



The Bay Run



Newsletter of
The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers
and Friends Association, Inc.

Volume 41 Issue 27
Fall 2023

“Our mission is to preserve the history of the
Delaware Bay and River Lighthouses, Lightships and their Keepers”

THOSE MAGNIFICENT MIGRATING MONARCHS

Fall provides a perfect time to witness one of the many events nature has to offer...the Monarch Migration. It is hard to believe these beautiful black and orange butterflies travel from as far north as southeastern Canada to the mountain forests of central Mexico, a total of 3,000 miles. It is a hazardous journey especially when one considers that each butterfly weighs less than a paperclip. The International Union for Conservation of Nature reports that the migration numbers have decreased dramatically due to agriculture, urban development and pesticides that are killing insects and milkweed. The migration period lasts only a few weeks in our area. To keep an eye on this activity, one can visit the Cape May Bird Observatory or it is possible to be along the butterfly route just at the right time. We have witnessed these beautiful creatures when visiting Ocean City, NJ, East Point Light, Cape May Point or anywhere along the coast. Witnessing a Monarch roost is a spectacular sight since they typically roost upside down in pine or fur trees. It is important that they blend in with their surroundings to protect them from predators.

Monarchs are programmed to breed quickly, laying their eggs on milkweed plants. The new generation emerges in late summer and early fall and does not breed; instead, their instinct is to make the journey south. They feed on the nectar of a variety of flowers as they move southward building up enough fat during their two-month migration to nourish them throughout the winter.

On any given day, the average Monarch will travel upwards of 80 miles. Most of the Monarchs migrating through our area will end their trek nearly 2,000 miles away, high in the mountains of Michoacan, Mexico. Here at 10,000 feet above sea level, the greenery, coolness and damp climate provide the perfect setting to sustain them through the winter. They have been known to cluster together in groups of tens of thousands. It has been stated that these clusters of butterflies cover about 1,500 trees. There is great concern about the declining of the Monarch population. Factors such as the ever-changing climate and weather conditions, loss of habitat, toxic pesticides



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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



Hello to all from North Cape May, NJ. This past July brings to mind just two words: “hot and humid”. Every day was like the previous one with no relief in sight. Even living at the Jersey shore, we experienced temperatures in the nineties with 73% humidity. So much for “Cool Cape May”. Quite a bit of my time was spent watering the garden. We are presently enjoying the “fruits (mostly vegetables) of my labor”.

Our first boat cruise on July 22 was successful with a full boat, calm seas and beautiful weather. As the boat traveled to each lighthouse it was upsetting to see how they have deteriorated over the years. I noticed that doors were left open, there were broken windows; every lighthouse needed scraping and painting and hundreds of sea birds had taken up residence. These lights, now with private owners, are supposed to have the structures maintained. It is apparent they are not. Brandywine was the only light that looked like it was in good condition. Hopefully it stays that way. The cruise planned for August 26 is also full. Let us hope for fair winds and calm seas.

On August 7, we joined in celebrating National Lighthouse Day at East Point. It was interesting as usual sharing information with the visiting guests. I always enjoy seeing parents bringing their children to learn about the history of the Bay lights, East Point Light and to learn what it was like to live in a lighthouse from a real, live, former lighthouse keeper (me). We, in turn, feel we learn as much from chatting with the visitors. So, until next time, keep the lights shining! *Angelo*

THE BAY RUN is the official publication of The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. and is published quarterly throughout the year. A subscription to the newsletter is included with the cost of membership, Annual Membership dues are \$25.00 for the calendar year beginning March 1st. Back issues are usually available for members joining mid-year. Materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced without permission of the DBLHKFA, Inc.

