

transportation for them and their equipment. The idea was for them to have a little vacation while painting the lighthouse — surfing, snorkeling, boating, fishing — but they were too busy to have much time for those things. Still, they considered it a great time. When the lighthouse stood tall and shiny in its bright new coats of paint, the community gave the painting crew a gala thank-you party.

Accomplishments of smaller detail, but nonetheless important, are: The jamb of the main entrance door to the tower has been repaired; the bottom of the door on the oil container room has been relieved so that it opens all the way for the first time in many years; special keys for the doors of the lovely, curved, parts cabinet have been purchased; and a volunteer has made a new donation box for the entrance of the tower, the keys for which are held by the newly elected Hope Town Committee. As a sign points out, donations placed in the box will go to the maintenance of the Elbow Reef Light Station, the funds being controlled jointly by the Hope Town Committee and the Bahamas Lighthouse Preservation Society.

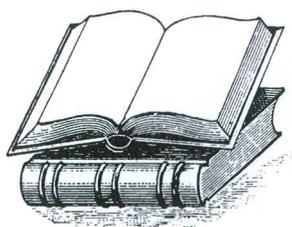
For the safety of lighthouse visitors, especially the youngsters, and the integrity of the equipment, we have had to prevent visitor entry to three areas that can only be accessed by narrow ladders — places most visitors, respectfully, did not attempt to climb. However, it seems there are always a few, who, when no one was looking, would climb into the burner area, the lens gallery, or the balcony above the main outside platform. Unobtrusive little gates have been installed to help prevent accidents.

The BLPS has produced an impressive looking postcard, unique among lighthouse postcards, in that it not only shows the lighthouse from the air with Hope Town, its harbor, and Elbow Reef breaking beyond, but has insert photographs of the spectacular bullseye lens and unique brass clockwork machinery. They will be used to thank new members for their donations and will be on sale for one dollar.

Many newspapers and magazines have been picking up on the story of the saving and painting of the Elbow Reef Light Station by BLPS — just what they had hoped for! Lighthouses are popular subjects with the media these days, and the more

exposure BLPS receives, the more they hear from prospective members and helpers.

The Bahamas Lighthouse Preservation Society feels sure they can look forward to a good working relationship with the Port Department, and that each party will be able to accomplish that which is most important to them.



## LIGHTING THE BAY

### Tales of Chesapeake Lighthouses

By Pat Vojtech

Reviewed by Wayne Wheeler

This is the second book about Chesapeake Bay light stations written in a year. Not only are books about light stations flying off the presses in unprecedented numbers, but they are starting to cover the same territory.

Ms. Vojtech has written a handsome and fairly accurate book. She nicely covers the three types of lighthouse structures constructed around the Chesapeake: shore tower, screw-pile, and caisson. Her work segues from early builders on the Bay to the perils of keeping a light station on the Chesapeake, which included being destroyed by ice, fire, storms, and vessels. *Lighting the Bay* covers the construction of many Chesapeake Bay light stations and focuses on a few dramatic events: strandings, rescues, collisions, a mysterious death, and, unfortunately, a ghost story.

A big plus to this book is the explanation of why certain light stations were constructed and why they were constructed in a particular location. The book is laced with colorful anecdotes and passages from official documents. Although the book shows a great deal of research, it has its inaccurate moments. Some of the numbers are grossly inaccurate and the information on the development of fog signals is slightly off. At one point Ms. Vojtech states keepers "had once numbered about 7,500 ... nationwide." The highest number of keepers at any one time was approxi-

mately 1,430 around 1915. She also states there were once 10,858 light stations in the country. Actually, the total number constructed in this country was around 2,000, and not all existing at any one time. The same section of the book states the reason the Coast Guard destroyed many light stations was due to the cost of maintaining them and men being unwilling to take an assignment at an isolated station. True, maintenance was a cause for removing light stations, but the Coast Guard, being a military service, could assign crews to any location. Men may have been unwilling to take the assignment, but vetoes were not allowed.

This work ends with a chapter titled "The Renaissance," which details some of the restoration and preservation work recently accomplished on Chesapeake Bay light stations. There is also a very nice section with a few paragraphs on every Chesapeake Bay light station that ever existed, many with a small photograph of what they looked like. This section includes information on the tenders of the Bay as well. The list of sources at the end is quite impressive.

This is a coffee table book filled with color and black and white photographs. In fact, Ms. Vojtech took the photographs. Some appear to be handsome and creative, unfortunately many are slightly off register and/or the color separations were not correctly done. In many cases a 'killer' royal blue has distorted what was probably an outstanding photograph.

The 194-page book is a comprehensive and enjoyable read. Ms. Vojtech has done a considerable amount of homework, and, although she isn't a lighthouse expert, much of her work is researched better than most lighthouse books. Still, there are some creative 'facts' which should not be carved in stone. The paper stock is excellent and the layout first rate. One hopes that better color work will be used in a reprint.

Hard cover, 9 1/2" x 12 1/4", 194 pages, 106 color and 58 black and white photographs, and a nice detailed map of where all the Chesapeake Bay light stations were located. This book may be purchased through the Keeper's Locker for \$34.95 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling.