



PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINATIONS

4931 South Peninsula Drive • Ponce Inlet, Florida 32127 • www.ponceinlet.org • www.lighthouselocker.org • (386) 761-1821 • lighthouse@ponceinlet.org
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Dear Members,

I hope this issue of *Illuminations* finds you well in mind, body, and spirit.

The Preservation Association is pleased to announce that that Florida National Register Review Board (NRRB) has recommended that the Pacetti Hotel be formally nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Board took this action at its regular meeting on August 6, 2020 and is in the process of preparing a formal recommendation to the Keeper of the National Register. The process of nominating the hotel for inclusion in NRHP began with the submittal of a NRHP Registration Form by the museum's curatorial staff in August of last year. Final approval for inclusion of the Pacetti Hotel by the Keeper of the National Register should occur within forty-five days of receiving the formal recommendation submitted by the Florida NRRB.

The Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association is proud of its partnership with Volusia County Schools. As you may know, the Association has a long history of providing free educational services to all Volusia public and private elementary, middle, and high school students. Although utilized extensively by local educators in years past, the museum recognizes that teacher access to the museum's educational programs may be limited during the current 2020-2021 academic school year due to safety concerns regarding

COVID-19 and the district's need to protect its staff and students. I am pleased to announce that museum staff members have worked hard these past summer months to address this issue by adapting many of its educational offerings for the virtual environment. These modified educational programs can be utilized by students and teachers in all three learning options currently offered by the Volusia County School System; the Traditional Classroom Setting (i.e. Brick and Mortar), Volusia Live, and Enhanced Volusia Online through Microsoft Teams in Office 365. The Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and museum will make its traditional on-site and off-site offerings available to local schools when it is safe to do so.

As many of you know, the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum is currently open to the public in accordance with the COVID-19 reopening schedule issued by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. Although open to the public seven days a week, overall visitation to the lighthouse and museum is currently hovering at around 60% of annual norms. This trend is expected to continue for many months to come. With more than 90% of the museum's operating revenue generated directly through onsite admission and merchandise sales, the financial impact of COVID-19 on lighthouse operations is significant.

Although the Preservation Association has responded to this decrease in realized and anticipated future

funding by tightening its belt wherever possible, your assistance is needed to help weather this financial crisis. As an Association member, you are one of the light station's most valuable assets. Your continued support will help us achieve our mission to preserve and disseminate the maritime and social history of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station at this difficult time.

The Preservation Association has launched an annual membership drive to generate financial support and public advocacy for this important National Historic Landmark. You can help by encouraging friends and family to purchase an annual membership to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse. For example; if every current member were to convince one person to join at the general (\$20) level, the Preservation Association would realize an increase of \$24,000 in additional revenue. This financial contribution would go a long way towards funding ongoing operations.

We greatly appreciate your patronage and look forward to seeing you at the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse and Museum in the near future. Stay safe and healthy.

With Warm Regards,

Ed Gunnlaugsson

Ed Gunnlaugsson
Executive Director
Ponce Inlet Lighthouse

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THE PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION IS DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE MARITIME AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHT STATION.

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Subscription is a benefit of membership in the Association. *ILLUMINATIONS* welcomes letters and comments from our readers.

REGULAR HOURS OF OPERATION

SEPTEMBER 7, 2020 – MAY 30, 2021
OPEN DAILY FROM 10:00 AM UNTIL 6:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 5:00 PM)

MAY 31, 2021 – SEPTEMBER 6, 2021
OPEN DAILY FROM 10:00 AM UNTIL 9:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 8:00 PM)

SPECIAL HOURS OF OPERATION

NOVEMBER 26, 2020 (THURSDAY)
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP CLOSED FOR
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

NOVEMBER 27 & 28, 2020
(FRIDAY & SATURDAY)
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN
FROM 10:00 AM UNTIL 7:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 6:00 PM)

DECEMBER 24, 2020 (THURSDAY)
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN
FROM 10:00 AM UNTIL 4:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 3:00 PM)

DECEMBER 25, 2020 (FRIDAY)
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP CLOSED FOR
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

DECEMBER 26 & 27, 2020
(SATURDAY & SUNDAY)
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN
FROM 10:00 AM UNTIL 7:00 PM
(LAST ADMISSION SOLD AT 6:00 PM)

SCHEDULED TOWER CLOSURES

NOVEMBER 30, 2020 (MONDAY)
TOWER CLOSED FROM 4:30 PM UNTIL 6:00 PM
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN UNTIL 6:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 5:00 PM)

DECEMBER 29, 2020 (TUESDAY)
TOWER CLOSED FROM 4:30 PM UNTIL 6:00 PM
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN UNTIL 6:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 5:00 PM)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

OCTOBER 19, 2020 (MONDAY)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND ANNUAL
MEMBERSHIP MEETING (CLOSED TO GENERAL
PUBLIC. OPEN TO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP)

