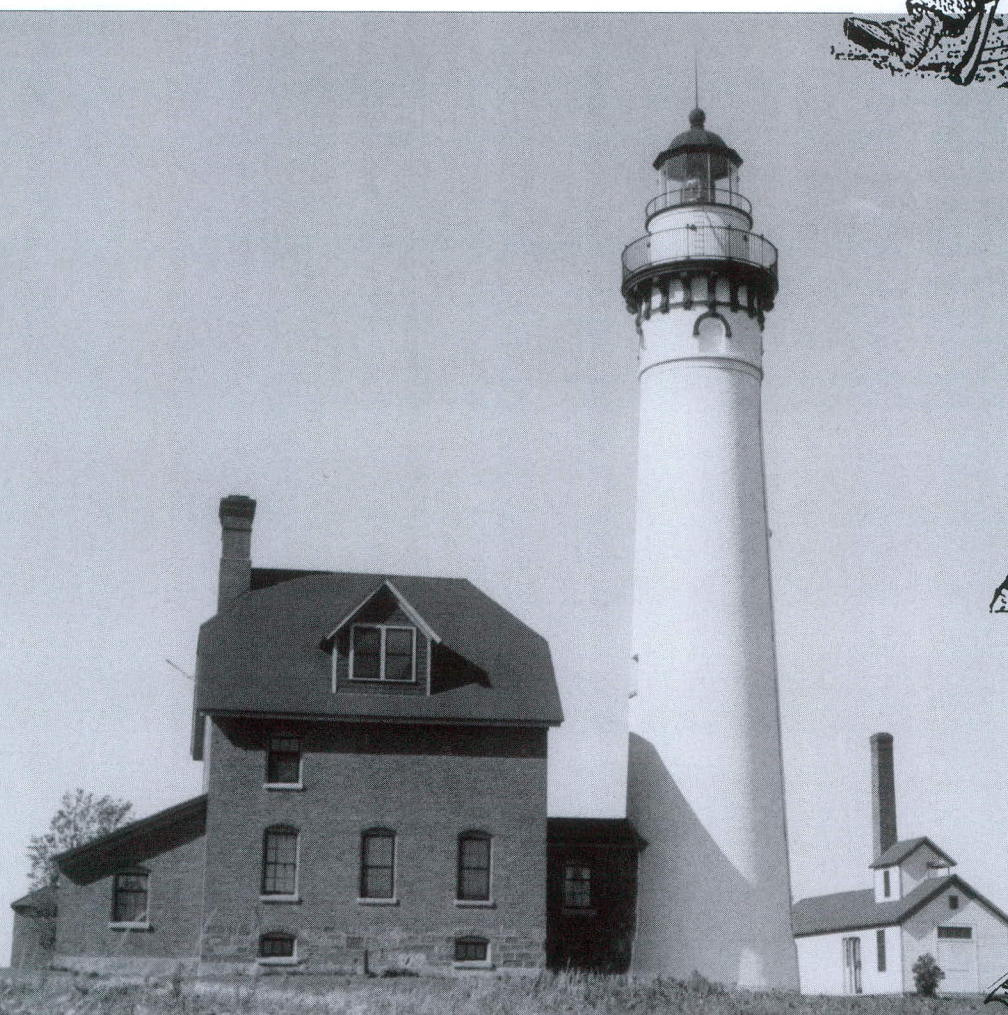
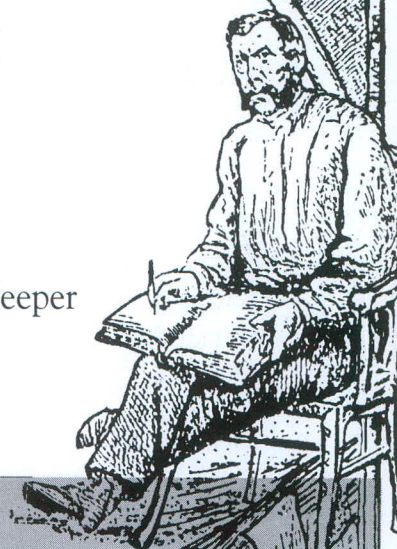


Pages from the Past

Outer Island, Apostle Islands
Lake Superior

O. K. Hall- Keeper



Outer Island Light Station, circa 1950s. The fog signal building can be seen at right. The station went into operation in 1874 and O.K. Hall was its first keeper. Official U.S. Coast Guard Photo.

