



LIGHTHOUSE NEWS

DEDICATED TO THE

UNITED STATES LIGHTHOUSE ESTABLISHMENT

Volume XIV Number 2

Summer 2008

Bald Head Lighthouse Has Spirited History



“Old Baldy,” built in 1817, is North Carolina’s oldest existing tower and may be the most haunted as well. Do we believe in such superlatives? Our members will travel to the island and take a special tour during our annual Keeper’s Weekend in October to find out.

By Cheryl Shelton-Roberts & Norma Elizabeth

Situated on an island that carries a name that conjures up visions of an aged, hairless head is hardly the way to honor the state’s oldest light station site. If you think 1817 makes it old, think again. The first tower built on this island harkens back to the Revolutionary period in 1794. One can immediately feel the history lingering here—even the engraved plaque over the front door is carved with Roman numerals “AD 1817”—and what a perfect setting this bit of paradise is to host a ghost. In fact, there have been no less than dozens of reports of sightings.

Further, the reports continue; indeed, recently an older couple visiting the lighthouse took pictures of one another at Old Baldy. When the wife got home and downloaded the images, she couldn’t believe her eyes. In one of the pictures of her husband, a little girl clearly appeared behind and to his left. The only thing is that when they were at the lighthouse, there wasn’t another soul around. Or was there? According to records, a former keeper’s daughter died at the lighthouse at a young age.

Frequent occurrences are images of orbs appearing on visitors’ souvenir pictures while visiting the light

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station. These spots of light are ghosts' energies, so paranormal experts claim, and have shown up both inside on the steps to the lantern room as well as outside the lighthouse at all hours of the evening and night.

An excellent account about ghosts of Bald Head is a brief publication *Lighthouse Ghosts & Carolina Legends* by Norma Elizabeth and Bruce Roberts, published by Lighthouse Publications. Read on, and make your own judgment about Bald Head's spirited past.

The "denuded" dunes on the island's southern shore gave Bald Head Island its name. Its semitropical climate, breathtaking natural beauty, and more than 400 years of remarkable maritime history have given this island oasis its unique heritage. And its resident ghosts continue to give it extra-special charm.

Jane Carr Oakley, former employee and "curator of ghosts" for the Old Baldy [Lighthouse] Foundation and The Smith Island Museum of History, attests to the presence of at least three bona fide ghosts on Bald Head Island: the sad and lovely Theodosia Burr Alston; a woman with bright red hair who seems to be of Scottish descent and who may in fact be the very lively spirit of a Mrs. Cloden (sometimes spelled Cloadan or Kalodon); and a gentleman dapperly dressed in a pinstripe suit. Theodosia has been seen so many times by so many people over so many years that a bed-and-breakfast inn has been named in her honor, Theodosia's, where guests are invited to rock in the chairs and swing in the porch swings as they "relax and absorb the tranquil beauty of this seaside setting."

Poor Theodosia herself however seems to have a very hard time staying in any one place, let alone sitting still and relaxing. She is most often seen wandering alone and seemingly forlorn, sometimes along the beach, sometimes on the golf course near Theodosia's Bed and Breakfast, and at least once trying on someone's grandmother's wedding dress. People say that they smell a distinct musky scent before they see this beautiful young woman whose journey aboard the Patriot came to such an untimely and unpleasant end in January 1813. Theodosia was on her way from her home near Georgetown, South Carolina, to visit her father, Aaron Burr, in New York City when pirates attacked the small pilot boat off the coast of North

Carolina. The Patriot—with no living soul aboard—eventually drifted ashore near Cape Hatteras.

To this day no one knows for sure what happened to Theodosia. Did the pirates kill her along with the Patriot's crew and other passengers? Did she manage to escape from the attackers and make her way to shore? Or did one of the pirates take her to his Outer Banks cottage and allow her to live out her days in relative comfort but cut off from the rest of the world? All that is known for sure is that she has been seen myriad times from Cape Hatteras southward to Bald Head Island. She always seems to be searching for something—perhaps the portrait of herself that she was taking to her father in New York, the portrait that, apparently unknown to Theodosia, showed up years ago under somewhat mysterious circumstances on the Outer Banks and now hangs in a private museum in New York City.

Jane, who conducted historic tours of Bald Head Island (part of the Smith Island complex) from 1992 until recently, credits Cap'n Charles "Charlie" Norton Swan for most of what she knows about Theodosia. Cap'n Charlie served as head keeper of the Cape Fear Light Station on Bald Head Island from 1903 to 1933, and he told many stories about the lovely dark-haired young woman who wears a long flowing dress. While Jane hasn't personally "met" Theodosia, she and her husband, Doug, and their Siamese cat, Indigo, have indeed "met" red-haired Mrs. Cloden and/or the dapper gentleman in the pinstripe suit. These two "people" appear to have taken up permanent residence in one or more of the three restored/reconstructed keepers' dwellings at the historic light station.

Jane and her husband spent a weekend in the middle of the three dwellings. The minute they entered the two-story house, Indigo made a mad dash for the bed and crawled under the bedspread. The spooked cat, his eyes as big as saucers, refused to eat or drink anything the entire weekend, and he only came out of hiding at night. Jane and Doug watched helplessly as their scared pet gingerly crept from under the covers and "ran patterns" all the while howling mournfully. One night while they were trying to catch a few minutes of sleep in between Indigo's frenzied runs and pitiful moans, Doug "felt someone sit on the bed"—and it wasn't the cat.