NOVEMBER 16, 2020 (MONDAY)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
(CLOSED TO GENERAL PUBLIC AND MEMBERSHIP)

DECEMBER 21, 2020 (MONDAY)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
(CLOSED TO GENERAL PUBLIC AND MEMBERSHIP)

CLIMB TO THE MOON SCHEDULE

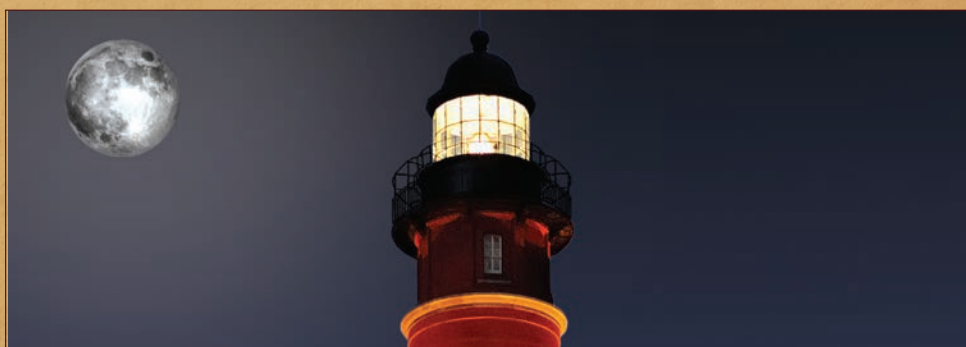
CLIMB TO THE MOON

OCTOBER 31 2020
(SATURDAY)
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

NOVEMBER 30, 2020
(MONDAY)
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

DECEMBER 29, 2020
(TUESDAY)
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Toast the setting sun with a sparkling beverage and enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres by the light of the full moon with your significant other and friends. Offered only on the eve of each full moon, this special event is limited to 25 participants only. Tickets must be purchased in advance by calling Amanda at (386) 761-1821 ext. 10. Prices are \$35 for non-members and \$30 for members. Please Note: Scheduled Climb to the Moon events are subject to change due to COVID-19.



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COVID-19 Update: Onsite educational events and program offerings are subject to change due to COVID-19. Advertised educational offerings may be modified from in-person to virtual presentations for the safety of staff and lighthouse guests. Please check the museum's online Calendar of Events for more information.

**OCTOBER 15-18, 2020, BIKTOBERFEST
THURSDAY – SUNDAY**

Biketoberfest is just around the corner! Take a leisurely ride along the World's Most Famous Beach to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum to experience one of Biketoberfest's most popular motorcycle destinations. Come on down and enjoy all the lighthouse has to offer including a special exhibit chronicling the history of Motorcycles on the Beach before heading over to one of the town's popular waterfront eateries for a cold beverage, delicious seafood, and live music.

**NOVEMBER 11, 2020, VETERANS DAY
WEDNESDAY**

Join us at the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum on Wednesday, November 11, 2020 in honor of the men and women who have served our nation in uniform. Veterans will receive free admission throughout the day with proof of service.

**NOVEMBER 27, 2020, THANKSGIVING GIFTS AT THE LIGHTHOUSE
FRIDAY**

Ring in the holiday season at the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse! Explore the museum and climb to the top of Florida's Tallest Lighthouse! The museum will be handing out ornament craft kits that kids can take with them to make at home.

**DECEMBER 26, 2020, WINTER HOLIDAY PROGRAM
SATURDAY**

Ring in the New Year with a trip to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse! Climb to the top of Florida's Tallest Lighthouse and talk with the "Old Lighthouse Keeper" and other historical re-enactors as you tour the museum to learn what it was like to live and work at the Ponce Inlet Light Station in the early 1900s.



THE PONCE INLET LIGHTHOUSE & MUSEUM HAS GONE VIRTUAL!

Online Virtual learning experiences are now available to all public and private schools in response to COVID-19. Visit us at www.ponceinlet.org to learn more.

ATTENTION READER: Unless otherwise noted, all scheduled events and activities at the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse are provided free of charge to participating guests with the price of regular admission. Additional information regarding scheduled events can be found online at www.ponceinlet.org under the Calendar of Events tab. Individuals wishing to learn more about these and other upcoming scheduled events may contact programs manager Mary Wentzel by phone at (386) 761-1821 ext. 18, or via email at mwentzel@ponceinlet.org.

Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association

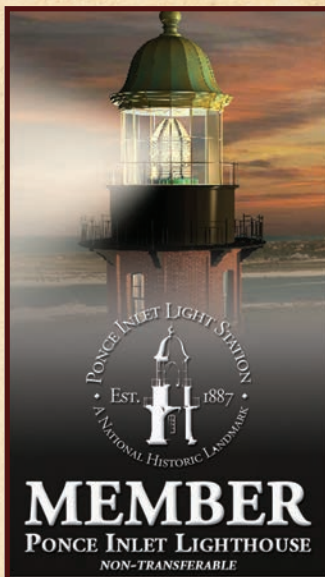
2020 Membership Drive

The history of the Preservation Association's stewardship of the Ponce Inlet Light Station dates back nearly five decades to 1972 when the non-profit organization was founded by a group of local residents committed to saving the historic light station for future generations.

