

Pages from the Past

Calumet Harbor Entrance Lighthouse,
Lake Michigan



Above - The Calumet North Pierhead lighthouse in 1966. This structure replaced the lighthouse that Keepers Ryan and Rushmore speak about on the next page. U.S. Coast Guard photo.
Right - The Calumet South Breakwater Light, which is mentioned by Keeper Rushmore on the next page. U.S. Lighthouse Society photo.



Keeper Mary Ryan

Dec. 25, 1873 - I was suppose [sic] to have been informed when this light would be discontinued [for the winter], not a vessel since the 15th of Nov. and nothing to light for and this is such a dreary place to be all alone in.

Apr. 7, 1874 - So dull in this place it is killing me.

Apr. 15 - Oh, for a home in the sunny south, such a climate.

Apr. 16 - Such a time, everyone is despaired thinking that summer is never coming.

May 1 - So cold, Mayday!, those people who go for flowers will be disappointed.

May 2 - Nothing but gloom, without and WITHIN.

Oct. 31 - A promise of a cold hard winter as the signs show, so many out of employment at this early in the season, and what will it be before winter is over? God "only knows."

Apr. 22, 1880 - I think some changes will have to be made, this is not a fit place for anyone to live in.

July 31 - This has been the most trying month of my keeping a lighthouse, the most important question, can anything worse come?

Aug. 28 - The lighthouse engineers never do anything for me.

Aug. 30 - Oh what a place.

Nov. 1 - This is all gloom and darkness.

[Keeper C.B. Rushmore relieves Mary Ryan and what a difference in attitude. . .]

Nov. 13, 1880. Commenced duties of light keeper today. The sunset behind a bank of dark clouds, yet it is not gloomy for the poets and our good sense teaches us that there is a Silver Lining beyond.

May 1882 - Several ore vessels and lumber vessels arrived here today. I am devoting all my time to fixing up the yard. I am often told that I cannot make trees grow here. Today Mr. Dobson, the Lighthouse carpenter, and four helpers arrive to move the beacon tower to the end of the north pier. My trees are doing well and not many years hence will shade the entire yard. The woodbine and ivy planted around the house and running up the walls proves a nuisance on account of it's festering so many worms. The beacon tower has been moved out 600 feet and placed in position.

June 1, 1882 - This lighthouse was lit up for the first time in 1853 by a Mr. Dalton who was the first light keeper. At what time it was abandoned by the Government and sold to Mr. Clark I am not able to learn. In 1870 it was repurchased by Lighthouse Board and the light was again placed "in the window" Sept. 9, 1873 by a Mary Ryan who remained as light keeper until November 1880. In 1876 the light was removed from the old stone tower to a wooden tower on the pier where it has remained ever since having been moved out from time to time as the pier was extended until it is now over 3,000 feet north and east of the old stone tower.

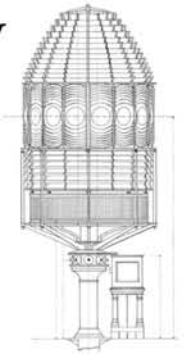
June 21 - Lighthouse supply steamer Dahlia came to our harbor early this morning under the care and command of J.C. Watson, Commander U.S.H. Inspector. Captain Watson seems a perfect gentleman and very thorough in his inspection not being over two hours in his delivery of supplies and inspection.

August 1 - Having obtained a leave of absence from the Inspector I left on the morning of Aug. 1st with my boy Dick for the Lake Superior region on the Steamer Duluth leaving Chicago — stopping at Milwaukee and the third day out we were at Mackinaw and all that day was passed in going up through the Ste. Saint Marie. In passing up through the "Soo" as it is familiarly called, the scenery was beautiful and so different from what I had been accustomed to it seemed like traveling in a foreign country. The clear deep water of Lake Superior was passed and we arrived at Marquette where we spent days enjoying Capt. McGuire's station. I learned some valuable experience in Light Keeping from this old experienced keeper. The Capt's lighthouse was certainly a model of neatness and I enjoyed his intelligence & sociability as much as any other portion of the whole trip. Leaving Marquette by rail we went to Escanaba where through the kind attentions of Mr. Coat we spent two days very pleasantly. Accepting the kind offer of Capt. Frazier of the [steamer] Minneapolis we took passage for south Chicago where we arrived after an absence of two weeks. My wife having looked after the lamp during my absence.

September 1882 - Found much improvement to have a funnel placed on top of the lantern [lens] in the lantern room. This improvement was suggested to me by Capt. McGuire of Marquette. This funnel cost me \$.50.



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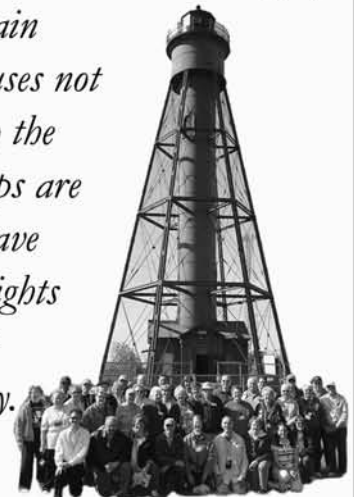
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