

BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

The Lighthouse Log

Winter 2015

*The quarterly Newsletter
of the BLMA*

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Message From The Editor

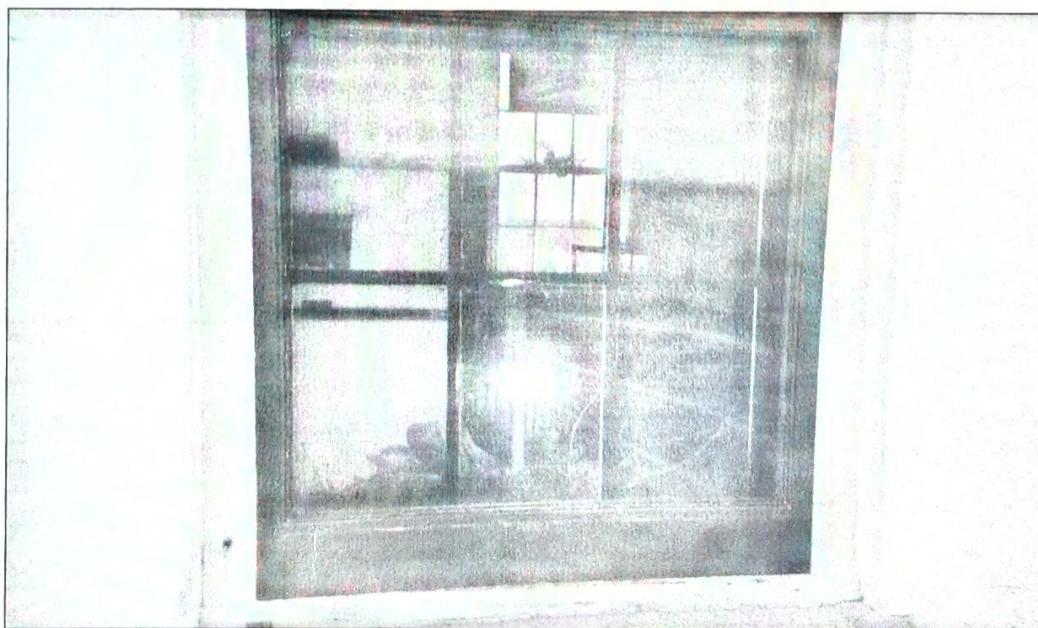
A warm, sunny January day brought this writer along with a number of joggers, walkers and birders to Beavertail State Park. A peek in the museum window was rewarded with the colorful holiday decorations so artfully placed by Joan Vessella, Linda and George Warner, Pat Newman, Ursula Parent and Sue Wermuth. The Christmas tree in caretaker Tom Rosa's north facing window added a cheerful holiday touch. These would soon be gone. You owe it to yourself to visit next winter season.

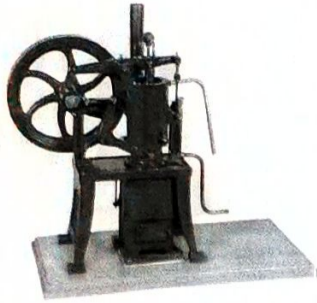
This last issue of 2015 has important news describing a new initiative underway. The QR project first discussed by the Board two years ago is coming to reality. Smart phones and tablets being carried by so many park visitors these days can download the QR (quick response code) app containing the reader which allows for viewing whatever information and images are associated with the QR matrix. More information as well as titles can be found inside,

The BLMA Board of Directors wants to thank all who contribute to the furtherance of its mission of preservation and education. You know the ways in which you contribute. Varoujan Karentz has created a special "Thank You" to be found inside.

Membership Chair Linda Warner wants to be sure that she has your most current email address and home address, if there have been changes. You can receive both the ecopy as well as hard copy if you wish. Let Linda know-mailmum@aol.com or 401-423-1278.

RES ■





FOG SIGNAL PROBLEMS AT BEAVERTAIL

The old fog signal installed at Beavertail in 1868 was a Daboll Horn operated by an Ericsson hot-air engine, which in turn compressed air to blow the horn.

The Ericsson Engine contained a power piston and displacer within one cylinder. The cylinder had a hot end, within the firebox, and a cold end, surrounded by a water jacket. Air heated within the cylinder expanded, driving the piston upward. The displacer next moved downward, pushing the air from the hot side into the cool side of the cylinder. The air then contract, pulling the piston downward. The displacer then moved the air from the cool side to the hot side. The cycle began again.