Originally consisting of an all all-volunteer workforce, the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association began the task of restoring the light station's deteriorated keepers quarters, service buildings, and tower with almost no public financial support. Funding was generated almost entirely in-house through donation drives, the collection of 25¢ admission fees, and the sale of homemade souvenirs. Building materials were gathered from a variety of sources including local businesses, its members' garages, and even trash bins. What the Association was able to accomplish back then given the limited resources it had to work with is nothing short of amazing.

The past 48 years have witnessed the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association grow far beyond its humble beginnings as an all-volunteer group to the professional, volunteer-supported organization that exists today. Well-known for its ground-breaking accomplishments in the fields of lighthouse and Fresnel lens restoration, educational programming, and museum development, the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association is highly regarded as one of most accomplished and well-respected lighthouse preservation groups in the country. Thanks to the organization's vision and ongoing efforts, the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse was officially declared a National Historic Landmark in 1998.

The Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum has historically generated nearly 100% of its annual funding exclusively in-house through private donations, annual membership dues, and onsite admission and merchandise sales. Although grants have been sought for large restoration projects in the past, the Association does not currently receive substantial public subsidies of any kind at the either the local, state, or federal level; making it one of the few self-supported historic



preservation groups in the region.

The Association's success in maintaining its financial independence is something all of its members can be proud of; however, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on museum revenue has been significant in recent months. The Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum is currently operating at about 60% of its normal capacity and has experienced a decrease of nearly 50% of its anticipated revenue for the second half of the current fiscal year. You can help the museum weather these difficult financial times by renewing or elevating your current annual membership and by recruiting at least one

family member or friend to join the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association.

Membership is one of the easiest and more popular methods of supporting the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station and its ongoing operations. Members enjoy many benefits including; free admission to the lighthouse and museum, discounts on gift shop purchases, quarterly newsletters, invitations to special events, and more depending on membership level. All proceeds help fund ongoing preservation and restoration projects, educational programming, and general operational costs. If each of our members were to recruit one person to join at the general (\$20) level, the Association would realize \$24,000 in additional revenue. This financial contribution would go a long way towards funding lighthouse operations in the 2021 fiscal year.

We welcome any questions you may have regarding ways to support the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum. You may contact us by email at lighthouse@ponceinlet.org, by phone at (386) 761-1821 ext. 10, or by visiting us online at www.ponceinlet.org for more information. Those wishing to purchase an annual membership or make a monetary donation may do so online at www.lighthouselocker.org, by mailing a check directly to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, or by talking to one of our friendly sales associates inside the museum's gift shop. ***Thank you for your support.***

ROBERT WILDER: From Daytona to Ponce Inlet

Robert Wilder may not be a familiar name to readers nowadays, but during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, Wilder was a popular author whose novels, plays, and scripts were well known. Perhaps his greatest fame came from his 1942 novel *Flamingo Road*, which was not only a best-seller, but he also developed it into a play and scripted the 1947 movie of the same name. After his death in 1974, the story became the basis for a television series. Another Wilder novel, *Written on the Wind*, also became a movie starring Rock Hudson and Lauren Bacall, and his novel *Fruit of the Poppy* became the basis for the 1968 crime drama *Sol Madrid*, with David McCallum and Stella Stevens.



ROBERT WILDER

Robert Wilder, *Wikimedia Commons*

Born in Richmond, Virginia, on January 25, 1901, Robert Ingersoll Wilder was the son of Estrella Mendoza Wilder and William Wallace Wilder, a man with many interests and a creative, restless mind. William W. Wilder was a minister who also became a lawyer, a doctor, and a dentist, and he undoubtedly gave his son plenty of

inspiration for characters in the young Wilder's stories. The family moved to what was then called Daytona (and is now Daytona Beach) while Robert was still very young, and the elder Wilder established a dental office at 102 ½ South Beach Street in the heart of Daytona. Robert grew up loving the area and was a fascinated observer of the local landscape and inhabitants, freely drawing on his experiences to create his later literary works. During his early school years, he won a dollar in story-writing contest, an event that he later recalled as a motivation for his career choices.