Photo Illustration of Theodosia Based on Reported Sightings

Jane notes that another couple who spent the night in this very same house reported seeing the man in a pinstripe suit looking out the window toward Frying Pan Shoals. And when a family rented the house, their young son almost “drove his parents crazy talking about his invisible friend.” He told them he met a “very nice” lady with bright red hair at the top of the stairs every night, and she would ask him questions. Jane also mentions the honeymooners who rented one of the other keepers’ dwellings and were more than a little surprised to see the bride’s wedding gown “moving” while it hung in the bedroom closet.

When you plan your visit to historic, beautiful Bald Head Island, be sure to leave plenty of time to tour Cape Fear Light Station and see Old Baldy, North Carolina’s oldest standing lighthouse. Spend some extra time looking at the exhibits and talking with staff and volunteers at The Smith Island Museum of History, housed in one of the keepers’ dwellings. While you’re there you just may catch a glimpse of

some of the island’s most charming residents.

For more about Bald Head Island (also known as Smith Island), contact The Old Baldy Foundation, P.O. Box 3007, Bald Head Island, NC 28461; 910/457-7481; <http://www.oldbaldy.org>; keeperscottage@oldbaldy.org; or visit the Lighthouse Friends Web site, <http://www.lighthousefriends.com>. For more about Theodosia’s Bed and Breakfast contact the inn at Harbour Village, Bald Head Island, NC 28461; 800/656-1812 or 910/457-6563; <http://www.theodosias.com>.

The Lighthouse News thanks Norma Elizabeth and Bruce Roberts for use of their article from Lighthouse Ghosts & Coastal Carolina Legends. We also thank Jane Carr Oakley and Ann Mills—the great hosts to the ghosts of Old Baldy and the island. Old Baldy Foundation Executive Director Ann Mills will lead our tour on Bald Head Island during the OBLHS 2008 Annual Keepers’ Weekend Oct. 9-11.

Visiting Old Baldy as a Keeper's Family

By Dawn Taylor

It was mid-February, when I found myself sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch of Principal Keeper Captain Charlie Swan's keeper's quarters. The view from that porch on Bald Head Island was one I'll never forget. Time had seemed to recede: no longer did it feel like I was living in the present but in the time of my great grandfather, Devaney F. Jennette. He had been the first assistant keeper at the Cape Fear Light Station for thirteen years of his life.

As I sat there enjoying the solitude, I could not help but think back as to how this beautiful place must have looked in his day. "Pop," as the family called him, arrived on the island in 1919. At that time, Old Baldy Lighthouse, Cape Fear Light Station, the keeper's quarters along with their out buildings, and the Cape Fear Life-Saving Station were about the only structures there. It was a much different island then than the one I was now discovering.

My father, Kenneth H. Dickerson, Jr., Cousin Edith Bradley, and I had long anticipated our visit. The trek from our home on Cape Hatteras had been filled with conversations about my father's memories of stories handed down from his youth. He had been just a "little shaver" when he stayed in the second of three keeper's quarters that now collectively bear the head keeper's name, Captain Charlie Swan.

I've often seen Cap'n Charlie's picture, as he was called, while researching my great grandfather's genealogy. I do believe that he would have been joyous knowing sixty-eight years after Pop's death that the descendants of Devaney Jennette were once again on Bald Head Island and staying in one of Cap'n Charlie's cottages.

To get to Bald Head Island, we first made our way to Southport and then to Indigo Plantation where we boarded our ferry for a twenty-minute ride to the island. An enchanting view of Old Baldy, that historic maritime reminder of days-gone-by, captivated us all—especially my dad.

Ann Mills, Executive Director of the Old Baldy Foundation (OBF), greeted us at the ferry and we headed for the lighthouse on her tram. OBF is dedicated to the maintenance and preservation of the Old Baldy Lighthouse. Due to her hospitality, we enjoyed a private tour of the lighthouse and Smith Island Museum, namesake for the original island's title.

The quaint museum reminded me of so many older homes from my own area on Hatteras Island. Cap'n Charlie Swan's photograph hung on one wall surrounded by artifacts. As I gazed upon his face, thoughts of his being part of Pop's life for so many years brought about a feeling of tremendous reverence.

Some of the most prized artifacts include two prisms from



In the background are two of three keeper's cottages on Bald Head Island. Behind the cottage area once stood a regal, 150-foot-tall-steel skeleton tower that guarded the entrance of the mighty Cape Fear River from the Atlantic Ocean between the years 1903-1958. It warned of the state's third, southernmost cape and Frying Pan Shoals to vessels passing by or entering the river to reach the port of Wilmington.
Photo by Bruce Roberts

the first-order Fresnel lens that once graced the lantern room of the 1903 Cape Fear Light Station. Prior to the light's destruction in 1958, the lens was bought and moved by a local antique dealer in Southport. A collector later bought some of the prisms and eventually made them a gift to OBF. These old beacons will always have a place in our maritime history, thanks to those who strive for preservation.

A short distance away, we entered the Old Baldy Lighthouse. Its exterior was much different than the familiar black and white stripes of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Instead, it is octagonal and the exterior has a rough texture; still, the sight of it nearly took my breath away. Ann shared a lot of history with us including that the Old Baldy and the Cape Fear Light Stations were both in operation while Pop was there. So in all likelihood, Ann said, he assisted at both lighthouses. My father and I enjoyed the history-filled climb with Ann each step of the way to the top.

