



The Lighthouse Log

Spring 2013

*The quarterly Newsletter
of the BLMA*

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Message From The Acting President

Sandy and Nemo have come and gone. Hopefully spring is here to stay. As you look around your yard you see signs of new growth and blooming flowers. We at the lighthouse see things paralleling that growth. It's a wonderful exciting time at Beavertail Lighthouse.

Over the winter when many things went dormant, activity at the Lighthouse was just the opposite. The Board members were working at full speed. After receiving the vanBeuren grant, plans took shape and were executed for museum expansion, a growth which will double the size of the existing museum. These plans had to include approvals for construction, actual construction, display research and development and the impact of these changes on the existing museum. This summer you will experience some of these new displays.

One of the effects of these plans is the moving and expansion of the gift shop. We will also implement a point of sale register system that will enable docents to have much easier checkouts and give the buyers up to date inventory reports.

We are starting to develop new programs and activities for you, our members and visitors. Look for information coming on Full Moon Parties and expanded children's programs.

One thing we need more of is volunteers. I would like you to give serious thought to devoting some time and energy this year to your organization. Whether it be event planning, researching, organizing, desk top publishing, children's educational materials, painting, plumbing, docent, committee member and on and on. You get the idea. The only quality that we require is a love and desire to spend some time enhancing one of the most beautiful places in Rhode Island. It can only enrich your life.

We look forward to opening and seeing all of you this year.



Picture Courtesy of Karen Morrison

Suzi Andrews ■

The Creation of Beavertail State Park

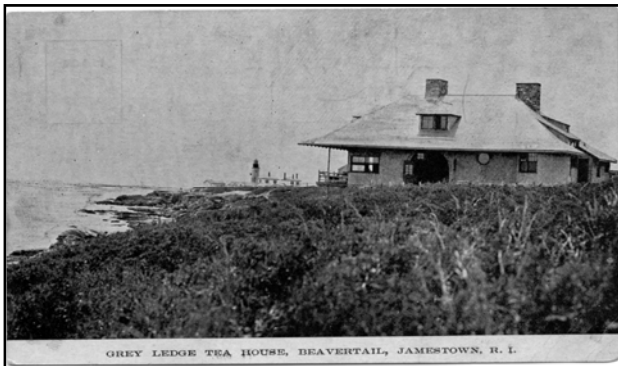
The Culmination of Many Years of Passive Recreation at Beavertail Point

The Briefest of Prewar Histories

Many generations of visitors have enjoyed the scenic views, cool summer breezes and sport fishing along the shoreline at the southernmost point on Conanicut Island.

Late 19th century property owners constructed cottages of modest and not so modest proportions for pursuit of seasonal pleasures.

The first cottage, Grey Ledge, was built in 1894. Some years later it served as a tea shop for visitors. It returned to private occupancy in the mid 1920s.



Courtesy of the Jamestown Historical Society

The Goelet cottage was a fishing destination for members of the Newport 400 who enjoyed the challenge of striped bass, cod and black fish among the most sought after. Fishing went late into the fall for cod. "Golet" on the postcard in the upper right corner is a misspelling.

Peckham's cottages and the Beavertail Fishing Club drew large numbers of fishermen year after year, many of whom fished from the fish stands constructed by cottage owners and the town .



Courtesy of the Jamestown Historical Society

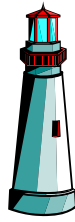
Summer visitors came in the evening to watch the Fall River Line steamer pass by the lighthouse, having left Newport at 9 pm destined for a morning arrival at lower Manhattan.

Passive recreational activities came to an end at Beavertail Point with the government purchase of land for military purposes. Among the largest landowners were the Joseph Wharton estate and Sidney and Catherine Wright. Among the smaller landowners, Beavertail Park Co. and Inez Peckham. The military presence would impact the approximately 185 acre parcel, exclusive of the light station, until 1974.



Courtesy of the Jamestown Historical Society

Postwar developments



The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 codified the procedures addressing the transfer of surplus government property. This Act described the policy of property disposal to municipalities and states for public parks or recreational purposes. This policy provided the framework for the first two property transfers; its replacement by an Executive Order in early 1982 led to a contentious third parcel transfer.

The first parcel of government land to be declared surplus was approximately 20 acres on the east side of beavertail Point abutting the light station property. Application was made by the town in November 1972 and title was received, July 1973. Some picnic tables and trash containers were installed by the town. The desire to have an onsite presence to discourage vandalism to the Coast Guard property as well as the 20 acres then known as Beavertail Park resulted in an agreement (license) between the town and the Coast Guard for a resident caretaker to occupy the vacant keeper house. The license allowed use of the other buildings and property at the light station. The exception was the light tower. This agreement was signed in early 1977 and was renewed for some 30 years before the Town was replaced on the license by the Department of Natural Resources (DEM) who then developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association (BLMA) in June 2009.