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FROM THE LOG OF THE INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT & CHAIRMEN OF

THE BOARD by Rod Mulligan



Our Fall meeting took place at the Cape May County Museum located on Route 9 in Cape May Court House, NJ. As we entered the 5-room renovated historic barn built in 1780, we were greeted by a beautiful first order Fresnel lens (A), the lens that once resided in the third lighthouse erected in Cape May. First lit in 1859, the lens is over 8' in height, contains 656 ground glass prisms and is seated on a solid cement base. Our guide informed us that it recently took 3 people 3 days to clean the lens. The light was moved here by the coast guard in 1946 and is considered on loan but technically remains the property of the United States. Military uniforms from all branches of the service including the Civil War, World Wars I and II and more recent conflicts were shown in a large exhibit on the right. (Note:

President Rigazio found a coast guard uniform similar to his.) Various artifacts and documents surrounded us; Barbara, our efficient tour guide, took us back in time as she explained the significance of these exhibits.

We toured 4 other rooms in the barn where we saw tools of the trades "back in the day" plus one room filled with displays of arrowheads, spear heads and other artifacts from the Leni-Lenape living in the Cape May area at that time. Next, we went to the Carriage Shed where we saw an old trolley, a sled (B), a horse-drawn carriage and a stagecoach (Note: It took 5-6 days to travel from Philadelphia to Cape May by stagecoach). As we walked out into the yard, our attention was drawn to a two-seater outhouse erected discreetly behind a grape arbor, sure to be hidden from onlookers.

We were met by a second guide, outside of the 11 room, 3 story Cresse-Holmes house, who explained how the ownership of the house was transferred from one family to the next. (Note: Secretary Darlene Rigazio remembers the family that bought the house in 1957; the owner was then her family's dentist.) A garage had been added but was eventually converted to living space (C). We entered the house into a room that was filled entirely with donations from people interested in preserving the past. Most of the room was filled with artifacts on loan from Gene Peterson, a member of the Atlantic Divers, who donated the helm he discovered from the Miraflores, artifacts from the Andrea Doria, and various other items found while diving along the coast. Continuing our tour, we found ourselves in a large room that served as a kitchen, a living area and a bedroom, featuring a large fireplace, a table and chairs and a bed with a rope mattress. Our guide pointed out the many samplers on display, explaining that they were embroidered by the young residents of the house to help them learn the alphabet and their numbers; other samplers were mainly decorative.

Continuing through the house, we were shown thousands of Cape May relics and related documents along with furniture, pictures and heirlooms donated by people interested in preserving the history of the area. Our guide explained that the history of these donations must be authenticated through hours of research before the article can be accepted by the museum.

All in all, it proved to be a very enjoyable, educational, informative day and we thank the Cape May County Museum and our guides for their time presenting this information to our association. The Museum is part of the "Historic Trail" wending its way through Cape May county.





SAVE THE DATES – Mark Your Calendars:

September holidays: Labor Day is observed every year on the 1st Monday in September

Native American Day celebrated on the 4th Friday.

Grandparent's Days observed on the 1st Sunday after Labor Day

Constitution Day, celebrating the ratification of the governing document of the United States, is observed on the 17th.

The autumnal equinox, the traditional transition from summer to fall, takes place on or around September 22, depending on the year.

Organization dates: *(Please note them on your calendar.)*

Fall Meeting Saturday, September 23, 2023 - The meeting will be held at the Bay Shore Center at Bivalve, 2800 High Street, Port Norris, NJ 08345 (856) 785-2060 **ITINERARY:** 11 AM the meeting will begin, followed by lunch at Noon (Oyster Cracker Café will be open – OR “brown bag it”) 1 PM will be guest speaker(s) “Oyster Industry in Area” “Update on AJ Meerwald’s Adventures”. Come join us at this historical location and learn about the area. Bring a guest; all are welcome. Visit the newly refurbished oyster sheds and check out the museum. (Bayside home of Ollie and family)

We always welcome suggestions for meeting places and topics. Please feel free to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. We appreciate your input.

October 21 & 22, 2023 – Lighthouse Challenge of New Jersey. Take the Challenge. Can you visit ALL the New Jersey Lighthouses in one weekend? Give it a try!! Our volunteers are welcome at East Point both days.

