



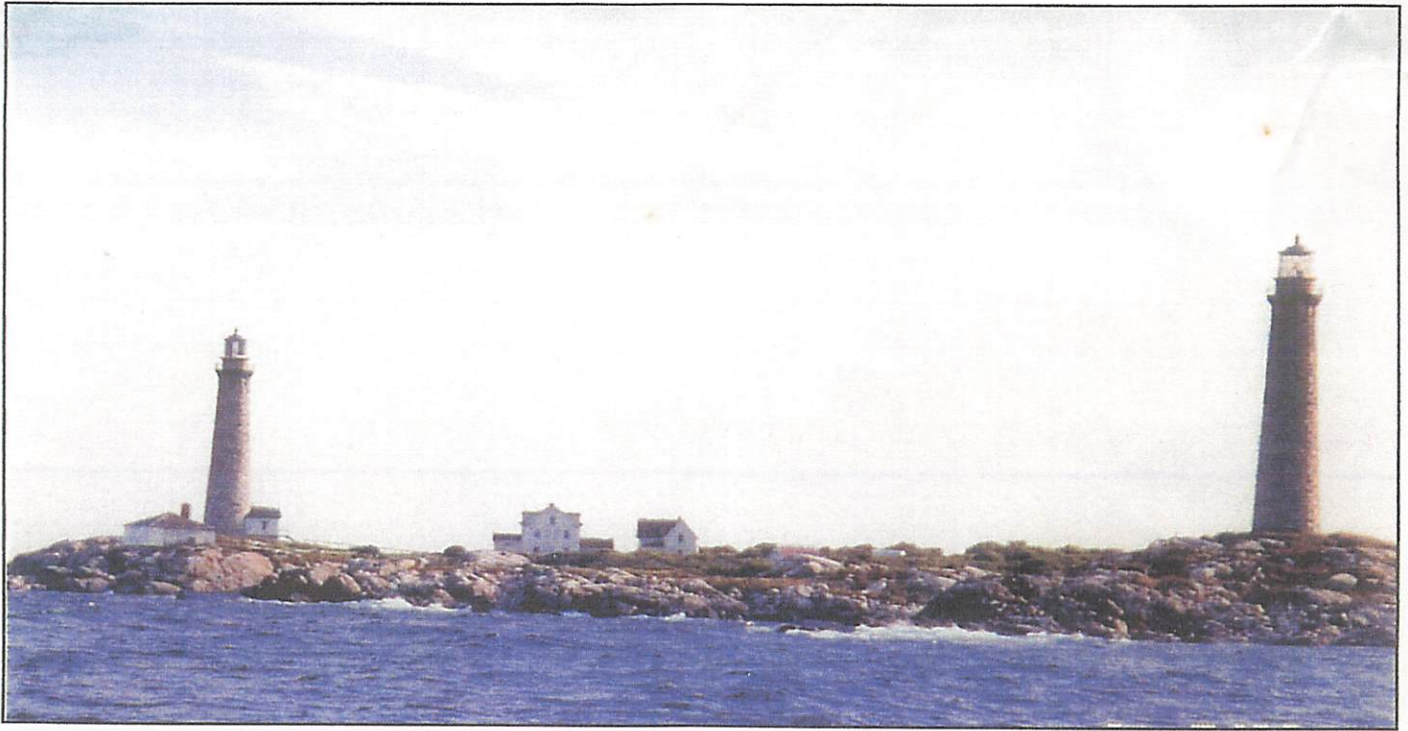
Hi!

I finally finished this!

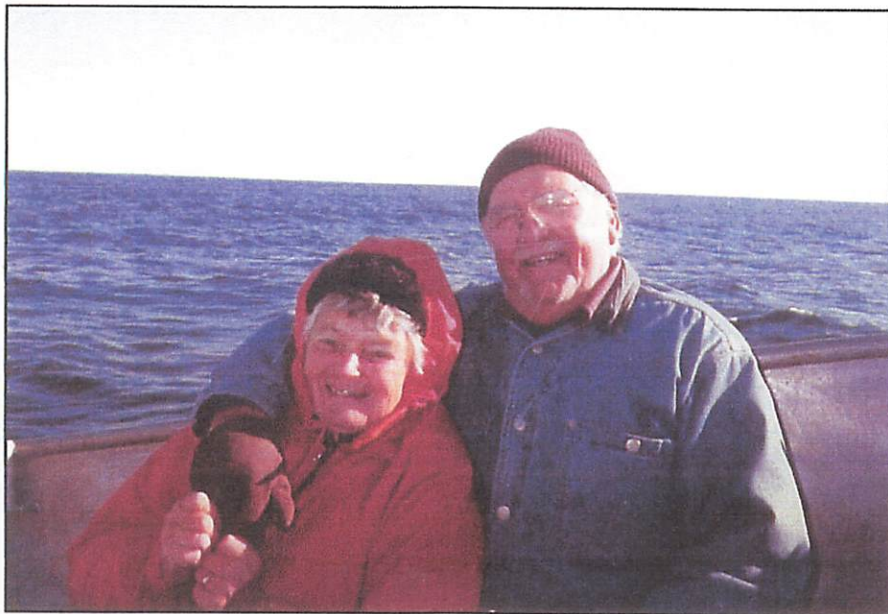
Enjoy it, & use it
in the "Digest," if
you wish, or just put
it among your souvenirs!