Robert Wilder attended Seabreeze High School and served briefly in the army during World War I. Afterwards, he attended Stetson University in nearby Deland and also Columbia University in New York, where he joined the Theta Xi fraternity. At various times in his life he worked



The Mosquito (Ponce) Inlet Lighthouse as Robert Wilder would have seen it as a child. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*



Beach Street, Daytona, c. 1920. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*

as a soda jerk, a theater usher, and as an assistant to theatrical press agent Dixie Hines. Wilder then started his own theatrical press agency and tried writing for the theater authoring two plays, *Sweet Chariot* and *Stardust*. *Sweet Chariot* was based on the life of Black activist Marcus Garvey, a daring subject for the time (1930) and which featured a nearly all Black cast. It ran on Broadway for only one week before it was closed. *Stardust* was similarly unsuccessful.

Wilder later joined the National Broadcasting Company radio network and eventually became chief of publicity for WOR Radio. In 1935, he branched out into journalism working for 10 years as a writer and columnist for the *New York Sun*. His short stories were published in *The New Yorker*, *Smart Set*, and various other magazines. He once remarked that a career as a newspaperman, although great fun, was not very rewarding financially, so he decided to write himself out of it. In 1928, Robert Wilder and Sarah Adams Peters, known as Sally, married. Their interests were similar, and Sally would help him throughout his career, which would eventually take the

hoped-for turn towards the literary. By the late 1940s, the Wilders would have a ranch in Taos, New Mexico, maintain an apartment in Daytona Beach, and spend four months a year in California.

Wilder's first novel, *God Has a Long Face*, was published in 1940 and drew on his love of Florida history. He used Charles Burgoyne, an early leading citizen of the town of Daytona, as the inspiration for the character of Wallis Burgoyne, and Daytona provided the model for his fictional town of Dade. Wilder's interest in Florida, in self-made men, and in political manipulations would inform a number of his novels.

In 1942, Wilder published what was to become possibly his most famous work, *Flamingo Road*. Set in the fictional town of Truro, Florida, some contemporary residents of Deland found a strong similarity between their town and the events in Wilder's Truro. Wilder and his wife Sally turned *Flamingo Road* into a play which suffered the same fate as Wilder's previous attempts at Broadway. But the story was optioned for a feature film, and Wilder wrote the screenplay for the 1949 production. It starred Joan Crawford, was directed by William Wyler, and it was enough of a success to eventually lead to a TV series produced in the early 1980s, years after Wilder's death. Another novel, *Written on the Wind*, was also the basis of a successful film, this time starring Rock Hudson. Wilder continued his Hollywood career as a screenwriter for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, and Warner Brothers studios, most famously as one of the adapters of a novel by Donald Hamilton called *The Big Country* into a movie with Gregory Peck. Another novel, *And Ride a Tiger*, found its way to the movie screen as *Stranger in my Arms* starring Mary Astor, and *Fruit of the Poppy* became MGM's *Sol Madrid* with David McCallum, Stella Stevens, and Telly Savalas.

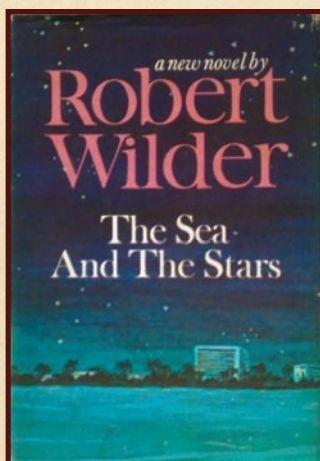
There are many autobiographical details in Wilder's novels, and one in particular, *The Sea and the Stars*, published in 1967, is especially rich with information about Daytona and the surrounding area including Mosquito (Ponce) Inlet, the Pacetti Hotel, Deland, Sanford, and the landscape of east Florida. Informed with his first-hand experiences, the novel has detailed descriptions of the real people, places, and things that bring this work alive and would certainly delight anyone interested in the history of Daytona Beach and its surrounding areas. It is truly Wilder's love letter to the place where he grew up, and one in which the fictional elements are almost secondary to the non-fictional ones.

One true-life event from Wilder's Daytona childhood took place on June 24, 1908, when a number of whales washed ashore at nearby Mosquito (Ponce) Inlet. An article in the *Keowee Courier* of Pickens, South Carolina, reported the event:

Nine Whales Ashore in Florida

Charleston, June 24 – The lighthouse keepers at Mosquito Inlet, on the Florida Coast, have advised the Charleston office of nine whales being ashore at Mosquito Inlet. The mammals are being cut up by the lighthouse men and others for the oil and bones, which are quite valuable, and the prizes should yield a handsome sum. During the past year or two a number of whales have been seen along this section of the coast, and it has not been so many months ago since a monster whale of about 75 feet in length got within the jetties of Charleston and cavorted about quite lively for a day or two before the mammal again found the channel and safely got out.

