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*Mr. Willard Forbes' grandfather (above) was keeper at the North River and Wade's Point (below) Lighthouses. The North River light was damaged in 1918; sold to the Dare County School System, and moved to Rodanthe in 1920 to be used as a schoolhouse. Now the structure, with modifications, is the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Community Center.*

Portrait courtesy of Willard Forbes



Photo courtesy of Marilyn Austin Meads.

## *A Second Lighthouse on Hatteras Island?*

# From Deep Freeze into the Limelight

*By James Charlet, Site Manager,  
Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station Historic Site*

Yes, there is! Almost everyone who lives in the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo community – a village formerly called Chicamacomico – is familiar with the Community Center. Many of those same folks know that before the building was converted to the Community Center it was the Rodanthe School House. Some of the residents still living on Hatteras Island attended that school. What hardly any of them know, if any, is prior to that it was the North River Screwpile Lighthouse! What a great story its evolution makes.

As the Site Manager of Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station Historic Site, I am particularly pleased that we have the opportunity to break the news of this little-known story. The reason for that is simple: in their day, all life-saving stations were located in small remote villages and were the center of village life. They usually had the only means of communication in the village to the outside world: they had the first telegraphs, radios, and, later, telephones. The stations had the only medical supplies and personnel trained in first aid. They had “government food” not available to the average citizen. The life-saving stations shared this bounty with their village and were the social and entertainment centers of their time. We at Chicamacomico are endeavoring to continue that tradition of reaching out to our community through the preservation of the site, the community, and the entire Hatteras Island way of life and its culture and history.

The story of the screwpile lighthouse “came to light” with a very gracious phone call from my friend, KaeLi Spiers, Curator of the Outer Banks History

*Story text continued on page 2*

*The lost sound and river lights of North Carolina once sparkled like diamonds in the night across inland waters of the Pamlico, Croatan, and Albemarle Sounds. Most of these sound lights were built in the years just following the Civil War to replace light vessels as more stable markers. By 1891, at dusk, one by one, the flames of all the North Carolina's river lights were lit. Navigators from around the world traveled the state's sounds and rivers and felt their way along dark waterways to mainland ports using the river lighthouses as a priest his rosary beads to find some comfort that the way would be shown him.*

*Abandoned and forgotten, these structures were once an important part of our aquatic highway system and our maritime history.*

*Today, we know that the ruins of Price's Creek, located on the Cape Fear River, is the only one of its kind still in its original position. In the mid 1950s, William Tate and Emmett Wiggins attempted to move the Wade's Point and Roanoke River cottage-style sound lights after the U.S. Coast Guard sold them. The Roanoke River Light successfully found a home on Wiggins' man-made spit of land in Edenton. It is now privately owned and deteriorating quickly after attempts by third parties to buy it for its historical significance. Wade's Point was lost. But its twin has been found in Rodanthe—another gem found amidst the treasures of the Outer Banks.*

## A Lost Lighthouse

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Center in Manteo. She informed me that two gentlemen, one quite elderly, were at the History Center conducting research on the North River Lighthouse, built in 1866. Its legs collapsed in 1917 [after extremely cold weather put the Albemarle Sound into a deep freeze], Spiers had discovered, and the Coast Guard sold it in 1920. The purchaser was Mr. R.C. Evans, Superintendent of Dare County Schools, and the structure was moved to Rodanthe to be used as the school house.

I could not wait to meet these folks and discover more. Arriving bright and early from Old Trap, Camden County, N.C., October 30, 2006, I was honored to meet Mr. Willard Forbes and his friend Mr. Alex Leary. Mr. Willard was a pleasant and hospitable 90-year-old. He immediately began unloading his van with lots of goodies – pictures, albums, documents, and a spectacular surprise – a huge scale model of an exact replica of the Wade Point Lighthouse. The model was made from a large piece of wood from the destroyed lighthouse, which was identical to the North River Lighthouse.

Mr. Willard's grandfather, Mr. Joseph Forbes Mercer, was keeper of both lighthouses at various times and was the last keeper of the North River Lighthouse. Keeper Mercer began working with the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1898 and retired in 1932. The North River Lighthouse, a screwpile type common in shallow waters, was located in the Albemarle Sound just south of Camden County's southern-most peninsula, also near the mouth of the North River. On December 31, 1917 (the year Mr. Willard was born), the sound around the lighthouse froze. It stayed frozen for the following two days. The ice cracked all of the supporting steel legs. The following is a direct quote from a Western Union telegram:

The lighthouse soon fell into the Albemarle Sound, but the water was shallow and the lighthouse settled so evenly that it was continued in use for about another year. Eventually it was condemned by the Coast Guard and Keeper Mercer transferred to Wade's Point Lighthouse. The service wanted to sell it for \$300 but only received one bid from school Supt. R.C. Evans of Manteo for \$150. "...the lighthouse superstructure was then

**Powells Point, N.C.**

**730 P.M., Jan. 4, 1918**

**Lighthouse Inspector, Baltimore, Md.**

**Sir: The condition of North River Lighthouse is dangerous to stay in. All five piles are broken and it is just hanging. Will stay at Powells Point until I hear from you. Will wire later.**