After the tour, we hopped back on the tram went to the "Capt. Charlie's II" keeper's cottage where we were staying. Once again the feeling of awe returned. And, as I stepped foot onto the wooden walkway which led to the keeper's quarters where my family lived so many years ago, I was speechless. The three cottages weren't much different than the photographs in Grandmother's album. There they were,

facing the beach as gallant as the Cape Fear Light Station that one stood directly behind them.

It felt natural to be there--to touch the walls, the furniture... everything. I could easily imagine Pop eating his daily meals in the kitchen and spending his leisure time sitting on the front porch as he watched his grandchildren play in the sand.

The next morning, we were greeted by a brisk wind while my father and I enjoyed an early morning walk on the beach. Ann Mills and OBF volunteer Marilyn Ridgeway arrived, and we gathered around our kitchen table with my family's private collection of photographs and documents that revealed the story of Pop's service at the Cape Fear Light Station.

Little had been known locally about Keeper Jennette's life, his career, or his death. The U. S. Lighthouse Service documents that I showed Ann and Marilyn answered many questions for them. Until my visit, the events of Pop's death had just been rumored. The photocopied letters that were written by Capt. Swan's own hand told about how Pop had died while the two of them were in the watchroom of the Cape Fear Light Station on that cold night in December 1932. His report appeared in the U.S. Lighthouse Service's monthly bulletin to keepers all over America.

But I hold onto the happier moments of Pop's service and my family's life there. One of my favorite images is of my late Aunt Nonie sitting in a chair that had belonged to Reese Swan, one of Cap'n Charlie's sons. How amazing it felt to look at these pictures and feel part of history.

Later, my father and I took a walk around the three keepers' cottages. The kitchen for Captain Charlie's II had burned down some time ago, but some of its charred remains could still be found on the sand bank behind the cottage. Repeatedly I felt called back to my favorite place, the front porch and its rocking chairs. I sat and rocked and looked out at the ocean, I could envision Pop catching fish as he often did in order to feed his family. And I could imagine him walking toward the lighthouse, ready to start his routine of climbing that steel skeleton tower.

Reese Swan met us after we left Bald Head Island. We could easily tell this was definitely the son of Keeper Charles Norton Swan. He shared the same blue eyes and zest for life that had made his father quite the local celebrity around Southport. We talked of my family, especially of my uncles, Ross and Elwood. Uncle Elwood and his wife Dorothy had visited him while he was the island's caretaker many years ago. That's how much the Swan family meant to the Jennettes.

Reese shared with me that when the Cape Fear Lighthouse had been destroyed that it about melted his father's heart. Among Cap'n Charlie and Pop, so many memories had been made there. Later that day we met with Reese's nephew, Ron Hood. Outstanding at storytelling like my family, he described island life in Southport and how they used to gather eggs for turtle duff. I'll always treasure this trip! I especially love the memory of seeing my father return to the island where he had spent time as a child.

Before I left, I took time to speak to my late grandfather. I hope he heard me when I said, "I will be back Pop, I will be back."



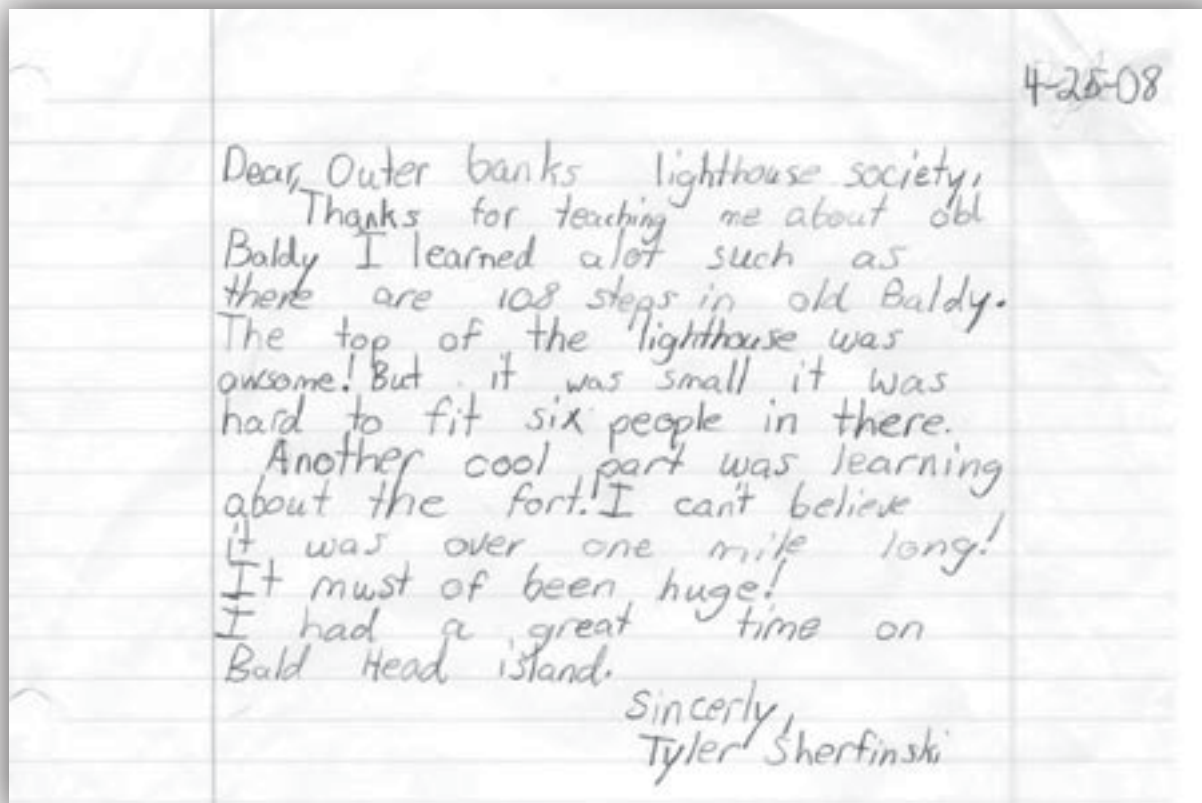
Above, Dawn Taylor and her father, Kenneth Dickerson, Jr., great granddaughter and grandson of a Cape Fear Lighthouse keeper, respectively, wait for their ferry to Bald Head Island. Dawn's great grandfather, Devaney Jennette, served for 13 years with Principal Keeper Charlie Swan, the light's long-time caretaker. Keeper Jennette died suddenly in the watch room while he and Cap'n Charlie worked to prepare the first order Fresnel lens for its night's work. Dawn and her dad returned to walk in the footsteps of their ancestor.