November 11, 2023 - The day honoring our veterans of all wars. A special thank you for serving our country and protecting our freedom. We honor all veterans who proudly served the United States of America.,

Just arrived – brand new Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay sweatshirts (contain pictures of ALL the Delaware Bay Lights). Available at the fall meeting, on the cruises and at the Challenge. Price of a sweatshirt \$40 – L & XL sizes available in light blue or navy. All Delaware Bay Lighthouse merchandise will be available at the Challenge.

LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS ORGANIZE

(Editor's note: In the process of cleaning, downsizing and updating files, I found the following article addressing the organization of the Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Organization, Inc. Sorry I missed our 25th anniversary but below is a copy of the article. It was written by member, Jean Jones, who was also a reporter for the Bridgeton Evening News.)

A group of former Delaware Bay lighthouse keepers and others with connections to the bay's many lights has organized, forming “Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends”. Carole Reily of Buena, known locally as the “Lighthouse Lady” produced a series of postcards featuring Delaware Bay lights (we still have many of them) and is currently working on a book about the keepers and their experiences. She had located a few men who had served on the lights and in 1995, they decided to get together at the home of Bill Johnson in Newport for a reunion. (NOTE: Johnson was a “Coastie,” a former keeper and a member of the organization.) The group agreed that their goal should be preserving and educating the public about the history and tradition of the Delaware Bay lighthouses and having fun while doing it.

Following an afternoon of working out the framework of the new organization, officers were elected. Dan McFadden, president; Carole Reily vice president; Roxie Vallantine, secretary and Zoe Maden, treasurer. Vallantine will produce a quarterly newsletter. Bill Horn, Fred Ruddick and Bill Holwell were elected directors. It was decided that officers would serve for two years and directors for one.

The group agreed to meet on the first weekend in February, May, August and November with an annual reunion dinner each year at the November meeting. And “Now, you know the ‘rest of the story’.”

DELAWARE BREAKWATER QUARANTINE STATION

The 14th century saw many nations quarantining ships and crews of other countries upon entering their ports to stop the spread of disease. In 1798 an act for the “Relief of Sick and Disabled Seamen” was signed into law. This act established a system of marine hospitals up and down the US coastline and inland waterways. Quarantine stations were established across the country to process incoming immigrants in an effort to control the spread of diseases.

At the end of the 19th century, thousands of immigrants fled poor economic conditions in Europe by emigrating to America. In addition to their dreams of a brighter future, many of these newcomers also carried with them a variety of epidemic diseases including cholera, typhus, smallpox and bubonic plague. Realizing the threat that these diseases posed to the United States, the federal government established the National Quarantine System in 1880.

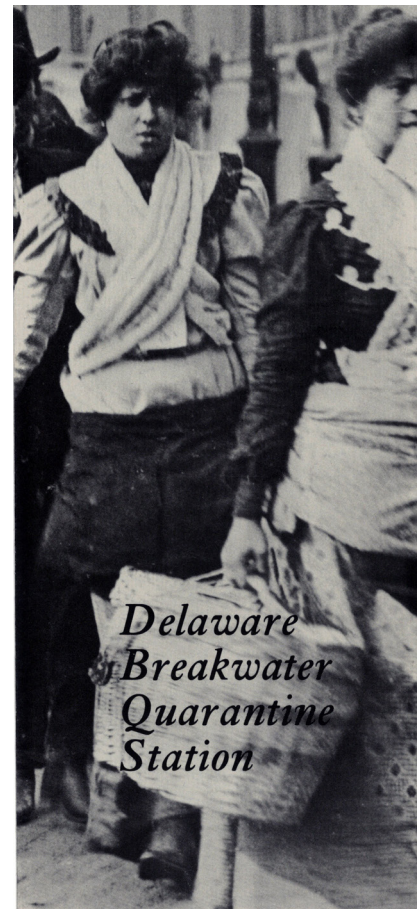
The Delaware Breakwater Quarantine System was established in 1884 to protect the cities of Wilmington and Philadelphia from these diseases. Cape Henlopen, located on the southeastern corner of the Delaware Bay, was selected as an ideal spot for the quarantine hospital. This isolated bayside location allowed authorities the opportunity to board all ships sailing for ports such as Philadelphia. This quarantine area was located three miles from the town of Lewes, DE and included surgeon’s quarters, a six-bed contagious ward, a kitchen and a small shed.

