

PASSAGES

DETOUR REEF LIGHT PRESERVATION SOCIETY

115 S. Huron St., Suite D ♦ P. O. Box 519 ♦ DeTour Village MI 49725-0519 ♦ 906-297-8888

We'll keep the Light on for you!

Issue No. 2 ♦ Summer 1999

JEFF LASER BRINGS THE DETOUR REEF LIGHT FOGHORN HOME

Jeff Laser, DRLPS member from Bellville, Ohio, and a representative of TOOT (reTurn Our Old Tone), has completely restored the original foghorn from the DeTour Reef Light. Jeff retrieved the foghorn from a storeroom at the Great Lakes Historical Society last year (the GLHS agreed to give ownership to the DRLPS). After restoring it at his home, he and his wife Carol brought all 475 pounds of it from Ohio to the Drummond Island (Michigan) Historical Museum on June 5, 1999.

It is a beautiful piece of America's maritime history and has been restored to perfection and tooting order by a true labor of love from Jeff Laser! He meticulously assembled the foghorn at the Drummond Island Historical Museum where it is presently on temporary display. The plan is for the foghorn to be part of a larger overall display on the DeTour Reef Light at the museum.

Richard Curtis of Drummond Island made the first-class stand on which the foghorn rests.

A dinner was held at the Northwood honoring Jeff and Richard for their contributions to the DRLPS. ♦



Jeff Laser with the DRL foghorn he restored and delivered to the Drummond Island Museum in June. *Photo by Barb Snider*

LIGHTHOUSE MEMORIES *By Bill Alguire*

Please submit your special lighthouse memories.

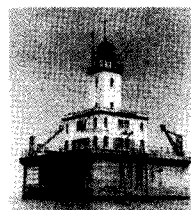
In 1956 I was traveling to Drummond Island with my parents and siblings to visit friends. As we approached DeTour, I caught a glimpse of this beautiful white structure surrounded by the deepest blue water that I have ever seen. It looked as if it was a castle in the middle of the lake. Once on the ferry, I got out of the car and was mesmerized by the sight of the DeTour Reef Lighthouse.

During my short visit to the island, I was enjoying some great perch fishing when all of a sudden we noticed a "pea soup" fog rolling across the lake in our direction. We pulled anchor and headed back to the cabin. As we reached the dock, I heard the majestic foghorn with an eerie Beeeoooooo, which is a sound that I shall never forget.

There are times when I appreciate the lighthouse more than others. On several occasions while fishing I depended on the lighthouse to get me home safely due to heavy fog. When I have the lighthouse in sight I

know exactly where I am. Other times I appreciate the lighthouse are when I am returning from trips from down below. When I catch a glimpse of the lighthouse driving across 134, I know I'm almost home.

My children have grown up with the lighthouse and share some of the same feelings for it as I do. Some day, thanks to the DRLPS, my grandchildren will have an opportunity to visit the DeTour Reef Lighthouse. ♦



DeTour Reef Light
c. 1950

*Photo courtesy
Judy Gillett*

FINANCIAL REPORT

1998 YEAR-END FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Income:

Membership Dues	\$25,779.00
Donations	685.00
Investment	302.00
Fund-raiser Events	13,787.00
Memorabilia Sales	6,080.00
Total Income	\$46,633.00

Expenses:

Fund-raiser Events	\$ 4,986.00
Memorabilia Purchases	15,685.00
Printing, Postage, Publications	3,906.00
Telephone	996.00
Dues & Subscriptions	507.00
Advertising	540.00
Office Expense	3,664.00
Bank Service Charges	335.00
Refunds	676.00
Total Expenses	\$30,619.00

Net Income: \$15,338.00

Cash, Savings & Investment Income	\$15,338.00
Memorabilia Inventory	11,265.00
Total Assets	\$26,603.00

For detailed information, please contact DRLPS Treasurer Barb Snider 906-493-6082. Report prepared by C. M. Bookkeeping.

