



The Bay Run



Newsletter of
The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers
and Friends Association, Inc.

Volume 31 Issue 15
Summer 2017

"Our mission is to preserve the history of the
Delaware Bay and River Lighthouses, Lightships and their Keepers"

THE LIGHTHOUSES THAT NEVER WERE

(Editor's note – Thanks to Jim Gowdy & Kim Ruth and the data in GUIDING LIGHTS OF THE DELAWARE RIVER & BAY for documenting this information. Without their research, we would have never known about these lighthouses.)

The Delaware River and Bay once had a wealth of at least 60 lighthouses, lightships and lighthouse depots. Some of the following lights had been planned but the plans never came to fruition; sorry, folks, no pictures are available to accompany this article.

One of the first lighthouses mentioned is Reedy Point Light. In 1854 \$3,000 was appropriated to construct this light. It seems that this light was never built because the property owners demanded such an exorbitant amount of money for the land that the government abandoned the project. Since this plan was dismissed, it was then decided to build a lighthouse on Pea Patch Island; the estimated cost would be approximately \$8,000. Congress conducted a survey of the land but again the plans were scrapped since other plans were being made to build range lights which would do away with the need for a lighthouse. Eventually an automated light, the Fort Delaware Light was erected on the island with a fog signal added.

The estimated cost for construction of a light at the mouth of the Maurice River in the interests of the oystermen was \$25,000. This was to be named the Big Oyster Beds Light. Again, the money was never appropriated. Later on, the Light House Board did approve the spending of \$250,000 on Elbow of Cross Ledge and Miah Maull Lighthouses; in several other cases, the US Lighthouse Service, and later on the US Coast Guard made do with spar buoys, gas buoys or automated lights at suggested locations.

Old Man's Point Range Lights, located a mile or so north of Penns Grove, NJ, were proposed by the government but never came to be since it was felt that the Bellvue Range serviced the shipping channel quite well. Instead of building a set of range lights to guide vessels clear of the knoll and shallow areas in the middle of the river, a gas lighted buoy was established. These range lights would have been appropriately named the Seventeen Foot Knoll Range Lights. In the 1900's money was again appropriated to build Arnold's Point Light *(continued on page 5)*

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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



As the seasons change and the warm weather returns, working in the yard and on the house getting everything ready for the summer, is my number one priority. Every year there seems to be one long list of things that need to be done.

Our banquet was a huge success with a good number of members in attendance. It is always a fun day for members and guests to visit and socialize. The baskets and gifts for door prizes were amazing. Thank you Maxine and Nellie for the baskets; the winners were all very pleased. Thanks to Melissa, Peggy and Katie for all their contributions and help in making this event successful. Mike Rothman, Captain and Owner of the Bonanza II, related some interesting stories about the lighthouses and fishing trips on the Delaware Bay. He shared his photos of Miah Maull and Ship John Lights depicting how they now look from the inside. We are hoping the new owners of Miah Maull plan on bringing the light back to its former “glory days”.

Everyone please plan on taking one of the summer cruises to either Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse in July or to Ship John in August. (See Cruise News). These cruises are our biggest fundraisers so let’s fill up the boat for each trip. Come out, take a cruise and see the sun set on the Delaware Bay; it is a fun evening. I hope to see you there.

‘Til then, keep the lights shining.

Angelo

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Ah, summer at last; it seems like it took its good ol' time getting here. Katie & I couldn't wait so we took a trip out to Nevada to hurry the time along. We visited the generic lighthouses along Lake Havasu and were surprised to find that the lighthouses representing some of those in the east were on the eastern shore of the lake while those of the west graced the opposite side. But enough about that since we will be giving our travel log presentation at our summer meeting on June 3.

