

Celebrating the Chesapeake

Dear Cape Charles Yacht Club Members,

Welcome to the January 2022 edition of Bay Tripper!

I don't know how the CCYC newsletter name, Bay Tripper, was chosen. I do know that a great boating magazine, Soundings, had a columnist Jack Sherwood that had a feature in that magazine for years. That feature was named Bay Tripper. Jack lived in Annapolis and campaigned a 22' Sailmaster named Erewhon. He was a great author and wrote terrific stories about the Chesapeake. I had the great fortune to work with the folks at Soundings years ago. I still love the magazine!

Have you ever wondered where the lighthouse in Bay Creek came from? The developer, Dickie Foster, had a replica of the original Old Planation Flats lighthouse built as a showpiece for the development. Below is a quick history of the original light from the US Lighthouse Society website:

Some News Items:

- Reserve now for Movie Night 6 PM 1/22/22: The Finest Hours: The True Story of the U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue.
 - Send check to Lisa Guzzardo by 1/10/22!
- CCYC Road Cleanup: Saturday 1/22/22 10 AM at the Water Treatment Plant, contact Nicki Tiffany with questions (ntiffany@hotmail.com)
- Still needed: Kayak Captain and club photographer. You know you want to volunteer, just contact me!
- Invoices for 2022 dues will be going out soon. Dues are \$180. Please pay as soon as you can!
- See updated membership application on the website! Prospective members now need two club sponsors.
- Prospective Members: Tack and Debbie Holt, Bill and Mary Ann Harris
- 2022 Captains Updates:
 - Large Boat Co-Captain: Stuart Smith and Scott Miller
 - Small Boat Captains: Keith Stone and Dave Cooper
 - Civic and Charitable Engagement Co-Captain: Jim Liepman and Dave Steward
- The Club is looking for a photographer(s) to help with photos of club events and of general interest to members. Please send photos to me for inclusion in the club

newsletter! Send to Ron Wrucke (ron.wrucke@gmail.com) for posting on our Facebook page.

- Still looking for volunteers. You know you can't hide your light under a basket! Get involved and join in the fun!

Old Plantation Flats Lighthouse



Photo courtesy U.S. Coast Guard.

Old Plantation Flats Lighthouse was built in 1886 as a white rectangular screwpile with a tower on the roof. The lighthouse was located at the entrance to the channel leading to Cape Charles, Virginia and Old Plantation Creek. The lighthouse had an unusual foundation construction with a combination of screwpile and concrete pylons. The lighthouse was damaged in 1893 by ice flows and the fifth-order Fresnel lens was destroyed. A month later a new fifth-order lens was installed.

The lighthouse was once again damaged by ice flows in 1918 and was later reinforced with concrete. The lighthouse was deactivated in 1962 and dismantled. It was replaced with an automated steel skeleton tower built on the original foundation.

In the spring of 2004, [Bay Creek Resort & Club](#), Cape Charles, VA, built an exact replica of Old Plantation Flats Lighthouse in a man-made lake along the shores of Chesapeake Bay, just two miles from the original station – Picture below on the left,



Picture on the right above shows the original location of the Old Plantation Flats Lighthouse, directly west from replica at Bay Creek. Can you see the pole and low foundation in the middle of the photo? On a clear and calm day, the foundation is visible from the beach. And if you enter Cape Charles harbor from the bay, you come right past the foundation.

Have you seen this lighthouse in Bay Creek? Did you know where the original lighthouse was located? Was Old Plantation Flats lighthouse haunted? I don't know, but this month's following feature article is about haunted lighthouses on the Chesapeake. ... Enjoy !!

Thank you and have a Happy New Year!!

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Feature Article

From Chesapeake Bay.net. Mission: Access expert knowledge about the Chesapeake Bay and its ecosystem through publications, reports and datasets from the Chesapeake Bay Program and our partners.