Keeper of
T. Island
1986-1992
~~to~~ May 1 -
Nov. 1.

See you!
Janie Castoll
18R High St.
Rockport, MA,
01966

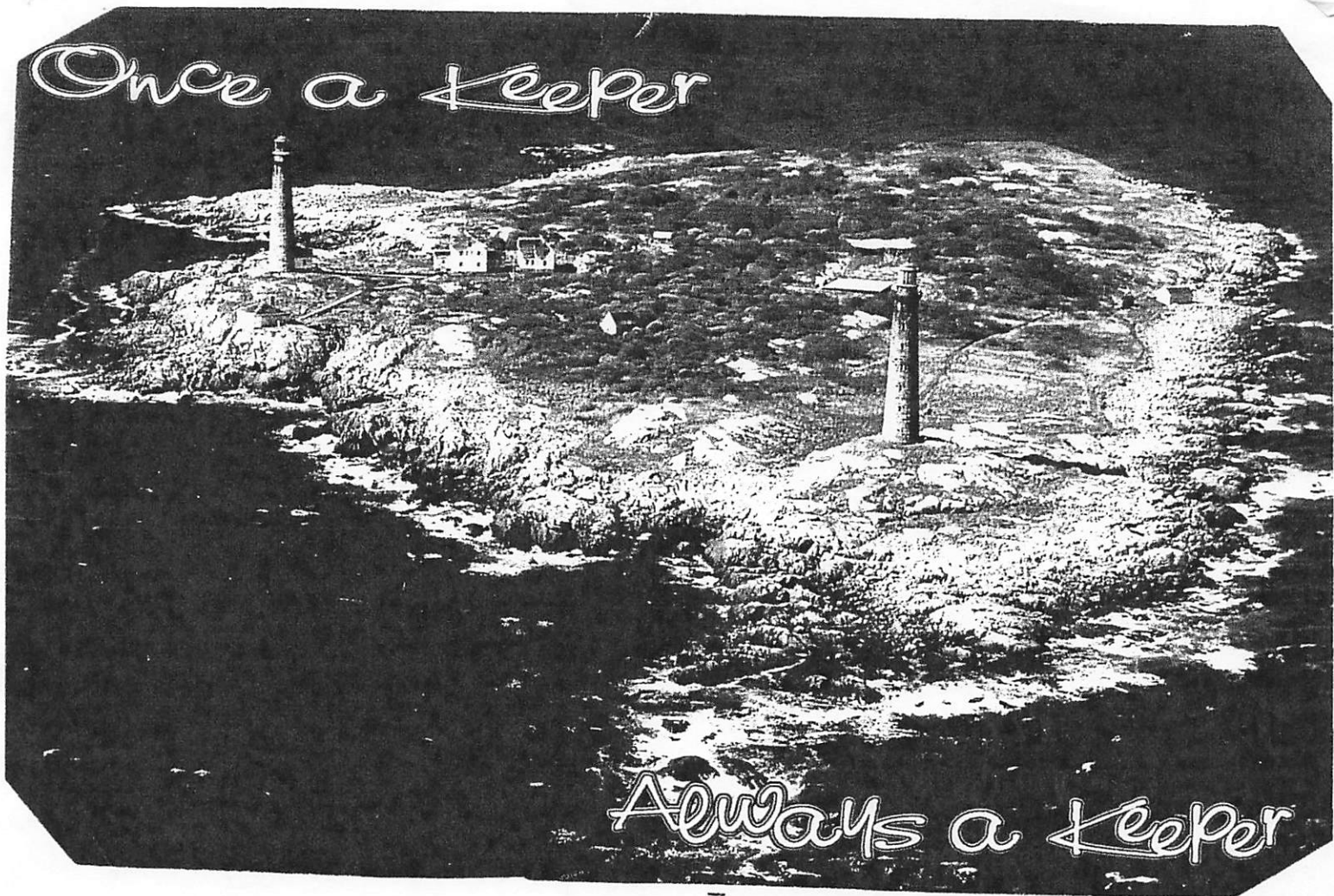


Island Love



*Dottie
Carroll
2,005*

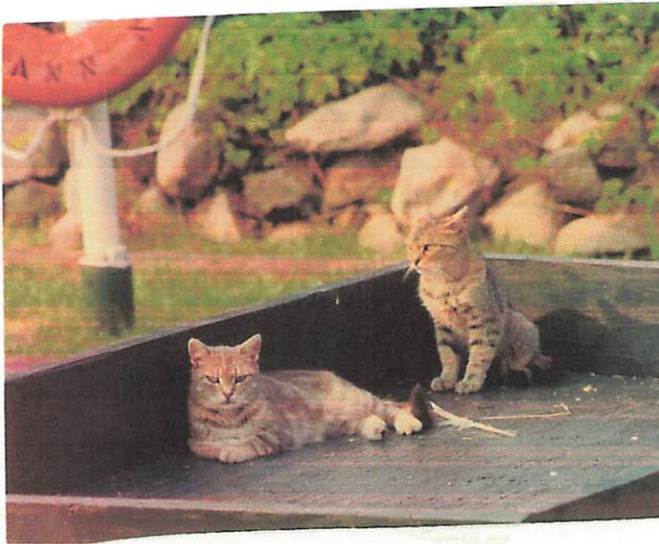
**The Story of George and Dottie Carroll as lighthouse keepers on Thacher Island.
By Dottie Carroll**



This card was sent to us in 2,003 by Pat and Don Dawson, of Rockport. They, too, have been "lovers" of Thacher Island. Don has been our "Watch Dog" of the island for several years. We recently lost Pat, but will never lose our memories of her!



Keepers
 ← George
 and
 Sottie



Ma
 and
 "Tiger"
 (cats)



Sottie feeding
 her chickens.



"Cookie"
 Our
 Sentinel

CHAPTER I - A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

What does a person do when retirement age arrives and he/she is not yet ready for that old rocking-chair?

In 1947, George and I were married in a little white church in the hills of Goshen, Massachusetts, with a little bit of money but a whole lot of love to live on. That is all that was needed in those days to make a happy marriage and to take each day as it comes with not/^{much}thought to the future. Our youth told us that we had a long, long life ahead of us - the future, as such, was too far away.

Then, all of a sudden, it seemed, in 1986 our future was upon us and we were considering retirement from our two great jobs at Nashoba Regional High School, Bolton, Massachusetts. I had been Secretary to the Principal for twenty-three years and George had been Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds for ten years. Previously he had been a book printer at Colonial Press, in Clinton, Massachusetts, for thirty-one years. We had lived in our house on Sylvan Road in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, for forty-three years, where we raised our two children, along with dogs and cats, hamsters, and guinea pigs. (Not all at the same time).

George was not only a handyman for his own property, but also for the entire neighborhood. He learned how to paint, paper, build a garage, fix machinery and cars, while I learned how to mow lawns and trim hedges, as well as work with people on various committees and organizations. I also was the newspaper correspondent for the Town of Lancaster and therefore used my writing skills to carry out my keen interest

