

Pages from the Past

Sand Island Light Station



Sand Island Light Station circa 1890.
(Courtesy of the National Park Service)

Friday, April 20, 1900 — Keeper Emmanuel Luick and wife arrived at station with str. Hunter at 2 p.m. Found lots of ice to go through and the shore all blocked with heavy ice. Keeper found station o.k. and lit the light for the season. Wind - calm and clear, very pleasant, at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Fred Hanson came after his mail.

Saturday, April 21 — Keeper got things up from dock and put station in shape. At 12 noon Mr. P. Hanson brought us some trout, the first of the season. At 6 p.m. Mr. L. Moe, hired hand, came to get their sack of clothes which was left by the Str. Hunter. At 10 p.m. the Keyston passed up and saluted as she passed.

Sunday, April 22 — Keeper developed some [photographic] plates which he exposed on the way coming out. Keeper's wife is ill. Devil's Island Keeper not out yet.

Monday, April 23 — Keeper burnt grass and at noon went to Eastbay with mail and to get eggs. Devil's Island Light lit - the first of the season. [Keeper's were instructed to observe any light stations in the vicinity and report problems].

Tuesday, April 24 — Keeper cleaned up the boathouse and took two pictures of the dock and one of the light and ice banks.

Wednesday, April 25 — The Str. S. B. Barker came after fish to Eastbay for the first [time] this season. The report was lots of ice in Bayfield Harbor, two large fields passed north of the station and went west.

Friday, April 27 — Keeper cleaned lens and brasswork.

Thursday, May 17 — Mr. Louis Moe returned yesterday from town and reported of his wife ... giving birth to a child on the Steamer Barker about 6 o'clock Monday, May 14 as they were on their way to town. Mother and child all [doing] well.

Saturday, May 19 — Keeper painted outside of house. Wind changed to NE, fresh and cold.

Monday, May 21 — Keeper finished painting house out side.

Tuesday, May 22 — Keeper worked around the house until noon, then went to Eastbay with mail. ... fishing is so poor that some of the men are quitting.

Thursday, May 24 — Keeper painted tower stairs & bedroom floor and hall floor and out house floor. Mr. F. Hansen and cousin from Norway were here to hail the Str. Hunter, but she failed to come.

Thursday, June 7 — SW half gale and calm until 2 p.m. then changed to squally & some rain. Keeper painted the kitchen floor. Keeper's eye is very bad.

Friday, June 8 — Keeper's eye is very painful, hardly able to do anything

Saturday, June 9 — Keeper's eye is very bad. Keeper did manage to whitewash the boat and fish house.

Tuesday, June 12 — Keeper cleaned windows and worked in garden, fixed up chicken netting for little chicks.

Friday, June 15 — Keeper cleaned tower windows and set out onions. Keeper fell and badly hurt his abdomen. Mr. L. Moe has his [fish net] stakes down and will set his Poon Net.

Sunday, June 17 — Mr. L. Moe & wife with daughter and sister Mrs. R. Moe were over to spend the afternoon, also Mr. Fred Hanson and Mr. H. Johnson all from Eastbay.

Thursday, June 21 — At 7:30 a.m. the Steamer Marigold with oil and other supplies [arrived]. Comdr. [J. A. Wilson, Inspector] & Clark were ashore, found station in good order. At noon Mr. and Mrs. Luick rowed over to Eastbay. Keeper has 6 little ducks.

Sunday, June 24 — ... one lamp chimney partly melted on lamp last night, Burnt 14 gills of oil in 8 1/2 hours. Mr. & Mrs. P. Johnson with family and Mrs. Peter Hanson were over to spend the day.

Monday, June 25 — NE fresh and cloudy, cold. At 12:10 noon Mr. Luick left the station for the Eastbay. From there he will go on Str. Barker to Bayfield to be gone until Friday, leaving me his wife in charge. I spent the afternoon in painting, embroidering, picking strawberries, and watching the ducks!