It was during this period that the town negotiated a lease with the U.S. Navy for the Harbor Entrance Control Post and adjacent property. The caretaker appointed by the town was to supplement the policing of the site by the DEM police and the other caretaker residing in the Keeper House.

In April of 1978 the Beavertail Recreation Committee was formed by the Town. The

Committee was charged with the task of exploring the possibility of a comprehensive recreational program for Mackerel Cove, Fort Getty the DAR Property on Prospect Hill, the Naval Communication Facility, the Coast Guard property and the town owned 20 acre Beavertail Park.

In early summer, the federal government announced as excess a 158 acre parcel containing the former Naval communication facility. A 6.8 acre parcel within the larger piece of property housing the Harbor Entrance Control Post was excluded. The Recreation Committee immediately shifted focus to insure proper use of the parcel which abutted Beavertail Park.

Many groups expressed interest in the property including the State, several universities, a hunting group, real estate developers and a camping organization. The Committee met with several of these groups to exchange thoughts. After considerable number of meetings it was decided that the Town of Jamestown file an application for the land in which partnering with the State would be a possibility. During the summer of 1978 the town met with DEM representatives to review the federal requirements for parcel use and the local resources available. It was apparent that the town did not have the resources to maintain and develop the land consistent with the federal guidelines.

It was agreed that the state would own, maintain and finance the property in partnership, with the town continuing to have caretaker responsibilities as well as off-season maintenance. It was agreed that the towns interests would be overseen by a five member committee set up to deal with administrative regulations, management and development of the property. Three members from Jamestown, one member from DEM and a chairperson from

(Continued on page 4)

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off island not affiliated with either town or state became the Beavertail Advisory Committee. It was agreed that the property would be developed as a “low key passive recreation area”. In April 1979 the Town leased its 20 acres to the State for a renewable 40 year period.

A quitclaim deed for 158.2 +/- acres was filed by the State April 1, 1980. In anticipation of the property award DEM and the Town signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describing the responsibilities and relationships between State and Town, January 1980. Responsibilities for the Town included snow plowing, caretaker responsibilities in the Harbor Entrance Control Post and keeper house, water and electrical services and appointment of 3 town residents to the Advisory Committee. The three appointees were Peter Anderson, Walter Schroder and Russell Clarke. The DEM representative was Robert Bendick and the Chairman selected was Gary Galkin, who had served as the first Ranger/Naturalist at the Park.

The Jamestown Recreation Committee, under the leadership of John Doyle Jr. submitted a final report December 22, 1980. It's most significant work had been accomplished with the appointment of the 5 member Advisory Committee. Jamestown's interests were well represented. The Report included the recommendation that the Jamestown Waterfront Authority make recommendations for the waterfront portions of Beavertail, including Mackerel Cove and Ft. Getty. The Committee was reactivated subsequently in response to the implications of Executive Order 12348.

In the fall of 1981 the federal government announced that the 6.81 acre parcel containing the Harbor Entrance Control Post was available to transfer for appropriate educational and recreational purposes. Proposals were solicited with a December 28, 1981 deadline. The Boston office of the U.S. Department of Education contacted the University of Rhode Island about the availability and the University submitted a

proposal for using the structure and adjoining land for marine research. Earlier, the University was successful in acquiring the Rose Island Light when it was declared surplus only to find that it was not the suitable site for research originally thought.

A growing federal budget deficit prompted the Reagan administration to revisit the 1949 act codifying the procedures for handling surplus property.

(to be continued in next newsletter)

Notes: The personal papers and newspaper clippings of the late **Pieter Hinkamp** were invaluable in researching this story. They were given to Linda Warner by Pieter. She has given them to the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum.

Thanks to **Bob Sutton**, Town Manager during the period of State Park development for his NY Times article and personal recollections.

Thanks to **Rosemary Enright** and **Sue Maden** for sharing Jamestown images relevant to the PreWar period and their infectious enthusiasm for anything related to Jamestown history.

Thanks to **Felicia Celeberto**, Secretary DEM Goddard Park office, for making available Beavertail Advisory Committee minutes.

For more information about fishing on Jamestown see an article by S.Maden and T. McCandless in the Jamestown Press, August 4, 2005.