in public relations.

However, would these skills still be put to good use and still hold our interest when we no longer had to get up at 5:30 A.M. to go to work, where we both had numerous responsibilities and felt needed? No problem, we thought. We would somehow find things to do to keep busy, or to travel.

Retirement did come at the end of 1986, and for a year or so we tried to stay in bed until 8:00 AM just so the day would not be so long. We did a lot of walking, but did very little traveling. We learned that on a fixed income, we had to "tighten our belt" a little and change our way of living. We always had a comfortable lifestyle, since our wants and needs were few, but now our wants and needs seemed to grow larger since we had plenty of time on our hands and no definite responsibilities to keep us busy.

Something had to change. I was bored, just watching our grass grow and the paint chipping off the house. What was the answer? I found it - in an article in "Yankee" magazine about Thacher Island. They needed Keepers.

CHAPTER II - WHAT IS THACHER ISLAND?

There is a remote island off the coast of Rockport, Massachusetts, once known only as "the big rock", but later called "Thacher Island", named after Anthony Thacher who, with his wife, survived a shipwreck off the coast of Rockport in 1635. The island of fifty-two acres is approximately three miles from the Rockport Harbor, with the closest land being three-fourths of a mile heading West to Loblolly Cove.

There is no bridge or causeway to the island. Access is by water transportation or by helicopter. The approach to the island itself is by way of a very unique uphill ramp which is often inaccessible due to rough waves crashing over the wooden ramp. Kayaks and canoes can often make it onto the ramp with the waves helping them along, but larger boats have to anchor in front of the island and use a small skiff to row onto the landing.

The highest portions of the island are approximately fifty-three feet above sea level. It is on top of these highest points that the two lighthouses sit - on a rocky ledge.

