

MARYLAND LIGHTHOUSES OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

by F. Ross Holland

Ross Holland has written many books on our favorite subject and the most recent, *Maryland Lighthouses*, shows the same dedicated and thorough research effort which went into many of his earlier works. Ross relates the construction of all of Maryland's lighthouses starting with the first and working forward chronologically to the last constructed in the state. The story of the lighthouses of Maryland (Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River) parallels the development of lighthouses in the rest of the country. Stone or brick shore structures were replaced by off-shore screw pile lighthouses in an effort to place the aids closer to the shipping channels. In areas where ice floes damaged and destroyed the spindly, water oriented screw pile structures, the caisson style was developed and constructed.

Ross Holland devotes an entire chapter to the ravages of erosion at several Chesapeake Bay light stations and another to the personnel who manned the lighthouses. The final chapter deals with the preservation of Maryland's lighthouses, including the relocation of three pile structures from the Bay to land.

This meaty book includes several wonderful construction plans showing details of the various styles of lighthouses con-

structed in Maryland. There are a few location maps or chartlets which are not as clear as they might be.

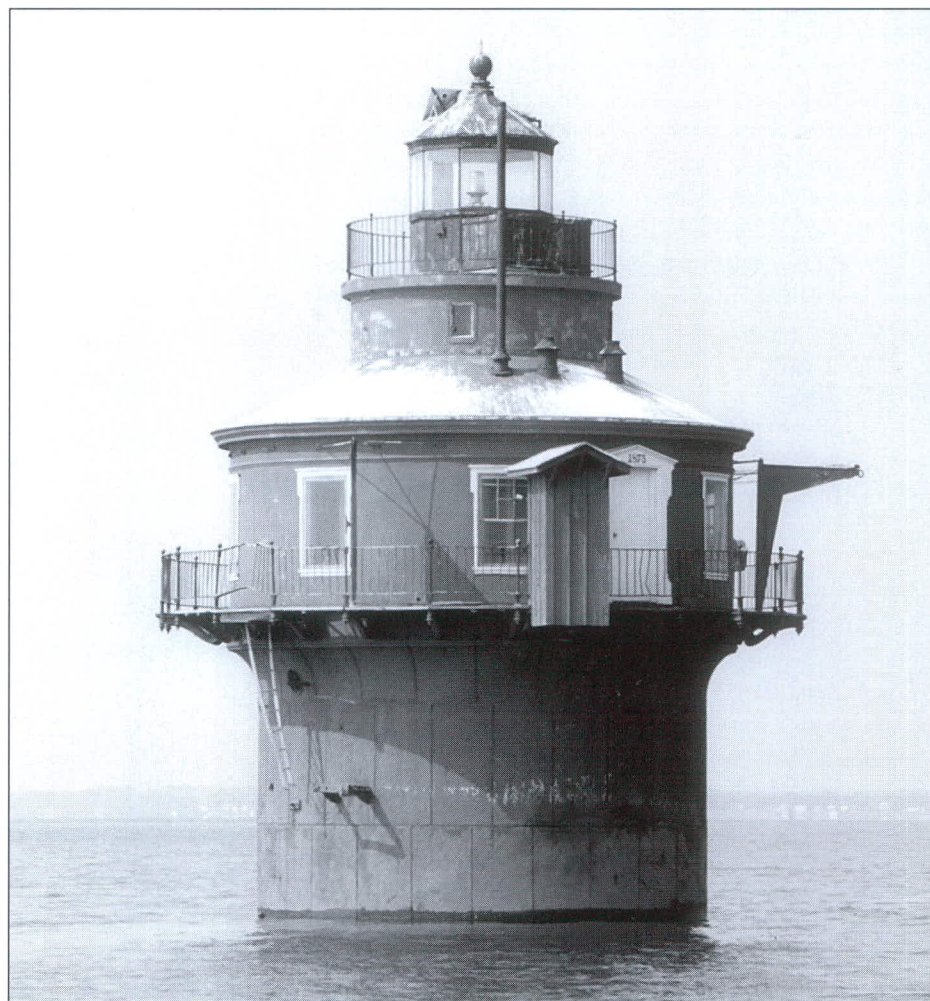
One aspect of the book which bothers me is that Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries should be treated as a whole and, of course, two coffee table books recently published did just that. By only covering those of Maryland the overall picture of the development of lighthouses in the area is lost. But the book was commissioned by the Maryland Historical Trust and they obviously are interested in only Maryland's lighthouses. As an example, when you read about the first lightship (in Maryland) it reads like it's the first lightship in the Bay, when in fact the first was in Virginia waters.

The book is loaded with photographs which range from poor to abysmal. Many are out of focus, they are poorly screened and almost all of them are too dark. I have

seen copies of some of the photos published in the book and I know they could have been reproduced more clearly.

Overall, the book contains some valuable and interesting information on the early builders of Maryland lighthouses (who also constructed them in Virginia) and details about the trials and tribulations they faced. As author Holland tiptoes down through the years the changes in the administration of our lighthouses is woven into the story. All of this, splashed with some wonderful and colorful human interest stories, makes for an educational and interesting read. But the photographs are a disaster and could have you seeing double if you stare at them too long.

Hard cover, 9" x 12", 200 pages, more than 250 black and white photos and illustrations, extensive notes and index. Available through the Keeper's Locker at \$32.95 plus shipping and handling.



Craig Hill Channel Front Range Light constructed in 1875 and, according to Ross Holland, the first cast iron caisson lighthouse in this country. Note the outhouse just to the left of the front door. Photo by Marie Weedon.