**J.S. Mercer**

**Keeper**

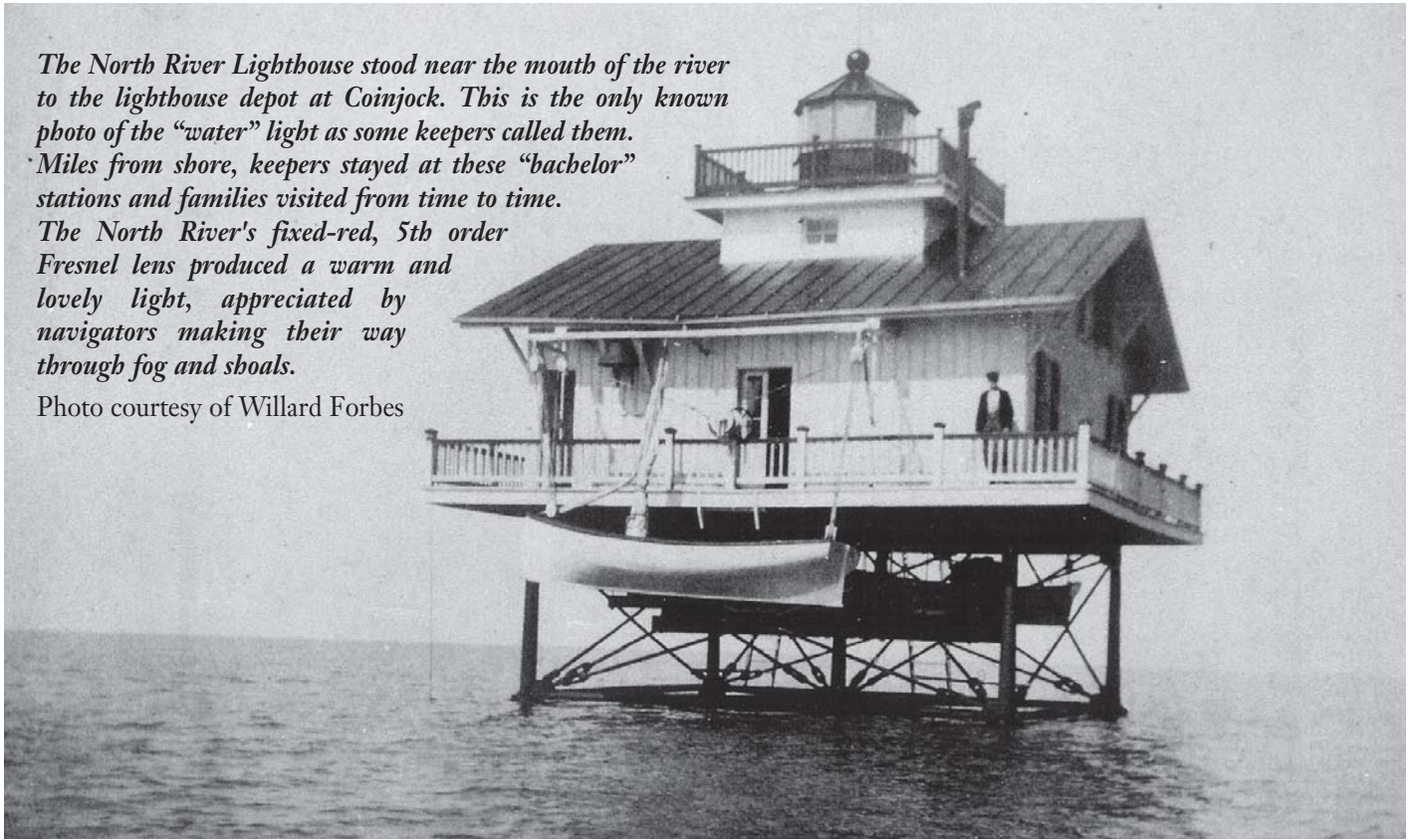
**816P**



*The North River Lighthouse stood near the mouth of the river to the lighthouse depot at Coinjock. This is the only known photo of the “water” light as some keepers called them. Miles from shore, keepers stayed at these “bachelor” stations and families visited from time to time.*

*The North River’s fixed-red, 5th order Fresnel lens produced a warm and lovely light, appreciated by navigators making their way through fog and shoals.*

Photo courtesy of Willard Forbes



moved to Rodanthe where it was a school house for a number of years,” according to the Pasquotank Historical Society, Yearbook No. 3. It was moved in 1920 to its present location and used as the Rodanthe School until 1951. Originally it contained two classrooms, covering first through tenth grades (kindergarten, eleventh, and twelfth grades were non-existent then). Later a north wing was added giving the school three classrooms, a library, various closets, and storage areas while housing first through tenth grades. Nellie Midgett Farrow, 93-years-old and a current resident of Waves, started school there in the sixth grade in 1926 and completed the tenth grade; she had to go to Manteo for the eleventh grade in order to complete high school.

The school closed in 1951 and children from all villages of Hatteras Island then went to Buxton to the first consolidated school. The old schoolhouse soon became a community center – a familiar concept only found in small, rural, isolated places, which Rodanthe certainly was then and now. “Old Buck” made many an appearance in this building over the years in celebration of Rodanthe’s unique ‘Olde Christmas’ celebration. In 1993 the building was expanded again and the designers painted new addition’s exteriors a dark gray and the old school house portion was painted a light gray, distinguishing the old and the new sections.

Over the years the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Community Center, as it is officially known, has had many gatherings held there. Today, it is an especially busy place with a great diversity of events: weddings, receptions, dinners, club meetings, pig-pickings, political meetings, and official agency presentation of all sorts – in short, almost anything you can think of involving a community. The use of this well-equipped building is free to residents of Rodanthe, Waves, and Salvo, but it must be booked in advance. It is available for rent to others.

And somewhere in that building today is the heart of the North River Lighthouse built in 1866.

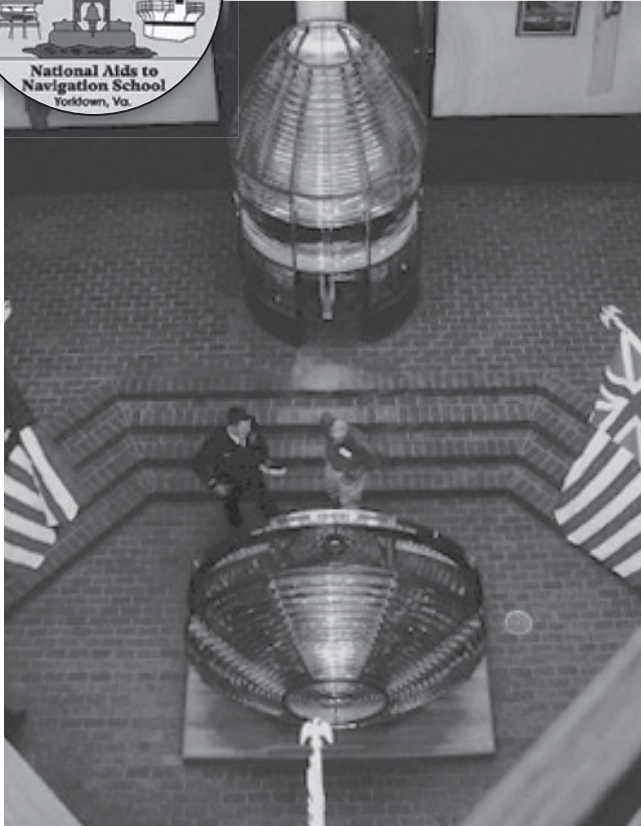
The U.S. Light-House Service and the U.S. Life-Saving Service were sister organizations, one trying to prevent shipwrecks and the other saving their victims. Here are two historic structures of that era, and they’re next door neighbors.

If you have additional information, documents, stories, or photographs, please contact James Charlet at the Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station Historic Site. Phone 252-987-1552, fax 252-987-1559, or email: [chicamacomico@earthlink.net](mailto:chicamacomico@earthlink.net)

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# Outer Banks Lighthouse Society Visits the U.S. Coast Guard's NATON Museum



*1st and 2nd order Fresnel lenses as seen from the third floor balcony at the Aids to Navigation School, Yorktown, Virginia.*

Photo courtesy Bob DaVia



*By Bob DaVia*

The Aid to Navigation systems of the U.S. and its territories are established, operated, and maintained by the Coast Guard to assist mariners in locating their position and to warn of nearby dangers and obstructions. This is done for the benefit of commercial vessels, recreational boaters, and to support the operations of the Armed Forces.