The procedure was simple. Ships carrying immigrants would anchor by the outer breakwater and raise a yellow flag. The quarantine station would send a launch, carrying a resident physician, out to the ship. The physician would inspect the passengers and crew for any signs of contagious disease.

As the 1890’s approached and the number of immigrants increased, the quarantine station’s facilities were upgraded so that anyone suspected of having been in contact with a diseased person could be removed to shore for observation. Men’s and women’s barracks were added to the facility which was now self-sufficient with its own sewer and wells. The station also boasted a bathhouse, laundry, boiler house, stables, boathouse, blacksmith, disinfecting house, crematory and graveyard. There was also a men’s hospital and a women’s ward and a new contagious unit was added.

There was no official count, but it is estimated that more than 200,000 people passed through the Delaware Breakwater Quarantine Station on their way to America.

(Information from Seaside Nature Center, Cape Henlopen State Park, Lewes Delaware)



THOSE MAGNIFICENT MIGRATING MONARCHS

(Continued from Page 1)

and predators have greatly affected the species. They are also vulnerable to harsh weather conditions. Observers report that many of these Monarchs have been gathering in large groups in the Cape May area. While Cape May is a prime destination for Monarchs, the Ocean City Environmental Commission has installed two Monarch way stations. Milkweed plants are also on the grounds at East Point Lighthouse. Members of the New Jersey Audubon's Nature Center in Cape May began tagging Monarchs in hopes of tallying the Monarch population. This project took shape more than thirty years ago. The tag is placed under their wing very gently so as not to interfere with flight. The monitoring program estimates that they tag just over 3,000 butterflies in Cape May between late August and early November.

There are various ways people can ensure the survival of the species. Planting native milkweed during the fall is one way to start. Goldenrods, thoroughworts, and native asters are also recommended as they provide Monarchs with much-needed nectar for their travels.

If you wish to observe the migration of these beautiful butterflies, plan a trip to Cape May Point, East Point Light or anywhere along the Jersey Shore in September or October. Prepare for a spectacular sight, bring your camera, as early in the morning, when warmed by the sun, the flock takes off to continue their southward trek.

Klenk, Steffen. "Shore Call," October 13, 2022.

Watson, Jay, "Sure Guide," September 24, 2022.

BOSTON LIGHT - AMERICA'S FIRST LIGHTHOUSE

America's first lighthouse opened in Boston Harbor on September 14, 1716. For more than 300 years it has provided safety and welcomed ships in the harbor; it also played an important role in the building of a city and the fighting of a nation. In 1774, British soldiers took control of Boston Light; Colonial rebels tried to burn the tower to prevent its light from guiding British naval ships in and out of the harbor. In the 1700's, when the war was over and commercial ships began operating in the harbor again, a group of merchants and shipowners proposed a new lighthouse be erected at the mouth of the harbor since commercial shipping was growing, harbor traffic increasing, and shipwrecks were becoming common.

The rebuilt lighthouse was manufactured of wood and iron and contained a "wave-swept light". Since the rebuilding was quite an expensive proposition, a penny-per-ton levy was placed on all ships entering the port; this would help finance the cost of the structure and the ongoing maintenance. George Worth, the first lighthouse keeper, was paid 50 pounds sterling per year and instructed that the lantern should be kept lighted "from sun-setting to sun-rising". He and his family resided on the island.

After 200 years of maintaining keepers in every lighthouse along the US coast, the US Coast Guard installed computers to automate those jobs. At that same time, Congress decreed that Boston Light be "forever manned". The 70th keeper, Sally Snowman is the first woman to hold the position and its first civilian keeper since 1941. Boston Light reopened as a new, 75-foot granite tower which remains in operation today.