Over the many years, the rocky island has come to life with underbrush here and there, and poison ivy scattered over most of the acreage. The only trees that have survived and no doubt planted by caretakers back in the olden days, are crabapple trees. As summertime approaches, the blossoms are really beautiful and, along with various species of wildflowers, the entire island becomes very picturesque and is a painter's delight. Daisies, purple iris, and wild roses, as well as the

always prevalent dandelions and buttercups, seem to dominate the entire scenery.

Blueberry bushes, blackberry bushes, and raspberry bushes grow in certain sections not far from the houses, but somehow they do not bear fruit every year. Of course, they just grow wild with no care except that given to them by Mother Nature.

The soil on the island is very rich, if one can find it among the rocks. The grasses along the trails and around the buildings resemble carpeting, due to the patient and loving care of man himself. This is not a problem when there are Keepers on the island, but when it is closed in the wintertime the terrain becomes unruly and everything needs a good "haircut" in the Spring.

Also a Spring activity is the return of the seagulls to Thacher Island, both the Herring Gull and the Blackback. The Blackback is the larger specie and is very aggressive during the hatching time. They lay their eggs, three to a nest, along the outside trails of the island and in open spaces towards the middle of the island. A few "cowards" do hide their nests in the underbrush and some prefer the overhanging rocks along the shoreline. The nests are made of old grass, with new ones being built every year. The eggs are about the size of a duck egg and are tannish with spots. However, some have a blueish shade similar to a robin's egg. From laying time to hatching time, there is a period of about six to eight weeks. As can be realized, each year finds the number of gulls increasing tremendously. Migration to parts unknown seems to begin on Labor Day week-end, like most tourists! A few "die-hards" stay on the

island all winter. They seem to survive on whatever fish and shellfish they can find. If they get really hungry, they have even killed and eaten the young gulls. For the first year or so of a young gull's life, it is a tannish color, similar to the egg itself, and later it changes to either the Blackback color or the Herring color.

The Canadian geese have recently discovered the island as a safe place to live in the wintertime. Only small flocks of them have been seen at one time, but it is expected that others will soon join them and remain until the Spring gulls take over.

Cormorants inhabit both the South and North ends of the island. They enjoy living on the rocks by the water's edge and are a diving bird. They and the gulls seem to get along fine.

Ruddy Turnstone's have been known to rest along the shore during migration.

Since there is one fresh-water pond in the middle of the island, ducks have discovered that it is a great place to lay their eggs and to teach their broods the art of swimming and self-survival. Both the Mallard's and the Eiderdown's are summer residents. However, it is a chore for them to protect their young from the starving seagulls. It is not uncommon for an entire brood to be gobbled up by the gulls in a matter of seconds.

Swans often glide by the island, but do not stop. They seem to be there just to add to the scenery.

Inasmuch as there are so many small bushes all over the island, smaller birds have found a retreat where they can enjoy their little families. During the summer, red-winged blackbirds seem to be the most common of the birds. Barn swallows like to

nest in the boathouse under the eaves. Goldfinches, wrens, and purple finches flutter here and there, and then in the Fall the starlings seem to take over as they head South, or wherever.

For several years, two snowy owls seemed to find Thacher Island an ideal place to spend the winter.

Seals are other seasonal inhabitants of the island, usually on the South end where there are more sandy areas and flat rocks to rest on. Occasionally, baby seals, separated from their mothers, have been seen resting all night long on the lower end of the landing ramp.

Once in a while a dead whale floats by the island, and one year one did wash up on shore - a Minke whale. It was left there to let the tides do what it was hard for a human to do.

There are no wild animals on the island, only an abundance of rats which have been seen in storage areas and also scurrying in and out of the rocks down by the water's edge. Striped adders like to sun themselves on the warm walkways now and then.

Most of the time there is an ample supply of water, since rain water collects on a roof over a cistern which holds twenty-five thousand gallons. A large underground pipe carries the water from the cistern into the house, then it goes into two holding tanks in the cellar where modern plumbing takes over. All drinking and cooking water has to be purified before using.

There is a working sewerage system near the Keeper's house and both the kitchen and the bathroom have modern plumbing. During a dry season, water has to be used very sparingly. Showers are never a problem, since the ocean is always there in case it is needed as a substitute for a cold "shower".

There is electricity on the island, as well as a telephone, with underwater cables coming from Loblolly Cove. The marine radio is often used to contact the Coast Guard or boats. If the electricity is off for one reason or another, the portable generator takes over for a short time for all electrical appliances and the hand-held radio comes in handy.

Due to the rocky and rough shoreline, it is impossible to cast a fishing line from the island, but fishing boats are numerous in the South and Southeast directions. There are no beaches.

There is an underwater ledge on the East side of the island called "The Londoner" and it is clearly marked with a tall spindle which has a basket on top - an aid to navigation for all sailors.

At low tide, a mussel bed is readily seen on the West side of the island which often provides a good meal for the residents.