In support of this mission, thousands of Coast Guard personnel – active duty members, reservists, civilians, and auxiliaries – come to Training Center Yorktown to master the latest techniques and applications of the modern Coast Guard. Training Center Yorktown, Virginia, also offers basic and advanced courses to personnel from other armed services, state and federal agencies, and allied nations throughout the world.

The OBLHS traveled to Yorktown for a different reason: it has the largest and most comprehensive collection of Fresnel lenses, aids to navigation equipment, and other artifacts on display in the U.S. Maintenance of these national treasures was entrusted to the National Aids to Navigation (NATON) School when it arrived at Training Center Yorktown in 1986.

LCDR Dave Merrill, the Officer in Charge of NATON, SCBM Bill Weir and Second Class Petty Officer Carrie Premo were our tour guides for the day. Lcdr Merrill met our beach bus that ferried us from Nags Head to Yorktown at the main gate. After a short introduction, and an identification check by base security, Lcdr Merrill directed us to Canfield Hall – home to NATON. 🏠

*Pulling up to the NATON Museum, one can't help but gaze at the vast number of colorful buoys and channel markers that are aids to navigation training equipment. Imagine the number of ships and boats that would risk going aground, miss an inlet entrance, or venture outside safe channel boundaries without these important markers. The USCG maintains buoy tenders just for this job. Constant monitoring and maintenance of the markers by experienced coastguardsmen are needed.*

Photo courtesy of Diana Chappell





*Dating back to 1826 and reportedly seen 52 nautical miles away (normal range is about 17 nm unless unusual atmospheric conditions exist), this 2nd order Fresnel bi-valve lens at left was originally used in the Dry Tortugas Light in Florida. Also called a “clam shell lens,” it measures 7-feet, 4-inches high and 8-feet, 3-inches across the focal plane at the bull’s-eye. In 1943, there were seventeen 2nd order Fresnel lenses on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and four on the Pacific Coast. Today, there are five on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and two on the Pacific Coast. None of North Carolina’s lighthouses utilized a 2nd order Fresnel lens.*

Photo courtesy Diana Chappell



*The museum features six 4th order Fresnel lenses including a fixed-drum, a rotating drum, a bi-valve rotating lens, and a twelve-panel lens. In 1943, there were one-hundred-forty 4th order Fresnel lenses on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and thirty-eight on the Pacific Coast. Today, there are seventeen on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and six on the Pacific Coasts. At right is a fourth order fixed lens.*

*Among North Carolina lights that displayed 4th order Fresnel lenses were Laurel Point, Ocracoke Island, Pamlico Point Shoal, Roanoke Marshes, Roanoke River, and Wade’s Point Light.*

Picture courtesy Bob DaVia



*Entering the Canfield Hall Atrium, all eyes are of course riveted to what many consider the heart of the lighthouse – the lens. The atrium is home to eleven 1st through 6th order Fresnel lenses. This huge 1st order Fresnel lens above once lit the way for countless mariners at the Cape Fowery Lighthouse in Florida. The lens is 9- feet-high and six-feet, one-inch across the inside at the focal plane. Today in North Carolina, Bodie Island and Currituck Beach have working 1st order Fresnel lenses, although Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout originally used them as well.*

Photo courtesy Diana Chappell

# *Living Bridge to the old Lighthouse Service*

## John Coble, Cape Lookout U.S. Lighthouse Keeper

By Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

*John Daniel Coble was born July 22, 1912, grew up in Wilmington, N.C. with his three brothers, and remains a life-long friend with his surviving brother, Sel. John joined the Navy in 1929 at the beginning of the Depression and served in the Far East as a radio operator aboard several ships. Next, he entered the U.S. Lighthouse Service, and when it was merged with the U.S. Coast Guard, he decided to go with the Civil Aeronautics Agency (now the FAA) and retired as Chief Air Traffic Controller in Winston Salem. During the late 1990s, a government official reported that less than a dozen old lighthouse service keepers were still living. John just may be our oldest full-time keeper in America today. And he loved his job as keeper at Cape Lookout—and there is no doubt that John was at the cape long enough to pick up the native pronunciation of the term: Cape /Look-OUT'—accent on the second syllable. "I would have stayed there until I was 105 if they'd have let me!"*

John Coble is approaching 95 years-of-age and is brimming with wonderful stories from his full life. Of all his envious experiences, he had the great opportunity to live at Cape Lookout Light Station as a full-time civilian keeper and as a radio direction finder technician and operator. He had served at the cape as a radio operator in the Navy in the early 1930s, and when he decided to leave the Navy a friend told him about an existing vacancy for a civilian lighthouse keeper at Cape Lookout 1938–41. Following the merger of the U.S. Lighthouse Service and the U.S. Coast Guard, he chose not to join the Coast Guard but to find employment with the Civil Aeronautics Agency (CAA) (now the Federal Aviation Administration [FAA]) and eventually retired as Chief Air Traffic Controller in Winston-Salem, N.C.

John's admiring brother, Sel, is proud of his brother's lighthouse service days and the possibility that he is the oldest living keeper in America. Wayland Baum still lives in Wanchese at over 100 years-of-age, but was not a full-time keeper. John just may deserve the title.

I met John and his family in Greensboro at the Friend's Home, an assisted living complex that has an air of warmth. Sel and his wife, Emily, warned me that John has good and bad days. This was definitely a good day.

My first question to this living link to the old lighthouse service was whether he liked his job. "Oh, man, did I! I enjoyed every minute," he enthusiastically responded.

His first work with the lighthouse service came after he had trained on ship radio equipment on foreign assignments in the late 1930s. He wrote President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of Commerce, Daniel C. Roper, for a service position. He got a reply from the secretary in two days: he had the job. Cape Lookout would become his and wife Lois Gene Scale's home.

To have a radiobeacon, the light station had to be electrified. So, when exactly was the station fitted with electrical equip-

ment and the light automated? The equipment had evidently been at the cape for about four years when John arrived for a fresh start as a keeper and radio operator, double duty in other words. The specific information about electricity arriving on the island and when the light was automated is in the October 1933 Lighthouse Service Bulletin (see boxed text).

According to John's drawings from nearly seven decades ago, the equipment was set up exactly as it originally had been described in the monthly bulletin of the U.S. Lighthouse Service.

John drew a rough sketch and points to the two-story keepers' house; it had two apartments, one up, one down; he was in the upstairs apartment. Two banks of batteries, kept charged with a generator, powered the radio equipment, the electrified lighthouse beacon, and electricity in the keepers' quarters. The radio direction finder transmitted the letter "C" [dash-dot-dash-dot] over and over so ships approaching Cape Lookout knew their location in case the beacon or its daymark couldn't be seen. John continued his description of the light station during the late 1930s, "When I was there, the water was a thousand feet away on the soundside." Sand bags followed by beach nourishment had to be done in recent years to re-establish a buffer between the keepers' quarters and the sound.

