



The Beam



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The Lighthouses of Eastern Lake Ontario

by Ted and Jo Panayotoff

Several trips to upstate New York near Lake Ontario have allowed us to visit and photograph a number of the lighthouses along the New York shore of eastern Lake Ontario. The "trip" below is actually a composite of several visits but would be feasible as a weekend trip. During the "weekend", it would be possible to cover five lighthouses.



Oswego West Pierhead Lighthouse
Photo credit C.E. Savas

OSWEGO WEST PIERHEAD LIGHTHOUSE

Our "trip" begins at Oswego, N.Y., at the mouth of the Oswego River and Lake Ontario. The present lighthouse is the third marking the entrance to this important Great Lakes port and link to the New York canal system.

Unfortunately, its location on the west pierhead makes it

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New York Harbor Cruise

by Carole DiNapoli

On a picture perfect autumn afternoon, about sixty members and friends of the USLHS - New Jersey Chapter boarded the "HAPPY" out of Atlantic Highlands for a New York Harbor Cruise.

The Captain guided us out of the harbor past the Conover Beacon, Great Beds, and Old Orchard Lights. Next, while munching Cape Cod potato chips, we saw Princess Bay, Coney Island and West Bank Lights.

Framed by a beautiful sunset and full moon, we viewed Romer Shoals, the last light on our cruise.

A great time was had by all.

(Photo essay on page 5).



Great Beds Lighthouse
Photo by Carole DiNapoli

inaccessible for close viewing except by boat. There were two earlier lighthouses at Oswego; the first, built in 1822, was on the east shore of the river mouth and the second, built in 1836, was on a pier on the west shore. When the harbor was expanded in the early 1930's, a new west breakwater made of stone was built with the present lighthouse at its end. The light went into service in 1934. It has a fourth order lens with a flashing red characteristic.

The building is a single story metal structure with an attached tower. In the early 1940's, the light was automated--a decision hastened by a tragic accident in 1942 in which several Coast Guardsmen were killed as their boat swamped in heavy weather during a change of keepers. This tragedy illustrates that there are reasons other than economics involved in the decision to automate a light.

The lighthouse is best viewed from Wright's Landing Park which is on the west side of the river. The park is on Lake Street off of West First Street.

At the foot of West First Street, the H. Lee White Marine Museum is also worth a visit. The museum, only open in the summer, has excellent displays of the nautical history of the region. Across the Oswego River next to Fort Ontario is the original stone keeper's house from the first lighthouse. A careful search along the edge of the bluff near the keeper's house will reward you with a look at one of the original Lighthouse Service property markers, a 6 inch by 6 inch stone column with "LH" on it.

SELKIRK LIGHTHOUSE

Moving east, the next lighthouse is the Selkirk Lighthouse at Port Ontario where the Salmon River enters the lake. The light was built in 1838 in anticipation of the rapid growth of the port. The river silted up, however, and a railroad bypassed the area, so growth did not occur as envisioned. Consequently, the light was decommissioned in 1859. According to one source, a keeper continued to serve the "light" until 1890. There were hints of high level influence in the "job;" however, another source indicates there were two minor pierhead lights in existence during that period and these would have required tending.

The Selkirk Lighthouse is especially interesting because it is one of the very few remaining lights in which the lantern is in the original pre-Fresnel lens configuration. The early decommissioning of the light made modernization unnecessary, thereby preserving the original lantern for us today. The lighthouse, which also served as the keeper's house, is a two story stone structure with a short

tower and lantern on the roof. There is a modern one story addition which contains a kitchen.

The lighthouse is privately owned by Jim Walker, the



Selkirk Lighthouse

Photo by Ted and Jo Panayotoff

developer of the adjacent marina. During our visit he graciously took us on a tour of the structure and shared plans for its continued restoration.

The lighthouse was relit as an official navigation aid in 1989. Recently, we have learned that the restoration has progressed to the point that the keeper's quarters are being rented out on a daily or weekly basis. Mr. Walker can be reached at (315) 298-6688 for details. The proceeds are to go to further the restoration effort. The lighthouse is located at the end of Lake Road off Route 3 at the blinking light, just after you cross the Salmon River Bridge going east in Port Ontario.

