



# The Bay Run



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

Volume 44 Issue 32  
Summer 2025

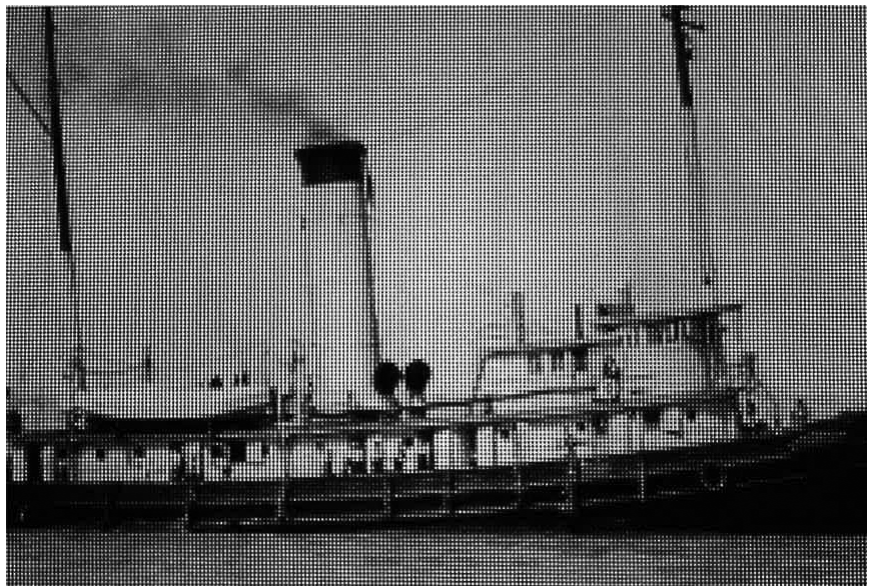
"Our mission is to preserve the history of the  
Delaware Bay and River Lighthouses, Lightships and their Keepers"

## THE WRECK OF THE TUG "SPARTAN"—BY STEVE MURRAY

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, September 16, 1903, Delaware Captain Ebe Townsend Chandler was piloting his vessel, the Spartan, a sturdy ocean-going 243-ton steam tug, up the Delaware Bay. It had been contracted to tow coal barges back and forth between Philadelphia and New England. On this trip there were 3 barges being towed; there was a crew of 15, including the captain manning the vessel.

It was a while before daybreak when a ferocious storm suddenly converged on the Spartan without warning. Later to be referred to as "The Vagabond Hurricane", it left a path of destruction all along the Mid-Atlantic states, including shipwrecks, flooding, destroyed buildings and loss of life. Torrential rain and 80 mph wind swept across the bay as seas pounded and tossed the vessels like mere toys. Captain Chandler had no time to search for a safe harbor, his only option was to drop anchor and try to ride out the storm. The anchor proved no match against the immense power of the storm; the tug with the three barges tethered behind it, was pulled aground on the treacherous Brown Shoal about mid-way center of the bay. The captain knew that a ship aground in a storm such as this is almost certainly doomed. The increasingly battered Spartan quickly began taking on water and, in an effort to at least save his own ship, he ordered the tow lines cut. It was of no use. The Spartan was sinking and would have to be abandoned.

The captain barked for everyone to get his life vest on and launch the life boat. Before the crew could evacuate, several huge waves washed every man overboard. Captain Chandler had not had time to put on his life vest. The men struggled in the darkness and churning sea to grab on to any debris that might help them stay afloat. The deafening wind, heavy rain and rising and falling swells made it impossible for the men to stay together or communicate. They quickly drifted apart, each to his own fate and probably with a prayer on their lips, as the Spartan was turned into driftwood.



*Continued on page 5*

### *In This Issue:*

- 2 - A Beam from the President's Desk
- 3 - From the Log
- 4 - Continued "From the Log"
- 5 - Continued Featured Article

- 6 - Cruise News
- 7 - Summer of '25
- 8 - Declaration of Independence

*Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.*



Hello once again from North Cape May, New Jersey. Spring is here and we are seeing longer days and warmer temperatures. It is perfect weather to watch our neighbors prepare their yards for summer barbecues and pool time with their kids.