This newspaper report was short on details compared to Wilder's hilarious account of the event as the local citizenry went a little crazy envisioning the profits they would obtain by removing the extremely valuable ambergris and the also-valuable oil from the whales. (Ambergris was and still is a substance used in the manufacture of perfume and is indeed valuable.) Men and their families swarmed into tiny Ponce Park to seek their fortunes. Fueled by alcohol and greed, the crowd began hacking up the whales until they realized that nobody knew what ambergris looked like or how to get it out of the whales. Many believed it to be located in the head, so that became the focus of attention. Unfortunately, the men were butchering the wrong end of the body, as ambergris is a product of the whale's digestive system. Likewise, the method of producing



Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association



"Flamingo Road" movie poster, Wikipedia

>> CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ROBERT WILDER: From Daytona to Ponce Inlet (continued)

whale oil was also unknown and finally everyone gave up, got drunk, and eventually went home, thinking that the tide would wash away the butchered whales. Sadly, this never happened, and within a few days the stench worked its way into every home and business in Daytona. After much heartache, a barge was used to float away the carcasses and life returned to normal.

The true-life event as reported in the *Daytona Gazette-News* of June 20, 1908, was a little sadder than Wilder's fictionalized account. The stranded sperm whales were discovered by Dr. and Mrs. J. E. Rawlings who were on the beach searching for evidence of sea turtle nests. The Rawlings reported the stranding to a group of friends at a nearby automobile clubhouse and a party immediately went to the beach to examine the whales. At that point, all of the whales were alive, but by the next morning six had died and by the following night all were dead. Then, two parties of workmen arrived and began to extract oil from the carcasses. The whales measured 35-43 feet in length with an estimated weight of 8-10 tons each. It took the workmen at least a week to complete their tasks. At first, hundreds of spectators came to the inlet to watch the progress but interest dwindled as the stench developed. John Lindquist, principal keeper at the lighthouse, contacted the Light-House Establishment's Sixth District inspector in Charleston for help disposing of the whales' remains, but no help was forthcoming and the bodies were finally removed by efforts of the local community. Remaining whale bones were collected by residents of the area to use as yard ornaments and souvenirs.



Mosquito (Ponce) Inlet Lighthouse Principal Keeper John Lindquist with whale bones, 1908. Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association

Interestingly, at this time the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, was in the midst of a project to build its collections of whale and porpoise specimens.

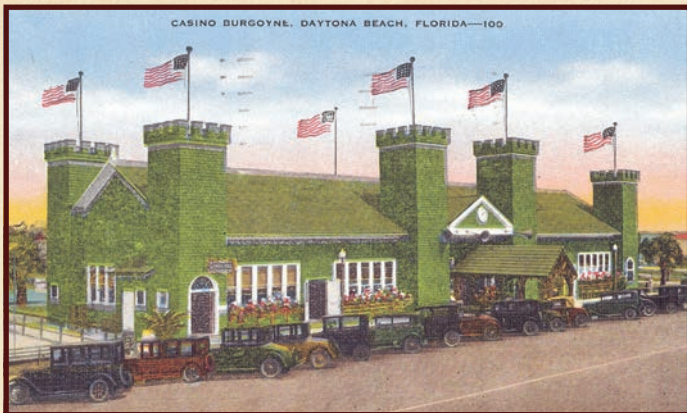


Whales on the beach with the Mosquito Inlet Lighthouse in the background to the left. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory Project

Lighthouse keepers, life-saving station keepers, and light ship personnel were issued a booklet by noted zoologist Frederick W. True on how to describe and preserve any stranded animals that may have been washed ashore and how best to submit information and specimens to the Smithsonian. A copy of True's 1884 booklet *Suggestions to Keepers of the U.S. Life-Saving Stations, Light-Houses, and Light-Ships; and to other Observers Relative to the Best Means of Collecting and Preserving Specimens of Whales and Porpoises* is in the collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association. The booklet provides no information on how to deal with stranded animals that are still alive and concentrates on identifying specimens and on procedures for telegraphing in reports to the zoologists in Washington. If a specimen was deemed important enough, one of these zoologists would be sent to personally oversee the collection process. At the Mosquito (Ponce) Inlet Lighthouse, keeper John Lindquist was probably unable to control the crowds of fortune hunters long enough to follow these procedures, if indeed he had a copy of the Smithsonian's booklet.

Besides the local events that inspired *The Sea and the Stars*, the author also fondly describes local landmarks including the Burgoyne Casino, Hankins Drug Store, Merchant's Bank, Keating's Pier and Casino, the entrance to Coquina (later Daytona) Highlands, Beach Street, Main Street, and many more. In chapter 14, Wilder turns his attention to Ponce Inlet. "The mellowed red brick of the lighthouse rose like a tapered sentinel on the dunes at the inlet. For as long as Tod could remember someone of the Pacetti family had kept the light here. He could recall a Bert Pacetti, a Gome Pacetti, several Pacetti wives and daughters whose names now escaped him. Also, there had always been innumerable Pacetti children tumbling about the yards, falling from docks into the river, cutting their feet on oyster shells, but somehow

surviving to provide an unending line of Pacettis to tend the light when the time came.”