John was first there at Cape Lookout for his eighth year in the Navy during the Hoover administration. There was a radio set up in a shack next to the U.S. Coast Guard Station right on the beach. "It was so close you could throw a sweet potato over there and hit it. We ate a lot with them, the Coast Guard. I went there as a keeper but they got me as a radio operator when I got there. I used to work for Western Union when I was a boy. I learned the Morse code fairly good—you know, the 'click-click.' So they put me in the radio shack for a year and then promoted me to radio operator. Later, I got another promotion, which was the same as Staff Sergeant in the Army. I liked it there on the cape so well that a friend told me about a vacancy and I wrote



the Secretary of Commerce, Daniel C. Roper, and I knew I was qualified, and heard from him in three days and he told me to go to the post office on a certain day and they'd arrange to have an examination there for me—he was real nice in his letter—he told me that if I passed the exam that I'd be 'in like Flynn.' The exam took about four hours and about two weeks later, I got the appointment. We thought things would get better when FDR came into office, but it really didn't for about four years.

Most people ask John what in the world did he do out there in a place so lonely? "But it wasn't lonely. We went fishing and swimming; I even had an 18-hole golf course set up out there! The first Christmas I was out there, it was real warm. We got forecasts, so we were looking forward to it. That Christmas, we played barefoot all day and then went up to the lighthouse to have Christmas dinner. Can't get any better than that. We had a good time out there. The Coast Guard and Navy guys and us lighthouse keepers, we'd roll up our pants and walk the clean beach and a huge oyster bed—good oysters, the best. We also served as game wardens and if we saw anyone doing something wrong, we had the authority to arrest them. Out of season hunters were the most common violators.

"Miss Carrie [Davis], she had that little store down from the lighthouse, had drinks and snacks and maybe a bottle of beer back under the counter, she was a nice old lady and her husband was dead when I was there but she had eight girls and I knew every one of them. One time, Mr. Davis and the entire family, they were going to Florida for a vacation, back then it was by train. When they got to South Carolina, they decided to stop at a hotel and rest and go on in with the kids the next day. After they boarded the train and left the station for Florida, she ran up to her husband, she was only about 85 pounds and nervous-like and her chin quivered when she was upset. She said, 'Mr. Davis,' she called him 'Mr. Davis,' 'stop the train! We've left the baby in the hotel!' They backed that train up a mile and a half to Florence to go get the baby—it was still asleep on the bed," John laughs with still-fresh amusement. "Miss Carrie had square dances every Saturday night. People really loved her place—we'd have at least 30 or 40 people.

"I'm going to tell you another story about Miss Carrie. She was a character. We had sheep on the island and horses and cows and they'd eat their way down the beach to the lighthouse and turn around and eat their way back. We had a hurricane one year and a little black sheep got lost. I made the mistake of feed-



*John Coble with his wife, Lois Gene, in his younger days. Lois loved Cape Lookout and she loved living there. She enjoyed not only the work but also the camaraderie with the other keepers' and coastguardsmen's families. When John had to pull extra long duty on days when the assistant keepers had to be away, Lois watched the light for him so he could rest*

ing him. My wife and I stayed in one of the fishing shacks—the owners let us have it during the winter. Well, I couldn't get rid of that little black sheep. She'd go to the station to work with me, sit on the steps 'till I was finished, then follow me back to the fisherman's shack. She wouldn't let me out of her sight. One Saturday they were having a square dance and the sheep followed me. The tide was low and I stepped up on the pier, but the little sheep couldn't reach it so she went out in the water to get around the pier and started to swim to keep up with us as we walked down the beach. I knew she'd drown because her wool would get water in it and sink. Miss Carrie had an outhouse in back of her store, so I went in the water and got the sheep and took her and put her in the outhouse because I didn't want to have to walk all the way home to tie her up. We went on and joined the group—we fished, talked, danced, visited. I went back towards the outhouse and it was black as pitch, but we were

## Electrification of Cape Lookout Light Station, North Carolina

"The installation of a radiobeacon and electric lighting equipment at Cape Lookout Light Station was completed on August 15 [1933]. The outfit consists of 2 gasoline engines direct connected to 5 kw generators, 2 sets of 200-ampere lead-acid storage batteries and two 200-watt transmitters with the necessary operating devices.

"The 75-millimeter incandescent oil vapor lamp in the tower has been replaced with four 250-watt T-14 lamps, increasing the candlepower from 77,000 to 160,000. The antenna is suspended between the light tower, about 150 feet high, and an 80-foot steel tower adjacent to the radio building, the distance between the two being approximately 210 feet.

"The entire radiobeacon equipment including the storage batteries was that removed from Lightship No. 72, and the new equipment purchased consisted only of generator sets, wire, cables, and conduit."

young and could get anywhere without light, and heard this death-chilling scream Miss Carrie had gone to use the outhouse and when she opened the door, the sheep jumped out of the outhouse into her lap. She was so mad at me, she didn't talk to me for three months!

"As a keeper, I had to take any message from a buoy tender and relay the transmission to headquarters in Norfolk. I'd send in severe weather reports, took turns as a keeper, and checked the charge on the cells (density of the electrolytes) in the batteries and if they needed more charging or if they were deteriorating. This took four hours each week. Two banks of batteries produced 110 volts.

"The transmitter was tuned to a certain frequency and sent the message to the antennae on top of the lighthouse. The hardest part was that we couldn't get a ground with all that water and sky around—not even the fellas from Washington could figure it out. We finally buried a copper plate, about 50 feet around and put in the ground. John's memory is so sharp even today that he sketched out the arrangement of the equipment at the light station.

"We didn't have the luxury of computers in those days but we did have a very ingenious system for automating the timing of our radio transmissions. Imagine a cylinder about a foot high and 6 inches in diameter with 60 holes in it to represent one hour and it was driven by a clock. We'd arrange pegs in the holes however we wanted them. On the hour at exactly 9 o'clock that cylinder would turn over and turn on the generator. Nobody was there; it would turn it on automatically. At two minutes past the hour, the generator would have the transmitter warmed up and everything and it would start a transmission 'dah-de-dah-de' [dash, dot, dash, dot] for the letter C. That was Cape Lookout's radio transmission identity. We worked with Frying Pan Shoals in Wilmington and Diamond Shoals off Hatteras. We'd transmit for a minute then cut off, then Frying Pan Shoals transmitted for a minute and shut off, then Diamond Shoals transmitted for a minute and the cycle would start over. A navigator used triangulation by fixing the three points on a chart to tell him exactly where he was. Once we got our radio going at Cape Lookout, we didn't need the Navy. Something most people don't know is that the light also flashed the letter C: on for dash, off for dot, on for dash, off for dot.