I was the speaker at our spring meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup> at Cold Spring Brewery giving a first-time power-point presentation on the "Forgotten Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay". I talked about my experiences living in Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse in 1972 and 1973. I had photo slides of the lighthouses on the Delaware Bay, both past and present, giving the history and statistics on each light. The audience was very interested in my story and asked questions after the presentation. I would like to thank my wife for creating this power-point slide for me. I spent eighteen months living in a lighthouse, which provided me with valuable experience. I hope to have conveyed the history of these lighthouses on the Delaware Bay to the audience.

We have three graduating grandchildren in 2025. Madison graduated from the University of Connecticut on May 10<sup>th</sup> with a Bachelor's of Nutritional Science degree. She plans on continuing her education at UConn. Bella is graduating from Lower Cape May Regional High School in June and has been accepted at Stockton University where she will major in theater arts. Liam is graduating from Richard M. Teitelman Middle School and heading to high school in the fall. We are so proud of all three of these grandchildren.

So, enjoy your summer, keep cool and until next time, keep the lights shining! *Angelo*

**THE BAY RUN** is the official publication of The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. and is published quarterly throughout the year. A subscription to the newsletter is included with the cost of membership, Annual Membership dues are \$25.00 for the calendar year beginning March 1st. Back issues are usually available for members joining mid-year. Materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced without permission of the DBLHKFA, Inc.

## **For Newsletter ideas, Contact**

***DBLHKFA c/o Maxine Mulligan***

1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, New Jersey 08360

Email: Memax1@juno.com

## **Board of Directors**

Rod Mulligan, Katie Moser,  
and MaryEllen Walker

## **DBLHKFA, Inc. Officers and Directors**

President..... Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.  
Vice President Pro Tem..... Rod Mulligan  
Chairman of the Board..... Rod Mulligan  
Treasurer ..... Maxine Mulligan  
Secretary ..... Darlene Rigazio  
Programs & Activities..... Mark Allen

Sunshine/Hospitality ..... Katie Moser  
Publicity ..... Dolores Dunn  
Newsletter..... Maxine Mulligan  
Webmaster ..... Kelly Mulligan  
Membership..... Mary Ellen Walker  
Cruises ..... Terry & Steve Rhoades

## **Phone Numbers and Email Addresses**

A. Rigazio- (609) 408-6692 • Keeperang54@yahoo.com

R & M Mulligan-(856) 691-8224 • Memax1@juno.com

Katie Moser-(215) 884-8548 • KatieMos@aol.com

K. Mulligan-(856) 691-8224 • Kellys.light.house@gmail.com

D. Rigazio- (609) 408-6692 • Darlenej50@yahoo.com

Mary Ellen Walker - (856) 447-3158

*The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. (DBLHKFA)  
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit preservation and educational organization.*

# FROM THE LOG OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

by Rod Mulligan

---

May 24, we attended a presentation regarding Robert Smalls of South Carolina, a slave who escaped the military of the South Carolina Confederacy and had connections to Cape May. The presentation was held at Cold Springs Brewery, part of Cold Springs Village in Cape May, NJ

Robert Smalls, a Civil War Hero and a Black political leader during the Reconstruction Era, was born in April of 1839 and raised in Beaufort, South Carolina. He was raised in a small slave cabin owned by Henry McKee for whom his mother was a house slave. When he was older, he was sent to Charleston where he worked as a waiter in a hotel. It was there where he met an enslaved Hannah Jones; they were married in 1856. Smalls hung around the Charleston docks and eventually became a knowledgeable enslaved crew member on a Confederate gunboat the "CSS Planter". He continually dreamed of freedom not only for himself but for his family.

On the night of May 12, 1862, the crew members of the Planter went ashore in Charleston leaving Smalls and the enslaved crew members unattended. Taking the chance to escape to freedom, around 3 AM, Smalls and his fellow freedom seekers fired up the ship's boilers and sailed to a wharf to pick up their waiting family members. Since he had worked as a harbor pilot, Smalls knew the proper signals to give to disguise their identity and the sixteen enslaved people steamed past the unsuspecting Confederate rebels. Holding up a large white sheet, they sailed out to the naval blockade squadron and turned the Planter over to the Union officers of the United States Navy. Robert Smalls and his family were "free at last".

With his knowledge regarding Confederate operations in and around Charleston Harbor, he was eventually promoted to captain and given command of the Planter in 1864. It is reported that Smalls influenced President Lincoln to allow former slaves to join the Union Army. Smalls is also remembered: for serving in the South Carolina legislature, as a member of the United States House of Representatives, as one of the founders of the Republican Party and for being revered as a Civil War hero.