MEMBERSHIP

Total Members as of 4/9/99 = 421 coast-to-coast!

Categories: Individual = 88, Family = 84, Patron = 36,
Keeper = 40, Lifetime = 18, Grand Keeper = 12

Note that some categories include more than one person.

Demographics: Southeast Michigan = 170, Drummond Island = 66, Other States(21) = 62, DeTour Village = 49, Other UP = 36, Other MI = 38

COMMITTEES & CHAIRPERSONS

Administrative	Jeri Feltner 906-493-6079
Exhibits & Displays	Jim Charles 906-297-2609
External Affairs	Dick Moehl 734-426-2230
Finance	Carol Melvin 906-493-6582
Fund-Raising	Barb Snider 906-297-5999
Grants	Chuck & Jeri Feltner 906-493-6079
Historical	Chuck & Jeri Feltner 906-493-6079
Membership	Mary Rogers 906-297-5704
Marketing & PR	Jeri Feltner 906-493-6079
Memorabilia	Barb Gusfa 734-455-7684
Newsletter	Jeri Feltner 906-493-6079
Property	Bob Jones 906-297-3231
Restoration	Denny Bailey 906-493-5232
Webmaster	Dan Sirrine (dnsirrine@iserv.net)

WE NEED YOU! Your help is needed on the above Committees.
Please contact the respective chairperson. Thank you!
Remember: You don't have to live in the area in order to help!

THANK YOU

- ◆ To the volunteers, members, businesses and local students who support the programs of the DRLPS.
- ◆ Some names missed in the last issue due a thank you are: Log Cabin Antiques, Apple Rose, Parks Riverview Cabins, Comfort Inn of Cedarville, Chili Dog Ent., Sudsy Wash & Dry, FMB Sault Bank Pickford, Les Cheneaux Wash Tub, and Hudson Hardware.
- ◆ Judy Gillett contacted the DRLPS on the web and provided information about her grandfather Lyle A. Garfield who worked for the DRL from 1937 to 1941. She sent us several photographs along with a DRL cross-stitch pattern she created.
- ◆ Mary Lou & Ron Freels who donated the original September 1965 U.S. Coast Guard DeTour Reef Light Station logbook. Ron was stationed at the lighthouse.
- ◆ Jim Ross for donation of the Peapod boat he crafted.
- ◆ Denny Bailey & DIYH for contribution of the boat trailer.
- ◆ Sunes & Ruth & Vince Klamers for peapod raffle tickets.
- ◆ Jeff Laser for recovery and restoration of the foghorn.
- ◆ Richard Curtis and Osborn Materials for the foghorn stand.
- ◆ John Andree who attended (for the DRLPS) the Michigan Humanities Council Grant Writing Workshop in Lansing, for his Auction '99 items, and other supportive efforts.

PASSAGES

Newsletter of the

DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society

115 S. Huron, Suite D, P. O. Box 519

DeTour Village MI 49725-0519

906-297-8888, Fax 906-297-8970

www.drummond-island.com/reef.html

www.detroitvillage.com



DRLPS Mission: To establish, support and promote efforts in the preservation and restoration of the DeTour Reef Light; to achieve the safe-keeping of the building, artifacts and records; to educate and inform the public on its history; and to raise awareness about the importance of volunteers in maintaining and protecting the lighthouse for all generations.

A tax-exempt, nonprofit, 501c3 organization

Donations are tax-deductible - EIN 38-3387252

Editor

Jeri Baron Feltner

Contributing Staff

Tyler Snider, Mike Spears

(We need help with our Newsletter - please call Jeri 906-493-6079)

Officers & Directors

Robert N. Jones, President; James M. Charles, Vice-president

Jeri Baron Feltner, Secretary; Barbara J. Snider, Treasurer

Denny Bailey, Director; Dick Moehl, Director

Membership Categories

Individual \$20, Family \$30, Patron \$50, Keeper \$100,

Lamplighter \$250, Lifetime \$500, Grand Keeper \$1,000

Your newsletter contributions are very much appreciated!

