part due to the secret code exchanged between the Mound Battery and the blockade runner. On board each vessel was a signal officer who was the only one on board with that information. A Confederate ship's captain waited for the signal to exit or enter the river while the guns of Ft. Fisher protected them, positioned up on the Mound Battery and beach below. Price's Creek was part of this network of signal lights. Today, it is the only N.C. river light still in its original position. Originally it served as a front range light with a rear range light located in the keeper's house that stood above and behind the shorter light. Damaged and its light removed, it was discontinued following the War Between the States. The lonely little light must enjoy the occasional visitor; permission only granted by its corporate owner.



## The Key Flashed the Message

The Confederate signal light at Price's Creek was probably identical to this one on display at Fort Fisher. A telegraph key mounted on the top somehow controlled the flashes. The code used by the Confederate Signal Service was top secret with only the signal officers able to use it. They were prized captors—so valuable that the Union would not trade them for other prisoners. Incoming blockade runners flashed "How is Col. Lamb's Health?" to identify themselves to the shore stations. In the top photo, members of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society enjoyed a rare privilege of being able to visit Price's Creek.





# LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

*Updates on the area lighthouse events & schedules*

**Cape Hatteras Lighthouse** is located in the village of Buxton. The Hatteras Island Visitor Center (bookstore and exhibits) is open all year--except Dec. 25--from 9 am to 6 pm in summer (Memorial Day through Labor Day), 9 am to 5 pm the rest of the year. There is a fee of \$6 to climb; children 12 and under and seniors (62+) \$3. International Chimney will soon replace the temporary replica windows (put in place after damage from Hurricane Isabel) with the repaired, original windows. The lighthouse re-opened for climbing April 14 and will remain open until Columbus Day, October 9, (weather permitting) but check <http://www.nps.gov/caha> for more info on climbing times and obtaining tickets. Some minor repairs have been made to the keepers' quarters. For more information about climbing times and obtaining tickets, visit the NPS website <http://www.nps.gov/caha> or phone 252-995-4474.

**Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse (reproduction)**, located in Manteo, is an exterior reproduction of an 1877 screwpile light that was originally located near Wanchese. The lighthouse is managed and leased by the N.C. Maritime Museum on Roanoke Island with a tri-party agreement with the Town of Manteo and Roanoke Island Festival Park. It is open from 9-5, Tuesday-Saturday with exhibits, free of charge. The lighthouse is located on Manteo's charming waterfront. A new fog bell has been installed at the lighthouse and eventually will be replaced with a replica. For info, contact Barry Wicker, curator, N.C. Maritime Museum on Roanoke Island at [obxmaritime@earthlink.net](mailto:obxmaritime@earthlink.net) or call (252) 475-1750. Volunteers are needed for the Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse. For more information on the history of this lighthouse, please visit [www.obxmaritime.org](http://www.obxmaritime.org).

**Ocracoke Lighthouse** is part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore like Bodie Island and Cape Hatteras Lighthouses. Ocracoke's base is open when volunteers are available--usually in the summer months. The Ocracoke Visitor Center (bookstore and exhibits) is open all year: Memorial Day--Labor Day 9:00 am to 6:00 pm; after Labor 'til Memorial Day 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. This visitor center is a convenient stop near the Ocracoke-Cedar Island ferry terminal and near the village (not located at the lighthouse). For more information contact the National Park Service Visitor Center on Ocracoke Island at (252) 928-4531. The lighthouse will receive a new coat of paint this summer and the Ocracoke Preservations Society is seeing that repairs are made to the keepers' quarters and new flooring is going in. Our twins, **Lauren and Paula Liebrecht and Jane Morgan (known as "The Lighthouse Ladies")** were there June 15th with a five-gallon can of paint and brushes in hand for the fence!

**Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum** is open all year. Shipwreck exhibits are in the lobby. Basic hours are Mon-Fri 9 am to 5 pm thanks to volunteers. For more information on programs offered about shipwrecks and rescues including special presentations by authors, please see <http://www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com/> or call (252) 986-2995 or 2996. See the Cape Hatteras Fresnel lens exhibit in the main exhibit room. This is an exciting, ongoing project.

**Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station** in the Cape Hatteras National Seashore is getting a facelift. It is being restored to the 1904-15 period and is still under repair in many stages. By the end of this year bathrooms will be stabilized and a new roof will replace the badly needed one. Another project fund has been requested to restore the entire life-saving station and the boathouse. The restoration is estimated to be complete in 2011.

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

Make sure we have your **email** address so you can receive quick updates from OBLHS president, Bett Padgett; email her at [info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org](mailto:info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org).

