



P.O. Box 177
Empire, Michigan 49630

1993/1994, Vol.4, No.1

March 1, 1993

HAPPY NEW YEAR FRIENDS!!!

1993 has arrived ..., and I hope the New Year is bringing good will to you all! We are enjoying a beautiful Northwest Michigan "snowy" winter with occasional opportunities to capture some solar heat. Beachwalks this time of year offer spectacular views of South Manitou Island and "minds images" of winters 100 years ago days turning into weeks of ice-bound isolation ... cutting, splitting and hauling the seasons wood supply ... cutting ice on Lake Florence ... ice-fishing ... snowball fights on blustery walks home from school ... and endless hours bellied-up to woodstoves spinning yarns, slurping hot black coffee with the sweet smell of homemade bread in the air To most of you, these are memories ... to others of us these create images to enjoy!

... Please consider recording those memories in writing ... or on tape ... to share with those of us who rely on those "images" to bring South Manitou Island history "to life".

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

The explorer examines the map or surveys the landscape. Usually an island holds the most intrigue. The explorer's mind wanders. Can I get there? Who owns it? Will the natives be friendly? At first glance, maps show that the Manitou Islands, with the exception of some relatively tiny, yet significant

inholdings, are "owned" by the federal government under the direction of the National Park Service. In actuality the islands are publicly owned. They have been placed under the stewardship of the National Park Service. We, as members of the public and as South Manitou Memorial Society members, have the opportunity to express our views as to how this land is managed.

In the recent past much of these islands was privately owned. This fact, however, did not prevent individuals to act as stewards of the land when their actual land ownership was negligible. I am told of a woman who greeted visitors to South Manitou with outstretched arms welcoming them to "her" island. In contrast, a man on North Manitou would patrol the island to keep people away. Sometimes outsiders would say that these people "acted as if they owned the place." Did these individuals actually own these islands? No, but when they were acting as stewards of the islands they were in possession.

My expertise includes the vegetation and plant life of the Manitou Islands. That aspect of the islands is mine. Someone else, due to frequent island visits and long-term study, may claim the birds. Other members of our Society due to their extensive research may claim island history. And some, by token of their ancestry, have an island heritage which they (even every cell in their body) possess. On a smaller scale anyone who actively visits South or North Manitou, who returns home with photographs, beach pebbles, or even an experience which they remember fondly, can claim a part of the

islands.

As long as these Islands remain accessible, people will come. A few will desire to "own" a piece of that world and a subset of these will want to associate with others who find this part of Lake Michigan special. They, too, will want to have a voice as to how this land is managed. The South Manitou Memorial Society has a diverse membership. Each member has a claim on the island and, almost certainly, each has an island claim on them. Collectively the Society has a choice as to how we treat those who have yet to come. As President of the South Manitou Memorial Society, my intent is to open my arms and say, "Welcome to my islands!".

Brian I. Hazlett

**BEATRICE THOMPSON HOLMES
1905 - 1993**

Beatrice Thompson Holmes was born and grew up on South Manitou Island where she lived until 1920. Her father was Thomas Thompson.

Beatrice died Feb. 20, 1993 in Grand Haven, Michigan where she had lived for many years. She was 88 years old.

She is survived by her son Gerald Holmes, 4 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. Services and Internment will be held in Grand Haven, Michigan.

We extend our sympathies to the family and friends of Beatrice Thompson Holmes. We shall miss her dearly. The family requests memorials in her name be donated to the South Manitou Memorial Society.

**SOUTH MANITOU MEMORIAL SOCIETY
FINANCIAL STATUS
2-15-93**

Perpetual Fund:	\$ 5,000.00
Savings Account: (Empire Nat. Bank)	\$ 3,714.36
Jack Phillips: Memorial Fund	\$ 1,357.95

Note: An anonymous donor has contributed 400 shares of Cumulative Preferred Stock (worth \$10,000) in First Chicago Corp. to a South Manitou Memorial Society Perpetual Fund, interest income from this stock, estimated at \$200 per quarter, will be deposited in the Society's bank account. First Chicago Corp. is a multi-bank holding company incorporated in Delaware. The principal asset of the Company is the capital stock of The First National Bank of Chicago.

**MY POINT OF VIEW
by G.C. FURST**

Hot off the Press! Glenn writes of the nine years he and his family lived at the North Manitou Island Lighthouse Station.