Our annual banquet held at the Sea Isle City Yacht Club went quite well. We had loads of door prizes and 8 beautiful raffle baskets. Mike Rothman, Captain and Owner of the Bonanza II, our lighthouse cruise ship, was our guest speaker. He stated that the Bonanza II is often reserved for weddings, fishing trips, bird watching, and sightseeing. Whales, schools of dolphins plus freighters, patrol boats and other ships traveling to and from the Port of Philadelphia have been sighted on some of these cruises. As he was speaking, he passed around photos of some of the Delaware Bay lights showing their interior and exterior conditions. Every lighthouse has been sold with the exception of Elbow of Cross Ledge. Some will be restored to their original condition.

Captain Rothman said that he has spent the majority of his life on the Delaware Bay, enjoying every minute. "The view from my office window is incredible." His sons accompany him on the cruises; he is hoping that some day they will continue being involved in this career. Their busiest months are May and June. He stated: "There is no better place to be. The sunsets on the Delaware Bay are incredible." Thanks Mike for your interesting, informative presentation.

22ND ANNUAL LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS BANQUET



*Bella McKeown
sings our National Anthem*



*President Rigazio with
guest speaker, Mike Rothman*

Summer 2017

While doing research, our historian stumbled upon an interesting article. There is another Fourteen Foot Shoal Light similar to our Fourteen Foot Bank Light only the newly found one is located in the Cheboygan Harbor Entrance to Lake Michigan. This white with red trim Fourteen Foot Shoal Lighthouse was established and first lit in 1930; the light is automated and still in operation. Of conical shape and made from reinforced concrete and steel, this lighthouse houses a fourth order Fresnel lens. Still an active aid to navigation, it is owned and managed by the US Coast Guard.

The original Fourteen Foot Bank Lighthouse, located in Delaware waters, was put into operation in 1885. It was used to mark the southern end of the Joe Flogger Shoal which extends more than 15 nautical miles into the Delaware Bay. It was the first lighthouse to be built on a submarine foundation with a caisson sunk using the pneumatic process. Eventually the coast guard crews were withdrawn, the fourth order Fresnel lens removed and the light became automated. Fourteen Foot Lighthouse has one thing that no other lighthouse in the Delaware Bay can claim—a privy and it's still in working condition! This black and white lighthouse is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

CAPE MAY – A Military Fortress?

On February 28, 1942 the USS Jacob Jones, travelling at 15 knots off the coast of Cape May, was torpedoed by a German submarine. It was the first sinking of a US ship after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Strategically located next to the Delaware Bay, Cape May was one of the last lines of defense against a German attack on the Philadelphia Naval Yard where US warships were assembled; also the location made it easily accessible to an area where oil refineries were located.

The sinking of the Jacob Jones led to the construction of the Cape May Canal so that United States Navy and Coast Guard ships could gain admission to the Delaware Bay without sailing into the ocean off Cape May Point. German subs were sighted in this area throughout the war and were responsible for the sinking of 10 ships within a mile of the New Jersey coast. The canal was also used by merchant ships. Building this canal had a lasting impact on the Cape May shore. The jetties constructed at the end of the canal on the Delaware Bay and the existing ones on the other side of the Cape May inlet have led to major beach erosion.

In 1942, a magnesite plant was built to extract magnesium salts from the seawater to create fire bricks. The firebricks lined steel mill furnaces and warships' boilers. The plant devastated the environment with smoke and alkaline pollution so that much of the vegetation around it was destroyed. The plant closed in 1983 and was eventually demolished. There was also a fire tower built in 1942 which is now clearly visible from miles away. The tower and bunker on the beach were built as part of Fort Miles to fight off air raids and German ships and submarines lurking off the coast. Cape May played a very important part during the war. It was top secret information that the United States tracked Russian nuclear submarines off the Atlantic coast including Cape May. Twenty-four buildings located near Cape May Point State Park were once part of a sonar surveillance base.