Photo courtesy of Dawn Taylor



The Cape Fear Light was a first order light station built in 1903. The U.S. Coast Guard destroyed the tower in 1958 to transfer its duty to the Oak Island Lighthouse across the Cape Fear River. The footers are still evident and leave a feeling that something grand is missing on the island. The keeper's cottages are now highly prized rentals on Bald Head Island's beach.

Painting by Mike Litwin



Southport Elementary School's fourth graders can see Old Baldy every day across the Cape Fear River, but many of the kids have never visited the island or lighthouse for a visit up close and personal. Thanks to the "Lighthouse Learners" Program sponsored by the Old Baldy Foundation and this year's funding by the OBLHS again, more than one-hundred students and teachers were able to visit as a group. (Photos by Ann Mills)



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

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

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

General correspondence:

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



Thank You Letters from a Teacher and Students to OBLHS members for a Trip to Old Baldy

Dear O.B.L.S.,
Thank you so very
much for giving us the
chance to visit one of
our lighthouses. I look
forward to this trip
every year, and the students
love seeing an important
part of our history. We
would not get to do
this without your help.
Thanks again,
Angela Brown 4th grade teacher

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LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

Updates on the area lighthouse events & schedules

Lighthouse Updates

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Visit us at our new site on the Internet:

<http://www.outbankslighthousesociety.org>

E-mail info@outbankslighthousesociety.org

Currituck Beach Lighthouse is owned and maintained by the private nonprofit Outer Banks Conservationists. Grounds are open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily; visitors may stay until 8 p.m. on Thursdays this summer only; after Labor Day operation returns to regular hours 9 a.m.-5 p.m. until the weekend following Thanksgiving. Recent restorative work includes replastering inside the southern cistern and scraping/repainting parts of the cistern and the Keepers' House. Keeper Meghan D'Agresto reported two reproduction keeper's uniforms are in hand, and that tours by a keeper is a big hit with visitors. Meghan adds, "Life as keepers with two small children can be challenging at times. Benicio and Paolo sometimes 'escape to the lighthouse' (as Benicio calls it) and push each other around like maniacs, usually Paolo pushing Benicio on the tricycle and generally being menaces to the visitors who have no idea who they are or why their parents let them bring a tricycle while visiting a lighthouse. Benicio thinks he's the official lighthouse greeter. Sometimes he wants to give staff a lunch break with me and he'll ask people if they want a 'fact sheet,' as he calls our new brochure."

Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse (reproduction), located in Manteo, is an exterior reproduction of an 1877 screwpile light that was originally located near Wanchese. It has been recreated on Manteo's charming waterfront near the Maritime Museum, both of which are cared for by the Roanoke Island Festival Park. It is open during the summer, free of charge, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily with exhibits. Hours of operation will change after October 31st. Call (252) 475-1500.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore includes the Bodie Island, Hatteras Island, and Ocracoke Island Visitor Centers, open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily during summer months and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily September through May (closed Christmas). Doug Stover, NPS Cultural Resources Manager reports that archeologists have found evidence of a trash heap on the grounds of the National Park Service headquarters near Ft. Raleigh that is believed to be tied to the Lost Colony. Some of the artifacts found include Native American oyster shells, blue beads from Venice, copper, and ceramic pottery. In July a diving team will visit the site of the 2nd Bodie Island Lighthouse. This site is now in the Oregon Inlet due to shoreline changes since mid-19th century.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and grounds are open year-round. The lighthouse is open for climbing 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. June 8 through Labor Day. The lighthouse will remain open through Columbus Day, Monday, October 13. Climbing tour tickets are \$7 for adults and \$3.50 for senior citizens (62 or older), children (12 and under, and at least 42" tall), and those holding a National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Access Pass. Tickets are available on a first come/first served basis and can only be purchased in-person at the site the day of the climb. There are no advance ticket sales. The ironwork was restored/repainted in 1981 but molds of the iron on the balcony were not made at that time. Small pieces of iron have fallen recently from the balcony; therefore, a great deal of work is needed. The stairs were repaired during the winter when the lighthouse was closed. The Cape Hatteras 1854 first order Fresnel lens remains on loan from the NPS to the **Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum**, which OBLHS donated funds for its restoration. The USCG plans to transfer the present electric beacon to the NPS. The **GOA Museum** is now owned and operated by the state of North Carolina. Summer hours are M-F, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (closed weekends).