* Feb. 1919 - Feb. 1928 *

Copies may be obtained from Glenn at:

37132 Sandra Ave.
Zephyrhills, FL 33541
Book: \$6.00
Mailed: \$7.00
10(or more) Mailed: \$6.50

**CONGRATULATIONS
GLENN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

At the Annual Meeting in July the Membership discussed and voted to hold Board Elections by mail. There were questions as to whether this was in accordance with our by-laws.

Cynthia Heisler volunteered to research the following questions: Why we can't go with the will of the vote at the Annual Meeting and hold election by mail? AND Who is Robert and what were his, "Rules of Order?"

The following was learned: Robert is actually General Henry M. Robert and his son and grandson all the same. General Robert found, in the many organizations he was in, that a lot of time was spent deciding how to do things and not the tasks for which the group had been formed. He found two recorded U.S. systems. His book is based on research into the operations of the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. The House was explained by a man named Cushing many years after Thomas~Jefferson wrote how to operate the Senate. Since the systems are different, written by different people that's why you can have a filibuster in the Senate, but not the House.

Robert began his research in New York in 1863, when moved back from the front. He was spurred on during involvement in groups in San Francisco and Seattle. Robert had time to write and publish the book (Robert's Rules of Order) while stationed in Milwaukee with the Army Corp in a severe winter (1874) when work on Lake Michigan navigation projects was stalled. The book was completed in 1876. It would surprise none of us that a winter on Lake Michigan could stall work enough to afford the time to undertake such a massive project. Groups were so desperate to have this task done, the first printing in 1876 sold out in four months instead of the anticipated two years.

It has been published since 1915 by Scott, Foresman of Glenview, IL. Robert's

1990 edition runs 706 pages. Since parliamentary law is always evolving, it is assumed the Senate and House now have volumes of directions a bit larger than Robert's.

At the start of his book Robert states, "Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty."

So, our Memorial Society can have our rules written to meet our needs, but we need an authority to back us up in the meantime. You must have a parliamentary system on which you rely, which can be written by one of our members. We must always be internally consistent within the Society's bylaws (which we have not been).

Therefore, assuming we accept Robert's Rules and understand we do not want to duplicate his work, the following addresses the mail-in election process:

To do a mail-in election, every detail must be in the by-laws and approved ahead of time. Among the requirements are more than one candidate from the committee for each office, a certified list of all members correct to the date of the mailing of ballots, copies of all voting members signatures to assure someone else at the address did not vote. Also necessary in the mailing are the directions for doing the mailing, biographical sketches of each candidate, a self-addressed stamped envelope to each voter, an inner envelope which must bear the voter's signature, a ballot folded in such a way that the vote cannot be read when removed from the envelope and a tally committee to count and certify the vote.

As you can see all those steps are necessary to assure a valid, honest vote. Robert states that the process should be used by professional and scientific societies with national and international memberships. A society where such a high percentage of the membership makes the meeting is not an

appropriate one for using such a process. Most state-wide societies do not use the process.

welding certifications. I completed my firefighter I & II training through the State of Michigan 3 years

After a careful analysis of our membership list, Cynthia found two-thirds of our members live in the state of Michigan, many others in adjacent states. Even those from long distances often make the meeting. By voting at our meeting, we are not disenfranchising our membership, which is the reason for using mail-in ballots. No, you may not mix mail-in votes with those of the persons present. The rules work very hard to assure that nominations can be made from the floor. Facilitating the type of election the Society had in 1991 is exactly the point.

Cynthia concludes that the mail-in process would be highly time-consuming and expensive. The risk of spoiled ballots seems high also ... Nominations by mail are fine. Cynthia generously offers to work at up-dating and making our by-laws internally consistent.

We thank Cynthia Heisler for the research she provided our Society. She loves these mini-research projects, we know. Thank you very much Cynthia!

**SOCIETY BOARD
NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Nominations Committee Reports that our voting procedures, that were voted on at the Annual Meeting in July, were in conflict with Robert's Rules of Order and our by-laws. Therefore, we will not be able to hold elections-by-mail. We will vote at the Annual Meeting, July 31, 1993.

The Nominations Committee presents the following slate (with attached biosketches) for the following Society Board Offices:

PRESIDENT: Paul Rocheleau

"I work as a Code Enforcement Officer with the Building Inspection Dept. in Mt. Pleasant, MI. and also as a Volunteer Firefighter and Medical First Responder in Mt. Pleasant. I was born and raised in Mt. Pleasant. I graduated from Sacred Heart Academy and also have 1 yr. of college education and college level

ago and my Medical First Responder training almost 2 years ago.