Please submit material to:

Jeri Baron Feltner

38456 S. Seajay Row

Drummond Island MI 49726-9429

906-493-6079, Fax 906-493-6496, e-mail: jeribaron@aol.com

DRLPS: A SUCCESSFUL SOCIETY

The DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society has achieved phenomenal success from its short beginning January 1998 thanks to our dedicated board members, officers, committee chairpersons, volunteers, and each and every member.

The DRLPS accomplished much in its charter year. Membership grew to over 400 people coast-to-coast, several successful fundraisers were held, statewide events promoting DRLPS were attended, publications nationwide reported on the DeTour Reef Light, and national recognition was received from the National Trust for Historic Preservation by naming Michigan's historic lighthouses, exemplified by the DeTour Reef Light, to its prestigious 1998 *List of Endangered Historic Places*.

For 1999, we are off to a full-throttle effort to continue our efforts to save the DeTour Reef Light. Many fun activities and educational programs are planned.

FUND-RAISER EVENTS: The 2nd Annual *Save Our Lighthouse Benefit Dinner* held on May 1 was an enjoyable event held at the Fogcutter in DeTour. The 2nd Annual *Lighthouse Boat Cruise* scheduled for June 20 is off to a smooth sail! Our *Lighthouse Concert* with Lee Murdock will be on July 24 & 25 at the Fogcutter in DeTour Village MI. The 2nd Annual *Auction* will be held on Sunday, August 15th at the Brooder House of Woodmoor Resort on Drummond Island. (See enclosed event flyers.)

GRANT: A Michigan Coastal Management Program grant application was submitted to create an interpretive display of the DeTour Reef Light depicting the history of the Lighthouse and the associated commercial development of the Lake Superior Basin via ship traffic up the St. Mary's River. If grant is awarded, this display will be housed in the Drummond Island Historical Museum.

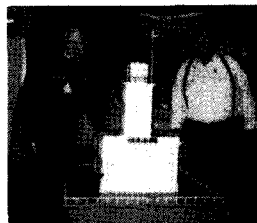
HELP WANTED: The DRLPS needs volunteers to help with fund-raisers, grant proposals, sale of memorabilia, newsletter, etc. Please call the Society at 906-297-8888.

MEMORABILIA (by Barb Gusfa): An ongoing activity of the DRLPS is the sale of lighthouse memorabilia. The purpose of this activity is two-fold. The first is to create an awareness of the DeTour Reef Light and the second is to

provide funds for the society programs through the sale of memorabilia. We have several quality logo items for sale (see enclosed pink order sheet). DRLPS members receive a 15% discount. Your purchases will be greatly appreciated, and a portion of your purchase price is a tax deduction.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (by Mary Rogers): We are very proud of each and every member for your membership. Without you, the DRLPS would not be successful. We encourage each of you to renew your membership to keep our initial efforts going so we can attain the goals of acquiring, restoring and preserving the lighthouse. If you haven't already done so, please send in your renewal, or call me at 906-297-5704 for an application. Thank you!

LIGHTHOUSE MODEL: Built by Bob Jones and Jim Charles from USCG plans reduced by the drafting class at DeTour High School, this four-foot wood model of the DRL is complete with blinking light and foghorn (that really toots!) It is on display at the Fogcutter in DeTour.



Bob Jones and Jim Charles with their splendid four-foot model of the DeTour Reef Light

Photo by Jeri Feltner

LIGHTHOUSE RESTORATION PLAN

The potential schedule of events for restoration is:

- 1) June -USCG asbestos/lead work on the lighthouse.
- 2) July - DRLPS Asbestos Management Plan for USCG
- 3) July - Bottomland lease from the DEQ.
- 4) July - Lighthouse lease from the USCG.
- 5) July - USGC "Key" transfer to DRLPS.
- 6) August - Restoration work on lighthouse begins.