"Keepers had to paint and do maintenance a lot. I got a water trough set up for the horses and other animals so they wouldn't break down our fence and try to get at our grass. I wrote [fifth district] Supt. M.C. Manyon in Norfolk to get permission. I've seen the horses dig up to their bellies to get fresh water near the beach while the cows waited. When the horses got their fill, the cows would take over. And to fight mosquitoes, the horses would go out in the water until just their nostrils stuck above the water in the sound. It was a funny sight! Like a million bullfrogs out there! They survived on the island grass, so we called them 'marsh ponies.' And then there was Dabney, I'll never forget him, from Alabama. He decided to get him a milk cow, so he got one of the wild ones and half-trained her until he thought he could milk her. So, he ordered four bales of hay and some feed and the mailboat brought it out to him. He fed that good food to the cow and she died!

"There wasn't a tree on Cape Lookout when I was there. I tried to have a garden, but it too hard. We had wild celery and I loved to pick them, root and all, and eat it right there or in a salad, better than any celery you've ever had. I did have a little garden of tomatoes and cucumbers and squash, but the cattle would knock everything down and ruin them. After the cattle were removed, they planted trees and there's a regular forest out there now."

"The first order Fresnel lens was still there and had five bulbs in a changer. That lens was half as big as this room, a big thing. We didn't dare touch the lens or even blow our breath of it! Part of the clockwork mechanism was still there and the curtains were also, but they weren't used as much as in the old days. We were warned to protect that lens.

"The Coast Guard men I knew were Jethro Quidley from Portsmouth, Harvey Nelson, O'Dell Guthrie from Marshallburg, and Coast Guard Keeper John Newton, Fred Gillikin the Chief Warrant Officer Dan Yeomans, and Calvin Salter—I knew them all. Most were local and served all their lives at one station until they retired. They grew up handling boats, they could really handle them. The lighthouse keepers I knew were 'Cap'n' Ben Harris, quite a man who studied and got a master's license with unlimited tonnage, Boyd Smith, Homer Austin, and Bill Geaslin.

"There was a grocery store, C.D. Jones and Company, right there on Main St. in Beaufort with the tail end of the store out over the water like all of them and we traded with them—they were real nice. Everybody at the cape traded with them they were so nice. I remember one time my wife was going to Norfolk and she wanted a girdle. She called this guy in the grocery store, Johnny Radcliffe, and asked him to get such and such girdle for her from one of the stores and he did and it arrived that afternoon at the lighthouse on the mailboat! Once a month we'd go over and pay our bill. Another Mr. Jones had a bike shop, and he did a good business. I got to know him right well and one day he asked if I needed any eggs. I said 'Sure,' and he gave me a 12-quart bucket full of eggs for a dollar! And the bucket! I gave them to the Coast Guard.

"Believe it or not but we had a contract with Cleveland Davis in Harkers Island and he ran the mailboat that ran out to Cape Lookout, he hauled our groceries, mail, and all that sort of thing. He had this old boat about 24-feet long, could carry about 12 people plus groceries and what have you. And you know about gas problems today...well, it was the same then and his boat had a 2 cylinder engine. He'd leave the cape to come over to Harkers Island in the morning and pick up the mail and what have you and if anybody wanted to go to Beaufort, he'd be there by twelve o'clock; he'd come back to Harkers Island at one o'clock at the post office to drop off the mail he'd picked up and then come back out to the cape. He would start his engine on gasoline and after the engines got hot, he'd switch to kerosene; he'd run it for about 15 minutes. He had a cup on top of the engine with paraffin in it and switch over to it when it was melted and burn that. It'd go 'POP! POP! POP!' But he'd get there! It was as dependable as any gasoline you've ever had in your life. Goes to show you there's more than one way to skin a cat.



"With the light electrified, I could sleep 3-4 hours at a time. Lois Gene set her watch exactly and would watch the light while I rested. After a while, I'd go out and check to make sure that everything was running well.

"I would have gotten more money if I had taken the job offered to me on the Diamond Lightship, but I was not about to accept it. At Cape Lookout I made \$95 per month plus allowance for my quarters. The lighthouse service provided toilet tissue, lights, soap, everything. The quarters were nice; the walls were about 4-5 bricks thick and stayed cool and in the winter we had a good Arcola heating system.

"Our batteries were DC out there and we had a converter to make it AC and we loved to listen to Raleigh and Wilmington—we had good reception.

"The district inspector would visit with us maybe once a year and have dinner with us. He'd make sure everything was running well and move on."

Having worked for the Federal Aviation Administration, John is aware of the role that former lighthouse keepers played in the development of the airways systems. During the late 1920s and early '30s, many former keepers, because of their training and experience, were hired by the federal government to help build, maintain, and operate the airways beacon systems and radio equipment at airports. Since many lighthouse keepers were familiar with both beacon operations and radio transmissions, they offered valuable experience in the development of airways operations. John, with both his radio experience and training in the Navy and his lighthouse service, was especially suited for employment by the CAA and its successor, the FAA. After leaving the lighthouse service, his first assignment with the CAA was at Daniel Field near Augusta, Georgia. Soon after he arrived, he was asked by the base commander to transmit a message over the CAA radio system to alert a plane on patrol in the Atlantic near the Georgia coast to search for a German submarine that had been reportedly sighted in the area. Although the Air Force had been unable to contact their plane, John was successful in contacting it using the CAA radio equipment. Coincidentally, Mr. Newton, who was still a keeper at Cape Lookout, had just written him about the sighting of two German submarines in the area around Cape Lookout.

John ends our session with a couple of final looks back at the place he loved to call home. "While I was in the Navy out there, we had two hurricanes. We gave regular weather reports to Norfolk and I had to work in the instrument shack. The storm was rough and I had to put on hip boots and crawl from the barracks to the shack. The anemometer read 130 knots, about 150 mph. I crawled back to the barracks because you can't stand up in that—there's nothing to stop the wind out there unless you stop it! When I crawled back to the radio the second time, there was no reading. I took my flashlight and looked and the anemometer had blown off. About three days later, the Coast Guard found it about 300 feet away on a sand dune,"



*Is this the oldest living U.S. Lighthouse keeper? John Daniel Coble turns 95 years-old in July and was a full time keeper at Cape Lookout during the late 1930s-early '40s. After the lighthouse service was merged with the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939, John chose to remain a civilian keeper before retiring in 1941. As an experienced Western Union telegrapher, Naval and U.S. Lighthouse Service radio direction finder operator, he was a natural to find work with the Civil Aeronautics Agency, forerunner of today's Federal Aviation Administration. John notes that many keepers were hired to operate and maintain the radio direction beacons that lit major American flyways that had been originally built and installed by the Airways Division of the U.S. Lighthouse Service.*

John chuckled. "But during the next hurricane, there were two houses that sat right on the beach. We watched from the Coast Guard cupola and they just got washed away.

"Lois Gene loved that place. She cried like a baby for a week about having to leave. She had friends there, they played cards together, walked the beach together, fished together, gathered oysters together. She enjoyed every bit of it.