**OBLHS Life-Time Memberships** (\$500) are now offered by OBLHS. Call (919) 787-6378.

**A membership** for Anne McLean has been given to her by Reta Whitten in loving memory of Anne's brother, **William Shelton Hawley** who crossed the bar in May 2006.

**Thank you to Deborah Hildebrandt**, an OBLHS Charter Member, who has donated a large part of her Harbour Lights collection to benefit the nonprofit. Debbie is moving to a retirement community and must downsize. If you would like make a donation other than cash, please contact board member Bob DaVia at [rdavia@seathelights.com](mailto:rdavia@seathelights.com) and earn tax credit for your donation(s).

**Congratulations to Betty Parrish**, OBLHS Charter Member and former Membership Chair, on her award from the American Lighthouse Foundation for being an outstanding lighthouse volunteer!

**Thank you for donations to OBLHS from:** Drs. Jim and Mabry O'Donnell, Mike Flynn, Doward Jones, Lighthouse Publications, Elizabeth Schloss, W.R. Dowe, Nancy Padgett, Joan Kutalis, Mike Byrd, the Chesapeake Chapter of the U.S. Lighthouse Society, Paul H. MacClennan. Thank you to all members making contributions beyond their membership dues. Any donations earmarked for the Bodie Island Fund have been duly added to that fund. Thanks to all of you who keep up the momentum of OBLHS!



# 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: [society@outer-banks.com](mailto:society@outer-banks.com) or write OBLHS P.O. Box 1005 Morehead City, NC 28557

## Please Check the Expiration Date on your Mailing Label! Subscribe or Renew your Membership

**\$10.00 Student Membership • \$25 Individual Membership  
\$35 Family Membership • \$20 Senior Membership (60+)  
\$30 Senior Family**

**Please make checks payable to OBLHS. Thank You**

**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 correspondence to:**

**OBLHS**

**P.O. Box 1005**

**Morehead City, NC 28557**

Name

Address

City, State,

Zip +4 code

Phone

Email

Gift for

Recipient's address

Email

## 2006 Annual Keeper's Dinner

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society's Annual Keeper's Dinner and Awards Weekend will be headquartered at the Ramada Inn, Kill Devil Hills, **October 13th-15th. Friday:** a tour of the National Aids to Navigation Museum in Yorktown, Virginia, and see one of the finest displays of Fresnel lenses. **Saturday:** explore the charming Historic Corolla Village and climb the Currituck Beach Lighthouse, visit the Whalehead Club, and the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education. **Saturday's dinner** will highlight comments from Outer Banks author **David Stick** and our keynote speaker is **Sandra MacLean Clunies**, certified genealogist, who speaks nationally on lighthouse topics and has served as a consultant researcher for Younger and Associates, creators of the Harbour Lights replicas. **The dinner and speakers will be followed by our annual lively auction and raffle drawing. Don't miss it!** More information and online registration form with event costs at [www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org](http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org), or you may call Bett at (919) 787-6378 or email her at [bett@outerbankslighthousesociety.org](mailto:bett@outerbankslighthousesociety.org).

**OBLHS officers** were elected at the board meeting Saturday, May 27, at its annual meeting. The Board of Directors met at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and enjoyed a special, long weekend together in the Cape Lookout area.

### Officers for 2006-2007:

Bett Padgett, President (919) 787-6378  
[bett@bettpadgett.com](mailto:bett@bettpadgett.com)

Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Vice President  
(252) 247-5436 [croberts@outer-banks.com](mailto:croberts@outer-banks.com)

Drs Jim and Mabry O'Donnell, Secretaries  
(740) 706-0398 [odonnelm@marietta.edu](mailto:odonnelm@marietta.edu),  
[odonnelj@marietta.edu](mailto:odonnelj@marietta.edu)

Diana Chappell, Treasurer (804) 883-6260  
[diandmanda@aol.com](mailto:diandmanda@aol.com)

### Duties:

Membership Chair, Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

Fundraising Chair, Bruce Roberts

(252) 247-5436 [broberts2@ec.rr.com](mailto:broberts2@ec.rr.com)

Special Events Chair and committee, Bett Padgett,  
Robert DaVia, Diana Chappell

Volunteer website coordinator, Virginia Howell

We are grateful for the help of Richard Meissner who is volunteer coordinator at Cape Lookout National Seashore, Sandra MacLean Clunies in research, Doward Jones of the Roanoke River Light, and Charlie and Shirley Votaw for special projects.