Postcard, Burgoyne's Casino. Collection of the Ponce de Leon Lighthouse Preservation Association



The Tarragona Arch was completed in 1925 as the entrance to the Coquina Highlands, an early residential development in Daytona. It is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Wikipedia



Medicine bottle embossed with “Hankins, the Rexall Store, Daytona, Florida.” Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association

This is, of course, a fictional work and is also informed by his admittedly foggy memories. No members of the Pacetti family ever served as lighthouse keepers at the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station. Members of the family did, however, marry lighthouse keepers or keeper children, notably Bertha Rowinski, a daughter of the first principal keeper at the light who married Bartola J. (Bert)

Pacetti, son of Bartola C. Pacetti, the family patriarch. And Bartola C. Pacetti's granddaughter Jeanette May (Nettie) Pacetti married Walter Rowell, a first assistant keeper at the lighthouse from 1907 to 1913.

Also, in chapter 14, Wilder describes Jesse Linzy, a resident of Ponce Inlet whose calm and philosophical manner was much admired by the author. Linzy died in 1955, but Wilder had known him for years and wrote about him more than once. His brief use of Jesse as a character in *The Sea and the Stars* reflects his admiration but also may seem offensively racist to some who may not understand that Wilder was writing truthfully about (and during) a particular point in history. His work is quoted below:

“The uncertain popping of a single-cylinder outboard motor caught their attention. They watched as a heavy, flat-bottomed rowboat nosed toward a rickety dock below. A huge Negro, bare of chest and in patched and washed-out dungarees, towered in the stern, his weight lifting the bow to a steep angle.

“That’s Jesse.” Tod reached for her hand. He led her down the slope, heavily carpeted with the oaks’ oval leaves and browning acorns. “Jesse’s been around here for as long as anyone can remember. If his stories are true he must be a hundred years old, but he looks and acts like a young buck.” They picked their way along the rough ground with its outcropping of bleached coquina rock. “This part of the river is posted by the Government as a waterfowl preserve. There’s a sign out there which says U.S. Waters.” Jesse’s very proud of it. He calls the area ‘us waters,’ meaning it has been set aside for him and a few of those privileged to call him friend.”

‘Jesse was the blue-black of the Ogeechee River Negro. His poll was gray, deep wrinkles were carved into the dark satin around his eyes. When he lifted himself from boat to dock his movements were as lithe as a boy’s. He regarded most white men with a friendly tolerance and made fine living guiding fishing parties. He took no nonsense from the winter tourists, though. When he accepted a client, it was with a warning: “Don’ you be late gittin’ heah en th’ mornin’. Don’ be stayin’ up ahl naight drinkin en wrestlin’ wid wimmen. You late we don’ git no fish. Dat don’ do my reputation no good.” A tardy angler was quite likely to find Jesse asleep in a hammock and no amount of explanation would rouse him. He would merely grunt his impatience and set the hammock to swinging lightly.’

Jesse Linzy was born in Savannah, Georgia, on August 7, 1872 to Bill and Matilda Linzy. How or when he made

his way to what was then called Mosquito Inlet is not known, but he worked as a handyman and fishing guide at the Pacetti Hotel, probably arriving around 1906. At the time, Bartola Pacetti's sons Bert and Gomez were the proprietors, along with their mother, Martha Jane Wickwire Pacetti. Oral history suggests that Jesse helped the lighthouse keepers build a concrete sidewalk from the lighthouse property to the shore of the nearby Halifax River. The sidewalk covered the path of a tramway used to bring building supplies from the river to the lighthouse construction site from 1884-1887. The tramway was dismantled after the lighthouse reservation was completed and the path was covered with a wood walkway. The concrete sidewalk replaced the old wooden boards. Jesse's assistance on this project was not recorded by the lighthouse keepers, but that does not mean the oral history should be discounted. Day laborers were sometimes recruited to help with projects at the lighthouse and because keepers occasionally paid these extra helpers out of their own pockets, the names of such helpers were not recorded.

had loved to visit the hotel and had brought Olivia there when she was a child. When she purchased the hotel, Jesse said that she had also purchased himself and his wife Ida since they had no plans to ever leave the place. Gamble conducted a major restoration of the property and Jesse and Ida remained.