Bob Heinly, a historian at the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts & Humanities, stated: "Not a lot of people know about Cape May's history with World War II...one of our missions is to make people aware of how important it was." (*AC Press, February 12, 2017*)



Saturday, June 3, 2017 Annual Bay Day Celebration in Port Norris, NJ

Saturday, June 3, 2017 Summer Meeting of DBLHKFA at the Charlesworth Hotel in Fortescue, New Jersey. Program presented by Katie Moser & Bill Geilfuss, relating their experiences on the Lighthouse Society of New Jersey's recent trip – "Lighthouses of the Desert Southwest". *Itinerary: 10:15 – Social hour (Meet & Greet); 11:15 – 12:15 Meeting; 12:15 Lunch (*limited menu of soup, sandwich and salad offered); 1:15 Program*

*MENU: Choice of: Chicken salad or pasta salad platter; Soup (chicken orzo or vegetable), OR Ham and cheese sandwich and soup. Dessert: Sheet cake. Beverages: Iced tea, coffee, soda, water. Cost \$15 per person. DOES NOT INCLUDE GRATUITY.

Saturday & Sunday, June 17 & 18, 2017 Maritime Days. We will be volunteering at Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood, NJ; volunteers always needed and welcome.

Saturday, July 8 Cruise to Harbor & South in the Bay, leaving the dock aboard the Bonanza II from Fortescue, New Jersey at 4 PM.

Monday, August 7, 2017 National Lighthouse Day Again our organization will be setting up at Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood, NJ; volunteers always needed and welcome.

Saturday, August 19 Cruise to Ship John & North in the Bay, leaving the dock aboard the Bonanza II from Fortescue, New Jersey at 4 PM.

September 15, 16, 17, 2017 Maryland Lighthouse Challenge

Saturday, September 23, 2017 Picnic/meeting at East Point Lighthouse

Saturday & Sunday, October 21 & 22, 2017 NJ Lighthouse Challenge Our organization will be at Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood, NJ; volunteers always needed and welcome.

*(NOTE: Is there a guest speaker or a topic you would like to learn more about?
Send suggestions to mspegstapleford@windstream.net)*

THE LIGHTHOUSES THAT NEVER WERE

Continued from page 1

and Fog Signal. This was located southwest of the Stow Creek in New Jersey, the dividing line between Cumberland and Salem Counties. Again it was felt that as long as the vessels followed the guiding lights of Liston Range, the building of Arnold's Point Light was unnecessary.

It seemed like the government continually appropriated the funds to build these lighthouses and range lights and then decided against their construction. So it was with Brown Shoal Light and Fog Signal, (to be located 2 miles south of Brandywine Shoal), Goose Island Flats Light and Fog Signal, (near the Salem River), Joe Glogger Shoal Light (in the vicinity of Cross Ledge and Miah Maull) and Horse-Shoe Shoal Light and Fog Signal (located on Horse-Shoe Shoal).

As in every case, money was appropriated but the plans rarely got past the preliminary stages. It is surmised that the Delaware River and Bay had become so well marked with navigational aids that construction of additional lighthouses was difficult to justify.

CRUISE NEWS

Summer 2017

2017 Cruises to the Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay have been scheduled for the following Saturdays: July 8 and August 19. The 5 hour SATURDAY NIGHT MOONLIGHT CRUISE taking place on July 8 will be going to Harbor of Refuge and south in the bay leaving the dock at 4 PM. The 4 hour SATURDAY NIGHT SUNSET CRUISE taking place on August 19 and leaving the dock at 4 PM will be going to Ship John and points north in the bay. All cruises take place aboard the Bonanza II out of the New Jersey State Marina (Higbee's -slip #5), Fortescue, NJ. RESERVE SOON --CRUISES FILL UP QUICKLY!!

Cost for the cruises will be \$45 for adults and \$20 for children 5 - 12 years of age. Passengers must be at the dock at least one half hour before departure time. Lighthouses visited are: Miah Maull, Cross Ledge, Elbow of Cross Ledge, Fourteen Foot Bank and either Brandywine or Ship John. Harbor of Refuge is included in the 5 hour cruise on July 8. You are asked to bring bug spray (just in case), a jacket and a box lunch if you wish. Soda and water are provided.