"A Methodist preacher would come down and visit all the Coast Guard stations as far down as Oak Island. He'd stay about a week; he had a portable organ he carried in a suitcase. He'd catch a ride to the island, we never knew when he was coming, and somebody would go get him and we'd all meet. The Navy, Coast Guard, keepers, we'd have a revival-like. And he'd preach up a storm for days! And then there was Van Willis who was one of the old life-saving surfmen and he was retiring. He'd been there forever and had a nice house on Harkers Island with a porch that went around all four sides of his house—he was pretty feeble by then. He told me he liked just sitting on his porch and looking at the water. It was so different there. I didn't want to leave that place either." ✎

**Editor's Note:** *John Daniel Coble gave me his notes, his recorded voice (he sounds a lot like Martin Sheen), and his sketch of the buildings at Cape Lookout, and I felt he'd given me part of his life. Thank you to Sel and Emily Coble for their hospitality and helping with the information gathered from John.*

*Outer Banks members who arrived early for last October's Annual Keeper's Dinner weekend gathered at Bodie Island to watch the light come on. John Gaskill and Marilyn Austin Meads, both keeper's children, met us to talk about growing up at Bodie Island. At lower left are Julia Hollenbeck and her helper, "Fox." Due to lack of space in this issue, more photos of the weekend cannot be published. Fortunately, Julia has posted an outstanding summary of the entire weekend at her website <http://www.wheelmeon.org> complete with great pictures.*



## OBLHS's NEXT EVENT!

Mark your calendar, arrange for a free weekend to join us for one of the most special weekends ever planned by OBLHS! This is all for you! OBLHS's special weekend **October 12-13**, we will visit Ocracoke Lighthouse, take a ghost walk, visit Cape Hatteras, and Chicamacomico for a tour and special presentations, a beach bonfire, and a visit to the old North River Lighthouse, now known as the Rodanthe Community Center. Don't miss it!

*Paula and Lauren Liebrecht (center) and Jane Morgan, "The Lighthouse Ladies" won the Bodie Island Award for 2006. These awards are one of the most important recognitions given to those who are outstanding volunteers and donors in the lighthouse community. These gals have given much of their free time for Chesapeake and Outer Banks Lights.*

Photo courtesy Lauren and Paula Liebrecht





# Roanoke River Maritime Museum Opens with Expansion and New Exhibits

By Doward Jones, Jr.

Strolling today through Plymouth's quaint downtown, it's difficult to believe that less than a century ago that the Roanoke River's passage gave way to a bustling hub of activity. Wharfs overflowed and stores lined the waterfront. Ships plied the waterways carrying cargo to destinations far-reaching for a rural community with little roadways.

After the Dismal Swamp Canal opened early in the nineteenth century, new markets developed in the North for wood products, fish, and agricultural produce. In 1810, Congress approved funds for the Roanoke River Lightship to be anchored at the mouth of the river. It stood as a guiding vigil for vessels departing from or approaching the Port of Plymouth until the outbreak of the Civil War.

Another note of the river's importance came in 1866 when the first lighthouse was commissioned to guide traffic into the Roanoke, which boosted the economy of the region, and, thus to the nation's development.

Today, Plymouth has taken this heritage full circle with the opening of the replica 1866 river light and the Roanoke River Maritime Museum. The river light, completed in 2003, offers an insight to the structure's architecture, history of the U.S. Lighthouse Service, keepers' lifestyles as well as their duties to keep the river light at peak operation.

The new year in 2007 welcomes the completion of the museum, which tells the story of how the waterways linked the port town to the outside world. Housed in a former automobile dealership across from the lighthouse, displays and artifacts fill the 5000-square-foot interior. Here you can take a journey just as the Mayflower traveled local waters carrying passengers and local goods before a fateful day when it capsized. Photographs arranged in unique displays provide an insight to the lifestyles of how the local population interacted with nature and the land.

A locally built 1889 vernacular fishing boat stands as a centerpiece to the main gallery. Used by three generations for over 100 years the vessel not only fished local waters, but also was used to peddle produce and fish traveling to various towns along the Albemarle Sound. From transportation, fishing, hunting or just plain fun the story is captured in the museum for all to enjoy. For the younger set (or anyone who has the inkling) there is

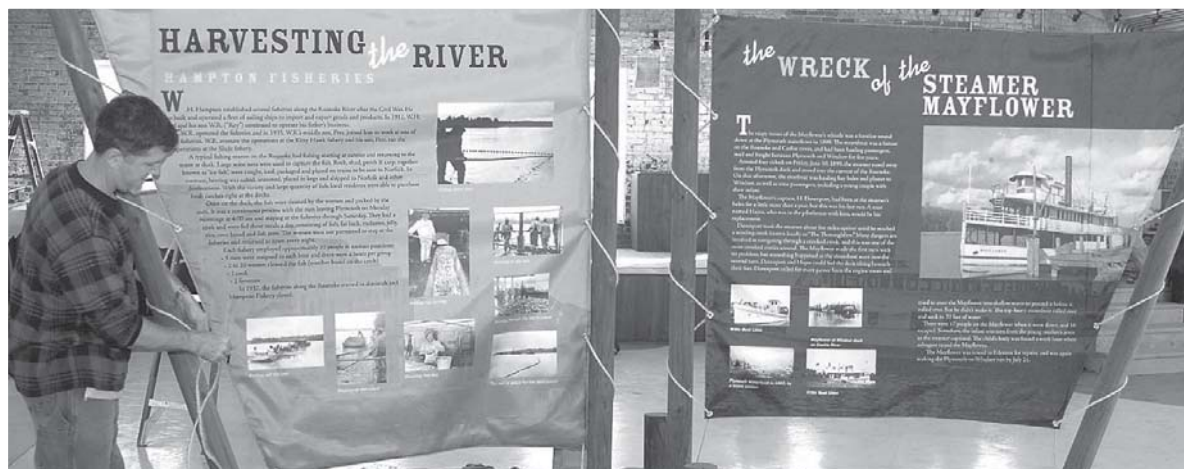
a boat to sail and navigate. Aquariums filled with local aquatic creatures will educate both children and adults on the importance of the environment and how critical it is that we all take part in caring for our land, water, and air.

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society will also have displays on the seaside lights that have made the North Carolina lighthouses famous. The exhibits will offer a gateway for visitors providing information and inspiration for their journey to the northern or southern Outer Banks shores.

Come experience an important link to Plymouth's regional history and explore Plymouth's growing waterfront. Many new shops and restaurants have opened providing diverse opportunities for the entire family. Downtown Plymouth is located a short distance off Highway 64. Signs mark the exit and there is plenty of free parking for cars, buses, and RV's.

For more information please visit [www.visitwashingtoncountync.com](http://www.visitwashingtoncountync.com) or call the Washington County Chamber of Commerce at (252) 793-4804 ✎ .