Bodie Island Lighthouse: Some monies taken from the climbing fees at Cape Hatteras Lighthouse will be used to do work on some broken stairs at Bodie Island Lighthouse. A section of stairs will be studied to see how difficult it is to remove them for repair. The stairs are a series of winding sections that must be suspended from above and supported from below in order to remove a section and rework/replace. Current plans include relocating the Bodie Island Coast Guard Station and the Bodie Island Life-Saving Station from their beach sites to the lighthouse grounds to get both building away from the brunt of storms. OBLHS is hoping restoration funds will be voted by Congress in the '09 budget. U.S. Senator Dole has pledged her support, so funding has an even better chance of making it this year with votes of confidence coming from Congressmen Price and Miller along with Senator Basnight. BILH has received the honor of being in the top 12 of 49 nominations for the Jeld-wen windows to be donated. OBLHS is pleased with this honor—**you can vote for BILH to receive these windows at <http://www.jeld-wen.com/lighthouse>**. Thank you to John Gaskill, son of the Keeper Vernon Gaskill, Sr., for greeting visitors at the lighthouse and sharing his memories of growing up there during the 1920s and 30s. John is at the lighthouse Tuesdays and Thursdays during the summer. He is a national treasure.

Ocracoke Lighthouse is to receive a good cleaning, some stairs repaired, and other improvements with \$250,000 from the NPS's rehab funds. The double keepers' quarters will be painted, the roof replaced, gutters renewed, and more. The U.S. Coast Guard Aids to Navigation team met with the NPS recently and has plans to transfer the fourth order Fresnel lens to the NPS. The 1823 tower is one of the oldest still in operation on the East Coast.

Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station is getting a new roof and repairs caused by 20 years of termite infestation.

Cape Lookout Lighthouse is located within **Cape Lookout National Seashore**. Operating hours for the Harkers Island Visitor Center, headquarters for the seashore, is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., but is closed December 25 and January 1. The Cape Lookout Light Station Visitor Center & Keeper's Quarters Museum are located across Core Sound from the mainland and are open from April to November and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Visitors can reach the lighthouse and keeper's quarters by small



LIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

Updates on the area lighthouse events & schedules

passenger ferries operating from Harkers Island, Morehead City, and Beaufort. These ferries are seasonal and weather-dependent. The lighthouse which has been open for climbing 4 days a year has now been determined to have structural problems and will not be open until further notice. **Portsmouth Village Visitor Center**, located at the northern tip of the national seashore is open from April to November (hours vary). Visitors can reach this island by passenger ferry from Ocracoke. The park offers a range of educational summer programs about the historic and natural resources of the park including wild horse tours on Shackleford Banks. For more information on tours and programs throughout the summer, call the park at 252-728-2250 extension 3001 or visit the park's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/calco>. A celebration of 150 years of light at Cape Lookout Lighthouse in October/November of 2009 is planned. There will be many activities and ceremonies. OBLHS is helping in the planning of the celebration as well as providing a list of the keepers of the lighthouse. Contact Richard Meissner, volunteer coordinator for Cape Lookout National Seashore at richard_meissner@partner.nps.gov if you are interested in being a keeper at Cape Lookout.

Oak Island Lighthouse is owned by the Town of Caswell Beach and maintained by the Friends of Oak Island. The Friends have completed their site development which includes parking for visitors, walkways to the lighthouse and plans for landscaping. They unveiled the site with a 50th Birthday celebration of the Lighthouse on May 17th (1958-2008). The lighthouse will be open for entry on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Tours to the top are available on Thursday by appointment; those interested should consult Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse website: <http://www.oakislandlighthouse.org>. All tours are free to the public but contributions are appreciated.

Bald Head Lighthouse is owned and maintained by the Old Baldy Foundation, which staffs this historic lighthouse. Spring/Summer hours began March 18, 2008, and are open Tues-Sat 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please note that the lighthouse is closed on Mondays. After Thanksgiving the site will open Friday-Saturday from 10 a.m. -4 p.m. and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Sunday. Admission to the Smith Island Museum and Old Baldy Lighthouse is \$3/person. Round-trip ferry fee to Bald Head Island is \$15/adult, \$8 for youth 12 and under—this is a separate fee not associated with the lighthouse. The best way to see the island is the Bald Head Island Historic Tour. Packages are available Tues-Saturday beginning March 18. Please note that reservations are required--call (910) 457-5003 for information and reservations. The annual running of the Rubber Ducky Race June 21* will help pay for the prizes for the 'Pirates Are Coming', August 1-3 (National Lighthouse Day). The proceeds will go to help restore the oil house and provide exhibits of the evolution of the use of energy at the lighthouse. A new roof is being put on the oil house late this spring. OBLHS donated \$1,000 for 108 kids to visit Old Baldy in April who climbed the 108 steps!