Thursday, June 28 — On their way home from lifting nets Mr. P. Hansen stopped and left a nice trout on the rocks. Showery all afternoon.

Friday, June 29 — ... E. Luick Keeper returned from town on Str. Barker at 3 p.m.. Absent 4 day 3 hours.

Wednesday, July 4 — NE gale and cold, cloudy. Fog and rain. A very unpleasant 4 of July morning. Keeper worked in house. At 2:30 p.m. Fred Hanson, Ham Johnson and John Fordelson came over from Eastbay to spend the day which they did by reading and at 8:30 p.m. we fired off the fire workes' rockets, roman candles and the like.

Thursday, July 5 — NE Breeze and cloudy, heavy rain at 8 a.m., heavy showers all day and fog. Keeper did not do much of anything.

Friday, July 6 — Keeper worked around the house. Keeper has a sore eye. At 2 p.m. Keeper went to Eastbay for mail, but boat failed to bring any.

Monday, July 9 — Calm and clear, warm and pleasant. ... Keeper cleaned tower and windows and at 3 p.m. Str. Barker arrived with Rev. and Mrs. Breckenridge and family to spend a few days. Str. had a large party on board.

Monday, July 30 — Keeper cleaned windows till noon, then took Mrs. E. Luick over to Eastbay to Str. Barker on which she went to town for a few days.

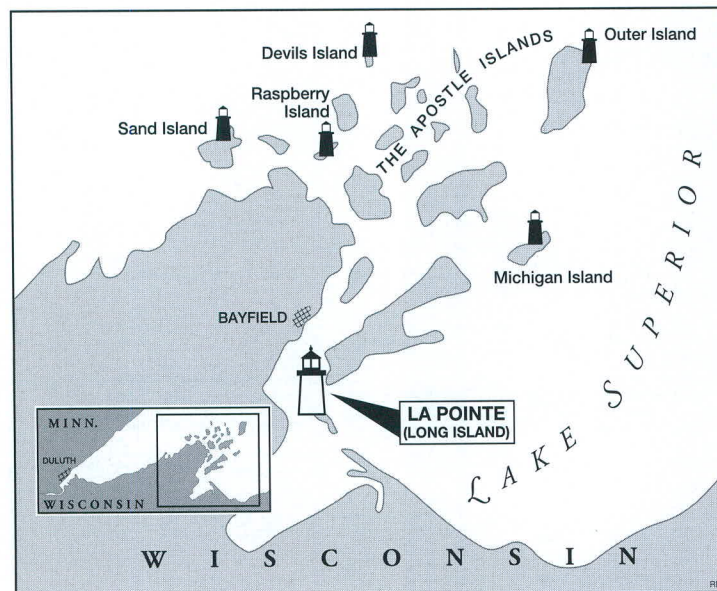
Wednesday, August 1 — Keeper cleared the brush out of the path leading to Eastbay and then went over to Eastbay after mail. Str. Barker had her flags all at half mast, Captain Bishop of the Str. Plowboy died this morning at Ashland of heart trouble. A man well known by all.

Friday, August 3 — Keeper cleaned windows and brasswork. At 12:30 noon, Keeper went to Eastbay to meet the Str. Barker on which Mrs. Luick returned from town. Mr. John Fordelson left for Bayfield where he will remain until Monday and then take the train to New York and then sail for Norway. He is 70 years of age.

Monday, August 6 — At 12:00 Keeper left for Bayfield to see a physician. I went to Eastbay with him expecting his niece to come from town and had the trip home through the woods alone.

Tuesday, August 7 — Cleaned windows and washed tower, did chores and picked berries. About 11:30 a.m. I was surprised by receiving a visit from Miss Randine Moe and Miss Mary Johnson of Bayfield and Miss Ellen Hansen and Mr. Fred Hansen of Sand Island. They stayed until 5 p.m. and helped pass the day very pleasantly.

Wednesday, August 8 — Keeper returned on Str. Hunter at 1 a.m. ... At 10 a.m. Ex Gov. S. Fifield with party came over to visit the station.