Robert Wilder wrote about Jesse Linzy's delicious smoked mullet. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*

Whether or not Jesse assisted the lighthouse keepers, what is without question is his role at the Pacetti Hotel. Jesse served as Bert Pacetti's assistant in Bert's capacity as a federal bird reservation inspector and traveled with Bert to reservations as far away as Alaska and Hawaii. Jesse Linzy also served as a handyman at the Pacetti Hotel, and like Bert and Gomez Pacetti, Jesse was a famous fishing guide. It was said that Jesse was so big and strong that he

could take guests deep sea fishing in a rowboat that he single-handedly maneuvered out through the treacherous inlet. By 1936, the hotel had fallen into disuse and disrepair and was purchased by Olivia Gamble whose father, James N. Gamble of Procter and Gamble fame,



Ida and Jesse Linzy. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*



The Pacetti Hotel c. 1907. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*



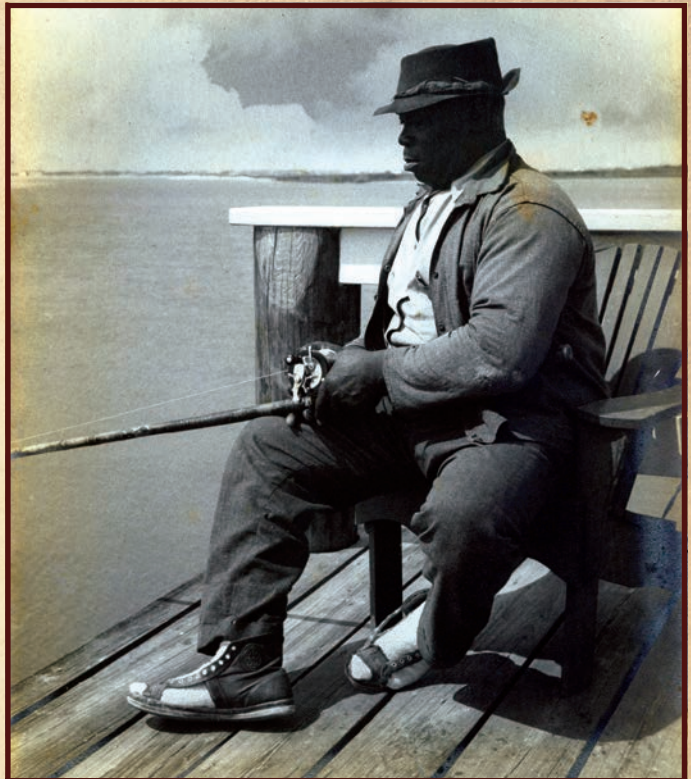
Olivia Gamble's restoration work underway c. 1938. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*

Robert Wilder recorded more of his memories of Jesse Linzy in his book *Out of the Blue*, a collection of stories about his life as a newspaper reporter which was published in 1943. In a chapter entitled "Ogeechee Jesse," Wilder also records several stories that appear as events in later works. One of those stories is the stranding of the whales and the frenzy over the potential fortune they represented. Another concerns fishing and Jesse. A local Chamber of Commerce (possibly in Daytona) decided to have a spectacular tarpon fishing competition at the inlet. Newspapermen from all over the country were invited to participate and to, hopefully, write inspiring and exciting articles that would generate tourist business for the area hotels and sport fishing industry. Fishing guides were booked for the event, and Jesse, being Black, was not invited to be one of them. Jesse was not even consulted, although he was one of the most knowledgeable guides in the area. The tournament was a disaster. Nobody caught a tarpon. The reporters were a rowdy lot, fueled by plenty of alcohol, and the hotel owners were dismayed enough to ask the Chamber of Commerce to get rid of the reporters. Jesse silently watched the fishing chaos from his rowboat. After everyone had departed, Jesse Linzy took two clients out to fish and each man caught a tarpon under his careful guidance.



Jesse Linzy (in overalls and on the left) with his rowboat and a party of fishermen. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*

According to the old timers who still remembered him, Wilder's description and stories about Jesse were all true. Jesse's obituary in the Daytona News-Journal called him the "Giant of Ponce Park," referring both to his impressive height of nearly 6'8" and to his status in the fishing community. Jesse Linzy was buried in the Mt. Ararat Cemetery in Daytona Beach and at the time of his death his home was still listed as the former Pacetti Hotel. The bed used by Jesse and Ida is in the collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association and is on display in the first assistant keeper dwelling.



Jesse Linzy in his later years, fishing off the dock at the Pacetti Hotel. *Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association*

Robert Wilder continued to revisit the Daytona area throughout his life, temporarily renting various apartments at the beach and spending his afternoons playing tennis. Wilder died on August 22, 1974, in La Jolla, California. He was survived by his wife Sarah Adams Peters and their son, Robert Wallace Wilder.

The list of books published by Robert Wilder is lengthy:

- God Has a Long Face (1940)
- Flamingo Road (1942)
- Out of the Blue (1943)
- Mr. G. Strings Along (1944)
- Written on the Wind (1946)
- Bright Feather (1948)
- Wait for Tomorrow (1950)
- And Ride a Tiger (1951)
- Autumn Thunder (1952)
- The Wine of Youth (1952)
- Walk with Evil (1957)
- A Handful of Men (1960)
- The Sun is my Shadow (1960)
- Plough the Sea (1961)
- Wind from the Carolinas (1964)
- Fruit of the Poppy (1965)
- The Sea and the Stars (1967)
- An Affair of Honor (1969)
- The Sound of Drums and Cymbals (1973)

IDENTIFYING WHALES AND PORPOISES: Who Owned the Booklet?