On a clear dark night, the stars are brighter than even those "deep in the heart of Texas".

Inasmuch as the island is surrounded by salt water, the temperature registers twenty degrees cooler in the summertime than on land, and in the wintertime, twenty degrees warmer. Storms can be wild and a little scary, but since there are no tall trees to topple over or no above-ground wires to fall down, there is very little danger. However, waves do wash over the entire island at certain times with such force that buildings close to the water can be damaged and the landing ramp can be demolished completely. Winds, too, may be stronger than on the mainland. There is always a breeze of some kind even on the hottest of days.

CHAPTER III ISLAND STRUCTURES

Perhaps the two most important buildings on the Island are the lighthouses, since they are definitely needed as aids to navigation, even in this age of high technology. They are commonly known as the "South" Tower and the "North" Tower, but when the Coast Guard manned the Island the South Tower was referred to as "Cape Ann Light". The "Twin Lights" name has, over the years, been adopted by many area manufacturers to distinguish their product. Streets and inns even have been identified with the twin lights.

The present towers are 124 feet in height and made of granite, with small entrance buildings attached. These towers were built in 1861. Many books have been written about the actual history of these lighthouses, along with descriptions of the lenses which have changed from time to time.

As of the date of this writing, 1998, the South Tower is being solarized by the Coast Guard and being restored to its former historical state. The North Tower has a battery-operated 12-volt system, with a steady amber light shining eight miles out to sea. The maintenance of this light is the responsibility of the Thacher Island Town Committee, with the Island Keeper being in charge.

After observing the two lighthouses from an approaching boat, the next building which a visitor notices is the boathouse. The approach to the boathouse is via a wooden ramp. It is on this ramp that boats of small sizes can land, timed with on-coming waves to facilitate the landing. The tourists' launch,

which is the largest "vessel" allowed on the ramp, has to be secured with a strong rope being hooked to yet another strong rope, by the Island Keeper, and then pulled up to a safe distance by a winch which is secured in the boathouse. This operation requires the services of two people. The launch is on rollers so when the tourists leave, the ropes are released and the boat slides into the water for its return trip to shore. The launch is also often used to transport supplies to the Island, via the boathouse and winch.

The boathouse is the typical white board siding with red shingled roof. In the "No-Name Storm of '91", the building was knocked over by the force of the tremendous waves. However, it was later rebuilt by a group of volunteers.

Next in line, as one walks up the wooden pathway, edged with railroad tracks, he passes a fieldstone building on the left, smaller than the boathouse. From this building, electricity goes to the South Tower and then transmitted to the rest of the buildings, except for the North Tower. That has a separate line, from the electrical house, in order to operate the light.

The railroad tracks and boardwalks at one time covered much of the island and even went through the boathouse so the railway carts could be pushed along the tracks with supplies from boats. The one remaining set of tracks, which is still walkable, goes from the boathouse to the turntable near the oil house, and also from the oilhouse to the Keeper's house. Other tracks have deteriorated over the years or been removed and replaced with more serviceable pathways for the Keepers and tourists.

The little "half-moon" house, built on shore by Dr. Sydney Wedmore, one of our launch captains and one of our most dedicated Island workers, is very close to the electrical house and convenient for those persons leaving the Island and not ambitious enough to seek out one of the other two out-houses. This small green building houses a portable pot which, on a hot summer day, is not a popular article to be brought to shore for emptying. However, it does serve the purpose for which it was designed and constructed.

A little farther on, off to the right, is a concrete sidewalk which is not often seen on such a rustic Island. This leads past the cistern which is in the middle of the brush just beyond the helicopter pad. (Yes, helicopters do land on the Island once in a while either for the purpose of carrying supplies or for transporting workers to the Island.)

Continuing along the sidewalk, one now finally sees the white clapboard gingerbread-style house, with red shingled roof which at one time was the home of the Head Keeper of the Island. This house had been gutted by the Coast Guard in the 1970's when they had orders to tear down the buildings and leave the Island deserted. At the present time the building is used strictly for storage but can also be

a haven for campers if a sudden storm hits the area.

The duplex white brick house, next-door to the "cottage", is still very livable and is the home of the various Keepers who take turns in maintaining the Island for a few months at a time. The Keeper's side of the house has a kitchen with pantry and ample cupboards, a living-room, an office, work-room shop, and four bedrooms, as well as a bathroom with modern facilities. There are three stories to each side of the house, and a bedroom on the third floor of the Keeper's section used to be the one-room "school" when it was more practical to educate the children on the island, with a certified teacher, rather than transporting them back and forth by rowboat, to shore.

The office is strictly for the use of the Keeper, with a marine radio and telephone and file records of the Thacher Island Association and Town Committee. Some of the records were taken to shore when the Island was deserted in 1992, due to the loss of the landing ramp. These are kept, and used, by officers of both the Town Committee and Association.