STONY POINT LIGHTHOUSE

This lighthouse is located on the west side of Stony Point peninsula just west of Henderson Bay and Harbor, N.Y. The Stony Point Lighthouse is about 25 miles further along the coast of Lake Ontario from the Selkirk Lighthouse. The light is a single story house with attached tower. It was built in 1869 and replaced an earlier lighthouse dating from 1830. The design is very similar to that of the nearby Horse Island Lighthouse and others on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway. The light, which was decommissioned in 1945, is privately owned and is available to rent on a weekend or weekly basis from June through October. The tower structure is

combined brick and stone and the keeper's house is of the same stone. There is also a new wood frame addition to the rear of the house. The site includes a small oil house



Stony Point Lighthouse
Photo by Ted and Jo Panayotoff

and an automatic minor light on a small metal tower.

To reach the lighthouse exit Route 3 to the left on Military Road just before reaching Henderson Harbor. Follow Military Road and bear left on Lighthouse Road, following it to the end at the lighthouse. The site is private property but we believe the owners are accommodating to the lighthouse enthusiast and photographer. The beautifully restored building is well worth a visit.

HORSE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

The next lighthouse, at Sackets Harbor, N.Y., is architecturally very similar to the Stony Point Light. Unfortunately, it is privately owned and about 200 yards offshore, on a small private island just east of the Sackets Harbor Battlefield Park. This limits close-up observation and photos but a distant view will show a brick tower and attached brick keeper's house with a wood frame extension similar to that at Stony Point Light.

The limited size of the original structure must have been a problem at both stations. The attic has only one dormer window per side while Stony Point has two. The present owner gains access to the island in an ATV from the

mainland via a ford. The ford is wadeable for a closer view, but imposing "Keep Out" signs at the island are not inviting.

The structure, which was completed in 1870, appears basically sound but in need of a little paint. It seems to be an active residence. We would assume it was decommissioned around the same time as Stony Point and the automated light transferred to a metal tower. Even though the lighthouse isn't readily accessible, the stop is well worth-while based on the other attractions of Sackets Harbor. It has been developed as a New York State Urban Cultural Park and is the site of historically important Army and Navy installations dating from the War of 1812. Sackets Harbor is about 15 miles further up Route 3.

TIBBETTS POINT LIGHTHOUSE

The last lighthouse on our constructed tour is the one at Tibbetts Point at Cape Vincent, New York. Tibbetts Point Lighthouse is at the entrance to the St. Lawrence River. The lighthouse is a conical structure of white stucco and is still an active light on this important waterway.

The first light at this location was built in 1827. The current lighthouse, which is the second, was completed in 1854, electrified in 1930, and automated in 1981. In 1984, the American Youth Hostel organization began to



Tibbetts Point Lighthouse
Photo by Ted and Jo Panayotoff

develop the site and now the two residences are used as active hostels.

The site also has a steam fog signal building, and an

air compressor building which powered the old diaphone fog signal and a small iron oil house. The light is a fourth order flashing white light 69 feet above the water.

The lighthouse is reached by heading to Cape Vincent from the south on Route 12E. In Cape Vincent, a left turn onto Lighthouse Road will take you to the site, which is open year round. The hostel is open from May to October (information is available by calling (315) 654-3450). As you approach Cape Vincent on Route 12E, you can see the Cape Vincent Breakwater Light on the left side of the road. It has been moved to the lawn of the Town Hall building.

While in Cape Vincent, you should allow time for a stop at the Palette Shop at 566 Broadway. Shirley Hamblen, the proprietor and a lighthouse artist, is the founder of the Tibbetts Point Lighthouse Historical Society and is very active in efforts to restore and preserve the lighthouse.

This is the final stop of our tour. There are other lighthouses on Eastern Lake Ontario but they are only accessible or visible by boat or by travelling to the Canadian shore.