His local connection? Dolly Nash, his great granddaughter, lived and taught in Cape May. Ms. Nash also ran a hotel which was originally named "The Planter". This hotel, located at 810 Lafayette Street in Cape May, is now called "The Boarding House Hotel". Stop by when you are visiting Cape May. If you happen to be in Beaufort, SC check out the Smalls-Nash House, another tribute to Smalls, his birthplace and his great granddaughter. Our thanks for the great presentation.

The spring meeting held on May 1 at the Cold Springs Brewery in Cape May, NJ, was interesting, well-presented and well attended. Our president, Angelo Rigazio, (assisted by his wife, Darlene) gave a power-point presentation on "The Forgotten Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay". Angelo was the last keeper to serve on Harbor of Refuge; he had joined the coast guard and was assigned to the lighthouse serving off and on from the light from 1970-1974. He gave several interesting facts including showing us pictures of the inside of the light. He explained: how the coast guard "keepers" were brought to the lighthouse and at the end of their duty assignment, picked up by helicopter, about their grocery orders, deliveries, and cooking assignments, their role with the Delaware River pilots, keeping the daily logs, calling in hourly weather reports to Cape May, surviving through hurricanes and the winters, and getting adjusted to the foghorn blasts. The solar-powered lights on the presently privately owned lighthouses are maintained by the coast guard. The lights, still very important aids to navigation even though privately owned, are rapidly deteriorating. Sign up for one of our cruises and check out a piece of history while the lighthouses are still visible in the Delaware Bay. (See "Cruise News" p. 6 ) continued on page 4



## FROM THE LOG OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

*continued from page 3*

NO LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION MEETING THIS SUMMER. SEE YOU IN THE FALL. HAVE A GREAT SUMMER.



At the very same time at the mouth of the bay, about 5 miles off Cape Henlopen, the 42' fishing sloop, "Irene", out of Anglesea, NJ was also in the grips of the storm. Her Captain, John Leonard Carlbert, also had no other option but to drop anchor and ride out this storm that came out of nowhere. The anchorage held fast at first but soon the Irene was also being dragged away by the tempest. A huge wave washed one lifeboat overboard and stoved in the other. The only other boat remaining was a small 12" dory, which was useless to the crew. The anchor finally grabbed and held fast. By 9 AM there seemed to be a brief lull in the fast-moving storm (could have been the eye of the hurricane) and the captain decided to carefully reset sails and try to slowly limp back to Anglesea. In a short time however, he noticed two forms in the distance bobbing up and down with the swells. It was two of the survivors from the Spartan. Without a moment's hesitation, the captain changed course to go to their rescue. In fear of running them over, he laid anchor a safe distance away from them. The only way he could get them safely on the Irene would be to send out the little dory. He really needed a small member of his crew to do this and 21-year-old Carl Aspenberg, stepped forward to volunteer. At only 130 lbs. he was very small in weight and stature but certainly strong and brave in spirit to leave the safety of his own boat to row a dinghy out in a hurricane.

Carl got to the exhausted men one at a time but for fear of upsetting the boat by them struggling to climb aboard, he had them hang onto the stern while he rowed back. When the rescued men, Carl and the boat were safely on board the men said there were 13 others that had abandoned the Spartan with them. Captain Carlberg braved the storm again searching a 12 mile radius for any survivors. One by one he was finding them and by noon, 8 men had been rescued. That made a total of 10 men saved from the Spartan. Five more, including Captain Chandler, were nowhere to be found.

It was 12 noon; all hope was given up. Captain Carlberg set course for their homeport of Anglesea arriving there about 4 PM. The exhausted, soaked, hungry and injured Spartan crew members were transferred to the Anglesea Life Saving Station near Hereford Inlet Lighthouse where they were given first aid, warm clothes and a hot meal. The next day there was some great news. Miraculously two of the missing crew members, Captain Chandler and his first mate, were picked up in the bay by the pilot boat "Philadelphia". They had been in the water for 16 hours, Chandler clinging to a 12" board the entire time. Both were taken to the port of Lewes, Delaware for medical treatment and care. Unfortunately, the remaining three had perished.