Most board members are up for re-election this fall and you will receive a list and voting card in your fall newsletter in September.

## PLEASE READ

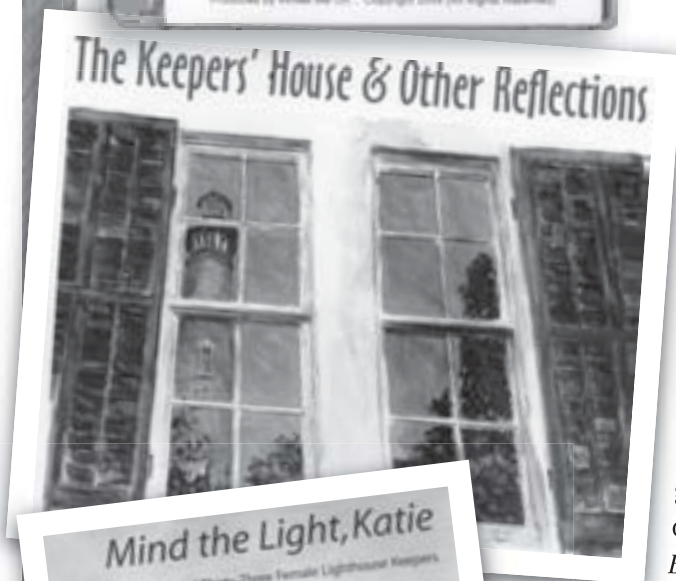
We are now using a mailing service and a bulk rate permit. This means that each envelope we mail with your newsletter must weigh exactly the same. Therefore, **each of you get a return envelope with your newsletter, but this doesn't mean your membership fees are due! Look at the expiration date on your address label!** Our members are so conscientious that several of you are paying far ahead of time. The newsletter editor has taken over membership duties for a while, and she is happy to do so. It keeps her in touch with all of you wonderful members.

# Of Special Interest For Lighthouse Lovers



***In Search of Lighthouses 2005: The Carolinas*** has been released by Julia Hollenbeck and Wheel Me On, a non-profit organization that conducts annual lighthouse searches and captures the scene as it unfolds. A DVD on New York lights is also available. "The Carolina's" is a 2-hour DVD film that starts with Bett Padgett singing a beautiful song. Footage includes Currituck Beach Light, an interview with keeper's son John Gaskill at Bodie Island, and a visit all along the NC and SC coasts. It is a film of courage and hope as well as witnessed passion for our historic sites—a message to get out there and visit these American Treasures!

Available for \$24.95 each. To order please send check or money order to. WMO, 35 Covington Street, Clarksville, TN, 37040 tel. (931) 551-9204. Please add \$4.95 for s/h. [www.wheelmeon.org](http://www.wheelmeon.org).



***The Keeper's House & Other Reflections*** by Lloyd Childers is newly released. Childers tells of her five years as keeper at North Carolina's Currituck Beach Lighthouse during 1998–2002. A gifted watercolor artist, she has illustrated her story with 22 of her beautiful paintings. In a book that will delight lovers of lighthouses, she combines her insights into the life of a modern keeper with informative details about the history of the 125-year-old light, its keepers, and their families.

"Lloyd Childers has not only created a beautifully illustrated book with her delightful paintings, but she has also recorded a first-hand account of what it is like to be Keeper of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse, the dream of every lighthouse enthusiast. We congratulate her for sharing with us the experience of gaining a passion for tending a light. *The Keepers' House* should become part of every lighthouse lover's library." Cheryl and Bruce Roberts, founders, Outer Banks Lighthouse Society

For a list of outlets or to order on line, visit Lloyd's website: [www.lloydsbrush.com](http://www.lloydsbrush.com) or contact the author at (910) 270-0934 or by email: [lloyd@lloydsbrush.com](mailto:lloyd@lloydsbrush.com). \$14.95 plus tax and s/h.

For young readers: ***Mind the Light, Katie: The History of Thirty-Three Female Lighthouse Keepers*** by Mary Louise and J. Candace Clifford was released spring 2006. It brings back to life some of the women who served at America's lighthouses between 1775–1947. These women proved to be just as disciplined and dedicated as their male colleagues, intent every day and night on guiding mariners safely to their destinations. It has 144 pages, 56 illustrations, an index, extensive glossary, and a list of suggested reading.

Please make your check for \$12.95 plus \$3 s/h to Cypress Communications and send your mailing information to 35 E. Rosemont Ave., Alexandria, VA, 22301 or call (703) 548-0532. [www.lighthousehistory.info](http://www.lighthousehistory.info).