Only a government publication could have a title almost as long as the book itself! While researching the article on Robert Wilder, museum staff discovered an 1884 booklet entitled “Suggestions to Keepers of the U.S. Life-Saving Stations, Light-Houses, and Light-Ships; and to Other Observers, Relative to the Best Means of Collecting and Preserving Specimens of Whales and Porpoises.” Written by Frederick W. True and published for the Smithsonian Institution, this booklet was meant to assist keepers and others in the identification and preservation of whale and porpoise specimens for the Smithsonian’s collection. On the cover of our newly acquired copy appears the signature of one H. E. Nichols, sparking our staff’s curiosity about who this person might have been.

With a little imagination and some help from Google which led us to the web pages of the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, California, we discovered that Henry Nichols was the Light-House Establishment’s inspector for the Twelfth District from December 31, 1892 until September 30, 1895. Nichols was also a distinguished naval officer who participated in the Spanish American War and died in Manila in 1899.

Henry E. Nichols was married to Juliet Fish. Juliet’s mother, also named Juliet, was married to Dr. Melancthon Fish and she died while giving birth to this daughter in 1859. The following year, Dr. Fish married his late wife’s sister Emily, and although she was Juliet’s aunt, Emily always referred to Juliet as her daughter. When Dr. Fish died unexpectedly, Emily Fish lived quietly in a period of mourning until her son-in-law, Henry Nichols, the Light-House Establishment’s district inspector, recommended that she take up a post as a lighthouse keeper at Point Pinos on California’s Monterey Peninsula. Emily Fish welcomed the challenge and began her lighthouse keeper career. She transformed the lighthouse with tasteful décor and beautiful landscaping and came to host artists, writers, and naval officers at her dinner party salons. She also helped found a chapter of the American Red Cross and served on its first executive committee. Emily served

as keeper for 21 years, retiring in 1914 to a house in Pacific Grove where she continued her passion for gardening. She died in 1931.

Emily’s daughter/niece Juliet, was also drawn into the lighthouse keeper life. Her husband, Henry Nichols, was well-regarded for his work with the US Coast and Geodetic Survey from 1880-1891. He then became the district inspector for the lighthouses in the Twelfth District. When Nichols was appointed to the rank of captain, he joined Admiral Dewey’s fleet in Manila where he was given command of the vessel *Monadnock*. Only six months after assuming this command, he died of ill health.

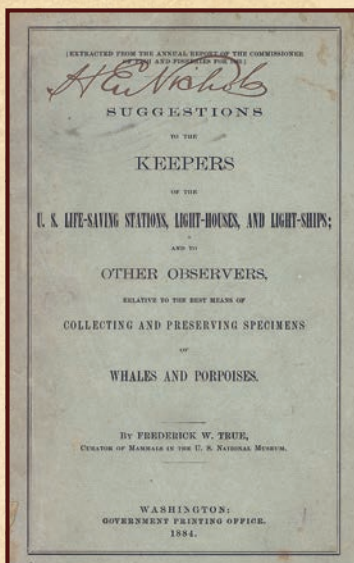
Following Henry Nichols’ death in 1899, Juliet became keeper of the Angel Island Lighthouse in San Francisco Bay. In April of 1906, she witnessed the devastating San Francisco earthquake from her vantage point at the lighthouse. That same year during a bout of bad weather, fog encased the Bay area and her machine operated fog bell failed. With no time to make repairs, Juliet rang the bell by hand, reportedly every 30 seconds for 20 hours until the fog lifted. Juliet lived to be 88 years old, dying in 1947.

Both Emily Fish and Juliet Nichols were buried in Oakland’s Mountain View Cemetery. These women with their unusual and truly ground-breaking careers were not honored with special markers at that time, although Dr. Melancthon Fish and Henry Nichols

both had named markers. To add further irony, Henry Nichols was buried at sea and was not actually interred in the cemetery.

It is not known if Juliet, Emily, or Juliet’s husband, the late Henry E. Nichols, ever had cause to identify cetaceans using the Smithsonian’s handbook, but it was exciting to discover their stories all thanks to Henry writing his name on its cover.

For more information on Emily Fish and Juliet Nichols, see the Spring 1985 issue of *The Keeper’s Log*, “Emily Fish, the Socialite Keeper” by Clifford Gallant, pp. 8-13.



1884 Smithsonian Institution booklet *Suggestions to Keepers of the U.S. Life-Saving Stations, Light-Houses, and Light-Ships; and to Other Observers, Relative to the Best Means of Collecting and Preserving Specimens of Whales and Porpoise. Collection of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association.*

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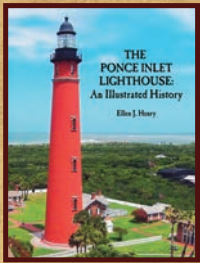
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