The bravery exhibited in this rescue made the newspapers nationwide, including the New York Times. The crew of the Irene was celebrated in Cape May County as local heroes. Letters of request went to President Teddy Roosevelt and members of Congress to award Captain Carlberg and Carl Aspenberg the Congressional Life Saving Medal, a medal that is usually reserved for members of the US Life Saving Service. Despite the captain's insistence that he did not want to be honored for just doing his duty, enough influential people made it happen.

On January 5, 1906, both brave mariners were awarded the medal. Engraved on the back: To: John Leonard Carlberg/Carl Aspenberg "For Gallant Conduct In Saving Life Wreck Tug Spartan" September 16, 1903.

Murray, Steve. "The Five Mile Beach Sun," Summer 2023.



## CRUISE NEWS FOR SUMMER 2025

---

Cruises to the Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay have been scheduled for Saturday, July 19, and Saturday, August 23, leaving at 3 PM...the 4 hour **SUNSET CRUISE** (July 19) takes us to Brandywine Shoal Light and returns from south in the bay...the 4 hour **SUNSET CRUISE** (August 23), goes to Ship John Shoal Light returning from north in the bay. These narrated cruises take place aboard the USCG approved Bonanza II out of the NJ State Marina (Higbee's -slip #5), Fortescue, NJ, 08321. **RESERVE SOON – BRING A RELATIVE, FRIEND, AND/OR NEIGHBOR. THESE CRUISES FILL UP QUICKLY!!** (NOTE: Fortescue is "The Weakfish Capital of the World".) Check out this quaint fishing village on the Delaware Bay. PLEASE NOTE WE LEAVE THE DOCK AT 3 PM. (NOTE: We must have 30 people sign up for the cruise in order to pay for the fuel.)

The cost for the cruises is \$55 for adults and \$25 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. You are asked to bring bug spray (just in case), a jacket and a box lunch if you wish. Soda and water are provided on board. Delaware Bay merchandise will be on sale on the cruise. We accept cash or a check.

**For reservations please contact:** Theresa or Steve Rhoades (cell) 609-364-8747 landline 856-697-4144 e-mail: [terri289@hotmail.com](mailto:terri289@hotmail.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 the number listed above. 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.

The cruise is narrated by our President, Angelo Rigazio, a former member of the coast guard and the last keeper at Harbor of Refuge Light. There are also other members of our organization aboard these cruises to 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...excellent "photo ops". Come join us for a relaxing, enjoyable time and watch the beautiful sunset on the Delaware Bay. These lighthouses will NOT be there forever. **CHECK THEM OUT NOW!!!**

**THE DELAWARE BAY LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

## THE SUMMER OF '25 – AN UPDATE ON OLLIE AND THE FAMILY

I have been informed that many of you have been asking about us, so I thought it was time for an update. The twins did extremely well in school and are growing up too fast. Research shows that young oysters can grow up to an inch a year. Soon they will no longer want to go on vacation with us so we thought we'd better take advantage while we can still travel as a family. Both twins have been recommended by their teachers for Advanced Water Filtering. We heard the state is moving ahead with oyster research for cleaner water and oysters can filter about 30 to 50 gallons of water a day. We are so proud of them. Since it is that time of the year, Shelley and I are planning our summer vacation and thought it would be great to learn (and educational for all of us) about New Jersey's Eastern Shore since that is our area. We are planning on hitching a ride aboard a passing ship and cruising to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, a 457,000-acre refuge up the coast. This refuge is well known for its year-round migrating bird visitors and the wonderful bird's eye view of the beautiful skyline of Atlantic City. As we sail by, we are planning to check out the Absecon Lighthouse.

We also would like to catch sight of New Jersey's most famous pachyderm, Lucy the Elephant, when cruising by Margate. Continuing down the coast, we will visit Corson's Inlet State Park where we can spend some time just relaxing. From our vantage point we will be able to see the many beautiful flowers that line the park. I also heard there is some poison ivy lurking near the water, so we will have to be careful. There are plenty of wetland acres near this site as with most of the Jersey Shore locations. Traveling further down the coast we can check out the barrier island towns of Strathmere and Sea Isle City and eventually Avalon and Stone Harbor, and we certainly don't want to miss Townsend's Inlet Waterfront Park. Friends have mentioned that under Townsend's Inlet's bridge, the surf sometimes gets rough so we will have to be careful. The New Jersey Audubon Society has a seabird watch in Avalon where as many as 800,000 birds have been counted. In some seasons, that count has risen to almost one million. WOW, that sure is a lot of birds.