Friday, August 10 — ... got some new potatoes of Mr. P. Hanson. They were very nice and 65 per Bushell.

Sunday, August 12 — Lamps burned 15 1/2 gills of oil and melted one chimney down.

Saturday, October 13 — At seven a.m. Mr. Luick left for Eastbay to go to Bayfield in a sailboat with Mr. Peter Hansen.

Monday, October 15 — Northwest, cloudy and cold. At 3:00 p.m. Gov. Str. Marigold arrived and [Inspector] C. E. Wilson came ashore and found everything in good order. At 4 p.m. Freddie Hansen came over bringing mail from town. A hawk stole one of my young pullets this afternoon. Devils Island light visible.

Tuesday, October 16 — Calm and clear. Heavy north swell from last night's gale. About ten o'clock I went out to see if all was right. Not a chicken was in sight, but there in the duck yard was Mr. Hawk feasting on one of my nice fat ducks. He has a very dainty appetite and chicken was not delicate enough. I came in and got the gun. I was very careful to pick out the highest [lightest] load I could find, for I was afraid the gun would 'kick'. Going carefully back I got within ten yards of him and fired - and hit him. I was very much surprised, as it is the first time I ever shot at anything. Devils Island light visible.

Thursday, October 18 — Keeper returned on Str. S. Barker at 5 a.m., absent 4 days, 22 hours. At noon Mr. Hendrickson & wife came over on a visit.

Friday, October 19 — Mr. Hendrickson and wife left at 10 a.m.. Keeper cleaned in tower and cut grass.

Sunday, October 21 — Keeper made out a report. Keeper lost a hen by a fox.

Monday, October 22 — Keeper hauled wood until 10 a.m. then set three traps for fox. During the day split wood and went to Eastbay with mail.

Tuesday, October 23 — Keeper shot a very large hawk. Keeper made wood.

Thursday, October 25 — Keeper hauled wood and split wood during the afternoon and evening. Keeper and wife cleaned out the cistern. At 4:30 rain squall from the west.

Friday, October 26 — At 6 p.m. shot a weasel under the sidewalk.

Sunday, October 28 — NE gale and cloudy, at 7 a.m. a thunder shower, heavy rain at 10 a.m. turned to terrible gale. Steamer making for shelter from down the lake.

Tuesday, October 30 — Keeper made a chicken box to send his chickens to the farm in.

Thursday, November 1 — North gale and cloudy and cold. Therm. 44. Keeper cleaned tower, hall and upstairs. Killed one of our ducks for dinner.

Friday, November 2 — Calm most of the day and clear, very pleasant. Keeper took his chickens over to Eastbay to take to town and one of them got let out of the coop and by noon a fox or lynx got it. Keeper set a trap but so far failed to get him. Once he was in the small steel trap, but it failed to hold him. Devils Island light visible.

Saturday, November 3 — It looks like rain or snow.

Sunday, November 4 — Keeper left station at 7:15 a.m. went to Eastbay and from there to Bayfield in a sailboat with Mr. Louis Moe.

Wednesday, November 7 — North gale, cloudy and cold. Last night the first snow of the season fell on us and the bushes are icing up over at East Point. Freddie Hansen was over this morning and

brought me a pail of milk. He got in wood and will go home and do the same for Mrs. Moe. I hope the menfolks will come home today, but I doubt if they will. A few flurries of snow today.

Thursday, November 8 — North gale, cloudy and snowed in the afternoon. Freddie came over this morning to get in wood and water. I painted a rosebud and his initials on one corner of his white handkerchief, which made him very proud and happy. It snowed quite hard for awhile in the morning and the wind shifted to NNW. Perhaps the men will come today.