Price 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. OBLHS hopes to visit both Rear Range light and Front Range light during October '08 at the Keepers' Weekend.

Roanoke River Lighthouse (reproduction) is located on Plymouth's beautiful waterfront about halfway between the northern and southern Outer Banks. Call (252) 217-2204 for hours open or to arrange a group visit. Visit <http://www.roanokeriverlighthouse.org/>. Members of OBLHS visited Memorial Day weekend '08 for a working day at the lighthouse and thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Plymouth. It is one stop you should not miss on your way to the OBX from points west on highway 64!

Board nominations are open for OBLHS. There is currently 1 seat of 15 available with other seats coming open mid-2009. If you have a nomination, please contact Bett Padgett for a list of nomination rules either at bett@bettpadgett.com or (919) 787-6378. The nomination committee will contact you.

OBLHS held its annual board meeting recently. Officers were elected and nominations for the annual prism awards were made. All results will be published in the winter issue; if you would like any details beforehand, just contact us at info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org. Three directors, Diana Chappell, Virginia Howell, and Bob DaVia, were re-elected for a 3-year term.

Thank you to Diana Chappell, Bob DaVia, Bett Padgett, Bill Padgett, Virginia Howell, Doward Jones, Richard Meissner, Charlie and Shirley Votaw, and all of you who have participated in/helped with OBLHS projects. We have two big years coming up!

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

Also, thank you for a generous donation from friends and family in memory of William D. McAninch for the Bodie Island Fund.

We have also received a total of \$1,000 from McKesson Corporation this year as part of their employee volunteer program thanks to the dedication of Diana Chappell, a McKesson employee and OBLHS board member, treasurer, and volunteer.

Additionally, thank you for a donation in memory of Lisa Priano from her husband, Gregory. She is remembered in the lights shining from our NC lights. About the picture at right, Gregory said, "Lisa and I have been members of OBLHS since the late 1990s. We both admired the good work you've done, and I know that Lisa would have wanted to somehow do something to help in the preservation of the priceless Outer Banks lighthouses. I feel that as long as they are standing, part of Lisa will always remain there, too."

Watch for the OBLHS annual raffle mailing soon! Remember that we make every dollar work for our lighthouses, and **YOUR** help is appreciated.

Do you have a new email address? Please send it to info@outerbankslighthousesociety.org and please update your information when using your return envelope. Check the date on your address label to determine your renewal date. Thank you, OBLHS members. You make all that we do possible.

OBLHS Members Spruce-Up Plymouth's Roanoke River Lighthouse



On May 24, several OBLHS board members and other members at-large gathered to do some cleaning up at Plymouth's reproduction of the first Roanoke River Lighthouse. Everyone had a great time while helping out a charming lighthouse that has brought renewed energy to the developing waterfront businesses and maritime museum. Thanks to all of you who participated!

Photos by Doward Jones



Cape Hatteras Keeper C.C. Miller's Family Continues Tradition Returning to the Lighthouse

Written by Alan Miller Jones

My father, Roy William Jones from Biloxi, Mississippi, married my mother, Retta Gray Miller of Buxton, N.C., in 1935. How in the world did an island girl from a remote island like Cape Hatteras meet a young military man so far south?

My parents met in Biloxi while Mama [Retta] was living with her brother who was stationed there in the service. Retta's dad felt she could get a better education in Biloxi than on Hatteras Island at that time. I can clearly recall hearing Earl O'Neal's stories last year at the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society Keeper's annual weekend on Ocracoke. His historic narrative helped me and my family to understand how hard island life could be at times.

After graduating from Biloxi High School, Retta returned to Buxton, and, after a long-distance romance, she and Roy William Jones were married. The Millers and Grays on Hatteras Island were not too happy about their only daughter moving so far away. To comfort Mama's family, Daddy promised her father, "Pop," that he would bring her back once a year.

Daddy kept that promise until they were unable to travel to Buxton for health reasons. Until that time, my siblings and I spent every summer in Buxton with family and all the beauty of the island and the water and horses and ferries. My wife, Andrea, and I hope to continue that tradition in some manner with our son, Breckinridge "Breck" Miller Jones. We introduced him to Cape Hatteras and Ocracoke last year while sharing the trip with my oldest brother Baxter. The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society group welcomed us with open arms and made us feel like family. Being a member has bridged our past and present to our son's future, and given us a nexus for future memories.

Like our new friend, Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, inscribed to us, we are "following the lights and coming home!" Thank you all, and my family and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Keepers Lineage:

Retta Gray (Miller) Jones's grandfather was Christopher Columbus Miller, a Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Keeper in 1887. Retta's father, Baxter Benjamin Miller, received two Congressional Medals for life-saving as a surfman at Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station. My brothers, Retired Naval Commander George Baxter Jones, Roy William Jones, and I are her proud sons; my sister is Judy (Jones) Haller. And, starting the next generation is her grandson Breckinridge "Breck" Miller Jones, born April 19, 2002. My wife, Andrea, is a big supporter of continuing the Keeper tradition by making the trek "home" to the North Carolina coast as often as we can.



Andrea Cabell Jones and her son, Breckinridge "Breck" Miller Jones, stand on the beach near Cape Hatteras. Breck is the next generation to recognize their ancestral heritage in the U.S. Lighthouse and U.S. Life-Saving Services. Setting a tradition to return to Cape Hatteras, Breck is our next generation of preservationists.