For more information about Grey Ledge see S. Maden and In the Jamestown Press January 16, 2003

RES ■



Beavertail Advisory Committee, Fall 2012 meeting. Robert Paquette, Chief Divisions of Parks and Recreation, DEM; Felicia Celeberto, Secretary, Division of Parks and Recreation; Gary Galkin, Chairman; Anna Templeton Cotill and Linda Warner, Jamestown Representatives; absent Jamestown Representative Dr. Neil Blitz

POINT OF SALE SYSTEM NEARS COMPLETION

The final items are being barcoded and training is being planned in preparation for the opening of the newly enlarged gift shop. The task of inputting all the information has been primarily the responsibility of **Melissa Burrows** and **Dorrie Linn**. They have been assisted by **Suzi Andrews**, **Joan Vessella** and **Linda Warner**.

Books have their own barcode so are easy to work with. Clothing, on the other hand, do not, so one has to be created with information that includes color, size and price. This information has to be inputted for each category of clothing. Hundreds of hours have been spent in the past year in preparation for opening this spring. The advantages of this system will be apparent the first time the docent practices equipment use.

The docent will recognize the equipment immediately. Most retail settings use the wand to scan the barcode. Price is automatically entered for each item scanned, a subtotal is calculated, tax, if any, is computed and the sale is totaled. The docent simply makes change. Each sale is recorded and each item sold is removed from inventory.

Inventory management will be a very simple affair, unlike the present arrangement of needing to physically count each item, both on the shelf and in storage. Merchandise restocking will be much more efficient and "on time".

The last major task underway is entering a picture of each item that will be displayed when the barcode is scanned. This will provide additional information for the individual at the register.

It promises to be an exciting season. Perhaps you will consider stepping forward to participate.



RES ■

MUSEUM EXPANSION UPDATE

A number of tasks have been completed in the past few months. The downstairs kitchen was removed and a new one built on the second floor in the security apartment. The kitchen is compact yet quite functional. This was a BLMA funded project very necessary to open up and prepare the first floor for the upcoming season.



The removal of all traces of the downstairs kitchen was the next task. The opening of a doorway between the former Gift Shop and the Keeper House was completed, a fire rated door was installed and attractive moulding framing the doorway was added. Finally the color scheme created by Stew Morgan last year when the museum was repainted was carried throughout the 1st floor of the Keeper House. The small room off the former kitchen was redone and matching hardwood floor installed. Interactive displays will be a feature of both spaces.

The former gift shop space will be devoted to R.I. lighthouse displays. Beavertail Light Station is the most accessible of the R. I. lighthouses and a number have expressed interest in having some of their material on display.

The center room of the 1st floor will be the home for a visitor mini-theater experience. Seating will be available for viewing Beavertail and other lighthouse videos on a 60" monitor.

The former living room will be the home of a much larger gift shop. New counters and display racks are being ordered as work progresses on this space and that of the adjacent hallway. A pocket door is being created separating the hallway and gift shop. This clever feature will be a real space saver. It is anticipated that entrance to the museum will be through the east door of the Keeper House adjacent to the gift shop.

Approval has just been received from the Coast Guard to open an original tower entrance currently boarded up in the hallway. Some changes within the electrical room at the base of the tower will need to be made. The hallway will be redone, both floor and walls. The walls will be used for exhibits.

The bulk of this work is paid for with van Beuren grant funds. LaMontagne Woodworking continues to do excellent work while staying on schedule. Work continues and will be reported in the next issue of the Log.

WO'S ■

VK ■



THE BLACK DUCK

Although there are few of us who are not familiar with “The Prohibition Era”, there are probably a few alive today that could tell the whole story firsthand. The practice of prohibition actually began in 1917 to address the issue of wartime shortages of a number of commodities which happened to include alcohol. Many women’s groups and religious organizations felt that alcohol, in particular, was a major cause of crime and poverty in the country at the time and they successfully lobbied to have the 18th amendment to the US constitution enacted. As it turned out, the prohibition of “the sale, transportation, importation and exportation of alcoholic beverages” would do more harm than good for if history has taught us anything it is that the way to make something more desirable is to make it illegal or difficult to obtain.

Illegal liquor flowed into the country by land and sea almost unchallenged for almost a decade before an organized effort could be put in place to stop it. Local smugglers in New England had their routine down to a science. Large vessels would anchor far enough off the coast to be legally untouchable by the authorities and to these ships would come smaller, often very high powered vessels that would pick up the contraband and head for shore at top speed, usually under the darkness of night, to unload their illegal cargo for distribution to the locals. One of these speedboats was known as the “Black Duck” and had made countless successful trips to the offshore “floating warehouses” until the early morning hours of December 30, 1929.