The second half of the Keeper's house is where guests have often stayed, for a nominal fee. This contains a kitchen, living-room, four bedrooms, and a bathroom. Both apartments in the house are fully-furnished, but guests are required to bring their own food and drinking water, and to plan on staying at least one or two days beyond their expected time, since often the seas are too rough to get them back off the island.

Years ago, two sets of Coast Guard Keepers lived in this

main house.

The cement-floor cellar is where the water tanks are, as well as an oil furnace.

Going past the South Tower, along a wooden bridge-like structure that spans a little wet ravine, is the white brick Whistle House which used to be the home of the old fog horn. During the storm of 1991, one side of the building was destroyed along with all of the machinery inside, and the fog horn. In order to preserve what was left of this historical building, a group of volunteers boarded up the East side, which was completely gone, and they did a great job, since that wall is still standing, as of this writing.

The last structure in the circle of buildings now in use is the Oil House, or sometimes called "Fuel" House. This is about half-way between the Keeper's House and the North Tower and is reached by going along the only two remaining boardwalks, either from the boathouse or the Keeper's house, just beyond the turntable. (This turntable is no longer used.)

The Oil House itself is the original brick - walls and floor - with a recently attached addition of shingled siding. During late years a wood stove was set up in the main part of the building to burn the Keeper's rubbish. There is also plenty of storage here for hand tools, garden tools, etc., and even the large tractor with the front-end loader.

The addition was necessary to store the small tractor and mower, as well as building supplies such as cement, etc. Since the island is closed nowadays in the wintertime, it is not feasible to leave machinery in the boathouse, in case of severe storms.

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Last but not least, there are two movable outhouses, with the best locations, for tourist use, to be in back of the Keeper's house, off to the Northerly^{*} side and hidden by tall bushes, and also along a trail to the Westerly side of the Oil House. These are kept in painted condition by the Keeper, when the island is open to the public. One "artistic" Keeper's wife tiled the floor and seats of one of the outhouses, and both buildings displayed various lighthouse pictures and poetry. This is now a tradition, with the "wallpaper" being changed each Spring.

CHAPTER IV - IN TRAINING

On May 2, 1987, I started my daily log as George and I began our new career as summertime Keepers of Thacher Island. We had visited the island only once before, just to look it over and to see if we could enjoy the rustic lifestyle which the island presented to us. We knew we could!

To make things easier for us to take over the duties on the island, the winter Keepers, Armand and Betty Desharnais, decided to stay for the week-end to show us around and to "teach us the ropes".

Armand spent a day with George, going through the daily routine of the water system, caring for the machinery, use of the boathouse winch in bringing boats up onto the ramp and securing them, and, of course, the actual duties of caring for the two lighthouses, but mostly the North Tower since that was the important one for the Keeper to keep his eye on. This was, for the most part, a Number One priority of the Keeper's duties.

Betty and I toured the Keeper's house, during which she gave me hints of properly using the household appliances and the care of the dog, "Cookie", the six chickens, and the four cats. She also helped me tremendously with what to buy for groceries when we would be able to get to shore to do the shopping. (I never did learn how to make bread like Armand did!)

After dark, we all climbed the South Tower to view the lights of Rockport and Gloucester, and even some of those

blinking at us from the high towers of Boston. . A magnificent view! We also found out where the emergency supplies are stored in this Tower - food, sleeping bags, cots, etc. We never did have to make use of them in the six summers we were on the island, but it was a great comfort to know that they were there.

The next day we walked all around the island, for an in-training session on where the trails were, and also how to avoid getting attacked by seagulls during the nesting season. We eventually learned that wearing hard-hats helped and also that carrying a stick over one's head did ward off our attackers.

One of George's daily duties was to call in the weather report, to Boston, twice a day, on the marine radio.

Inasmuch as a Keeper's wife has to learn all of the duties in case the Keeper cannot, for some reason, carry on with his various jobs, I paid attention to everything new that we had to learn. This knowledge came in handy, since many times I did have to take over as the Keeper, or had to join George in performing his duties. We worked as a team, most of the time, with George being the "boss", of course. He was "Keeper I" and I was "Keeper II".

It did not take very long to feel right at home in our snug brick house, with all of the modern conveniences.

As we retired on Sunday evening, alone on the island with CoOkie and the seagulls, we both had the same thought, "This will not be a dull summer!"

CHAPTER V ON OUR OWN

It seemed like a long night, waiting for the sun rise to tell us that it was time to get up and start acting like real Lighthouse Keepers. Even though the clock said it was only 6:00 A.M., we knew the hour was right to "get going". The rooster started to crow, Cookie was getting restless to go outdoors for her morning walk, and the seagulls were already flying around to find food for their newly-hatched chicks.