Today the beam from Boston Light is visible for 27 miles. Tours of the Boston Harbor Islands including other landmarks are available today from late May to early October. Eric Jay Dolin, author of a book on American lighthouses states: "We would not be the country we are today without the service that lighthouses and their dependable keepers have provided". Check out www.bostonharborislands.org

Jackson, Nancy Mann, BOSTON LIGHT, American Spirit, September/October



DID YOU KNOW?



The porthole windows at the top of the Cape May Lighthouse served to light the entire area surrounding the building. When you climb, please note the thickness of the walls here. The tower's inner and outer walls converge just above this point.



Atop Philadelphia City Hall is the largest statue of any building in the world—a 37' statue of William Penn.



Cape May Point Science Center, formerly St. Mary-By-the-Sea, which was originally used as a retreat by nuns, is now a fascinating, educational center full of history.



November 6, 1869, at 3PM Rutgers and Princeton gathered in NJ at Rutgers to play the first official game of intercollegiate football. A coin was tossed to begin the game which established another tradition.



Baseball historians agree that “the great American game” owes more to Hoboken, NJ than to Cooperstown. Baseball became a genuine sport with recorded rules on June 19, 1846, when two uniformed teams played a game on Hoboken's Elysian Fields. (Cunningham, THE NEW JERSEY SAMPLER, 1964.)



The Cape May Canal was built during World War II to allow ships to enter the Delaware Bay without the need to run the gauntlet of German submarines at the mouth of the Delaware Bay.



Delsea Drive was named by the New Jersey State Legislature in 1933 because at that time, it was the major road from the Delaware River to the Sea. Delsea Drive is 75 miles long.



Sir George Carteret named his lands in the New World in honor of the military defense of his home, the Isle of Jersey, but he named the province West Jersey. Today's state didn't become New Jersey until it became a royal colony in 1702 when East and West Jersey were united and became New Jersey, the royal colony.

The Delaware River and Bay was named for the Governor of Virginia, Thomas West, Lord De La War. The state takes its name from the river and the bay.



The Cape May-Lewes Ferry is planning on phasing out the current fleet and bringing in smaller boats. Replacing the current fleet is a \$320 million project hoping to save the Delaware River and Bay Authority money. The first vessel is expected to dock in Cape May in 2026.



The first boardwalk in the world opened in Atlantic City on June 26, 1870. (Internet)



In 1881, Walt Whitman, poet from New Jersey, immortalized part of the New Jersey coastline with his poem “Patrolling Barnegat” in which he wrote “wild, wild the storm, and the sea high running, steady the roar of the gale...”



The four other Great Lakes could all fit into Lake Superior.



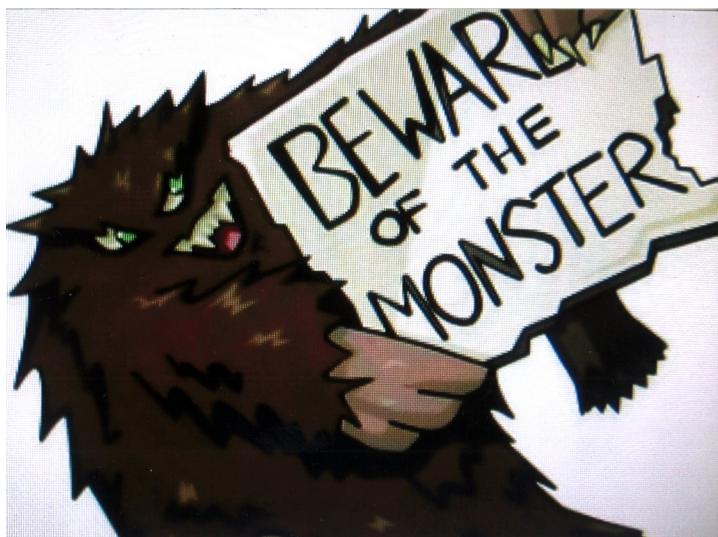
Canada has more lakes than any other country on our planet.



The world's first rodeo was in Pecos, Texas July 4, 1883.