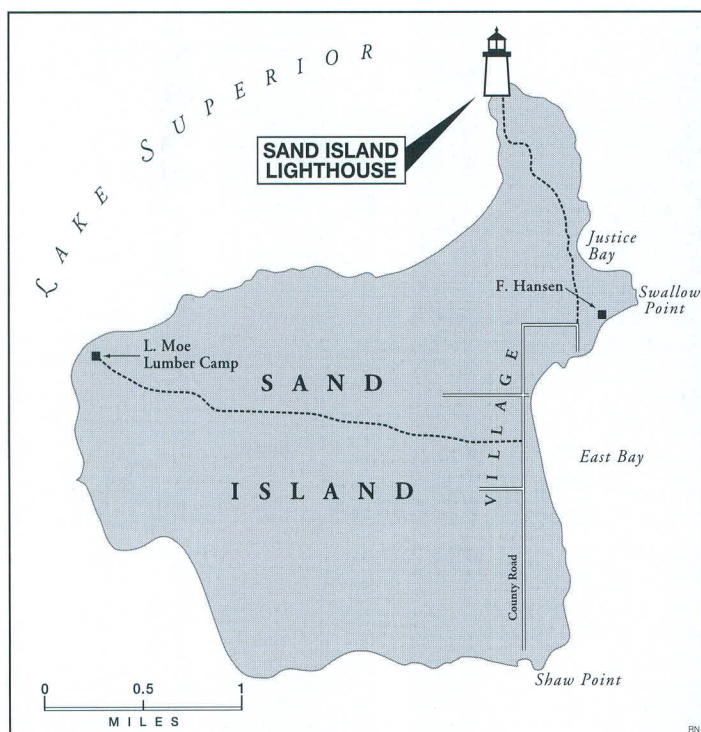
Friday, November 9 — WSW fresh cloudy and cold. Mr. Luick arrived home at 2:15 A.M. After waiting three days for a good wind they towed with Str. Hunter. Devil's Island light visible.



Sand Island Lighthouse in 1989. Photo courtesy of Joel Lauterbach.



USLHE tender *Marigold* brought supplies, and the inspector, to Sand Island. USLHS photo.



Saturday, November 10 — NE terrible gale and Snow Storms cold. Keeper is getting Station ready for winter. At 11 AM Mr. F. Hansen came over to visit. Devil's Island light visible.

Sunday, November 11 — N gale & cloudy cold. Keeper killed a duck for dinner. Devil's Island light visible.

Monday, November 12 — NNW gale & Clear cold changed to Cloudy. Keeper and wife went to Eastbay with mail & for to get butter. Devil's Island light visible.

Tuesday, November 13 — NW gale & Cloudy cold 15 below freeze. Keeper sawed wood in the woods! Devil's Island light visible.

Wednesday, November 14 — NW gale & Cloudy cold 15 below freeze. Keeper sawed wood in the woods & split wood. Quite a number of Boats passed down. Devil's Island light visible.

Thursday, November 15 — NW half gale and Clear cold 7 degrees freeze. Keeper Sawed wood and went to Eastbay. Devil's Island light visible.

Friday, November 16 — SSW fresh & Cloudy cold 12 degrees freeze. Keeper got his rowBoat home from Eastbay. Devil's Island light visible.

Saturday, November 17 — SSW breeze & Cloudy looks like Snow. Keeper sawed wood and killed a duck & got a trout & some herring from P. Hansen. Devil's Island light visible.

Sunday, November 18 — NE gale & Snow Storm Flur. 7 degrees freeze. Mr. L. Moe and wife came over to spend the day they brought the baby over in a blanket sewed up like a bag. At 4:15 PM the Steamer Amaranth passed down by here. Devil's Island light visible.

Monday, November 19 — E. fresh and Snow. Cloudy cold. Keeper sawed wood reset his fox traps and shot a rabbit. Devil's Island light not visible.

Tuesday, November 20 — NE half gale cloudy some snow. Keeper molded bullets and went to Eastbay to see if Mr. F. Shaw came back from Town but learned he did not. 7 degrees freeze. Devil's Island light not visible.

Wednesday, November 21 — NW changed to SW fresh & Clear. Changed to Cloudy. Keeper sawed wood. Devil's Island Light not visible.