OBITUARY: We sadly report the passing on May 20, 1999, of DRLPS charter member William G. "Bill" Kemppainen, 86, of Drummond Island. He was captain of the Drummond Island Ferry and also a tugboat captain on the Great Lakes for over 20 years. Our sincere sympathy is extended to his family and friends. He will be greatly missed by all that knew this kind man.

PEAPOD BOAT RAFFLE: DRLPS is having a raffle of an exquisite 13' Peapod Boat handcrafted by Jim Ross of DeTour who donated the boat to the Society, and an EZ-Loader trailer donated by Denny Bailey of Drummond Island Yacht Haven. Raffle tickets are \$10 each and are available at local merchants and from Bob Jones (906-297-3231) or Barb Snider (906-493-6082). Tickets donated by Sunes and Ruth & Vince Klamers. Drawing will be held at the DRLPS Auction August 15 (need not be present to win).



GREAT LAKES LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM in 1999

By Sandy Planisek, Director



While the Great Lakes Lighthouse Museum is busy with its own start-up, it has not failed to notice progress on the transfer of DeTour Reef Lighthouse from the Coast Guard to the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society. We applaud the perseverance of the DRLPS's Board and hope that the dream of a summer "passing of the key" turns into a reality.

At the GLLM we are busy collecting money, artifacts and ideas for a world-class museum. As President Dick Moehl said, "This is like leading an orchestra." Visiting foundations and corporations, meeting with State officials, consulting with other museums are all steps in the process of creating a new museum.

Challenging work does not overshadow the fun of working with lighthouses. Here are a few of our upcoming fun activities: *Lighthouse Photo Workshop* – June 27-30. Live at a lighthouse while learning the basics of photography. This limited enrollment program will give you a chance to enjoy life without the amenities while photographing the nature of St. Helena Island. *St. Helena to Beaver Island Cruise* – July 5-9. Cruise from Mackinaw City to St. Helena for two nights in the lighthouse and lessons in the history of the industrialists of the island in the mid-1800s. Then cruise on to Beaver Island and learn about the arch-enemy industrialist residing there, James Strang. This trip will offer a chance to see seven lighthouses as well as to learn of the local economic struggles of the 1850s. *North American Lighthouse Festival* – August 14-15. This two-day festival will celebrate the lighthouses of the Great Lakes, both Canadian and U.S. Centered in downtown Mackinaw City, the events will include cruises to the lighthouses of the Straits, tours of historic ships, a road rally, food booths, lighthouse crafts, and lighthouse entertainers.

We are working to have a successful museum that properly documents the history of lighthouses, the science of lighthouses and the culture of lighthouses in fashion that families and scholars enjoy. ♦

GLLM, 100 Dock Dr., Box 712, Mackinaw City MI 49701
616-436-3333, Fax 616-436-7870.



Dick Moehl at a recent DRLPS meeting holding a model of the GLLM built by Otto Stout.

Photo by Jeri Feltner

STATE OF MICHIGAN LIGHTHOUSE LICENSE PLATE PROPOSAL

State Rep. Scott Shackleton (107th district) has sponsored a lighthouse preservation license plate to save Michigan's historic lighthouses. This is part of Secretary of State Candice S. Miller's plan giving residents the option off supporting their favorite university or charitable cause by purchasing a fund raising specialty license plate which includes universities, lighthouses, water quality, wildlife habitat protection, and child abuse prevention. Funds from the lighthouse plate would help the state's 116 historic lighthouses.

GREAT LAKES. GREAT TIMES. GREAT LIGHTHOUSES!

The State of Michigan's new theme for Welcome Centers promotes the lighthouse to attract more tourists. All Michigan Welcome Centers will be changed to support a lighthouse motif and each center will have a 52-foot tall metal lighthouse built at its location. Also, the states TV promotional ads end with the line: "Michigan will leave a lighthouse on for you."

NEW MICHIGAN ROAD MAP TO FEATURE MICHIGAN LIGHTHOUSES

Michigan Department of Transportation has published a new road map that features Michigan's historic lighthouses. The unveiling ceremony was June 11 at the Michigan Historical Center with Governor Engler as the keynote speaker.

