

**The Plum Beach Light
The Birth, Life and Death
of a Lighthouse
by Lawrence Bradner**

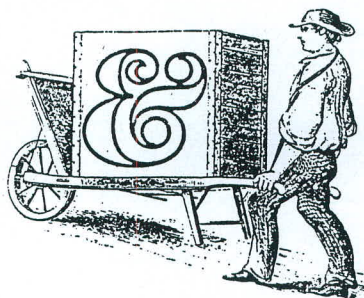
Author Lawrence Bradner grew up under the beam of the Plum Beach lighthouse, visited it as a child and now works within a fog horn blast of the structure. His lifelong fascination with the Plum Beach lighthouse has led him to compile a book about the "Birth, Life, and Death of a Lighthouse."

Bradner's approach to this Rhode Island lighthouse is totally different from any other book on the subject we have ever read. He begins with an overview of the maritime history of the waterway in which the structure will eventually be constructed. The next chapter delves into the decision to build the lighthouse and explores all the politics and bureaucracy behind the scenes. Chapter three details construction of this one of only eleven pneumatic caisson lighthouses built in this country. This chapter is laced with detailed drawings of the lighthouse and fully explains construction techniques used in placing a pneumatic structure off-shore.

The next chapter deals with the light station and its relationship with the local community. After a look at the bureaucracy and details of construction, Bradner explores the human side of a lighthouse.

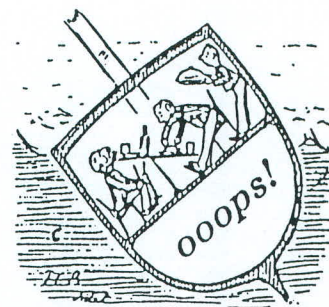
In Chapter five the keepers face the elements, ending with the great hurricane that slammed into New England in 1938. That very storm destroyed a similar structure just 6 miles south of Plum Beach at the mouth of Narragansett Bay. Finally, chapter six tells of the decommissioning of the structure in 1941 after the construction of a nearby bridge and the activity surrounding the lighthouse right up to the present time when, just before publication, a group was formed to save the Plum Beach Light.

The book includes a detailed and interesting Appendix, bibliography and list of sources. It is very well written, scholarly and enjoyable to read. Lawrence Bradner's attention to detail is as evident as is his love for this relatively unknown lighthouse. This is a tight book, trim with no superfluous information. It's a very scholarly work and a model upon which others should look before writing about the subject. Soft cover, 6" by 9", 196 pages, numerous black and white photographs and engineering drawings. Available from the keeper's Library at \$19.95 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling.



**Research Assistance
Requested**

Ms. Elaine Eff, Administrator of Cultural Conservation Programs for the State of Maryland's Division of Historical and Cultural Programs (some title!) is seeking information about Maryland Lighthouses. Her research is being conducted in tandem with a state mandated project examining the remaining 25 lighthouses in the state. To volunteer information for the lighthouse lore project, you may call (301) 974-5585 or write her at 45 Calvert St., Annapolis, MD 21401.



Several members caught our gaff in identifying the lightship WAL 612 (in Boston) as our vessel the WAL 605 (at Oakland). Actually they are sister ships but the skyline is totally different and our aft mast has been restored to appear as it was when the ship was launched.

**Cape Sable
Lighthouse Museum**

Barrington, Nova Scotia

The Cape Sable Historical Society has constructed a facsimile of the Seal Island Lighthouse tower. Their tower is 12 feet shorter than the original 1831 tower which is 67 feet high. The society reports that their lighthouse is the only one along the south shore of Nova Scotia accessible to visitors and they receive quite a few. The real Seal Island station, located 20 miles off the coast, will be automated this year and all the buildings except the tower and some power buildings will be razed. It sounds as if the Canadians are where this country was in the 1950's.

The society has a book for sale about a family living on the station called *We Keep A Light*, by Evelyn Richardson (cost \$12.95 Canadian). It won the Governor-General's Award a few years ago. If you are interested you may write Cape Sable Historical Society, Barrington, N.S. BOW 1EO.

Lighthouse Memories

Due to the amount of lightship material for this special issue we were unable to publish the last installment of Cora Owen's "Lighthouse Memories, Point Cabrillo." This final segment will appear in the Spring Log.