The account of what transpired is taken from the newspapers of the time, “Three members of the crew of the notorious rum-running speedboat, the BLACK DUCK, are dead; its captain wounded; two other smuggling craft captured; \$600,000 worth of liquor seized – thus were tabulated today the results of a Sabbath drive on rum row by the Coast Guard. The wreck of the BLACK DUCK and the two other craft with their cargoes are tied up at the coast guard base at New London, Conn., today. The bodies of the three men lie in a morgue at Fort Adams, awaiting the official verdicts of all the officials who set about to determine just how they met their deaths. But there is no mystery about that. They were riddled by machine gun fire from the patrol boat CG-290 at the entrance of Narragansett Bay. According to coast guard officials, they had refused to halt their craft when ordered to heave to From his hospital bed where he was suffering from machine gun wounds, Charles Travers, captain and sole survivor of the speed boat’s crew, declared the coast guard craft had opened fire without proper warning. ... Superior officers at the New London coast guard base, from which the patrol boat operated, declared the shootings “unfortunate but clearly justified by the law covering such cases.” Other than that statement, they refused to talk.

The crew of the CG-290 saw the speed boat running without lights entering Narragansett Bay near Dumpling Rock. She was recognized as the BLACK DUCK, known as one of the most daring rum-running suspects on New England’s rum row. Boatswain Alexander C. Cornell, in charge of the coast guard vessel, signaled with the ship’s siren to halt. The BLACK DUCK increased her speed. As the BLACK DUCK was gaining a rapid-firing one-pound gun was thrown into action, sending shots across the bow of the elusive craft. These shots failed to check the speed of the rum-runner and a firing squad was ordered to send a volley of machine gun bullets at her stern to disable the craft. With bullets raining in her wake, the BLACK DUCK veered and her bow came in a direct line with the machine gun fire. The pilot house was raked. Apparently out of control the BLACK DUCK swerved and then disappeared in the fog beyond range of the patrol boat’s searchlight. When she reappeared, she was just drifting and there was no sign of life aboard. Several of the coast guardsmen, armed for fear of resistance, boarded her with orders to arrest the crew.

As they appeared on the deck the form of a man clutching a badly wounded arm was noticed outside the pilot house. The wounded man, later proved to be Travers, slumped to the deck after he had shouted to the coast guards: “We are all shot up.” In the pilot house the boarding party found the bodies of the three victims. The dead men and Travers were placed aboard the patrol boat and taken to Fort Adams. From there Travers was sent to the hospital. The government boat later towed the bullet-ridden BLACK DUCK to port, where it was held for further investigation and disposal of her cargo of liquor. Because she was such a fast boat, the BLACK DUCK was taken into the service of the US Coast Guard and became CG-808 and would see action during the next few years before Prohibition was repealed in 1933. To my knowledge, although there were other similar incidents in New England waters, this was the closest incident of its type to the lighthouse at Beavertail.

A STEWART MORGAN UPDATE

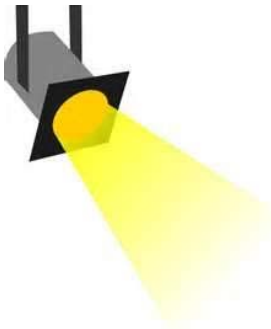
Martha Stewart sent an update to the Board on April 19. Stewart continues to show progress. He went to his daughter's house for Easter and, a week earlier, a birthday. He is making the transfer from the wheel chair to the car and back with increasing ease. He requests a hand operated wheel chair for getting around, not a powered chair that is available. He requests homework every day to continue his therapy. The staff is very impressed with his tenaciousness and he will stay at the VA facility as long as he continues to make progress.

His address is:

Stewart Morgan
 Bldg 2 SCI 2nd floor
 1400 Veterans of Foreign Wars Pkwy
 West Roxbury, MA 02132



RES ■



THE SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON

When it comes to hard work no one can surpass the amount of work **Dorrie Lin** has put into the Gift Shop for the past 5 years. Taking over a viable operation very capably handled by Charles and Karen Osen-ton , Dorrie introduced some ideas for beavertail merchandise using local artists, expanded the jewelry line and sought gifts designed to appeal to young visitors. Her dynamic style and warm personality drew in people like Joan Vessella who took over book ordering and Linda Warner who assisted in many ways including the buying trips looking for new ideas.

Dorrie grew up in Ohio, married Tom, a young man from the neighborhood, and proceeded to have nine children, five boys and four girls. In 1961 they relocated to Holliston MA for Tom's job with Computer Controls and remained for 42 years. Dorrie served as a buyer for the Gift Shop at the Framingham campus of Metro West Hospital and worked as part of a research team at Boston Children's Hospital. Over the years they had vacationed in southern R.I. and decided to move into the area after retiring.

Dorrie has been an advocate for a point of sale system for some years and her desire is coming to fruition. She has been working very hard this past fall and winter getting the system up and running. She has agreed to stay on in a consultant role for this season and will continue to help as she always has with whatever needs doing around the light station.

RES ■



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