GUIDE TO LAKE MICHIGAN LIGHTHOUSES

West Michigan Tourist Association published a 56-page, full color guide to Lake Michigan and its lighthouses. It is geared to the traveler who wants to do the "circle tour" of Lake Michigan. It covers four states, has numerous lighthouse photos and lighthouse directory. To obtain a free copy, call 800-442-2084.

DICK MOEHL ON THE MOVE

DRLPS Director Dick Moehl was voted President of the newly formed American Lighthouse Coordinating Committee, dealing with national concerns of lighthouse organizations. Dick is also President of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Museum and President of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Bob Jones



It was just two years ago that Dick Moehl made me aware of the Coast Guard's plan to excess the DeTour Reef Light. Like many of our local residents, my first reaction was disbelief – "they couldn't do that!" As I learned more about the plight of lighthouses, both in the United States and around the world, I realized that the doomsday lists were just as real for lighthouses as for military bases and the DeTour Reef Light was at risk. After touring the lighthouse in August of 1997, I became even more convinced that something must be done to preserve this part of our local history.

I began to talk with others and by January of 1998, a dedicated group of people willing to serve as Board and committee members, had been recruited and the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society (DRLPS) was formed. Across the country, from coast to coast, people came forward to join DRLPS. I regularly receive calls from persons wanting to donate time, money or both to our cause. From our young DeTour/Drummond school students to seniors who no longer live in the area but have fond memories of the Light, everyone wants to do something to save our lighthouse. Certainly, we still have some "Doubting Thomas" who say they can't excess the Light, but even they ask often how things are going and watch the progress of the DRLPS which currently numbers 440 members.

Working with the members of the DRLPS is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. The project demonstrates what is best about our area and people who love lighthouses. I believe that with continued support we will "Keep the Light On" for ourselves and future generations. Thank you for the opportunity to work with and get to know each of you. ♦

Michigan Lighthouse Project Sponsors Successful Workshop

By Martha L. MacFarlane

Environmental Review Coordinator, State Historic Preservation Office

The Michigan Lighthouse project and the State Historic preservation Office, in cooperation with the Michigan Historical Center Foundation, presented *Keep the Lights On! Strategies for Saving Michigan's Lighthouses* on November 6, 1998. This day-long workshop, held at the Michigan Historical Center in Lansing, addressed the imminent threat facing Michigan's historic lighthouses over the next decade, financial assistance for lighthouse preservation efforts and the challenge of preserving these important resources for the future. Speakers arrived from across the nation, including Rear Admiral John McGowan, Commander of the Ninth Coast Guard District in Cleveland. Speakers from a variety of state and federal agencies and preservation advocacy organizations also contributed to the productive event.

With over 150 participants, the workshop was the first public event sponsored by the recently formed Michigan Lighthouse Project. The Michigan Lighthouse Project is a coalition of federal and state government agencies, state and national preservation advocacy organizations, legislators, and other interested parties that aims to increase public and governmental awareness of lighthouse preservation issues and identify ways to ensure the long-term preservation of Michigan's lighthouses. The Michigan Lighthouse Project will assist potential lighthouse stewards by serving as a clearinghouse for information on the disposal and transfer process, current and pending legislation, and available resources. The Michigan Lighthouse Project seeks input and commitment from both the public and private sectors. For more information, contact the Michigan Lighthouse Project, c/o the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, P. O. Box 720, Clarkston MI 48370-0720. ♦

Ed. Note: The DRLPS was invited to speak at this historic event. Jeri Feltner presented "How to Build A Successful Lighthouse Preservation Society: The DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society."

JUNIOR LIGHTHOUSE VOLUNTEERS

By Amy Scott

The Detour and Drummond elementary students collected cans every Friday during the school year. The students have earned over \$200 toward the lighthouse preservation project. To spark the interest of the students and the community, the Kindergarten, First and Second grade students at DeTour built a candy replica of the lighthouse. It stood about four feet tall and was covered with over 500 pieces of candy. The students sold raffle tickets to earn money for a field trip.