Additional information can be obtained from F. Ross Holland's book, **Great American Lighthouses; Seaway Trail Lighthouses** available from Seaway Trail, Inc.,



Jack Granger presenting Ross Holland with Cheryl Collin Spencer sculpture of Sandy Hook Lighthouse - Photo by Carl Nelson

Record Turnout for Ross Holland

by Jack Granger

Our fall meeting, held October 3rd, 1992, at Sandy Hook, was the best attended meeting to date. Approximately 100 people turned out on a beautiful day to hear Ross Holland. He previewed his newest book, due out in 1993, which covers the lighthouses in the Chesapeake Bay and showed many interesting slides illustrating the history of lighthouses in the area.

Jack Granger presented Ross with a miniature sculpture by Cheryl Collin Spencer of Eliot, Maine, and a colored drawing of the Sandy Hook Lighthouse by Paul Bradley of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

After the meeting Ross and Mrs. Holland were dinner guests of the Chapter.



Ross Holland addressing New Jersey Chapter
Photo by Carl Nelson

New York Harbor Cruise

Photos by Carole DiNapoli



Help Save Cape Cod Lighthouse!

Contributed by Barbara Lauer

The Cape Cod Lighthouse, the oldest lighthouse on Cape Cod, is endangered. Once situated on a 10 acre site, the elements have eroded it to the point where only about four acres remain. In 1796, the lighthouse was 510 feet from the cliff; the light now stands 125 feet from the edge.



Highland or Cape Cod Lighthouse with Radio Beacon, North Truro, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, circa 1948.

The Truro Historical Society Lighthouse Committee plans to move the lighthouse back from the deteriorating edge of the cliff, at an estimated cost of \$2 million. They plan to apply for federal funds to pay for most of the cost of the project but must show evidence of other funding to Congress.

The Lighthouse Committee needs to generate public support and contributions, including, it is hoped, a significant corporate sponsor. To complicate matters, Cape Cod Light is owned by the U.S. Coast Guard, but lies on Cape Cod National Seashore land, and permission from both agencies must be secured before the Committee can take over the lighthouse. The Committee has gathered over 10,000 signatures on a petition to Congress to save the lighthouse.

If you would like to help save the Cape Cod Light, send your tax deductible contribution made payable to

Lighthouse Fund. and mail to Truro Historical Society, P. O. Box 486, Truro, MA 02666. Excerpted from *Cape Cod Guide*, September 11 - October 8, 1992, pages 92-93.

President's Letter ✍

First, I am delighted to welcome the thirty new members who have joined us in the last two months.

Secondly, I would like to bring us a point that has been discussed before regarding chapter activities. Your officers and board members are constantly trying to identify activities that you would enjoy. Our meetings are planned to provide you with a variety of speakers and locations. We try to arrange trips that will appeal to you. At the Sandy Hook meeting, we passed out an "Ideas and Suggestions" sheet to all who attended, asking for your input. To date, only eight have been returned out of the 75 or more distributed. This is very disappointing.

Friends, this is your organization, and we would like to serve you in the best way possible, but we need feedback from you on things you would like to do.

During the summer, I tried to schedule a Long Island Cruise, but had to cancel my attempt when the cost approached \$60.00 per person. At Sandy Hook, I tried to get some idea of what cost the membership considered reasonable for a 2 or 3 day trip. I was not able to get any clear, general response, although after the meeting several comments were heard indicating the cost was too high.

I would like to ask a favor of allof you. Please drop me a note at 21 Channel Road, Toms River, NJ 08753 or call me at (908) 255-7484 telling me two things:

What specific destinations, topics, projects, etc., would interest you?

What are your spending preferences and time constraints?

Help us make 1993 a banner year!

Thank you!

Jack Granger

The Old Channel Light

by Marie Olson, 1979

It stands in the water
Half black and half white,
A strong, sturdy structure,
The Old Channel Light.

For years, it has stood there
It's light flashing bright
To guide all the ships
On all sorts of nights.

Once men used to live there.
One at a time,
To keep the light working
and make sure its works fine.

But now no footsteps
echo its walls,
it runs automatic
With no help at all.

Contributed by Pete Hoeltje

A Guide to New Jersey Lighthouses

Contributed by William Burket

A new publication entitled **A Guide to New Jersey Lighthouses** by R. Marilyn Schmidt has been published by the Barnegat Light Press/Pine Barrens Press. The 22 page paperback contains illustrated pictures of the 7 Atlantic Coast and 2 Delaware Bay lighthouses it covers. The book gives directions for reaching each light, hours, and phone numbers to call for information.

