



THE LIGHTHOUSE LOG

A publication of Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association,
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A Message from our President:

It's hard to believe that the year is 2001, two years since Beavertail Light's 250th birthday!

Much is happening at the museum, as we move closer to opening for the new season. New faces have brought new ideas, old ideas have been rehashed, all the result of your board of directors and officers at work over the months since our annual meeting in September.

I cannot say thank you enough to all the folks who have said, all winter long, that's a good idea, I'll take care of that responsibility. It is because of this attitude that we are making many improvements, including new displays, a web site, a video presentation and more.

Your support as a member, volunteer or friend of BLMA is what makes it possible for us to continue to meet our commitment to education and preservation.

I would personally encourage all of you to visit the museum this season, voice your opinion, give us a call, send us your e-mail, drop a note in the mail. We need your support.

I would be remiss, if I did not thank Charlotte Richardson, who after a short leave has again taken on the responsibility of editing our newsletter: "Thank you Charlotte".

I hope to see all of you at the Light which will continually flash once every 6 seconds, 24 hours a day, as a guide to all.

With best regards,

Charlie Auld

WHAT'S OLD?

ANN BUCHER, KEEPER OF THE HISTORY.

In 1705, Beavertail's first official navigational aid is said to have been an elevated, open pitch fire, manned by members of a local Indian Tribe; In 1712 the records of the Newport Town Meeting listed a request for a permanent lighthouse on this site which was to be known as Newport Light and to raise the funds needed for construction, a tariff was placed on ships carrying cargo into Newport – 10 shillings per ton foreign – 18 shillings per ton local; In 1719, A large cannon to be fired intermittently during periods of poor visibility became the first fog-warning device installed at Beavertail Point.

Beavertail Light, the third light established in the colonies, was built in 1749. A light had been authorized earlier, but nothing had been done about the actual building because of the war between England and Spain. This first light burned in 1754 and was repaired the same year. Stones from Goat Island were used as building materials. Abel Franklin, Beavertail's first keeper, manned his post throughout the reconstruction, warning ships with a hand-held lantern.

Twenty-five years later, the lighthouse was afire again; this time from British warships as they left Narragansett Bay.

On October 12th, 1790, President George Washington wrote Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury:

"I have received your letter of the 5th instant – the public service requiring the arrangements, which you have made, relative to the Light Houses Newport and Portland, they are perfectly agreeable to me and receive my approbation."

After repairs were made this lighthouse continued in operation until 1855.

It was not until 1793 that the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations ceded to the United States the "lighthouse in Jamestown, in the island of Conanicut" and subsequently 5 acres on Point Judith.

In November 1838, Lt. George Bache in his report described the light as being 98 feet above sea level, and its limit of visibility 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles. The rubble stone tower was 68 feet high ascended by a wooden spiral staircase.

There were 15 lamps, with reflectors, arranged around two copper tables, 3 feet in diameter; the lower table supported 8 lamps which illuminated every point of the horizon. The upper table held 7 lamps, the vacant space being towards the land.

In 1851 the tower was reported as the worst yet seen, built on soft shale and greatly out of repair; tower inside and out in wretched condition; bad materials, mortar very poor; cracks from base to lantern, woodwork in rapid decay, badly done in the first place. Frame of lantern miserable; reflectors old, thin and scratched; fountains of lamps leak badly.

In 1854, Congress appropriated \$14,500.00 for a new lighthouse tower and illuminating apparatus and for a fog signal; our present structure.

WHAT'S NEW?

It's been quite some time since we've had a Lighthouse Log, but that certainly doesn't mean we've been idle. No indeed – a look back at what's been going on shows that plans announced at the Annual Meeting, last September have been brought to fruition almost without exception. Membership figures are rising each month; many changes have been brought about inside and out of the building, and volunteers are busily looking forward to opening day in May; the scholarship committee deep into its agenda for the 2001 awards; painting, chipping, repairing and general overhauling of everything is in high gear; and we're told that we won't recognize the place when we return this year. Everything is upward and onward with enthusiasm on all sides. The Board of Directors have met regularly and everything is progressing. Don't miss the chance to see the newly updated and revised displays and the many items and photographs received for the opening day of Beavertail Light's 252nd year of continual operation. Come on down.