DRLPS Certificates of Appreciation were passed out to each student volunteer by President Bob Jones at May school functions. Special speakers at the events were Carl Levin's regional representatives Kevin Morter and Harold Chase.



Drawings of the lighthouse made by the junior volunteers.

Photo by
Jeri Feltner

THE LOST LENS

By Tyler Snider



On November 24, 1992, an article was printed in the Sault Ste. Marie MI *Evening News* titled "Back Home." – Back home meaning the DeTour Reef Light's 3-1/2-order Fresnel lens.

In 1822, a French physicist named Augustin Fresnel invented the Fresnel lens. The lens has four flash panels, each with a bull's-eye and concentric circular prism in the central drum. The prisms gather light, which is focused, into a concentrated beam. Fresnel lenses came in a variety of sizes, or "orders," ranging from sixth-order (about 17 inches high and a foot wide) to first-order (as much as ten feet high and six feet wide). Most Fresnels used on the Great Lakes were third, fourth or fifth-order lenses.

Built in Parbief, Benard, Turenne Paris, France, the 3-1/2-order Fresnel lens was shipped across the Atlantic in pieces and installed in the DeTour Reef Light in 1936. It rotated once every forty seconds producing a ten-second interval between flashes. The 12-foot tall lens was dismantled in 1974 and stored in nine wooden crates of various sizes.

In December of 1988, a loan agreement was filed which sent the DeTour Reef Light's Fresnel lens from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to the Mackinac State Park Commission in Mackinaw City where it was stored. Electrical Technician Timothy Struckman and First Mate Douglas Hoagland of the U.S. Coast Guard transferred the lens to Mackinaw City on July 21, 1988.

"Early attempts in DeTour to return the lens included a petition which villagers signed and sent to some politician," said Bob Jones, Assistant Director of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority, and President of the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society.

Jones discovered the lens in Mackinaw City in the early 1990's while searching for something else. He lobbied heavily to the U. S. Coast Guard to secure for safe return of the Fresnel. He contacted the Ninth District Commander of the U. S. Coast Guard in Cleveland, Ohio, in which he obtained permission to have the lens returned to DeTour.

During the summer of 1992, Dick Moehl, President of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association, called the Admiral of the Ninth District USCG requesting them to come check out the DeTour Passage Historical Museum's facilities as a place to display the lens.

In August of 1992, a Standard Facility Report Application was sent to Jones by Gail Fuller, who at the time was Courier of the USCG, by direction of the USCG Commander in Washington. This was a report requesting an explanation of how the lens would be stored.

On September 9, 1992, a loan request was sent to Fuller by Jones requesting the DeTour Reef Light's Fresnel lens to be loaned to the DeTour Passage Historical Museum in DeTour Village, Michigan – situated on the St. Mary's River within sight of the lighthouse.

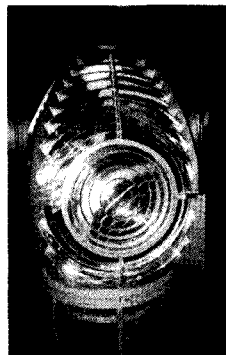
On November 23, 1992, the loan agreement was sent to Jones by Fuller stating the lens was worth \$1.5 million dollars. On November 24, 1992, the agreement was signed by Jones and sent back.

At this point, Jones contacted Marsha Hamilton, Courier of the Mackinac Island Parks Commission, about retrieval of the lens. He also sent a letter to the USCG requesting to retrieve the lens with a truck. This was denied by the USCG. They would send two Coast Guard personnel to move it from Mackinaw City to DeTour. The lens arrived in the fall of 1992 where it sat in boxes at the Museum all winter.