King Ranch in South Texas is larger than Rhode Island.

HOME, HOME OF THE STRANGE



(Editor's note: Every fall I like to include stories that are related to Halloween and the "bewitching hour" of Midnight. After some research, I found some more tales of South Jersey and the Delaware regions, SO I now present to you...)

The Jersey Devil is possibly the most famous of the South Jersey tales but there are a few other narratives told in the area that need relating, such as... "The Sea Monster of Cape May". In November of 1921, the remains of a tremendous mammal washed ashore at Cape May. The animal weighed an estimated fifteen tons or more (about the size of an elephant). Visiting scientists were unable to identify it and stated that nothing yet known to science could compare with it. Eventually the smell from the rotting carcass got so bad, the creature had to be towed out to sea.

The City of Vineland also contributed to the state's weirdness with a landmark built of old car parts and other junk during the Depression years in the early 1930's. The house was built on a mosquito-infested automobile graveyard, by a wild-looking man named

George Daynor and was named "The Palace of Depression". He built his abode out of items that were found in the junkyard. After his death, the "Palace" started deteriorating so a nonprofit group began applying for grants and using donations to rebuild the place. It is located on South Mill Road in Vineland.

Not far from Mizpah in Southern New Jersey along Route 40 stands a unique lawn exhibit made up of thousands of one-gallon plastic jugs filled with dyed liquid and arranged to resemble an American flag. It seems that over 30 years ago, the homeowner began this project in an attempt to keep the neighborhood kids off her lawn. The homeowner has received thousands of donations of used jugs and hopes, one day, to construct a map of the entire United States.

There have also been reports of the legendary creature known as Bigfoot, Sasquatch and the Abominable Snowman wandering through South Jersey. Hunters, newspaper reporters and other citizens have reported seeing a nine-foot creature, covered with shaggy gray hair, walking upright. This creature was described as having no neck and had glowing red eyes; he usually appeared at dusk. So, beware!!

Unidentified Flying Objects are certainly not a "thing of the past". Many residents of New Jersey and Delaware have reported seeing lights in the night sky. On a summer evening of 1998, there was a full moon, the night sky was dark when a resident of Toms River, NJ reported a flying object of a kind he had never seen before. It was described as a small neon like intense blue object with a red light circling the object in a diagonal fashion flying about two thousand feet off the ground. The police were informed of the sighting, but nothing was ever resolved. This is only one in thousands of reports regarding UFOs.

Lewes, Delaware also has its tales of hauntings in strange places. Of any building in Lewes, the Cannonball House, a structure dating back to 1743, vividly depicts a relic of the town's past. It seems, no matter how often the door leading to the stairway is closed, it continually swings open. The owners tried hammering a firm nail over the latch trying to keep it closed but that didn't work either. There is also a poltergeist floating around Shipcarpenter's Square in Lewes. A ship's stone ballast was used as the foundation for the home and its heavy timbers were once the timbers of a deck. The place was ripe for haunting. The ghost, (affectionally named "Charlie") had a habit of pestering the carpenters working on the house by knocking down stacks of wood that had been piled up; a mysterious free-standing letter "C" appeared in the middle of freshly troweled cement.

A ghost known as the "Henlopen Devil" haunts the area of Cape Henlopen State Park. The story goes that the crackling, howling, foul monster that tormented the folks of New Jersey, made its way to Cape Henlopen on the ice floes of a frozen Delaware Bay, a long time ago. It found a mate and the resulting offspring born as ugly and sinister as its parents, became the Cape Henlopen Devil, destined to haunt the area and torment the residents.

The World War II bunker located at Cape May Point is also reported to be hunted. But, that's another story for another time and place. Due to the coastal location of New Jersey and Delaware, many intriguing and chilling tales and legends have been handed down from generation to generation. One can only imagine the countless tales yet to be told.

Scurman, Mark and Mark Moran, WEIRD N.J. Barnes and Noble, 2003.
Seibold, David J. and Charles J. Adams III, "Ghost Stories of the Delaware Coast," Exeter House Books, 1990