Our log book shows that from opening day in 1999 to closing day in 2000, nearly 11,000 visitors signed the guest log arriving on this tiny island from from all 50 states in the union as well as from 41 different countries around the world! And we know that some got away without signing in. Be sure YOU sign in on your next visit, which we hope will be in the very near future.

Brenda Johnston had a vision about how our "Fireplace Room" could be changed, called for 'full speed ahead' and move she did, with her corps of volunteers. The two old display cases were removed and a new one has been custom made to hold the many hand made lighthouses models, fashioned by Bob Dennis, that have always been a feature attraction for our visitors; pictures and displays were dismantled; nail holes spackled and walls painted by Jill Meyer, Frank Meyer, Linda Jacobsen and Jim Myers; the captains chairs, refinished by Bob Dennis; a casing for the fireplace custom made by Paul Cardin, a tribute to his woodworking skills. With Ann Bucher, Keeper of the History, reorganizing the history collections into brand new binders, Brenda's vision for the Fireplace Room is already a reality and moving ever forward with each passing day.

Charlie Auld and Frank Meyer have volunteered to spearhead the video production that will be available for viewing in the Fireplace Room, this season.





FILMING OF THE VIDEO PRODUCTION
"A CANDLE ON THE WATER".

Pictured: Producer, **Tim Tierney**, from University of Rhode Island;

Emily Smith: who plays the part of the widow of a Beavertail Lighthouse Keeper;

Katherine Minahan: who plays the part of the spirit of the inventor of the Fresnel lens, Augustin-Jean Fresnel. (Photo by Vic Richardson)

About Fresnel's Lens Light:

Born in Normandy on May 10, 1788, Augustin Jean Fresnel became an engineer and a pioneer in the study of optics. A modest man, he received little recognition during his lifetime. It was not until after his death that most of his papers were published and the world came to learn of his technological contributions.

Fresnel began his research in optics around 1814. By 1822, he had developed a lens for lighthouses that was superior to any that had ever been used. The Fresnel lens looks somewhat like a glass beehive. There is glass at the center belt that magnifies the light, and glass above and below this belt that refracts or bends the light, sending out a thin concentrated layer of light. Originally a lamp inside the lens supplies the illuminant. The lamps for smaller lenses contained one or two circular wicks; in larger lamps there were four or five circular wicks. The wicks were placed one inside the other. Eventually there were seven sizes or orders of the Fresnel lens. These orders were numbered one through six with a three-and-a-half order. Order was determined by the distance of the flame from the lens, known as the focal distance. The sixth-order lens had the smallest focal distance, while the first-order lens had the greatest focal distance. The sixth order lens had the smallest diameter; the first-order lens had the largest.

A lens with a smooth glass at its center belt was used to emit a fixed light. On the other hand, glass that was molded into the form of a bull's eye at the center belt was used to display a flashing light. The flashing effect was achieved by rotating the lens with a clockwork system. A falling weight turned gears that eventually turned the lens.

Fresnel died in 1827, five years after he ran his first successful tests at Cordovan. Without claiming a patent on this invention, he gave his wondrous lens to the world!





We lighthouses!!

And, since you are a member of Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association, you probably do too!

We'd love to hear from you, by phone, by mail, by e-mail or by responding to our Website.

Our mailing address is: BLMA - PO Box 83, Jamestown

Our Website address is: WWW.beavertailight.org


Our E-mail address is: info@beavertailight.org

Our voice mail number is: (401) 423-3270

If school children studying lighthouses would like information about Beavertail Lighthouse, they can reach the "Lighthouse Keeper" using any of the above methods and will receive answers to questions, a postcard of Beavertail Light and a brochure from the Keeper (and maybe even a message from the Assistant Keeper, Eddie, the Lighthouse Cat).

We'll be watching for you!!