The problem was the engine would require almost 60 minutes to develop enough heat to operate. By 1872 a new steam system was installed. It proved inoperable because sufficient water was unavailable from roof run off and ground cisterns to maintain steam in the boiler.

Eventually a large canted roof building was designed and constructed to collect rainwater to be stored in an underground cistern and a large tank in the Assistant Keepers basement. The outline of the tank is still visible today.

VK

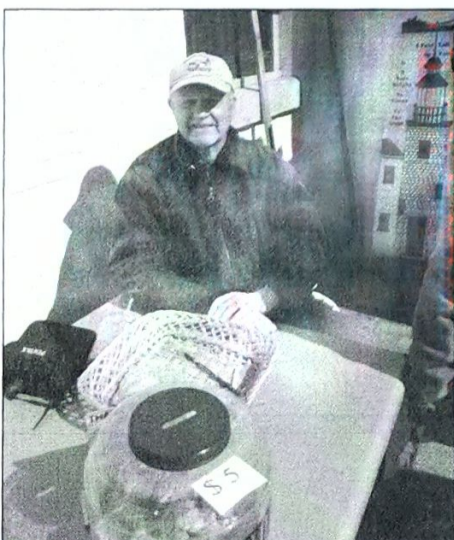


THE SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON . . .

An active member for many years, Treasurer **Richard Koster** has successfully brought us into the 21st century of financial recordkeeping. Although double entry bookkeeping is centuries old, it's Quick Books and the computer that handle contemporary organizations' books.

Richard grew up in Warwick, R.I. He attended Cushing Academy and Bryant University. Richard had a career in retail management. During a 34 year career with Cherry and Webb Richard served as Personnel Director, Director of Purchasing and Branch manager. After retiring Richard spent 5 years as Director of Purchasing for the Preservation Society for Newport County.

Richard has been involved in just about every phase of BLMA activity. In addition to his role as Treasurer Richard has served as Docent Coordinator, Director, and Docent. Richard was responsible for the acquisition of the Point of Sale equipment used in the Gift Shop.



If you have climbed the tower in the past 3 or 4 years you have probably met Richard whose friendly smile and greeting makes donation giving a pleasure.

Richard serves as Treasurer for the Jamestown Humane Society and the West Reach Homeowners

Association where he lives with his wife Jane.

RES



Is it "Beavertail" or "Beaver Tail"

As early as 1650 the south end of the peninsula where the lighthouse is located was named "Beaver Tail" along with "Beaver Head" and "Beaver Neck" at the north end of the peninsula.

It was not until 1899 that U.S. Lighthouse Board and nautical charts began documenting "Beavertail" as a single noun.

Why ?

Do any of our readers know?

If so ... let us know.

THE QR PROJECT



Envisioned 2 years ago, BLMA recognized the thousands of visitors to the Light Station and thousands more who visited Beavertail State Park were never aware of the many historical events, physical characteristics and biological features associated with Beavertail Point;

BLMA this summer will be installing over 20 "QR" code signs providing links to its web site www.beavertailight.org. Each QR code sign scanned by a smart phone will bring up a one or two page historical event, physical or biological description or information guide.

BLMA's team, Paula Samos, Ursula Michael, Richard Sullivan, Sean McCormick, Dave Smith and Varoujan Karentz have identified the following sites and are finalizing the interpretive links.

NORD Site and Antenna Helix

Tuner Hut

Beavertail Point WWII Rapid Fire

Cannon Site

Harbor Entrance Command Post

Building

Spraycliff Radar Development Site

East Passage Mine Fields and Anti

Submarine Nets

West Passage Mine Fields and Anti

Submarine Nets

Brenton Reef Lightship and Tower

Payton Stones Shipwreck Site

Marine Vessel Identification Guide

Beavertail's Geophysical Fault

Deer Population Information

Lime Disease Warning

Endangered Floral Species Guide

Bird Recognition Guide

Monarch Butterfly Migration

U853 Submarine Sinking Overlook

Beavertail Nature Trails

Site of Old Tea House

Brenton Reef Overlook

Local Fish Identification Guide

Rosa Rugosa Information Guide

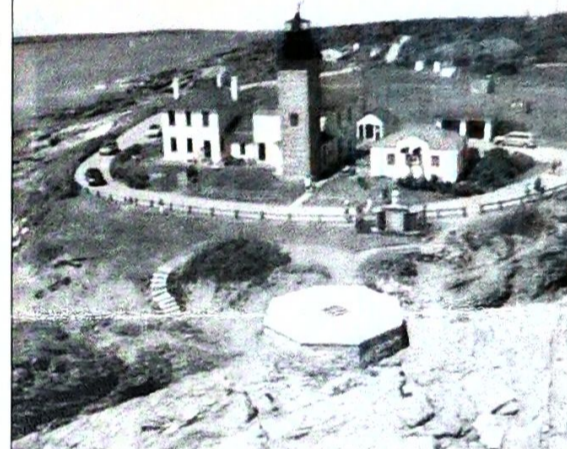
Battery Whiting Ammunition Bunkers and Gun

