



LIGHTHOUSES OF THE CAROLINAS — A SHORT HISTORY AND GUIDE

By Terrance Zepke

Right from the first paragraph of the introduction, I knew I was about to read another slap-dash book on lighthouses. These books continue to fly off the press, with increasing regularity.

That first paragraph has the Great Pharos lighthouse of Egypt constructed in 300 BCE. I don't know what the "E" stands for, but the completion date is generally accepted to be 280 BC. And, it didn't stand for 450 years, but rather over 1,100 years!

Later, in the Foreword, the author talks about caisson lighthouses as a type constructed in the Carolinas. This type was never constructed in that area of the country.

The book is divided into sections or chapters for each lighthouse discussed. Each chapter starts with three various Fast Facts regarding the lighthouse: height, construction cost, first constructed, last constructed, etc. If a U.S. Life Saving Service station was located in proximity to the light station, then it is discussed with accompanying photos.

Each chapter ends with an Other Points of Interest and Useful Address and Resources sections. These are nice additions to the chapter, furnishing information and phone numbers of organizations which could enhance a visit to the particular lighthouse.

A few side-bars scattered through the book explain the Fresnel lens (incorrectly),

tell about Blackbeard, relate the story of a murder at Cape Romaine and even, God forbid, tell of a ghost at the Georgetown station.

The first two photographs of the Currituck Light Station label it a Life Saving Service Station. Later, a drawing is labeled a Keeper's duplex, when it is clearly a single family home. Other mistakes include calling a lens a "light," identifying a 375mm lens as a 1st order lens, terming the lantern room a "crown." The author states the Oak Island light station is the last manually operated lighthouse in the country, when in fact, that honor goes to the Boston Light Station.

The author included the Harbor Town Lighthouse at Hilton Head, SC. This abomination isn't a lighthouse and looks more like a WWII German coastal defense bunker than a light station tower. Although the owner installed a small optic and has a permit to operate it as a Private Aid to Navigation, it was never a government light station and never had personnel assigned. There are thousands of these Private Aids to Navigation throughout the United States but that doesn't make them lighthouses or light stations, even though they are listed in Light Lists and on charts (not maps, Mr. Zepke).

The book contains numerous interesting black and white photos, many rare and not seen in other books on the subject. A few location maps and drawings are sprinkled throughout. In the center are eight pages of color photographs.

While we appreciate the hours spent on research and in writing this book, the author is not familiar with the vernacular or mechanics of the subject. One aspect of the title is correct, it is a short history of the light stations of the Carolinas.

Soft cover, 6" x 9", 176 pages, numerous historic black and white photos and eight pages of color photos. \$12.95.

West Michigan Tourist Association Publishes Lighthouse Guide

Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin

A 56 page, full-color guide to Lake Michigan and its lighthouses was published in 1998 by the West Michigan Tourist

Association. It is geared to the traveler who wants to do the "circle tour" of Lake Michigan. It covers four states, has numerous lighthouse photos, a lighthouse directory, and calendar of events. Obtain a copy of the 1999 guide by calling (800)442-2084.

Big Sable Point Light Station History Available

Lake Michigan, Ludington, MI

Society member and Log contributor Tom Tag has recently completed a 75-page booklet on Big Sable Point Light Station. It includes historical photographs, maps, drawings and sketches of the light station. Available for \$10 at the lighthouse, or via mail for \$12. Contact the Big Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association at P.O. Box 673, Ludington, MI 49431. Their recent newsletter tells much about recent restoration efforts at the lighthouse. To quote, "Recent visitors to Big Sable are thrilled with the progress of the restoration! Come this summer and see for yourself."

Great Captain's Lighthouse — OOOOPS!

Greenwich, CT

Funds are being raised to refurbish the lantern room at the Great Captain Lighthouse. We erroneously reported in the Spring Log that "The funds will be used to . . . pay the Coast Guard to install their optic in the lantern." Captain C.C. Beck, of the First Coast Guard District, brought to our attention that the Coast Guard is moving the optic into the lighthouse tower at its expense. Local funds will only go toward refurbishing the lantern room. The Coast Guard is dismantling a skeletal tower (which is a maintenance problem for the Aids to Navigation Team) and relocating the optic into the lantern room.