Sept. 17, 1874 — I got ready to move my household goods from Bayfield to Outer Island on a sailboat, but three gentlemen that were going to put up the fog whistle arrived at Bayfield and employed a tug to bring them out, so we improved the opportunity and came with them. When we got there we found Mr. Crump, the Lampist, had arrived that morning, so I was just in time to learn and improve all I could in running it. From Friday until Tuesday night Mr. Crump worked diligently and completed it in a workman like manner, with pleasure to himself and honor to the craft, if I am any judge. I run it today to see if I could handle the critter. I put on a good light, but my overflow was too great, which I reminded, after a good deal of sweat and anxiety I conquered the kicking creature. The light [lens] is a revolving white light, order #3.

Sept. 18 — It blowed a living gale from N to NW. The sea washed away the dock and ruined the scow that belonged here. This is a very bad coast to land or get on. The government steamer was from Friday to Tuesday landing 80 tons of coal.

Sept. 24 — We left in our sailboat for Bayfield to get provisions, arrived that night about 12 o'clock. I went over to Lapoint the next morning to get pork and hams as there was none in Bayfield.

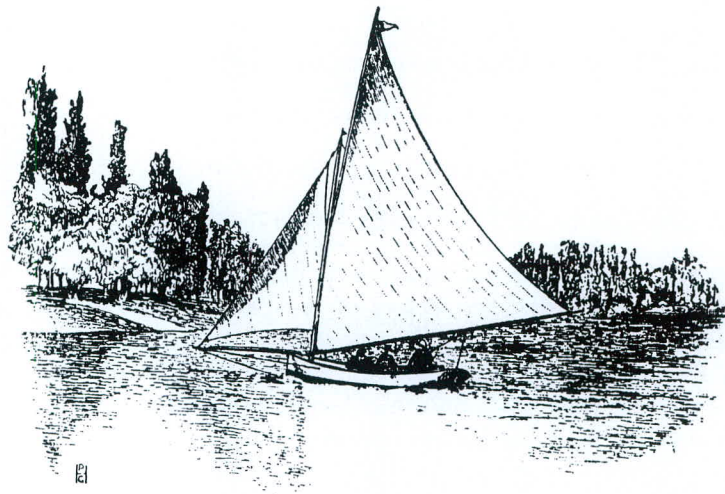
Sept. 26 — We sailed for Outer Island. Arrived at 1/2 past one P.M. They [the workers] was anxiously looking as they was about out of grub. I brought with me some current bushes and raspberries and set them out against the house.

Sept. 30 — Our boat left again for Bayfield with five men, 2 to return and 3 to go to Portage to work on the light there.

[The first ten days of October brought nothing but rain and heavy gales]

Oct. 12. I left for Bayfield for my winter supplies. Arrived that night.

Oct. 13 The boat returned to the island. I went to LaPoint for the new boat that was built there for my use while I remained in the Service.



Oct. 14 — Myself and assistant loaded her and left for Outer Island at 12 o'clock. Arrived at Outer Island at 8 p.m., she sailed well, with the borrowed sails we had, they were too small for her. I got orders from the Light House Inspector at the Post Office at Bayfield to light up on the 20th.

Oct. 17 — Myself and Assistant done a long days work cleaning the lantern. The men finished digging the well for the fog whistle today, going down 30 feet.

Oct. 19 — Cleaned the revolving machinery today, she looks well.

Oct. 20 — We lit the light at 6 o'clock P.M. and broke one chimney. We had some trouble with the clock[works] and the weights were not heavy enough, they rubbed on the wall, but it works like a charm now, it gives a splendid light.

Oct. 22 — Mr. Dobson's party tore down the shanty they had been living in this summer, expecting to get the tug, but she has not come.

Oct. 23 — No tug nor boat from Bayfield.

Oct. 24 — Mr. Dobson's party and myself left on the tug with the new boat in tow. Lit up at 6. Mr. Miller and myself worked on the clockworks which broke the pin in the clock, we made a new one.

Continued Overleaf

Oct. 27, 1874 — Turned off the light at half past six. Steamer off the light bound down as 11 o'clock p.m. O.K. Hall [keeper] left Bayfield Monday Oct. 26 for Outer Island. With the wind W. blowing a gale, canting to the NW, I was obliged to camp on Hemlock Isle. One night that I thought there would be so much sea that I could not land at our place. I arrived home the next day at about 11 o'clock. I had a rough trip, absent 3 days.

Oct. 28 — A heavy gale from the NE with rain . . . 5 o'clock, the gale increases with fury. The dock has all washed away and our new boat would have gone with the dock if it had not been for the assistance of the gentlemen working on the fog whistle, the sea was very angry.

