



CHESAPEAKE LIGHTS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
CHESAPEAKE CHAPTER, U.S. LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

Herb Entwistle, Founding Chapter President, 1989-1997

Maryland Lighthouse Challenge

Special Edition No. 5 - 2007

The Lighthouses of the Maryland Challenge

by *Sandra Sableski*

Concord Point

Location: Susquehanna River / Chesapeake Bay
Year Station Established: 1827
Date Deactivated: 1975
Automated: 1920
Style: Conical



Concord Point is the second oldest tower lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. John Donohoo was the designated builder and also built the keeper's dwelling across the street. This lighthouse has the distinction of being the only lighthouse on the Bay to be tended throughout its manned history by a single family, the O'Neill's.

Fort Washington

Location: On the grounds of Fort Washington National Park, on the Potomac River
Year Station Established: 1857
Date Deactivated: N/A
Automated: Early 20th Century
Style: Converted wooden fog-bell tower



When this light station was established it was nothing more than an 18.5 foot iron pole with a light that could be hoisted to the top in the evenings. In 1882 the present bell tower was erected of German cut clapboard wood. In 1883 permission was granted by the Secretary of War to build a keepers house close to the light and the bell tower at the base of the Fort. In November 1901, a platform was built on the fog bell tower to support a lens lantern. The sixth-order light in the light tower was then extinguished.



Cove Point

Location: Cove Point / Patuxent River Entrance
Year Station Established: 1828
Date Deactivated: N/A
Automated: 1986
Style: Conical

Cove Point marks the shoal that extends outwards toward the shipping channel at Calvert Cliffs. It was built by John Donohoo. In 1857 a fourth-order Fresnel lens was installed. On August 16, 1986, Cove Point Lighthouse was officially automated. In 2000 the Coast Guard transferred ownership to the Calvert Marine Museum.



Hooper Strait

Location: Relocated From Tangier Sound
Year Station Established: 1827
Date Deactivated: 1966
Automated: 1954
Style: Screwpile

This is the second lighthouse constructed at Hooper Strait; the first one was destroyed by ice in 1877. The structure was designed and built in Baltimore, then dismantled and re-erected at the site in October of that year. It had a fifth-order Fresnel lens. The lighthouse was slated for destruction in 1966 when it was acquired by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, MD and moved to its new site in November 1966.

Drum Point

Location: Relocated From Patuxent River
Year Station Established: 1883
Date Deactivated: 1962
Automated: 1960
Style: Screwpile



Drum Point Lighthouse was constructed about 2.1 miles east of its present position at the Calvert Marine Museum. The structure housed a fourth-order Fresnel lens. By the 1970's the lighthouse sat on dry land. Drum Point is only one of three remaining screw-piles from forty-five that once served the Chesapeake Bay at the beginning of the twentieth century. The lighthouse was moved in March 1975 to the grounds of the Calvert Marine Museum.

Chesapeake Lightship (LV116)

Launched: August 17, 1930
Commissioned: 1930
Decommissioned: January 6, 1971



The Dry-Dock & Machine Company in Charleston, SC built LV116 in 1929. During WWII, LV116 was based out of Sandwich, MA, where it served as an examination and guard vessel at the north entrance of the Cape Cod Canal and helped protect the important port of Boston. After decommissioning, the ship was transferred to the National Park Service and used as a floating environmental classroom at Hains Point, Washington DC from 1971 until 1980.

see *Lighthouses of the MD Challenge* on page 3

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Pasek's Puzzlers Challenge Lighthouse Keepers

by Tony Pasek

By participating in the Maryland Lighthouse Challenge, we honor the steadfast and brave men & women who put duty ahead of self and served nobly in sometimes dangerous and often lonely stations. As you visit the Challenge sites, match the keeper with his or her lighthouse post.

- (1) John O'Neill
- (2) William Yeatman
- (3) Pamela Edwards
- (4) Thomas Steinhise
- (5) Eliza Wilson
- (6) Alexander Andrews
- (7) Fannie May Salter
- (8) Joseph Cameron
- (9) James Somerville
- (10) Alonzo Hubbard
- (11) John Cornwell

- (A) Chesapeake LV-116
- (B) Concord Point
- (C) Cove Point
- (D) Drum Point
- (E) Fort Washington
- (F) Hooper Strait
- (G) Piney Point
- (H) Point Lookout
- (I) Sandy Point
- (J) Seven Foot Knoll
- (K) Turkey Point

BONUS – Coast Guard BM/1 Frank Ramaly was the last keeper of this last manned Chesapeake Bay beacon. Ramaly departed this station when automation arrived in 1986.

see **Pasek's Answers** on page 4

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visit us at <http://www.cheslights.org>
Individual membership in the
USLHS is encouraged.