*Chuck Nintzel of Design Dimension installs one of the new displays in the Roanoke River Maritime Museum. The exhibits and artifacts provide visitors with insight on the importance of the region's waterways and how they shaped the area's history.*





# LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

*Updates on the area lighthouse events & schedules*



Spring 2007 Vol. XIII no. 1

<http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org>: News, articles, lighthouse info

**VISIT US!** Join or apply for memberships/donations online at our .org site. 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).

**Currituck Beach Lighthouse** is owned by the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. and re-opens Tuesday, April 3rd for the 2007 climbing season. The light station's summer hours of operation are 10 am to 6 pm daily until late October. The cost to climb is \$7 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. For further information, email [info@currituckbeachlight.com](mailto:info@currituckbeachlight.com) or call (252) 453-8152. **Congratulations** to Keepers Meghan and Luis Agresto (and son Benicio) on the birth of second son, Paolo Tobias, born Nov. 9th (on his dad's birthday!).

**Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse (reproduction)**, located in Manteo, is an exterior reproduction of an 1877 screwpile light that was originally located near Wanchese. It is open from 9-5, Tuesday-Saturday with exhibits, free of charge. The lighthouse is located on Manteo's charming waterfront. 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.

**Bodie Island Lighthouse** Good news: the emergency repairs to Bodie Island Lighthouse began the second week of January and should be finished in three weeks. The base of the tower will be re-opened to the public this spring. Watch for details for a small celebration! Federal funds are needed for complete restoration, estimated at over two million dollars. 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! Bodie Island Visitor Center (252) 441-5711.

**Bodie Island Life-Saving and Coast Guard Station** are located on Highway 12 in south Nags Head near MP 22. Stabilization of the buildings will begin in June in preparation for their relocation. The structures are currently in danger of destruction by the ocean. Relocation will ensure the preservation of these historic structures.

**Cape Hatteras Lighthouse** is located in the village of Buxton off NC 12. 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. The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse will open to the public for climbing from April 20, 2007, (the first day is fee-free) through Columbus Day, October 8. The fee is \$7 for adults. Lighthouse grounds are open year-round with the nearby Hatteras Island Visitor Center and Museum of the Sea open every day except for Christmas. Recently, Forestry Services installed eight reproduction windows, returning the tower to its original appearance..

**Cape Lookout Lighthouse** is part of the Cape Lookout National Seashore. A Gala Celebration of the opening of the Harkers Island Visitor Center was held January 27. It has a new theatre, a new film, new displays, and an expanded Eastern National outlet. **Lighthouse Open House dates: You must make reservations on the designated date. For reservations, call on that special day (about 3 weeks ahead of the climbing date)** (252) 728-5766. **March 10, 2007.** Reservations accepted on Wed. February 21, beginning at 9:00 a.m. **June 16, 2007** - Reservations accepted on Wed. May 30, beginning at 9:00 a.m. **August 4,** Reservations accepted on Wed. July 18, beginning at 9:00 a.m. **November 3, 2007** Reservations accepted on Wed. October 17, beginning at 9:00 a.m. If you would like to become a Volunteer-in-the-Park, contact the park at (252) 728-2250 and Richard Meissner, Volunteer Coordinator. Private funding through partnerships to restore the lighthouse can sponsor stair repairs and possible opening of the tower for climbing on a more frequent basis that the four special days each year. Visit park headquarters at the end of Harkers Island and the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center next door. For more info: (252) 728-2250 or see <http://www.nps.gov/cal/>.

**Ocracoke Lighthouse** is part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and has a new paint job! Ocracoke's base is open when volunteers are available—usually in the summer months. The NPS visitor center is located near the Ocracoke-Cedar Island ferry terminal near the village and has an Eastern National bookstore and restroom facilities. It 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. The Ocracoke Preservation Society is seeing that repairs are made to the keepers' quarters and new flooring is going in.

**Oak Island Lighthouse** is owned by the Town of Caswell Beach with ongoing cooperative efforts with the Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse. Take a look at the Friends of Oak Island's new website at [www.oakislandlighthouse.org](http://www.oakislandlighthouse.org). Find out how to join at <http://www.caswellbeach.org/lighthouse.html>. Contact Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse, 1100 Caswell Beach Road, Caswell Beach, NC 28465 or email [lighthouse@caswellbeach.org](mailto:lighthouse@caswellbeach.org). Donald Parker, new chair of FOIL reports that the group has been working on developing a lighthouse visitation policy/schedule. FOIL hopes to open the lighthouse to the public for tours in conjunction with the seasonal tours of the adjacent USCG station in May.





# LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

*Updates on the area lighthouse events & schedules*

**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. This small light played a big role during the Civil War as a blockade runner signal station.

**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, announced spring hours beginning March 16: open Tuesday-Saturday 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday 11 am to 4 pm. Closed on Mondays.

**Roanoke River Lighthouse (reproduction)** is located on the town of Plymouth's beautiful waterfront about halfway between the northern and southern Outer Banks. OBLHS will have a display with all N.C. lights in the maritime museum (opening fall 2007) located near the lighthouse. Call (252) 217-2204 for hours open or to arrange a group visit.

**Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum** is located by the ferry docks at the southern tip of Hatteras Island. Basic hours are Mon-Fri 9 am to 5 pm thanks to volunteers. For more information please see <http://www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com/> or call (252) 986-2995 or 2996. The National Park Service loaned the original pedestal of the Cape Hatteras 1854 first order Fresnel lens along with panels of prisms in park possession to the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum. The USCG re-installed the existing DCB 2-36 beacon in the Cp. Hatteras Lighthouse as an active aid-to-navigation.

**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 <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. The site is open from mid-April through November. **The Beach Apparatus Drill Reenactment is back!** USCG Station Oregon Inlet and USCG Station Hatteras Inlet have each created two drill teams comprised of station personnel who perform the Drill Reenactment, a tradition begun in 1871, and takes place every Thursday at 2 p.m. June, July, and August.

**Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving** boat house has been restored and the buildings have been lifted to guard against flooding. The main house is next to be restored to the 1904-15 period and is still under repair in many stages.

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

**MEMBERSHIP correspondence and donations go to Bob DaVia at OBLHS MEMBERSHIP, PO BOX 2141, Winterville, NC 28590**

\*\*\* 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.

\*\*\***PLEASE READ:** We are using a mailing service and bulk rate permit. 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!**

**Thank you to Robert DaVia** for the fantastic job he is doing as Membership Chair!

Do you have a **new email address?** Please send it to [info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org](mailto:info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org) And, please update your information when using your return envelope!