Photo by Alan Miller Jones



Breck and his dad, Alan Miller Jones, visit the Circle of Stones, the engraved face stones of the foundation at the original site of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. They are pointing to the name of Christopher Columbus Miller, assistant keeper in 1887.

Photo by Andrea Cabell Jones

Membership Report

By Bob DaVia



Did you know that the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society offers a Lifetime Membership? Before I get to that, I want to address a couple of questions that have come up regarding membership.

First of all, your yearly dues cover 12 months of membership and must be renewed annually, during your anniversary month (the month you joined). If you renew after your current membership has expired, your next renewal month will not change.

Secondly, our membership levels include:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Student | \$10.00 (K-12 Grade) |
| Individual | \$25.00 |
| Family | \$35.00 Family members living in the same residence. Each family member receives an individual membership card and society logo sticker. The family receives one newsletter to share (each member does not receive a separate copy). |
| Senior | \$20.00 For our members aged 60 and older |
| Senior Family | \$30.00 For our families aged 60 and older.
Benefits are the same as Family Membership. |
| LIFETIME | \$500.00 All the benefits of membership without the need to mail in your dues each year. Each Lifetime Member receives all society mailings, individual membership card and society logo sticker yearly, special recognition as a Lifetime Member. |

When renewing your membership, please include the name(s) of all the members in your family, so that our membership list is up to date. Note that if you indicate you receive the newsletter electronically (via email), you will not receive a hard copy. If you want the electronic version AND a hard copy, you must indicate BOTH on your membership signup.

Finally, please check your mailing label for your expiration date. If your membership is close to expiring (or has expired), please send in your renewal today. As a non-profit organization, money we spend on sending out renewal notices is less money we have to maintain the lighthouse we all care so much for. There--that's it! Thank you for helping OBLHS.

Mail your renewal to:

OBLHS MEMBERSHIP
PO BOX 2141
WINTERVILLE NC 28590

If you have any questions about your membership, or any other comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at the address above, by email to rdavia@seathelights.com or (252) 439-0776.

Keep the lights shining,
Robert DaVia

The Past Meets the Future

Willard Forbes (left) was keeper at the Neuse River Lighthouse during the early 20th century. After a presentation to members of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society last fall, he spoke with George Baxter Jones, grandson of the great Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station Surfman Baxter Benjamin Miller (early 1900s) and great grandson of Cape Hatteras Assistant Keeper Christopher Columbus "Kit" Miller (1880s). [Kit Miller was Baxter's father]. The bright young lad in the foreground is Breckinridge "Breck" Miller Jones whose family introduced him to the Outer Banks and his keeper/surfman lineage as the great grandson of Surfman Miller and great-great grandson of Keeper Kit Miller. The Jones family arrived on the Outer Banks after having lost everything in Hurricane Katrina. The importance of revisiting their home of heritage and introducing Breck to his past brought them to coastal North Carolina to steady their perspectives in the roots of their maritime ancestors. Photo by Andrea Cabell Jones



Pictures from the Future

Pictured is Alvin Glatkowsky giving a costumed-interpretive tour to a school group at the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. Recently the Old Baldy Foundation procured two reproduction keeper uniforms. Keeper Meghan D'Agresto reports that these tours with a keeper-in-uniform are popular with visitors. Costumed interpretation

puts us right there in another time and place while we learn history as if we were listening to the keeper himself. Picture courtesy of Outer Banks Conservationists and Keeper Meghan D'Agresto