The Wetlands Institute, located in Stone Harbor, is where research has been conducted for over 50 years. Next, we are planning on floating by the historic Hereford Lighthouse that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We will have to be careful in that area since it is known to have some of the most treacherous waters in the ocean causing a lot of shipwrecks. I sure don't want to put my family in jeopardy. We will float on to the Two-Mile Beach Unit and the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge. Sounds good to me...I can't wait.

Just one more adventure before ending our vacation, we are planning a visit to a bit of New Jersey that still belongs to Delaware (a surprise to us, that's for sure). Taking us back in time to 100 years before the Revolutionary War, it seems that William Penn and King Charles II of England signed a treaty to separate Delaware from Pennsylvania, which included modern-day South Jersey. The two men agreed to draw a 12-mile circle around the city of New Castle, Delaware. Everything within the arc was Delaware's including the Delaware River over to the low-tide mark of the New Jersey shoreline. At that time Killcohook was a marshland situated just barely above the waterline. Time and tide made this area just seven miles south of the Delaware Memorial Bridge, an area of Delaware located at the tip of Salem County, NJ. That is where we will end our summer vacation.

Have a nice summer and enjoy the Fourth of July, ya'all.  
I'll keep in touch.

**OLLIE**

(Galetto & Brown, "SNJ Today," August 24, 2022.)  
(Sarah Fertsch, "Shore Local," October 13, 2022.)





# WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT...

## *The Declaration Of Independence*

“Believe me dear Sir, there is not in the British Empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do. But by the God that made me I will cease to exist before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament propose, and in this, I think I speak the sentiments of America.” (Thomas Jefferson, November 29, 1775)

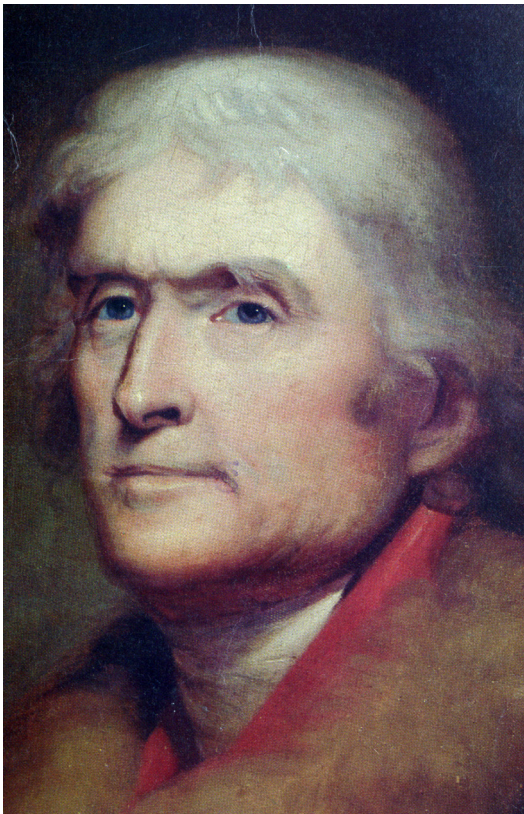
On April 29, 1962, President John F. Kennedy stated the following at a dinner for Nobel Prize winners at the White House: “I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent of human knowledge that has ever been gathered at the White House with the exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone.” - a tribute regarding Jefferson’s remarkable intellect and diverse talents.

“First and foremost, Jefferson is the author of the most important freedom that much of humankind takes for granted. He articulated in a single brilliant sentence that ‘all men were created equal, that we have God-given rights, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’. This is the American creed, and he wrote it.” (Ken Burns, 1997)

The Declaration of Independence was originally the Declaration of the thirteen united states of America which was adopted unanimously by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress at Independence Hall in the colonial capital of Philadelphia. The delegates became known as our “founding fathers”. These 13 colonies regarded themselves as independent sovereign states no longer subject to British rule. Jefferson passed away on July 4, 1826.

This document is considered the most circulated, reprinted and influential document in our history and number one of our most influential historical documents. As we entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Thomas Jefferson was selected the “Man of the Millennium”.

### ***THE SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE***



**HAVE A GREAT FOURTH OF JULY!!** *Compliments of Thomas Jefferson, 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States*