After our usual breakfast of orange juice, cold cereal, toast and coffee, we each wrote down our plans for the day. Mine were easy, since I still had not unpacked our linens and clothes, and most of the groceries. George decided to take an inventory of tools and machinery, and to learn where he wanted to keep them for his own convenience. He was real anxious to ride around on the little tractor, carrying supplies in the little wagon hitched to the back of the tractor.

We realized that George's experience as Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds at a high school, and mine as Secretary and Director of Public Relations at the school, came in handy in order to successfully fulfill our expected island duties.

I was anxious to get outdoors to find out if I still had a love for farm life, so it did not take me very long to hang up our few dungarees, tee shirts, and sweatshirts. We each had an old winter jacket, too, and, of course, a rugged raincoat and boots. The "best" dungarees and tee shirts were kept in a special area, to wear only on week-ends when our only obligations were to handle tourists. We wanted to look

like "island people", but still to look clean and neat. No dress clothes, as such, were needed on Thatcher Island. Our week-end clothes were also used to go ashore for shopping, to be changed into our working clothes as soon as we reached the island again. The island meant "work", and the shore meant "fun".

It wasn't long before our daughter, Cyndi, and her husband, George, came over in their boat to see how we were doing and to get a first-hand look at the island which they had observed every day, from afar, for about two years. They lived right across from the island, near Loblolly Cove. Cyndi brought us a lunch, since she knew that oftentimes food can be scarce on an island and wanted us to save our food for later on. This was really thoughtful of her.

Also, Ned Cameron and Dick Whitaker, of the Thatcher Island Committee, took a short trip out in the launch, from the Rockport harbor, to make sure we were doing O.K. We had our first experience in using the winch - worked O.K.

Later on, four kayakers pulled onto the ramp, from New Hampshire, and they had a picnic on the island. These were our first tourists, with many other kayakers to follow in the months and years ahead. We learned that visitors to the island are all very nice people and all have the same love of the outdoors and feel the need and desire to preserve nature in any form.

When all visitors had gone, George and I decided to get the island skiff down to the docks, since this was the boat which was going to be used by us. It had to be painted first and George wanted to make sure there were no leaks in it.

As I collected the eggs from the henhouse that afternoon, I recalled the days of my childhood when I did this for my father, and later on for my foster father, and hated every minute of it, since the hens would peck at my hands. It hurt! However, now I enjoyed it! We had 12 hens and one beautiful rooster! We used to let them run around the yard - they always stayed nearby the house - a pretty sight! Later, due to the number of tourists on the island, we built a 6-foot wire fence to make a large enclosed yard for them to roam around, and they seemed to adjust to it.

Cookie already accepted us as her new Masters, and the cats no longer stared at us with an expression of "Who are you?" Betty had taught me their feeding habits, so I soon gained the trust of our new "charges".

Cookie was our shadow - followed us wherever we went, and even slept on the floor at the foot of our bed, except once in a while she had her own bedroom across the hall, which was named, "Russ's Cove", after the former Keeper - that was his bedroom.

Cookie loved going out in the boat, and each day would go down to the ramp, sit in the boat, and wait for George to take her lobstering - usually around 4:00 PM. In the beginning I went, too, and Cookie would watch me put the buoys into the skiff, as George pulled in the

traps. It looked like fun (as Cookie seemed to think), so one day she grabbed the buoy line, pulled it into the skiff, and then waited for George to pull in the trap. So, I lost my job! Also, when George went fishing, she tried to pull in the pole for him, if he got a bite! And, when a fish WAS caught, she almost went crazy with excitement. She enjoyed lapping the salt water from the fins as the catch lay wiggling at the bottom of the boat. On the way back to the ramp, it was a standard routine for Cookie to jump out of the boat and swim to shore, after shaking a buoy first - why, I never knew.

With a "Ma" and "Pa" cats on the island, brought out there by Ned Cameron, our "director", we kept having a lot of little cute-as-a-button kittens! We were fortunate to find homes on shore for some of them, and finally a nice home for "Ma". "Pa" was also gotten rid of when we had to close the island due to the storm-destruction of the ramp.

Ned decided that we needed goats to eat the poison ivy, and so he brought out two, a mother and daughter, whom I soon named "Maggie" and "Peggy". Don't ask me why - and it didn't matter since they never knew their names anyhow! We had them for three years. They would follow George all around the island, and when I wore any thing red, they would chase me all over the place! Each morning, around sun-up, we would hear them at the back door, trying to get Cookie to come out and play. It didn't take them long to become good playmates, chasing each other all over the island, over rocks and bushes.

We discovered a rhubarb bed near our house and, since my daughter loves rhubarb pie (and I do, too), I used some of it each year to make those much-desired pies.