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/six_lighthouses_in_the_chesapeake_bay_with_eerie_pasts

Six Lighthouses In The Chesapeake Bay With Eerie Pasts

Make sure those lights guiding you on the Bay aren't from a ghost



The historic lighthouse at Point Lookout State Park, located at the confluence of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay, is seen in St. Mary's County, Md. (Photo by Steve Droter/Chesapeake Bay Program)

by Rachel Felver
October 29, 2021

From the mouth of the Chesapeake in Virginia Beach, Virginia to its terminus in Havre de Grace, Maryland, lighthouses still shine to this day, guiding sailors and watermen alike through Bay waters. But thanks to [shipwrecks](#), wars and [pirate attacks](#), lighthouses around the world are known for their haunted tales as much as their ability to guide vessels to safety. The ones that are scattered throughout the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries are no exception to these ghostly stories. Read on if you dare!

Drum Point Lighthouse



The skipjack Dee of St. Mary's is docked on Back Creek, next to the Drum Point Lighthouse, at the Calvert Marine Museum in Solomons, Md., on May 7, 2017. (Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)

[Drum Point Lighthouse](#) now sits on display at the [Calvert Marine Museum](#), but for 79 years, it guided vessels at the mouth of the Patuxent River. During that time, the lighthouse was rammed by a sloop dragging its anchor and a few years later, an ice floe during the winter. It also survived an earthquake and a severe gale that flooded the structure and washed away instruments and sank the lighthouse keeper's boat. During World War II, the lighthouse was targeted during potential enemy strikes and made to turn off its light most nights to keep safe. With all of this history, its not a surprise that locals now [report](#) seeing the apparition of a young brunette woman walk around the lighthouse at its new home and water over the Bay.

Fort Washington Lighthouse



Fort Washington Lighthouse. (Photo courtesy of Craigbucher/Wikimedia CC BY-SA 3.0)

With Fort Washington built on the banks of the Potomac, along the way to Washington, D.C., this bustling portion of the river needed a lighthouse to help guide travelers along the many hazards in the water. Built in 1857, the [Fort Washington Lighthouse](#) is still in use today, albeit automated.

As with many other lighthouses, rumors of strange phenomena have plagued Fort Washington for years. A few years ago, an intuitive visited the site to see if she could observe any of these paranormal activities herself. Her records note the presence of two spirits—a male and a female—as soon as she arrived at the lighthouse. The male indicated he was the former Fort caretaker and the woman was identified as a spirit named Ophelia. Subsequent research identified an Ordnance Sergeant Joseph Cameron who had served as the Fort Washington caretaker for 37 years in the 19th century. He resided at the Fort with his wife...Ophelia.

Holland Island Bar Light



Holland Island Bar Light stood across from Point Lookout State Park until 1960. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office)

Just the mere location of [Holland Island Bar Light](#) sends a shiver up one's spine. Nestled in the Bay across from [Point Lookout State Park](#) (home of one of the world's most haunted lighthouses) and near both [Bloodsworth Island](#)—used by the U.S. Navy as a shore bombardment and bombing range—and [Holland Island](#), which is the face of climate change in the Chesapeake, the lighthouse doesn't need haunted tales to be spooky. But in 1931 it bore witness to one of the strangest unsolved deaths in the region.

A fellow lighthouse keeper manning nearby [Solomons Lump Light](#) panicked when he noticed Holland Island Bar Light was not lit. Immediately, the local sheriff and doctor took off for the lighthouse where no one greeted their arrival, and the boat used by Ulman Owens, the lighthouse keeper, was tied up in place. Upon entering the lighthouse, they found the door wide open, the room ransacked and covered in blood, and the body of Owens lying in the middle of the floor, completely naked and next to a butcher's knife. But when examined, the doctor could not find any cuts on Owens' body—so where did all the blood come from? It was eventually determined that he had passed away due to natural causes—a result that didn't satisfy anyone. To this day, rumors abound that Owens was involved in Prohibition-era rum smuggling or had been killed by a jealous husband, as he was a known womanizer.

In an even stranger tale that also involved Holland Island Bar Light, in 1957 Navy pilots flew in the area with the intention of using a nearby shipwreck for target practice. However, one of the pilots confused the lighthouse with the shipwreck, attacking it and the

four lighthouse keepers that were inside. Luckily, the three rockets that hit the lighthouse were not armed with explosives but did greatly damage the structure. The four men were able to escape unharmed and the lighthouse was decommissioned in 1960.