For reservations please contact:

Elma Gardner (856) 825-0123 e-mail: elmagardner@verizon.net;

OR Darlene Rigazio (609) 884-1329 e-mail: darlenej50@yahoo.com

Checks (payable to DBLHKFA) are NOT deposited until after the cruise; if the cruise is cancelled due to inclement weather, your check will be returned. We must have a home & cell phone number for you in case of a cancellation OR you can call any of the above numbers. Refunds WILL NOT be made if you DO NOT let us know you WILL NOT be there. Payment is due 2 weeks BEFORE the cruise, checks can be mailed to: Maxine Mulligan, Treasurer, 1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, NJ 08360.

There are former lighthouse keepers and members of the coast guard aboard these cruises to narrate and answer your questions. Background information on the Delaware Bay and the history of each lighthouse will be given. Spend some time on the historic Delaware Bay viewing the lighthouses and the beautiful sunset. What an excellent opportunity to get beautiful photos Come on a cruise; join us for a pleasant, rewarding, relaxing, educational experience.

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO CAROLE F. REILY

A tribute to our organization's founder, organizer, leader and first president. Remembering her on the 10th anniversary of her passing. July 7, 2007 – July 7 - 2017

*When we felt the brunt of the storm
The waves crashing and pushing us around
You were our lighthouse.
By showing your strength
Your light beaming far and near
Calming the ocean after the storm
Becoming the beacon for others to follow.*



CROSSING THE BAR – Doris Elizabeth Simpson



Member, Doris Elizabeth Simpson, went to her “Good Reward” on March 22. She graduated from the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing in Philadelphia, PA, becoming a RN in 1950, and eventually became a private duty nurse at Delaware Hospital, retiring in 1991. Her favorite activities included going to church, belonging to the Private Duty Nurse Registry, attending the Delaware Bay Lighthouse meetings and spending time with her “Girls Club” buddies, family and friends. She also loved to travel. It was truly a pleasure to be in her company sharing and reminiscing. She will be missed by her “lighthouse family” at our gatherings.

FROM THE WEB SITE

by Kelly Mulligan Web Master

Since we are in the process of moving the web site, I thought it would be appropriate to present the historical statistics for October 2008 to March 2017 as a way of bidding farewell.

Total number of visitors 106,713

Total number of hits 1,879,280

Most visits were from the US, Asia & Europe

The phrases most searched were: 5 Fathom Lightship; Delaware Bay Lighthouses; Port Mahon in Delaware

The most downloaded item was the Newsletter.

In 2016, the top lighthouse sites linked to ours were: The Lighthouse Challenge of NJ and Lighthouse Friends

We are looking forward to a new and improved site.



Katie Moser selling chances



Raffle prizes



Door prizes



Members enjoying the buffet

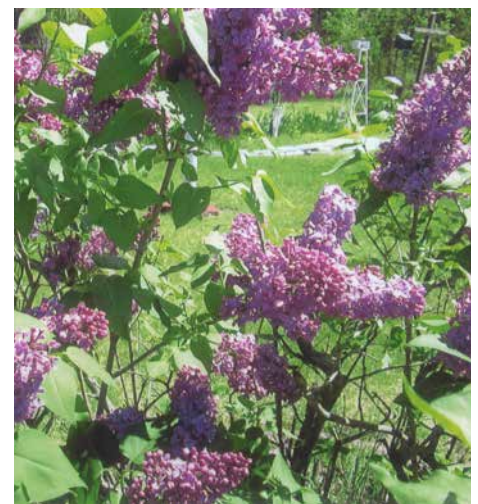
SPRING IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY



*"Tulips brighten the spring.
They cheer up our lives with
the colours they bring."
– Mand*



*"And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils"
– Longfellow*



*"When Lilacs last
in the Dooryard
Bloomed"
– Whitman*