

Lighthouses of Australia – Images from the End of an Era

By John Ibbotson

WOW! this is one of the more lavish lighthouse books ever published. In some aspects it is similar to the Australian lighthouse book "From Dusk to Dawn," which was published by that country's Department of Transportation and Communication. Our Society was the sole agent for that publication in this country until it went out of circulation.

This giant coffee table book consists of 282 pages of color photographs of, I assume, all of Australia's lighthouses - now all automated. It features 220 different lighthouses. To orient the reader both inside end papers contain a map of Australia with each lighthouse numbered. The numbers are repeated alongside the map with the name of the lighthouse. Additionally, each Section of the country begins with a map showing the location of the lighthouses in that section.

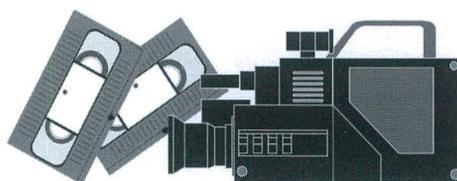
After a brief chapter on the overall history of Australia's light stations, the book is divided into six sections (territories), a chapter on lighthouse museums and several appendices that contain a chronological listing, glossary and other information.

Each featured lighthouse is accompanied by a very brief sidebar which lists the date established, height of focal plane of the optic above sea level, height of tower, range of the light, characteristic and a very brief paragraph about the station. In addition to exterior (sea level, ground level and aerial) photographs of the towers, there are a few

interior photos of equipment to give you the "flavor of the bean."

Detailed history is not a strong point of this book (nor was it meant to be), but the absolutely gorgeous and dramatic photographs will keep you leafing through this volume for hours. The tome is well laid out and printed on high quality paper. The book says "lighthouse and "Australia." It's a wonderful record of the end of the lighthouse era in Australia. From the photographs, the lighthouses all appear to be in outstanding condition, at least at the time the photographs were taken.

Hard cover, 12" by 11", 282 pages, 500 color photographs, 12 detailed maps, a chronological listing of 400 lighthouses and a section on 70 museums with lighthouse artifacts. Available through Australian Lighthouse Traders 4/19 Elm St., Surrey Hills, Victoria 3127 Australia. You may contact them by e-mail at lighthouses@mira.net. The cost is \$82 AU, which translates to about \$42 US (and worth every penny) plus shipping.



Video Review

By David Snyder

A Light on Treacherous Waters: The History of the Hunting Island, South Carolina Light Station

Video produced by WJWJ-TV, Beaufort, SC.

An interesting and beautiful history lesson on South Carolina's Hunting Island and its lighthouse, this video was recently awarded a Cine Golden Eagle. Past recipients include Ken Burns and other acclaimed film and video makers. Last year's awards honored such major broadcast organizations as HBO, NBC, Discovery Communications, the History Channel and the A&E network.

A Light on Treacherous Waters tells the story of the old Hunting Island lighthouse, which was originally built in 1859, destroyed during the Civil War, eventually rebuilt, then moved inland away from the eroding beach.

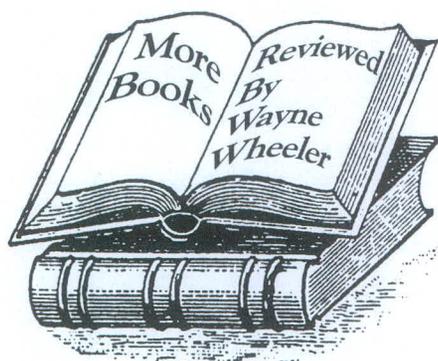
It was once home to light keepers and their families who lived in isolation at a time when Hunting Island was considered uninhabitable and was accessible only by boat. Many historic and contemporary images of the light station are featured. Nice images of a wooden, lending library box, a keeper's medicine chest and an old medical handbook are featured, emphasizing how isolated the keepers and their families were. They needed to be very self-reliant. There is also a nice discussion of its 2nd order Fresnel lens.

The Hunting Island lighthouse is integral to the maritime history of the Lowcountry and South Carolina. It was once a vital navigational aid for merchant ships heavy with indigo, cotton, phosphate and timber and, through the years, endured the wrath of nature, war and politics. The production features excerpts from interviews with historians. It also includes some poignant memories from Society member Fred Wichman, of Charleston, the son of a former light keeper.

Lush nature photography depicts the white-tailed deer, birds and alligators on the island. We learn that when Europeans first settled South Carolina's coast, the low barrier island was considered uninhabitable and good only for hunting - hence the name. Much of the video is accompanied by 19th-century vernacular music including guitar and flute. The music adds a nice element making one feel that this place and its human associations go back hundreds of years.

The only inaccuracy may be the statement that the Great Depression brought about an end to the Lighthouse Service. The implication seemed to be that things just ended nationwide. Although the station was deactivated in 1933, the local shipping trade had relocated to other nearby ports. The lighthouse simply wasn't needed. President Roosevelt did authorize the efficient melding of the Coast Guard and the Lighthouse Service in 1939, but certainly the tradition of manned lighthouses, whether civilian or military continued for another fifty-plus years.