Emplacements

Late 19th/early 20th century fishing and recreation

Thanks to you, we had a fabulous year. 2015 gave us record numbers of visitors to Beavertail Light. We could not have done it without you.

Thank You Our docents, volunteers, faithful members, generous donors and all the visiting families and friends. We are pleased to provide a community service preserving this historic site for future generations.



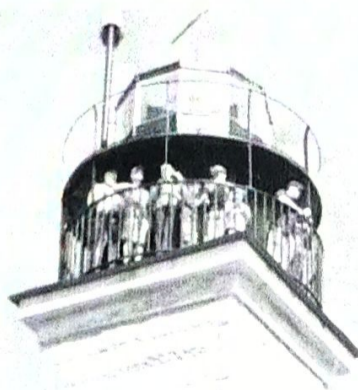
We plan 2016 to be an exciting year with new events and exhibits.

Climb Beavertail's Light Tower. Best view in Southern Rhode Island.

Explore Our Shipwreck Data Base Comprising over 2,200 Maritime Events. The largest Shipwreck Data Base in Rhode Island.

View our Interactive Touch Screen Displays and Over 20 Historical Story Boards and artifacts.

See Our new Rhode Island Lighthouses display.



Visit our web site for details

www.beavertailight.org



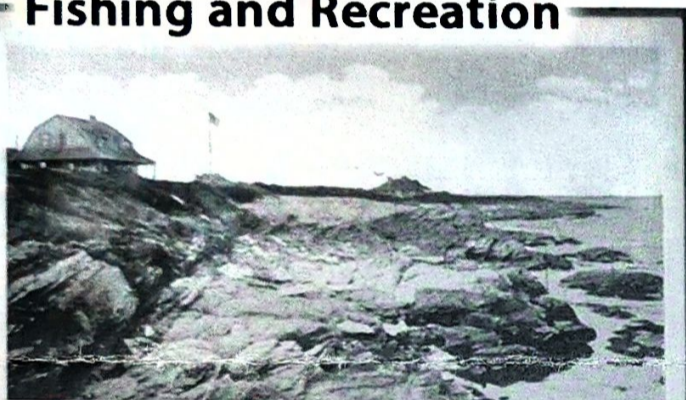
EXAMPLES OF QR LINKS

Plans are for the 20 plus QR links to be available on the website as well as the QR signs to be accessed by visitors smart phones and tablets during the spring. BLMA members will have an advance look at the information in upcoming newsletters. This should of particular interest to our members living out of the area.

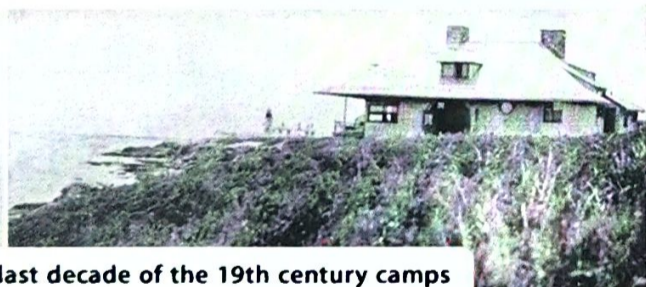
The QR matrix is similar to a barcode, only in the form of a square arrangement of dots of different sizes. Each matrix is unique.

RES ■

Fishing and Recreation



Beavertail Point has been a well known fishing destination for many generations. Tents were erected and groups of fishermen and families enjoyed the exceptional access to striped bass, black fish, and late in the year, cod. Both cod and bass of 40-50 pounds were common.



During the last decade of the 19th century camps and more elaborate structures were built. A group of Newporters built substantial seasonal homes. Two of these are pictured. Grey Ledge became a public tea house just after the turn of the century.



R. E. Sullivan

Above image courtesy of the Jamestown Historical Society and RE Sullivan



Rosa Rugosa



Highly tolerant to salt spray, the Rosa Rugosa hedges grow in dense thickets. In summer, the shrubs bloom with vibrant pink flowers and in autumn, the tomato shaped fruit of the plant ripen into rose hips, which may be used for tea and jam.