Glimmerings

by Anne Puppa

The goals of the Chesapeake Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society are the same as those of our parent organization. Specifically: we are a non-profit historical and educational organization incorporated to educate, inform, and entertain those who are interested in lighthouses, past and present. If you are not familiar with who we are and what we do you can talk to a member or visit our web site at www.cheslights.org.



To meet the goals stated above we do the following:

- We have an education program directed by one of our board members. He is a frequent visitor to area schools. Lighthouses played a vital role in the development of the Chesapeake region and many schools cover this topic.
- To entertain and educate we sponsor trips to various lighthouses both in and out of the region. Each year there are several trips, both land-based and cruises, that take people out to see, photograph, learn about and in some cases climb the lights of the Chesapeake. The annual Maryland Lighthouse Challenge takes visitors to all the land based lights over one weekend.
- We have a historian who spends a lot of time researching lighthouse keepers and their kin. She is a professional genealogist and frequently gets questions regarding the keepers of specific lighthouses in the Chesapeake region. She has also assisted in several reunion events for keeper's kin.
- To preserve we have a volunteer program where you can get your hands dirty. These projects keep our volunteers busy every month of the year. Refer to the *To Preserve* article in this newsletter for details on our preservation activities.
- To educate and inform we have a quarterly newsletter as well as a monthly e-news. The e-news provides monthly updates with current or late-breaking news. The web site has lots of information and is constantly updated with information on upcoming events. We also have a speakers program; you can make a request via the web site.
- We also have a Keeper's Loft with Chapter collectibles. If you want to display your love of lighthouses you can purchase a Chapter shirt or other lighthouse items.
- To entertain we have an annual lighthouse photography contest. Each year there is a new theme for the pictures which makes this event more interesting.

All these activities are performed by volunteers. There is no paid staff so you can tell the work must be rewarding, or people wouldn't be doing it! So if you are not already a member, you may want to consider becoming one. If you have a question about any of these programs, you can contact the responsible person via the web site or reference the contact information in the front of this newsletter. Why don't you come out and join the Chapter and join the fun?

Lighthouses of the MD Challenge from page 1

Piney Point

Location: Potomac River
West of Piney Point
Year Station Established: 1836
Date Deactivated: 1964
Automated: 1939
Style: Conical



John Donohoo, master lighthouse builder, built this lighthouse 14 miles up the Potomac River from the Chesapeake Bay. The tower is much the same as the other lighthouses that Donohoo built, such as Concord Point and Cove Point. Piney Point is the oldest light on the Potomac River and at times was the summer vacation spot for various presidents and dignitaries. In 1980 the Coast Guard transferred ownership to the Saint Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks.



Point Lookout

Location: Entrance to Potomac River
Year Station Established: 1830
Date Deactivated: 1965
Automated: N/A (automated light placed off-shore when lighthouse deactivated in 1965)
Style: Integral

The Point Lookout Lighthouse was originally constructed in 1830 as a one-and-a-half story wooden and masonry building. It was rebuilt as the two-story present structure in 1883. The U.S. Coast Guard gave the U.S. Navy the lighthouse in 1966 upon deactivation. The bell tower, bell, and striking mechanism are at Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. In 2006 the state received the Point Lookout lighthouse from the U.S. Navy.

Seven Foot Knoll

Location: Relocated from Patapsco River / Chesapeake Bay
Year Station Established: 1855
Date Deactivated: 1987
Automated: 1948
Style: Cylindrical Screwpile



Seven Foot Knoll Light was the second screwpile light to be built on the Chesapeake and the first to be built in Maryland. It is built entirely of iron and in a circular design, which is unique among the Bay's screwpiles along with its barn red color. It had a fourth order Fresnel lens. In October 1987 ownership of the lighthouse was transferred to the city of Baltimore. It was moved by barge, in 1988, to Pier 5 at the Inner Harbor waterfront where it stands on its own legs. It is the oldest surviving screwpile lighthouse and the only one of its design.



Turkey Point

Location: Elk River Entrance / Chesapeake Bay
Year Station Established: 1833
Date Deactivated: 2000
Automated: 1947
Style: Conical

John Donohoo built the Turkey Point Lighthouse and keeper's quarters. The tower is situated on a 100-foot bluff where the North East and Elk Rivers converge. This lighthouse was the home of the last woman lighthouse keeper, Fannie Mae Salter. The lighthouse holds the distinction of being tended by more women keepers than any other lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay.

Photos by Harry Fahl.