Created in cooperation with the Friends of Hunting Island State Park, this half-hour video will make an excellent addition to anyone's lighthouse media collection. Order yours for \$18.45 (includes shipping) from WJWJ-TV, P.O. Box 1165, Beaufort, SC 29901. You can also get more information by calling the station at (843) 524-0808 or by visiting their website: www.wjwj.org/videoltw.htm.



California Light Stations – Circa 1950

By Jan Mattson & John Twohy

Basically a photo album, *California Light Stations* (and other aids to navigation) provides an interesting glimpse of lighthouse life along the California coast around 1950. In that era, world War II was over, and the Coast Guard was really getting into the lighthouse and aids to navigation business. Members of the old civilian Lighthouse Service were slowly being phased out and the system was becoming more military. For the most part the light stations were still in outstanding condition, but they were beginning to lose their bucolic innocence. With few exceptions, the photos are of men in military uniforms working at light stations and on buoy tenders, hauling supplies and working buoys.

The photos are by author Jan Mattson's father, George, and his friend John Twohy. One of the men photographed the stations to the north of San Francisco and the other to the south. They had planned to publish a book of their work, but the Korean War intervened and the project was placed on hold. Now, after 50 years the project is complete.

Some historical text accompanies the photos, but it is mostly a photo album of California aids to navigation a half century ago. Some of the photos lack definition and the layout could have been crisper. The photos would have been enhanced with boxes (thin, line borders). That aside, it is a worthy addition to your library.

Soft cover, 8 1/4" by 11", numerous black and white photos. \$19.50 plus shipping and handling from the Lighthouse Gallery & Gifts, P.O. Box 2382, Florence, OR 97439, phone (800) 320-2130.

A Guide to the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse Gardens

By Steve Murray

What a delightful and refreshing booklet Steve Murray has created. His subtitle, *With Tips and Observations for the Seashore Gardener*, gives a hint of what this booklet contains.

For the history buff there are several historical photos of the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse over the years, along with a brief history and some facts about the station. But the garden and its development is the meat of this work. There are before and after photos that are quite dramatic and a discussion of the progress of creating a beautiful landscape around this charming Victorian lighthouse.

Steve Murray is Superintendent of Parks for the City of North Wildwood, NJ, where the lighthouse is located. He clearly knows his stuff. He details what he was faced with as the project started, describing the soil and problems associated with a seaside environment. There is a discussion about choosing a proper landscape design and descriptions of types of gardens; cottage, winter, shade and herb gardens. There are sections on scents, hydrangea, insects, weeds, plant materials, trees and shrubs. Various flowers (perennials and annuals), shrubs, vines and even which flowers attract butterflies – are described. There is even a listing of birds in the Wildwood area and at what time of year one might encounter them. We know that a lot of our members are "birders" as well as lighthouse lovers. A list of recommended reading rounds out the booklet.

If you have a coastal gardener and lighthouse lover in your life, this is the book for them. All proceeds from the book go to the continued maintenance of the lighthouse.

Soft cover, 5 1/2" by 8 1/2", 64 pages, color and black and white photos. Order by calling (609) 522-4520, or contact them on the web at: www.herefordlighthouse.org.

Sentinel of the Jersey Cape – The Story of the Cape May Lighthouse

By John Bailey

John Bailey is past president of the Mid Atlantic Center for the Arts. That group is responsible for the restoration and maintenance of the Cape May Lighthouse and they have done an outstanding job. The tower, with an operating Coast Guard optic, is open for tours.

John Bailey has done his homework with this book and it nicely details the history of one of our taller towers.

The book is sectioned to provide a glimpse of the towers of the Cape May Light Station, a clever tour of the tower and another of the grounds, a section on the keepers and what happened during the Coast Guard years, after WWII.

Interspersed in the various sections are historical and contemporary photos that very nicely tell the story, including the recent renovation work. Of particular interest are pages from the ad hoc Lighthouse Board Committee (before it took over our aids to navigation system) reporting their findings of the condition of the Cape May Lighthouse. This report really shows just how poor our system was in 1851.

Several pithy appendices provide a chronology, list of keepers, short blurbs of other New Jersey lighthouses, etc.

As we have remarked in reviews in the past, there are a ton of lighthouses books flying off the press, most leave a lot to be desired and most regurgitate what has appeared before. *Sentinel of the New Jersey Cape* is a refreshing book, well thought out and researched, with very few errors. It even discusses the name; who calls it what and when. Like other lighthouses, locals have affixed their own name for the light station. In this case many erroneously call it "Cape May Point," when in fact it is the Cape May Light Station, period!

Hard cover, 8" by 10", 120 pages, numerous photos and diagrams, color and black and white. Available at \$22.95 plus shipping and handling from the Lighthouse Gallery & Gifts (800) 320-2130 or at the Cape May Lighthouse gift shop.