RHODE ISLAND'S PERILOUS COAST

BLACK ROCK, BLOCK ISLAND (PART 2)

In the last edition of the Lighthouse Log the stories of five vessels lost at Black Rock, Block Island were presented. What follows are the details of four others whose final voyage ended there.

On January 11, 1890, one of the largest sailing vessels to come to grief in Block Island waters took place at Black Rock. This was the 235-foot long, four-masted schooner POCAHONTAS. At nearly 1,400 gross tons, she was surely a sight to behold as she routinely plied the waters off Block Island. On her final voyage she was headed north from Baltimore with 2,200 tons of soft coal for Portland. Under the command of Captain O.G. Hammett, the vessel encountered hard weather from the start of the voyage. When off Montauk Point she ran into a dense fog bank which aggravated the already bad situation and shortly after midnight she ran ashore on Black Rock. The local lifesavers rushed to the scene and quickly landed the crew who were taken to the lifesaving station. The vessel was left in a very exposed situation, with a hole in her prow, near the keel. Wreckers arrived the next morning to start offloading the coal in hopes of being able to haul the large schooner from her perilous position. The local wreckers found the leak to be greater than they could manage with manual pumps and quickly contacted the Scott Wrecking Company of New London for steam pumps which would make all the difference in the all important pumping process. Unfortunately Scott's salvage pumps and teams were occupied with other work and could not come to this scene and that factor, along with the relentless force of the seas, sealed the fate of this three-year old ship. The loss of the vessel and cargo was estimated at nearly \$100,000.

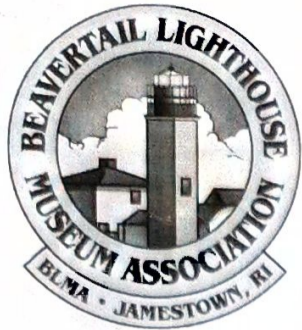
Ten years elapsed before another vessel was lost at Black Rock. This was the barge WAVERLY. At 166 tons she was not very large but carried a considerable amount of coal and was northbound when she encountered an extreme storm off Block Island. As part of a multi-barge tow, she went adrift when the lead barge's towline parted; shortly after, her towline was also broken leaving her at the mercy of the wind and sea. The barge's captain and mate grew ever fearful as the storm continued in violence and finally abandoned her just before she "turned turtle" (turned upside down) dumping her coal cargo to the sea floor. The empty barge then floated ashore near Black Rock Point where she was destroyed. The date was November 11, 1900 when this unfortunate craft ended her final voyage.

February 5, 1945 was notable for a severe snowstorm which struck Block Island while the fishing dragger ALICE & JENNIE was working in the waters off the south side of the island. The 46-foot diesel powered craft called New London, CT her home port and on this trip was commanded by Manuel Roderick. The vessel was headed home to repair a broken cable in their drag net when they were lost in the snowstorm and ran aground on the submerged rocks off Black Rock Point. The ALICE & JENNIE was just 25 tons and no match for the exposed southern shore of Block Island. Along with her catch, 20 barrels of fish, the dragger was lost where she struck. Her crew remained aboard until dawn and then swam ashore to safety.



The final currently known loss at Black Rock was the fishing vessel AGGRESSOR which ran aground 200 yards off Black Rock Point on November 21, 2005, almost sixty years after the wreck of the ALICE & JENNIE. The AGGRESSOR measured 79' x 21' x 12' and displaced 139 tons. Owned by the VINRUD Fishing Corp, she was inbound to New Bedford at the time of her loss. Although not specified, the presumed cause of this disaster was heavy seas. The Coast Guard responded to her distress and removed the crew from their perilous position.

There are likely more disasters that have resulted in a total loss at this location but these have not yet been discovered. Black Rock is another example of Rhode Island's perilous coast.



BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 83
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BMLA is dedicated to preserving America's third oldest light, providing educational experiences reflecting the best current thinking for all learners and engaging in fund raising activities necessary for enhancing visitor experiences.

Visit us on the web at
www.beavertailight.org



Sarah Gleason, author of Kindly Lights and creator/designer of the original lighthouse exhibit that graced our museum for 25 years, paid a visit in early December to donate her library of lighthouse books and journals.

Sarah, a graduate of Harvard University, has devoted her professional life to historical research, exhibit development, and writing.

PROVIDENCE RI 028

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Docent Appreciation
Breakfast and Orientation
April 23rd
at the museum.

*Watch your mail for more
information.*