Oct. 29 — The gale last night made the tower shake. I was fearful the clock would [break], but she kept moving as usual. The gale continues with fury, with a monstrous sea. The bank around the fog whistle has caved in very much on the lake side. The sea has washed it away within 6 or 8 feet of the building.

Oct. 31 — The gale has abated some, NW, freezing, our oil congealed so that it would not burn, we was obliged to put it in the lamp & heat the oil, which we will continue to do hear after before lighting, everything is very wet and damp in the lantern. We was obliged to use brine on our lantern glass to take off the ice.

Nov. 1 — We had a good deal of trouble with our wind-up clock weights last night. Three of them fell off caused by dragging on the wall, which is a great trouble all the time. The wheels that carries the weight cord does not extend over enough to carry the weight clear, it causes a great strain on the clock[works]. Mr. Miller has labored night and day by spells to help us, and I don't know how we should have got along without him, for the whole weight had to be hauled up by main force.

Nov. 2 — We finished making today a splendid place for our new boat, I feel proud of it.

Nov. 3 — Our thermometer got blowed off from its hanging place and broke — I sowed grass seed around the dwelling today.

Nov. 7 — We dug a new well for the fog whistle up on the bank and run through 8 pipes into the tank in the building, as the water in the well failed. Mr. Miller got through with the fog whistle today, all complete.

Nov. 8 — Sunday, there was a preaching today so we stayed at home.

Nov. 9 — The tug failed to come for Mr. Miller today as agreed so my Ass't started with them for Bayfield at 2 p.m.

Nov. 10 — A terrible gale from the NE, I fired up the fog whistle.

Nov. 13 — Boat returned from Bayfield at 4 p.m. Assistant absent 5 days, heavy gales, freezing, finished hauling our boat into winter quarters. Striped her and carred her over, or in other words housed her. Drouillard bro[ough]t the new sails, blocks, hal-yards, etc. for the new boat. Fired up [the whistle boilers] at 1/2 past 2 p.m., got up steam and blowed until 6 p.m. when the bank on the land side gave way carrying the ladder with great force against the building. The earth nearly covered the building to the roof — we thought the whole bank was coming in. There is plenty more ready to come. We was obliged to draw the fire give up running [the signal] and climb the bank the best we could.

Nov. 20 — Cold wind NW, blowing a gale. We have to heat our oil every day. Also clean all the oil from the upper reservoir and bring the lamp connecting rod that holds the float & lower reservoir every morning, but it gets so cold during the night that it will not overflow sufficient to give a good light. We have used a spirit-lamp to keep it warm.

Nov. 27 — Closed the light today as it was so cold we could not run it any longer, and we thought there was no necessity as it has been so cold and such bad weather since the 10th of this month that it was almost impossible for anything to live outside. Terrible gales all the time, it was impossible to keep the ice from the lantern. On the inside we used strong brine, but the ice would form as fast as we got it off.

Nov. 30 — Tool the clockworks out of service table today with all its fixtures and brot it out of the tower to the office for the winter.

Dec. 2 — Took a nice walk to the south end of the island today and found one half barrel of fish nearly covered up with sand and ice. We cut it open took the fish out and piled them up on the bank. They were nice and come very acceptable.

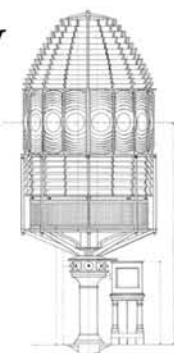
Dec. 5 — Today was the first time we could work in the tower since we closed down the light — we raised the lens and blocked her up in good shape and took out the balance wheels and all that we could and brought them down for cleaning. We also put socks over the smoke stack and fog whistle to keep the snow from filling in.

[the remainder of the December Log notes only the weather and ends with . . .]

So endeth the month of December with nothing particular to note only a very rough fall.



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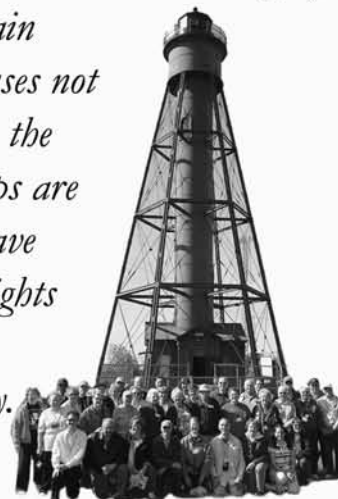
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