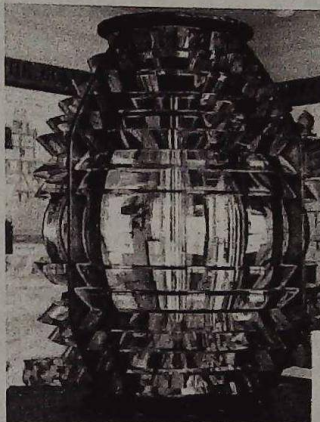
Form	
I want to be an active participant in the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association	Please Check One New Member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>
	Membership Period ending 12/31/ 20__
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Museum Docent	New Dues Rates:
<input type="checkbox"/> Building Maintenance Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual, Life \$100.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> Family, Life 200.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual 15.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> Family 25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Nominating Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor 75.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> Student 5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Archives Committee	Donation \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Building Clean-up Committee	Name: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Tours Liaison	Address: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity/Newsletter Committee	Phone: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral History Project	Mail to: Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association
<input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Open House	PO Box 83
	Jamestown, RI 02835-0083
<input type="checkbox"/> Naturalist Program Liaison	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other?	
Suggestions:	All members receive a 10% discount at the Museum giftshop.
	

Little Snippets of Lighthouse Lore:

The Great Hurricane of September 1938, destroyed Whale Rock Light, located offshore at the head of West Passage. At the same time the storm exposed the foundation of the original Newport or Beavertail Light house – some 100 feet in front of the present tower.

A year later, the U.S. Coast guard took over responsibility for all navigational aids. Thirty three years later the beacon was automated as part of a program that in 1989 ended the profession of lighthouse keeping (except for Boston Light). Domenic Turrillo was the last Keeper to serve at Beavertail.)

In 1983, the Rhode Island Parks Association began restoration of the deteriorating Assistant Keepers House. As a result of a joint effort by RIPA, the RI Department of Environmental Management, the US Coast Guard and the Town of Jamestown, the museum was opened in 1993, under the sponsorship of the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association. (at right) The Fresnel Light that is on display in the Museum, along with many other items of interest.



Fresnel Lens (Photo by Vic Richardson)

The top of the Beavertail Light tower is reached by climbing a spiral staircase of 62 steps. The revolving light rotates every 6 seconds and is a #DCB24. The fog whistle sounds a 3 second blast followed by 27 seconds of silence.

Did you know that lenses larger than **Fresnel First Order** were manufactured for use in lighthouse lantern rooms? They were called **Hyper-radiant Lenses**.

One such lens, the largest used in the United States, was installed in Makapuu Point Light, Oahu, Hawaii, in 1909. Presently an active aid to navigation, it is approximately 8 ½ feet in diameter; stands 12 feet high; weighs over 7 tons; and produces 115,000 candle power visible from 28 miles at sea. (Submitted by Hugh Bucher, Vice President)

What's Coming Up?

Jillian Meyer

We will have new name-tags this summer and will be known as docents instead of volunteers, but the job description remains unchanged. It will still be our pleasant duty to offer a friendly welcome to our awesome little museum located in one of the most beautiful spots on the east coast and we will be sharing our knowledge of the museum and the area with all of our welcome visitors.

The air is cooler, the view is grander and it's a great place to spend time on a glorious summer day, for visitors and docents alike. Thanks to all of the returning docents as well as those newly recruited, we'll be opening right on time – beginning with Memorial Day Weekend:

Our Schedule:

May 27th – through June 17th weekends only from 12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m.

June 18th – September 3rd (Labor Day) our hours will be daily 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

September 8th – October 8th (Columbus Day), weekends only from 12:00 noon until 3:00 pm.

An update from our Gift Shop Coordinator

Susan Warszawski

One of the delights of the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum is its charming gift shop, filled with many delightful seaside gems. One of them is becoming more and more rare as time goes on, since the Harbor Lights Company retired the mold for the Beavertail Lighthouse model a few years back. Due to quick action by the Board of Directors, we were able to acquire a supply of this lovely model, each of which is numbered and they will be available this season.

Cat's Meow Village collectors will be pleased to find the model of Beavertail Lighthouse from their Colonial Collection available, along with the Rose Island Lighthouse model.