In March of 1993, Jones contacted Admiral Wilham Kine, Commander of the USCG in Washington, because nothing was happening. Kine stated that a specially trained unit would arrive to assemble the lens. In the middle of March a team of two USCG personnel arrived and assembled the lens in two days.

Instead of the 500-watt lamp bulb, which had a range of 14 miles, a white Christmas light bulb rests inside the Fresnel lens. The lens was replaced because technology overcame manpower. A computerized lens was more efficient than manning the DeTour Reef Light 24 hours everyday.

When asked if the Fresnel lens would make one final journey to the DeTour Reef Light if it were converted to a lighthouse museum, Jones nodded his head silently in denial. The lens is staying in DeTour. ♦



DeTour Reef Light
1936 3-1/2 Order
Fresnel Lens is on
display at the DeTour
Passage Historical
Museum in DeTour
Village MI.

Photo by Bob Jones

DETOUR PASSAGE SHIPWRECK TALES

By Mike Spears



The DeTour Passage has been an important commercial waterway since the very beginning of modern Great Lakes history. Its first recorded usage for Great Lakes commerce dates back to the 1600's when early French explorers first established the fur trade.

In the early days of the fur trade, when the canoe was the chief mode of transportation, the final trading destinations were Montreal and Quebec, located along the St. Lawrence River. For nearly two hundred years, the main route from Mackinac and Lake Huron to those trade centers was via DeTour Passage and the North Channel to the French River, Lake Nipissing, and the Ottawa River, finally to the St. Lawrence River.

By the early 1800's, the ship had replaced the canoe as the chief mode of transportation, and other ports on the Great Lakes were developing. The major trading centers then became Lake Ports such as Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. For a brief period, the importance of the DeTour Passage, as a commercial waterway declined. But as the mid-1800's approached, copper was discovered on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and the DeTour Passage once again became important – as the gateway to Lake Superior.

Some of the vessels making their passage to Superior did not survive and consequently there have been numerous shipwrecks in the vicinity of DeTour Passage and Drummond Island. Although most of these shipwreck incidents were unimportant to the outside world, each is a small but interesting and important fragment of the history of the DeTour Passage, and of the DeTour Reef Light which was built to guide these vessels.

Our First DeTour Passage Shipwreck Tale

Those who frequent the waterfront along the south end of DeTour are probably aware of the large shipwreck protruding out of the water near the shore just north of Frying Pan Island. Near the wreck is an old paddle wheel. And not too far away, at the south end of the Frying Pan Island shoreline, is another paddle wheel. The casual observer would imagine, as I first did, that the two paddle wheels were part of that shipwreck. However, if that observer were to ask one of the older residents of DeTour, he or she might learn that this is not the case. The protruding shipwreck is the *SAINTE MARIE*, a wooden railcar ferry that was abandoned there in 1927 by her last owner T. L. Durocher of DeTour (then a prominent salvager

on the Great Lakes). The paddle wheels are from the *MICHIGAN CENTRAL*, an iron railcar ferry, which were abandoned in 1923 when that vessel was converted to a barge by Durocher in 1923. The converted barge (*MICHIGAN CENTRAL*) sank in 1926 in False DeTour Passage just east of Drummond Island.

If our casual observer were to stop in one of the shops in DeTour, he or she might find a postcard showing an aerial view of DeTour. The *SAINTE MARIE* wreck, and the paddle wheel next to her, is quite visible in this photograph. A closer look would reveal another wreck, totally submerged, and right next to the *SAINTE MARIE*. This wreck is the wooden steamer *JOHN W. CULLEN*, abandoned there by T. L. Durocher in 1933. Less than a half-mile south and slightly east lies another wreck, the tug *GENERAL*. This wreck lies in about thirty feet of water, just off Frying Pan Island, also abandoned by T. L. Durocher after burning to the waterline in 1930.