Pictures from the Past

Just Yesterday

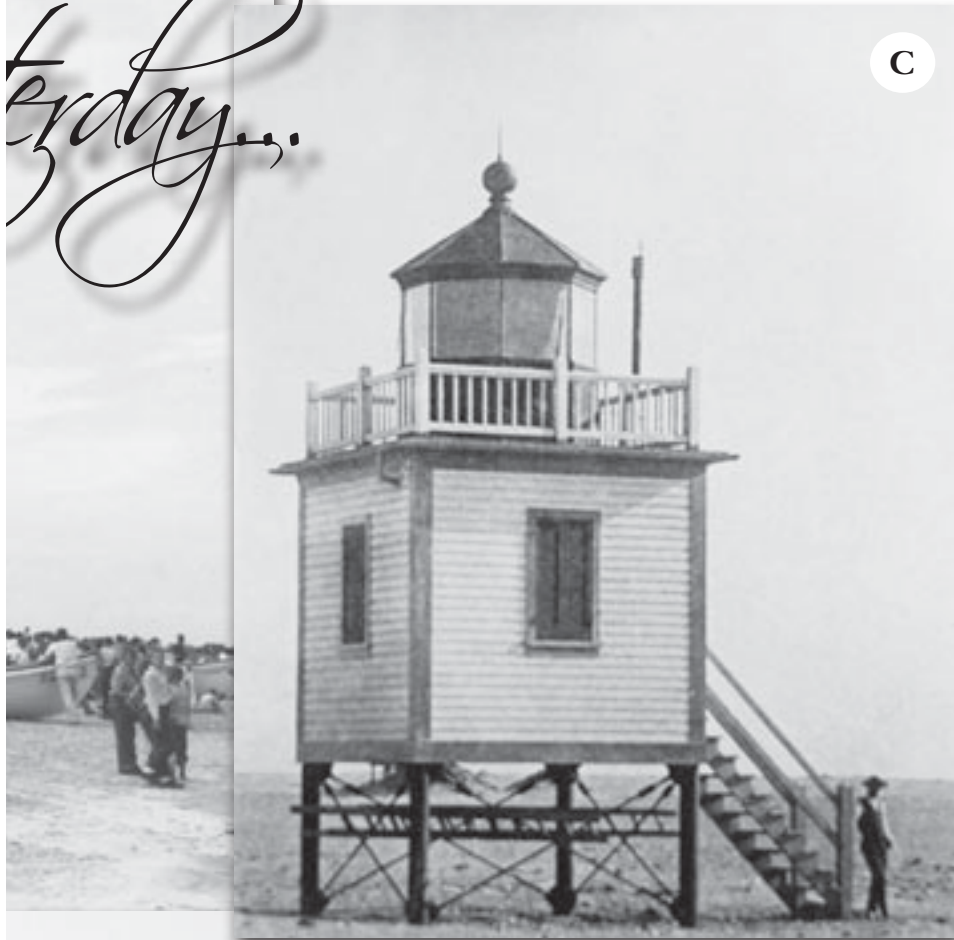
B



A



Yesterday...



A These leisurely free-range cattle below show what the area around Cape Hatteras was like until 1936. Absentee livestock owners as well as local owners liked the laissez-faire style, but there were others who said that sand erosion was due to the overgrazing by these animals. Franklin Delano Roosevelt created projects for the Civil Conservation Corps as part of his make-work programs including building a dune system and planting countless numbers of sea oats and other sea grasses. Dunes were held in place by the plants' root systems and the dunes were thought to be the answer to destructive island over-wash from storms. There perhaps has been no other theory more hotly debated than to have a dune system or not. Some native islanders think over-wash is natural and keeps the barrier islands moving as they were meant to be dynamic.

Photo courtesy of the Outer Banks History Center

B After the U.S. Coast Guard took over duties at American lighthouses in 1939, Cape Hatteras became the scene of numerous "Coast Guard Day" celebrations. The events gave visitors a chance to see life-saving drills executed just as they had been for decades. We don't have names of the coast-guardsmen in this image, but there is a certainty that at least one—if not several—are descended from the legendary surfmen including the Mighty Midgetts, Rollinsons, Etheridges, Daniels, and other well known Outer Banks' native families.

Photo courtesy of the Outer Banks History Center

C The Cape Hatteras Beacon Light guided local and casual boaters using the Diamond Slough Channel between the shore and the inner Diamond Shoals. It held a sixth order Fresnel lens and was tended by the third assistant keeper at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Built in 1856, it was moved a number of times due to an eroding shore at Cape Point. It finally disappeared from the U.S. Lighthouse Service's official Light List after the turn of the 20th century.

Photo ca. 1893 by Henry Bamber, courtesy of the Outer Banks History Center

D A view from the top of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse during the late 1930s reveals a different place and time. A sandy road led beyond the light station towards the radio station where a naval base was developed. As far as the eye can see, there are no houses or other development. A keeper had the entire panorama of sea, sky, and sound to entertain him during quiet moments.

Photo courtesy of N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History

You Are Invited

OBLHS Keepers' Weekend October 9-11, 2008

OBLHS members will gather for a memorable weekend at Southport, Oak Island, and Old Baldy. We want to see all of you—if you've never joined us for one of these weekends, this is the ideal year to be with us.

Is it serendipity? Or, is it synergy? Both the U.S. Life-Saving Service Heritage Association (USLSSHA) and the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society (OBLHS) have chosen North Carolina's Lower Cape Fear Region as the location for their 2008 conferences. Recognizing this unique opportunity, some of our activities will overlap, further enhancing the experience. With each annual Keepers' Weekend, we continue to expand our horizons as well as our thinking about the cultural richness along our coast. The program will also incorporate a look at preservation of our maritime heritage through the arts. A woodcut, a painting, a photograph, a poem, a song... along with bricks and mortar, these, too, are tools of preservation.

Our Keepers' Weekend, dinner and awards will be exciting again this year. **October 9-11th**, look at these **opportunities during this special fall weekend**: reception at **Fort Johnston** in historic Southport and visit with our friends of the USLSSHA; dinner on **Southport's waterfront**; tour **Fort Caswell and Oak Island**; tour the **Oak Island Coast Guard Station**; lunch at the restored **Oak Island Life-Saving Station** at Caswell Beach; **climb Oak Island Lighthouse**; we hope to visit **Price's Creek** again and have lunch at **Old Baldy Lighthouse** along with a **tour of Bald Head Island and its ghosts**. The event kicks off on Thursday evening with dinner and entertainment by maritime **folklore musician John Golden and songwriter Bett Padgett** and a special program by **historian Burt Feldon (USCG Ret)**. Lots more too---check it out on the events link on our website at <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org>. You may also call Bett Padgett (919) 787-6378 for details, or write her at 1213 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607 or email bett@bettpadgett.com. We already have several reservations in hand, so claim your space! Additionally, **USLSSHA** will be touring Beaufort/Fort Macon/NC Maritime Museum Beaufort/Watercraft Center at the time of the OBLHS tour of Ft. Caswell, the Coast Guard Station, lighthouse and Life-Saving Station. There may be a few seats available on the bus for OBLHS participants. If you prefer this tour please indicate that you would like to be put on a waiting list.

See you there!