In spite of a very quick sell out of the beautiful Scassis Beavertail Lighthouse holiday ornament at the December Holiday Sale, we have been able to restock and it will be available again this season.

Other new inventory items that will be available will include; books for children and adults; an updated hat design, and boxed cards by Patricia Cahill Taft, depicting Beavertail Lighthouse during the winter season.

Scholarship Selections well under way.

While the rest of us wait for the somewhat balmy days of summer, a couple of our committees are already hard at work. One is the Scholarship Committee that is deep into the selection process for the winners of the **Third Annual W. Craig Armington Memorial Scholarship Program Awards**. The applications were prepared and distributed to Rhode Island high schools that have Jamestown students enrolled and 10 completed returns came bounding back by the April 1st deadline. Two \$1000.00 awards will be made to the most worthy of those applying, and an evaluating procedure is well underway to choose the winners. Judging of the applications is already underway by the review committee, **Linda Jacobson, Linda Warner, and Jack Willis**.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE TOUR BOOKINGS REPORT

Linda Jacobson, Peter Frazier

The second committee that gets up to speed early in the year is the Education Committee. It is they who book and conduct the tour groups that come in ever increasing numbers of interested people looking for answers and knowledge about the Point that fits into their

particular spheres of interest. They are young and old and everything in between, some seeing a real lighthouse for the first time in their lives, others truly avid lighthouse seekers on personal and sometimes arranged bus tours.

June 6th, will see our first arrivals (at least those already booked at this point) and this one will be three 2nd grade classes from the Davisville (RI) Elementary School. Each class will be involved in three twenty- minute sessions that will involve the museum tour, the Department of Environmental Management Aquarium tour and a look at the various points of interest around the site. They will be arriving at 10:00 a.m. with their teachers and chaperones and will enjoy their lunch, picnic style somewhere on the grounds surrounding the Lighthouse. We look forward to welcoming Ms. May Fricklas, teacher and school organizer of the tour along with those accompanying and you can be assured they will hear much that will interest and inform them through our capable tour guides.

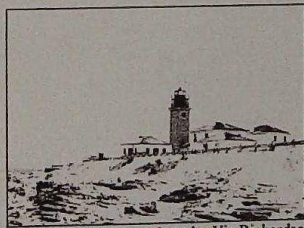
Later on in the year, just before the Museum closes, a group of 50 adults who are sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Froberg are expected to arrive at 10:00 a.m. eager for lots of information about Beavertail Lighthouse – its history; sea life and plants which live in the area; the general Park area and the US Coast Guard's involvement with the Lighthouse.

If you are interested in putting together a guided tour for a group of family members, friends or an organization, please call (401) 423-3270 or E-mail Beavertail@light.org

On the other hand, you needn't stand on ceremony – just pack up a picnic basket; hop in your car and drive on down to the beautiful island of Jamestown; head south and before you know it you'll be face to face with the Atlantic Ocean and all of its magnificent sights and sounds. There are plenty of places to park and besides all of the awesome beauty that abounds at Beavertail Point, you'll often find artists at work, kite fliers enjoying the breeze; boats and ships of all sizes and classes to watch moving in all directions out on the water; and always the incredible rock formations and tidal pools to explore.

If history holds true, as it usually does, there will be many other planned and impromptu tours highlighted by tales and stories about the area and its long history, featuring, of course - the Lighthouse. Our well-informed and enthusiastic docents will be happy to share stories, historical events, personal memories and general knowledge about all of it. One of the great attractions in our Museum, is the large wooden map that lights up the all of the lighthouse locations in Rhode Island and is newly reactivated by volunteer George Warner. Kids and grownups love it!

So come on down – our welcome Light is always on and we'll be looking for you.



Beavertail Lighthouse (photo by Vic Richardson)
41,26,58 N; 71,24,00 W- Conanicut Island, RI

INSIDE...

A word from our President ...

BEAVERTAIL LIGHT - THROUGH THE YEARS ...

About Augustin Jean Fresnel ...

An illuminating story...

What's New in the Museum???

**OPENING DAY - SATURDAY, MAY 27TH - 12:00 NOON
UNTIL 3:00 P.M.**



Donald & Linda Barrows
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