Piney Point Lighthouse



Piney Point Lighthouse is located on the Potomac River. (Photo courtesy of Kitkat70/Wikimedia CC BY-SA 3.0)

The oldest lighthouse along the Potomac River is also known as the “[Lighthouse of the Presidents](#),” as many vacationed and visited its grounds since it was built in 1836. While no violent or disturbing incidents are known to have taken place at the lighthouse, there have been several reports of paranormal activity over the years. Enough to bring the D.C. Hauntings group out to investigate at the site. Visitors have reported feeling people touch them that they could not see and even hearing speaking when no one else was around. Former Director of the [St. Clements Island Potomac River Museum](#), Michael Humphries, related a story to the [Baltimore Sun](#) in the late 1990s. “I asked out loud if I could move some paint and had a voice tell me to ‘suit yourself’.” He recorded the voice and found out that others at the site had heard it as well. Humphries also relayed that workers had noticed a woman in 1920s-era clothing walking the lighthouse grounds and smoking a cigarette. When they tried to approach her, she disappeared.

Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse



Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse, now in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, has a spooky past. (Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)

After spending years guarding the entrance to Baltimore Harbor, [Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse](#), built in 1856, was moved to Pier 5 near the National Aquarium in 1997. The lighthouse was still manned by a lighthouse keeper in 1933, when the Atlantic seaboard experienced one of the most active hurricane seasons of its time. In August of that year, the [Chesapeake-Potomac hurricane](#) slammed into the Mid-Atlantic, carving out the inlet that separates Ocean City and Assateague Island and becoming the barometer for which future hurricanes are now measured by.

Lighthouse Keeper Thomas Steinhice was out in the harbor during the storm, along with his son, Earl. Early in the morning the day the storm hit, Earl was suddenly awoken from a sound sleep, screaming that a cold, icy hand was upon him. At that same time, a distress signal came from below. Earl was convinced that what he felt was a sign that only danger lay ahead should his father try and rescue the ship that sent the call. He did everything in his power to hold him back, but Steinhice braved waves up to 15 feet high to reach five sailors who had fallen out of a tugboat. One of the men did not make it and to this day, Earl firmly believes that the ship engineer who did not survive was the one to have awoken him with the icy hand pleading to save the others aboard.

“I felt that ghostly hand just as plain as could be,” said Earl in an interview years later to [The Lighthouse Digest](#). “I don’t believe in spirits, but sometimes I wonder if it wasn’t the ghost of the dead chief engineer who wanted to warn me that his pals were drowning nearby. It may be something to laugh off, but I can’t quite do that.”

Point Lookout Lighthouse



Point Lookout Lighthouse is said to be haunted by Civil War soldiers. (Photo by Steve Droter/Chesapeake Bay Program)

None of the above lighthouse ghost stories can compare with [Point Lookout Lighthouse](#). Located at the top of southern Maryland, this area is not only known for its paranormal activity but holds the title of the “Most Haunted Lighthouse in America.” It had the unlikely misfortune to be built near a Civil War hospital and prisoner of war camp, where over 4,000 people died.

Author Edwin Warfield Beitzell notes, “The tale of the camp is a horrid story to tell. It is a story of cruel decisions in high places, a story of diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid and typhus, of burning sands and freezing cold in rotten tents. It is a story of senseless shootings by guards. It is story of the death and despair of the 4,000 prisoners, many whom could have been saved.”

Ghost hunters believe that the spirits of these soldiers curse the lighthouse and haunted spirits of all ages, genders and moods have been observed at both the top of the structure and in its basement. In particular, a Civil War-era soldier has been spotted patrolling the grounds with a long rifle on this shoulder.

Even outside of the Civil War, the history of the lighthouse is a dark one. The first keeper died after only two months on the job. Then, in October 1878, a steamship sank off Point Lookout Point and a few days later, the body of a mariner washed ashore. The mariner, Joseph Haney, is rumored to haunt the lighthouse to this day. Former lighthouse residents note strange tales such as someone knocking on the door, and when answered, no one was

there but puddles of water leading to the Bay. Another claimed to have seen books fly off of bookcases and hear heavy footsteps down the hallway at night. Still others claim to have seen a woman at the top of the lighthouse and have heard the voices of men and women while walking along the grounds. Terrible smells waft out of various rooms and the temperature vastly drops.

Have you visited any of these haunted lighthouses? Tell us about your experience in the comments!