Inasmuch as I was a farmer's daughter, I looked for an appropriate spot for a garden, and found one, not far from our house. George helped me spade it, weed it, and then put up a high fence so the goats would not get at it. I had green and yellow beans, carrots, tomatoes, lettuce, and squash. George was a good sport about eating vegetables, even though he prefers his meat and potatoes. He was the lobster man and I was the vegetable woman, so we never lacked for food. Also, my cupboard was always stocked with spaghetti, sauce, and Bisquick, which I used for all sorts of special dishes. Powdered milk was much more practical to keep on hand rather than the regular milk. We did have two refrigerators and two freezers.

About twice a month, weather permitting, we would take the little skiff over to Rockport to pick up new supplies, get the mail, etc.

During our six summers on the Island, we made several improvements and additions, as well as handling the daily and weekly chores of mowing trails, spraying for poison ivy, fixing machinery, greeting visitors, etc. We had fun laying tile floors in our kitchen and pantry, and our bathroom. Several rooms need^{ed} new paint, so we tackled those jobs on rainy days. We filled in several holes along the walking trails with gravel from the pit which we discovered along Ann's Way - a path leading to the South End of the island. George would drive the large tractor and I would drive the little tractor, to cart the gravel here and there. This was a new experience for me, and I enjoyed it.

With several folks wanting to camp on the island, we decided we needed more space for them, so we developed a large campground on the North end of the island. This was used for several years by such groups as the Boy Scouts, The School for Field Studies out of Beverly, and many individuals, as well as Ham Radio operators.

Each year we would have Biology Classes from the Rockport High Scvhool come out for a field trip. They would spend the day on the island doing their "thing", and later had to write essays on their trip. Also, sometimes we had fourth and sixth graders out there to study geology and the impottance of lighthouses.

One of the most exciting events was a 3-day week-end of soldiers from Ft. Devens, about 200 of them, who camped in pup tents, and did a lot of required maneuvers to pass certain tests. This was fun to watch, and we enjoy@d tasting their K-Rations - a big improvement over those used in WW II.

Special days were set aside to accommodate groups of artists and authors, as well as the Coast Guard Auxiliary unit who would come out for the@r annual picnic.

For four years, it was a great event when the annual ci@m-bake took place on the island, with 60 - 75 folks coming out for a day of fun. For a while this was a fund-raiser, with cooking being done by Ellen's Harborside, of Rockport. Then it became too expensive, and transportation to the island became a problem, so the bakes were discontinued.

We were fortunate to have a group from Georgia stay with us for about 2 months, for the purpose of building a helicopter pad for the Coast Guard, for any possible emergencies. We enjoyed them - they stayed in the guest quarters.

Also, the International Chimney Co., of Buffalo, N.Y., spent a summer on the island, working on the ~~North~~ North Tower. It needed a lot of repair work, and is owned by the National Wildlife. The light had been turned off in 1932 for economical reasons, and then in 1987, our winter Keeper, with electrical cable donated by the Coast Guard, lit the light again! It now has a regular light bulb which lasts for about 10 months and shines about nine miles out to sea. The South Tower light is solarized.

We did survive some severe storms while on the island, with the worst being "Hurricane Bob". The North end of the island was completely covered by water, from East to West, and the waters were about fifteen feet from our house, in our back yard. However, with no overhead wires or trees, there was no damage. Later, during the "No Name Storm" of 1991, we did lose the boathouse. It was later rebuilt by a group of volunteers.

Wanting to experience some island "adventure", I decided to toss a bottle, with a note inside, into the ocean off the South Tower. I had forgotten about it until I received an answer from a family vacationing in New Harbor, Maine. They were from Vermont and that Fall we visited the family and the fourth grade class, in which the daughter was a member. It was a wonderful week-end! We corresponded for several years, but apparently their interest in islands and lighthouse has "bit the dust".

EPILOGUE

It has been eighteen years since we left "our" Island as Keepers, but our memories of those six years will NEVER leave us! We are on the Board of Directors still, after holding other Committee offices, and continue to have an active interest in Thacher Island. We still enjoy our weekly work days on the Island, in summer months, with a great group of workers, all with different talents and interests. We now have four sets of Keepers, each for one month of duty. This works out well, inasmuch as all have different skills and new ideas, but all with one united purpose - to preserve and maintain a unique, rustic Island, with its Twin Towers and valuable acres of history.

I realize that modern technology is taking ^{over} much of our daily lives, but I am hoping that each coming generation will enjoy the natural beauty of Thacher Island with preservation being the main motive of owning such a unique piece of nature. This preservation should be the only "goal" of those who are truly lovers of Thacher Island - may it forever remain historical.

(Since it has taken me a few months to write these pages of memories, some things have changed on the island. Perhaps they will be included in another island-lover's book. I hope there WILL be one.)