The area around Frying Pan Island is one of the more incredible submerged maritime junkyards in the Great Lakes region, but the story doesn't end with the wrecks near Frying Pan Island. South of the entrance to the DeTour Marina lies another partially submerged shipwreck. This is the steamer *SUPERIOR*, which burned to the waterline there in 1929. Inside the marina at the north end lies the drivetrain of the early Drummond Island ferry, the *PHILIP*; and just north of the marina in the old Watson dock area lie the remains of the steamers *TWO MYRTLES* and *ALICE C*. Other wrecks reported as abandoned along the DeTour shoreline are the steamers *M. S. TREMPER* and *LOTUS*, along with the fishing tugs *MINTA K* and *LILLIE A*. Besides the shipwrecks, there are also numerous submerged cribs that once supported the several coal docks that were prominent features on DeTour's waterfront.

Many of the area residents are quite knowledgeable of their "waterfront graveyard" through the efforts of John T. Nevill, a writer for the Sault Ste. Marie *Evening News* who resided in DeTour in the 1950's. Several of his stories were compiled into a book entitled *Wanderings*, published in 1955. Mr. Nevill's deep love for this uniquely beautiful part of Michigan and the Great Lakes region is immediately obvious to those who read his stories. ♦

© Mike Spears 1999

Ed. Note: Mike Spears of Dearborn MI is an avid scuba diver and shipwreck researcher., who was recently appointed Public-Member at-Large of the Michigan Underwater Salvage Committee.

More of his stories on DeTour Passage Shipwreck Tales to come in future issues of this newsletter.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

- ◇ July 24 & 25 - DRLPS CONCERT with popular Great Lakes folk singer and guitarist LEE MURDOCK at the Fogcutter Restaurant in DeTour MI. Sat (members only) at 6:30 p.m., Sun at 3:30 (906-297-8888).
- ◇ August 15 - DRLPS AUCTION (3-8 p.m.) at the Brooder House of Woodmoor Resort on Drummond Island MI (906-297-8888).
- ◇ August 14 & 15 - North American Lighthouse Festival sponsored by the Great Lakes Lighthouse Museum in Mackinaw City MI (616-436-3333).
- ◇ October 8, 9 & 10 - Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival in Alpena MI (800-4-Alpena).
- ◇ November 7 - Lighthouses & Lakes Day at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing (517-373-1630).

LETTERS to the DRLPS

Dear Folks: Enclosing my check for a family membership. In 1955 I was stationed there to work in the area taking care of the lights and buoys. The boat was tied up to the coal dock. I lived in town (DeTour). The population was about 300 people back then. DeTour Reef Lighthouse had a crew of four.

Three lighthouse service guys and one Coast Guard. They had their own boat, but from time to time, we would run people back and forth or bring things by. I was on the light a dozen times or so.

DeTour Village had two restaurants, three bars, and many

very fine citizens. My stay there was very eventful. I learned a lot, particularly the joys of living in a small town. Looking forward to a return visit. Meantime, best wishes! ◇

- Jim & Patricia McGuire, Lancaster CA July 13, 1998.

(From our web site) Dear Jeri: I was web surfing to find information on the DRL. My grandfather, Lyle A. Garfield, worked for the lighthouse from 1937 to 1941. We have several photographs of the lighthouse. The one I remember the best is one where the lighthouse was three feet thick with ice from top to bottom. My grandmother would tell us that grandpa and the other workers had to physically chop themselves out in order to get to safety and to clear the ice off the light at the top. Grandpa had to wash that light everyday and help maintain the light. My mother use to tell us kids all about the big storm, and also of walking out to the light during the winter to see her dad. She said that sometimes they would drive out to the light. Grandma would relate how grandpa said the lighthouse would groan and vibrate when a really bad storm would come rolling in from Lake Huron. He wondered if the lighthouse would stand, but it did! ◇

-- Judy Gillett, Battle Creek MI, February 26, 1999.



Lyle A. Garfield, on the shores of DeTour in 1948, worked for the DeTour Reef Light from 1937 to 1941.

Photo courtesy of Judy Gillett

PASSAGES

DETOUR REEF LIGHT PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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