**Thank you to our recent donors:** Wheel Me On, Karl J. Dailey, J. David Fraley, Gerald & Patricia Sink, John & Margaret McCombs, James Williford, Shirley J. Reeve, Meghan Agresto, Katherine & Glenn Dunn, Barbara King, Paul MacClennan & Family, Edna Lennon, Lorraine F. Pregoner, David Biggy & Save the Lighthouses Campaign, W.R. "Bill" Dowe, Darlene Howland to the BILH fund, Bett Padgett (also a memorial in memory of Leslie Moon), Ralph Burroughs, and Kim & John Gottshall Grant Wallace, and Leslie Keith & Mary Ann Kennedy.

*Thank you, members and friends! You are helping to save history.*



*Mr. Charles Fulcher and his grandson, Nathan, holds an original brass U.S. Lighthouse Establishment oil can and the original wreck reports and award documents for the Gold Life-Saving Medal for the rescue of the Efraim Williams on Dec. 22, 1884. Mr. Fulcher and his family are loaning the artifacts to the Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station for display. Congrats to all!*

# 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

**Officers for 2006-2007:** You voted unanimously to approve  
all **Board of Directors**

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[bett@bettpadgett.com](mailto:bett@bettpadgett.com)

**Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Vice President** (252) 247-5436  
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Membership Chair, **Robert DaVia**  
[rdavia@seathelights.com](mailto:rdavia@seathelights.com)

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,  
**Virginia Howell**

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 – and we welcome new board member, **Bill Padgett**

## Welcome to Our Members!

Being the new Membership Chairperson, there may have been a slight delay in receiving renewals. Dues that are mailed to the Morehead City PO Box are collected and mailed to me weekly. We have established a new mailing address for your renewals so any delays should start to diminish. The new address is:

**OBLHS MEMBERSHIP • PO BOX 2141 • WINTERVILLE NC 28590**

As you may have noticed, your mailing label now contains your membership expiration date. I would like to thank everyone for sending in their renewals on time. As a non-profit organization, money we spend on sending out renewal notices is less money we have to maintain the lighthouses we all care so much for.

I would like to welcome the newest members of our society:

**Tim & Marilyn Basden (VA); N. Ned Bixler (OH); Joel & Peggy Brothers (NC); Michael Clark (PA); Pat Compton (NC); Deborah Deuerling (MD); Bill & Sheila French (NC); Susan & Clinton Fulcher (VA); David Gyertson (VA); Sherry Hamilton (VA); Homer Phifer (NC); Kaye Shutt (NC); Brad & Kendra Sykes (MA); Betsy Bass (OH); Noel & Christine Troike (PA); Trisha, Thomas, Authur, Kimmie & Caroline Eshenbaugh (PA).**

**Welcome Aboard!!**

If you have any questions about your membership, please feel free to contact me at the address above, by email to [membership@outerbankslighthousesociety.org](mailto:membership@outerbankslighthousesociety.org) or (252) 439-0776.

Keep the lights shining, Robert DaVia





# *Dimming the Light...* *Our Lighthouse Family:*

*"The Last Voyage, The Longest, The Best"*  
— Thomas Wolfe

LOOK HOMEWARD ANGEL

**Captain Jimmy “Woo Woo” Harker** crossed the bar June 25, 2006. Wreathes were thrown into the sea by Cape Lookout, his favorite place in the world. Cap’n Woo and his wife, Dr. Margaret Harker, have been constant supporters of OBLHS. They were generous to our members on two occasions, taking us for moonlit cruises on the Carolina Princess along the Morehead City and Beaufort waterfronts—insisting that we pay nothing. There absolutely will be no greater boat captain than Woo.

We also bid adieu to OBLHS member Dorothy Simpson’s husband, **John Louis Simpson** on Aug 12, 2006.

**Leslie Moon** crossed the bar in November. We will miss him so much! He always stayed with his beloved Cheyenne, a Dalmatian, to wait on Judy to climb the various towers or where dogs were not allowed on our special trips. Leslie flipped hamburgers for one of our special weekends on the OBX and ran them up and down 3 flights of stairs until the group approved them! His wife, Judy, will have to attend our future events and keep Cheyenne! “Moonpie,” we shall always miss you.

**Bob Huggett**, site historian for the Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station, passed away on December 19, 2006. Bob’s friends at the station say, “Bob was a incredibly generous, selfless, humble gentleman who greatly enhanced the lives of all who knew him. His constant dedication to Chicamacomico was evident to all who had the opportunity to spend any length of time with him...Bob has left a wonderful legacy behind through the amazing amount of research, donations, and body of work he contributed to Chicamacomico. Memorial donations may be made to Dare Home, Health, and Hospice, PO Box 1000, Manteo, NC, 27954 or to Chicamacomico Historical Association, PO Box 5, Rodanthe, NC, 27968.

With his family and close friends around him, the man known around the world as “Mr. Lighthouse,” and founder of the Maine Lighthouse Museum, **CWO Kenneth Black**, (USCG Retired) passed away in Rockport, Maine, on Sunday, January 28. Black is largely credited as being one of the principle founders of the lighthouse preservation movement in the U. S., and the first person to have a national newsletter about lighthouses, which always ended with his handwritten, personal comments and the statement, “Be neighborly,” a philosophy that he was known to live by. Two years ago his gigantic collection of magnificent Fresnel lenses and other artifacts, through the help of civic-minded community leaders, moved to its new headquarters on the Rockland waterfront and was named the Maine Lighthouse Museum. Although retired for many years, Ken spent long hours every week volunteering his services to the lighthouse community and other worthwhile causes such as the Salvation Army, Rotary, Shriners, and the American Lighthouse Foundation. He received countless awards such as the Coast Guard ‘Public Service Commendation,’ the Harbour Lights ‘Lifetime Achievement’ award, the Lighthouse Digest, ‘Beacon of Light’ award, and the American Lighthouse Foundation’s ‘Keeper of the Light’ Award, to name a few. Even a book about life after retirement included a full chapter about Ken Black. He was the cheerleader behind the creation of *Lighthouse Families* by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts. Farewell, friend. *Thanks to Doug Bingham and Tim Harrison for this information..* ✂

# **The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society is pleased to announce its Fresnel Prism Awards for 2006**

**Each year, the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society sponsors awards to individuals within the lighthouse community who have contributed significantly to the preservation of lighthouses and their history.**

**These awards were presented at the Annual Keeper's Dinner October 2006**



**President's Award:**  
**Larry Belli, former Supt. Cape**  
**Hatteras National Seashore**  
**The Dare County Tourist Bureau**  
**Julia Hollenbeck**  
**Cheryl Shelton-Roberts**  
**Bill Schneider**

**Currituck Beach Award:**  
**Meghan Agresto and Luis Garcia**

**Ocracoke:**  
**Paula and Lauren Liebrecht**  
**Jane Morgan (The Lighthouse Ladies)**

**Cape Hatteras Award:**  
**Lynne and Windsor Jacques**

**Bodie Island Award:**  
**Representative David Price**

**Cape Lookout Award:**  
**Margaret Lewis Gillikin**

**Oak Island Award:**  
**Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse**

**Founders Award:**  
**Ralph Burroughs**