To Preserve

by Anne Puppa

One of the goals of the Chesapeake Chapter USLHS is to help preserve the lighthouses in the Bay area. There are several ways to do this. By participating in the Lighthouse Challenge you are showing government officials that the public does have an interest in these historic structures. You can also support them by: visiting them; making donations to organizations that are trying to restore or maintain them; helping to educate the next generations about their importance and history; or volunteering to get some hands-on preservation work done. This last option is what our volunteer program is all about. We have about 35 to 40 volunteers who sign up each year to work on our projects. For many of these projects we are just providing some additional help to the organizations that care for these beacons.

Our projects include the following:

The Baltimore Maritime Museum: We work on either the Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse or the *Chesapeake Lightship*. Work ranges from brass polishing to fiberglass repair or cleaning the lightship engines.

Fort Washington Light: This year we did extensive work replacing the exterior wood after stripping off the outer layer, cleaning and painting the interior layer, inserting a layer of Tyvek and then putting on a final layer of new primed and painted wood.

Calvert Marine Museum: We help out with spring cleaning at both Drum Point and Cove Point. This year at Cove Point we cut up a fallen Cedar tree, weather proofed a wooden ramp, raked the sand and shells out of the grass, and took out some old carpet in the keeper's house.

Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse: Work includes painting, cleaning, and replacing or repairing the windows, the decking, and the siding that creates a safe environment for the visitors that now head out there on scheduled weekends.

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum: We have done cleaning, polishing and painting on Hooper Strait Lighthouse. We generally spend Saturday working on the lighthouse and then sleep at the lighthouse Saturday night, waking up to a sunrise over the bay.

Lighthouse Histories Project: A small team of volunteers is writing histories for each lighthouse listed on the Coast Guard Historians web site.

Fresnel Lens Preservation Team: This team works on Fresnel lenses. They are currently cleaning and repairing two lenses belonging to the local D.A.R. The team has also worked on lenses in Sandy Hook, NJ and Cape Henry, VA, along with cleaning lenses at the Calvert Marine Museum and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

Old Coast Guard Station on Assateague Island: We've cleared out the old garage and basement area, fixed some of the screens, scrubbed the quarters down and done some basic grounds keeping. We spend the night in the station sharing our meals and having a rousing game of Balderdash.

Our volunteers provide hundreds of hours of service and have a lot of fun. Each of the organizations we have the pleasure of working with has some fantastic people. If you wish to be part of the fun you can fill out a volunteer registration form located on our web site.



Greetings... and Welcome to the 2007 Maryland Lighthouse Challenge!

by Karen Rosage

We hope you will have a wonderful time exploring Maryland's historic lighthouses during this weekend-long adventure! From Point Lookout - Maryland's "haunted" lighthouse, to Piney Point - the "Lighthouse of Presidents". From Turkey Point - home to the last civilian lighthouse keeper, to Fort Washington Light - an unassuming bell tower convert strategically located at the entrance to our nation's capital... and all the others in between! Each of the Challenge lights has a personality of its own and a story to tell. Enjoy them all, and some of the most beautiful Bay scenery the state has to offer during the 5th Anniversary Celebration of the Maryland Lighthouse Challenge!

Some participants of past Challenges, including many Marylanders, have commented that they never realized Maryland had so many different styles of lighthouses, or how beautiful the state really was until they traveled the scenic route from one lighthouse to the next!

If there is anything we can do to make your trip around the Bay more enjoyable, please let us know. The goal of this event is to educate the public about these extraordinary structures while hopefully, bringing to light the current efforts being undertaken to restore and preserve them. The Challenge Lights are a unique and extraordinary group of sentinels, a group we collectively refer to as our *beloved* "Bay Beacons".

We would like to thank this year's event sponsors: Cecil, Harford, Talbot and St. Mary's Counties; Four Rivers; The Heritage Area of Annapolis, London Town & South County; Maryland Humanities Council and Harbour Lights. We would also like to thank the lighthouse organizations of Maryland - the modern-day keepers of the lights for partnering with us on the event. And as always, we would like to spend this weekend honoring the memory of the lighthouse keepers who kept watch over these lighthouses in years past. We, and *countless* others, owe them a debt of gratitude, for keeping the flame burning as the original "Keepers of the Lights". It is truly through their memory that the history of these remarkable structures come to life.

So enjoy your weekend Challengers and drive safely. After the event, we'd love to hear about your experiences. We encourage you to drop us a line at challenge@cheslights.org. Photos are welcome as well.

Safe Travels and "Happy Lighthouseing" from the 2007 Maryland Lighthouse Challenge Committee.

Visit our web site at: <http://www.cheslights.org>
for post Challenge news and photos.

Pasek's Answers from page 2

Source: *Bay Beacons* by Linda Turbyville and *Lightships and Lightship Stations of the U.S. Government* by Willard Flint.

Answers: (1) B, (2) D, (3) H, (4) J, (5) G, (6) A, (7) K, (8) E, (9) C, (10) I, (11) F

BONUS - Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse