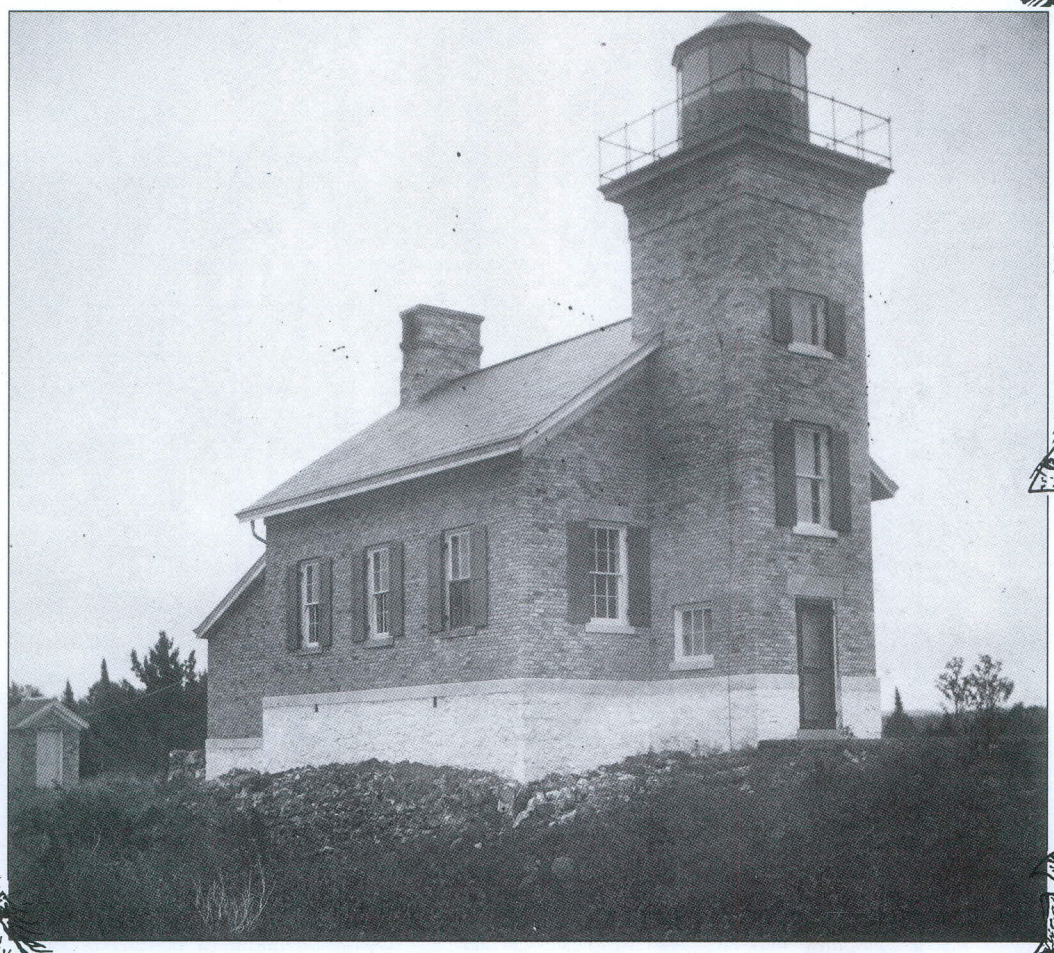
Pages from the Past

Copper Harbor
Lake Superior

Keeper Charles T. Davis -

June 24, 1900 - I opened this journal today after having used the old one for nearly fifteen years. Our two children grown from infants to a full grown young man and woman and this little house is the place that they have learned to call home, Sweet Home !! Be it ever so humble there is no place like home. What an uncertain world this is. Who can look into the future? And who would want to? I made the first entry in this journal on a quiet Sabbath afternoon. Who will write the closing one? echo answers, who?



Copper Harbor, MI 1912

July 3 - I left the station at 5:30 am for Eagle Harbor to get a few supplies and firecrackers to celebrate the 4th.

July 4 - We had dinner at the village today, spent a very quiet day and entertained at 5:45. I have spent and remember a lot of very quiet days on the 4th of July, but I think this one takes the cake.

July 28 - A sad accident happened on the tug Silver Spray this evening.

They were returning from Houghton and when just abreast of the island they discovered that the fireman was missing, he having been laying on a fish can a few minutes before and evidently fallen overboard. His brother, the engineer gave the alarm and they ran back and forth until dark, but found no trace of the missing man. The young man was a sober and industrious young man, he was raised at Hancock. His brother, William McGraw, feels his loss terrible as he blames himself for allowing him to lay on the fish can, instead of sending him below. . . .

July 31 - Mrs. Davis took a walk as far as the harbor today. She made a freezer full of ice cream which we enjoyed thoroughly.

Aug. 6 - Another case of drowning on the tug Silver Spray happened again today about noon just outside of the harbor. A young man by the name of Joseph Sanville was caught in a line and pulled overboard and drowned before they could help him. . . . Will Mintingo jumped overboard with a line and attempted to reach the drowning man, the line was fouled and before it could be cleared the young man sank and did not appear again. It was in about 40 fathoms of water and there is little hope of recovering his body. The accident has cast a gloom over the whole place, this is the second accident that happened on the Spray in ten days.

Aug. 11 - I painted the front tower flower post again today. My mother-in-law is sick at the village. Mrs. Davis was down there.

Aug. 12 - My mother-in-law is quite ill, Mrs. Davis was at the harbor part of the day waiting on her. I walked down part way to meet her after I lit up.

Aug. 16 - I moved my mother-in-law down here today on a boat so that Mrs. Davis can take care of her here. . . . The bay was calm, we carried her on a cot onto the boat and rowed down here and carried cot and patient up to the house.

Oct. 8 - I dug a few bushels of potatoes today. . . . I killed a partridge with a stone, first one this season.

Oct. 14 - Mrs. Davis and myself went to Resolute, I put my daughter Laura in charge of the light. She is very competent to look after it.

Nov. 29 - Thanksgiving Day was observed in a very quiet manner, no visitors, NO turkey and nothing going on.

Dec. 13 - Keeper moved to Eagle Harbor for the winter.

1901 May 15 - Laura returned from Delaware (MI), she met a big black bear on the road . . . the horses reared up and turned toward home . . . in a gallop until she caught up to some men working on the road. They returned with her and the bear was still there but left shortly thereafter.

Aug. 15 - Today is my birthday I am 42 years old.

Sept. 12 - I received a letter of commendation from the Lighthouse Board. I am very much gratified at the kind report of CDR Wilson and hope that we may be able to merit it hereafter while I am in the Lighthouse Service.

1930 - Aug. 15 - My birthday, I am 70 years old today. Miss Crescense Ruppe gave us a dinner party at her cottage this evening. Had a delightful evening. There were eight all together. It was something to remember in the future, one of the bright spots in our time spent here. I received several birthday presents that were entirely unexpected and hence a delightful surprise.

Sept. 30 - Am retiring from the Lighthouse Service today, leaving Mr. Haven in charge of the station. Have spent the most of my life in the service and I am leaving it with best wishes and not much regret.