Available for \$4.95 + \$2.00 postage and handling from Pine Barrens Press, P.O. Box 305, Barnegat Light, NJ 08006. For more information call (609) 494-3154.

Lighthouse Cup Plate Update

by Ted and Jo Panayotoff

Since our article in the September *Beam*, three more lighthouse cup plates have been produced.

As anticipated, Ayn Chase completed the Martha's Vineyard set with cup plates of Cape Poge Light and Gay Head Light. The latter is very unusual, made multicolored to capture the effect of the multicolored clay cliffs at Gay Head. These plates are available through Pairpoint Glass, 66 North Second Street, New Bedford, MA 02740 or phone (508) 997-1813.

The third cup plate was brought to our attention by Barbara Gowdy and Betty Husarik of our New Jersey Chapter. The plate is from Millville Art Glass and is the Finns Point Rear Range Light on the Delaware Bay. It is sponsored by the Pennsville Township Historical Society with proceeds going to support their programs.

At the October quarterly meeting we were asked about prices of the plates. The Millville Art Glass plate is \$6.50. Most of the Pairpoint Glass Co. plates are \$10-12. Some may be higher, such as the multicolored ones, limited editions, or editions where the molds have been

Lighthouse Stamp Society

by William Burket

Anyone interested in collecting lighthouses on stamps is invited to join the new Lighthouse Stamp Society. The President and newsletter editor is Darlene Thomas, 8612 West Warren Lane, Lakewood, Colorado 80227-2352. Please write to Darlene for more information.

Part of each journal includes a checklist of stamps on the topic of lighthouses and notices of special postal cancellations.

Did you know that the Sandy Hook Lighthouse has been featured on two United States stamps, the Cape Hatteras Light on two stamps and a postal card? Excluding the Statue of Liberty, the United States had had 10 stamps and one postal card on this topic. Can anyone name the others?



December Meeting

by Kim M. Ruth

The December meeting of the United States Lighthouse Society - New Jersey Chapter will be held December 5th at the Brigantine Bay Museum, Lighthouse Circle, Brigantine, New Jersey, at 11:00 a.m. Ken Black, the Curator of the Shore Village Museum, in Rockland, Maine, will be our guest speaker. Bring your lunch and a friend!

Elections will be held for officers and Board members for 1993. This is also the deadline for photo contest entries. After the meeting, we have made arrangements to have the Absecon Lighthouse open to visitors.

To reach the museum from the Parkway, take Exit 40 onto Route 30 East to Route 87 Huron Avenue to Brigantine Blvd. Pass Harrah's Casino following the bridge into Brigantine Beach. The museum is off of Lighthouse Circle and features a small lighthouse.

From the Atlantic City Expressway, take Route 9. Turn onto Deliah Road following signs to Route 30 towards Atlantic City. Take Route 30 to Route 87 Huron Avenue to Brigantine Blvd. Pass Harrah's Casino following the bridge to Brigantine Beach. The museum is off of Lighthouse Circle and features a small lighthouse.

❄️ Happy Holidays ❄️

As this year draws to a close, I would like to thank all of the people who have made this newsletter possible. Our contributors - Ted and Jo Panayotoff, Carole DiNapoli, Jack Granger, William Burkett, and many others; Carl Nelson, who provides the excellent half-tones used in our pictures; Tina and the staff at Sir Speedy - Mt. Holly who do our printing; and my wife Sharon Fitzpatrick, who edits the editor and keeps the kids off my back while typing and laying it out. Without your contributions this newsletter would not be possible. If I have any regrets, it is only that I don't hear from more of you.

At this writing (November 11th), it's a little hard to begin thinking of Christmas and New Year's, but it is my last chance in print for the year. Please accept my best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, a joyous and prosperous New Year to

Happy Hanukkah, a joyous and prosperous New Year to all of our members and their families!

Kim

The Beam is the official journal of the United States Lighthouse Society - New Jersey Chapter. It is published quarterly, usually March, June, September and December.

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