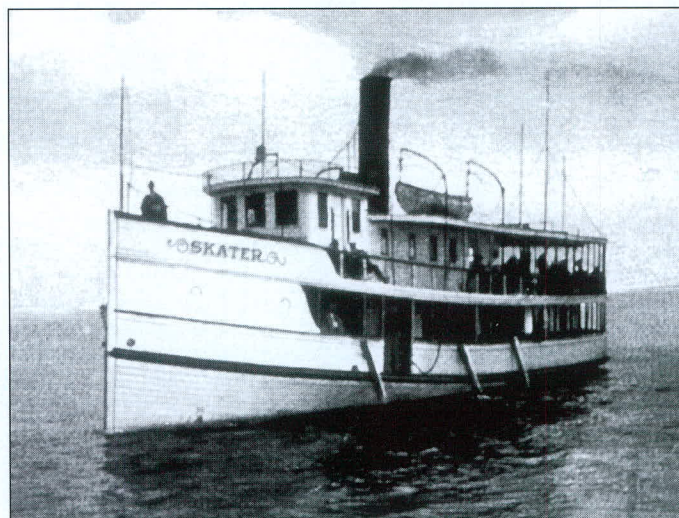
Thursday, November 22 — SSW fresh & heavy Snow Storm til 4 PM changed to NW gale & Snow Squalls and very cold. 18 freeze. Keeper sawed wood and made roads to get wood out. Devil's Island light not visible.

Friday, November 23 — NW gale & Snow Squalls 18 degrees freezing. Devil's Island light visible.

Saturday, November 24 — NW gale & Cloudy cold. SW breeze Clear. 10 degrees above zero. Keeper sawed wood and went to Eastbay. Devil's Island light visible.

Sunday, November 25 — W changed to SW breeze. Keeper went to Eastbay for mail as Frank Shaw came home today and after waiting for three weeks our patience was rewarded by one single solitary letter which was of no account.

Monday, November 26 — SW breeze & Cloudy. Ther 5 degrees freeze. Keeper sawed wood and hunted rabbits but failed to get one. Keeper and wife packed our fruit away for the winter, & got thing ready for to leave. Devil's Island light visible.



The M/V Skater was one of the passenger boats which serviced the community on Sand Island. Old Post Card, courtesy of Dave Snyder.

Tuesday, November 27 — SW breeze till 12 noon then NW fresh & Cloudy. Looks like Snow. Keeper Sawed wood & logs to have L. Moe draw out with his horse during the winter. Keeper's wife is ill. Devil's Island light visible.

Wednesday, November 28 — NW fresh & Cloudy cold & trying to Snow. Keeper shot a rabbit and went to Eastbay with Mrs. Luick. Devil's Island light visible.

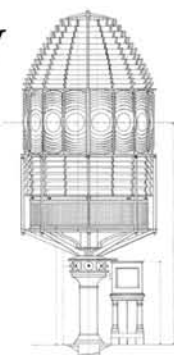
Thursday, November 29 — NW breeze & Clear cold. Keeper killed a duck and is puting thing down to the Boat house to take home. Str. Hunter passed down at 2 P.M. We had rabbit for this thanksgiving dinner. Devil's Island light visible.

Friday, November 30 — NW fresh breeze cloudy & warm. Keeper reset his fox trap in Justus Bay. The fox took the bait last night. Devil's Island light visible.

Saturday, December 1 — SSW breeze cloudy. Devil's Island light visible.



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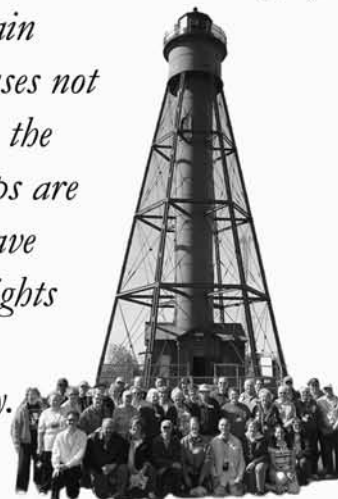
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