I believe I've been with the Memorial Society since 1989 or 1990. I've been interested in hiking and exploring around Michigan for almost 10 years now. Islands hold a special place in my heart, especially South Manitou Island. I hope to be of service to the Society by convincing the National Park Service that the simple maintenance of some of the structures on the Island is a worthwhile method of preserving our shared history as well as a benefit to the general public."

VICE-PRESIDENT: Margaret Kelly Braden
As I was growing up, my mother, ... Ruth Burdick Kelly, would tell me and my siblings about the chickens, the general store, the dances, the lighthouse, the schoolhouse ... She would become wistful, almost as if talking about her childhood would make it real again. She saved photographs, newspaper articles, clothing, letters, jewelry. An incredible pack rat, she was. But in being so, she saved remnants of an incredible heritage for her family and those interested in South Manitou Island. Through the years, we would visit Uncle Fred and Aunt Bea in the summertime. Then college, children, jobs, etc. became more immediate obligations.

Several years ago, I began attending the annual reunion in July. There I met childhood friends of my mother's, and recognized her and her brothers and sisters in wonderfully candid photographs saved by other families. Too, the pictures that I shared seemed to bring joy to some and historical information to others. I thought that I would like to be an active contributor to this organization.

My professional background includes studies in physical sciences, geological research and 6 years with the Michigan Dept. of Health Laboratories. I have recently earned my Master of Library Science, and am presently part of the management team at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne (those of you interested in genealogy have heard of this place).

as a representative of the families and their interests, to mandate their places on the island and in its history, and to help document this history. Thank you for the opportunity.

SECRETARY: Sandra Thompson Black

Member of Society for 2 years.

Affiliations: West Michigan Genealogical Society and West Michigan Quilters Guild.

Areas of Interest: Genealogy and history of Manitou Islands. Quilting.

Service to Society: Flashback to the Past articles for Newsletter.

Background: Ludington High School. Davenport College – Grand Rapids, MI. Assistant Claims Manager for third party administrator for Worker's Compensation Claims.

Personal Background: Father – Floyd S.

Thompson. Mother – Marion Ambler. Grandfather – I. Theodore Thompson. Grandmother – Matilda Agnes Beck. Great Grandparents – August Beck, Elizabeth Beck, Tarald Teodor Tomasen (died in Norway), Petrine Gesine Gabrielsdatter (Gesine married Bernt S. Johnson.) Great-Great Grandparents – George Haas, Maria Hoffman.

TREASURER: Zella Mae Stormer Morris

"I am a Registered Nurse, graduate of Henry Ford Hospital School of Nursing. I have five years of nursing experience in Pediatrics at Oakwood Hospital, Dearborn, Michigan, including 3 years as Head Nurse. I have been a member of the Memorial Society since its beginning. My interests are in genealogy and the history of both Manitou Islands. My goals for the Society are to preserve the memory, history, heritage and accomplishments of the past generations of people who lived on the islands year-round. Access to the historic sites for people of all ages and disabilities is essential. Personal Background: Father: Joseph Stormer, North Manitou resident, grandparents homesteaded there. Mother: Ethel Furst Stormer, born on South Manitou, grandparents homesteaded there. Grandfather: Martin C. Furst, born on South Manitou Island. Grandmother: Zella Mabie Furst Hutzler. Great Grandparents: Oswald Furst and Dorothea Beck Furst.

Maple City, MI. 49664 (616) 334-4355. My community service has included being Clerk, Trustee and a member of the Diaconate of the Olivet Congregational Church. I am a member of the Glen Lake Association and the Glen Lake Women's Club. I am a member of the Women's Board of Olivet College and served as its president for 3 years. For my service to Olivet College, I was presented the prestigious 1844 Award, the only woman so recognized."

These are the Nominees thus far. Nominations will continue to be accepted by mail to Ethel Stormer, Nominations Committee Chairperson, at 1181 Mich. Ave. Benzonia, MI 49616. Nominations must be accompanied by a bio-sketch. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor during the Election Process at the July 31st Annual Meeting.

PLEASE consider running for a Board position!

**ISLAND OUTING
AUGUST 1, 1993**

Take a moment to THINK SUMMER! We are trying to plan an Island Outing on the Sunday following the Annual Meeting! Reunion Picnic. We'll charter the MANITOU ISLE - leave Leland around 7:30am tour the Island enjoying Island stories and memories - have a picnic lunch - and return in the late afternoon (4:00pm) What a wonderful opportunity to be together as a "Society" and visit the places that have brought us together. We need to get an estimate of "how many" will attend. The fare would be \$15.00 per person if we can provide 60 passengers. PLEASE respond at my address:

Kathy Bietau
P.O. Box 99
Empire, MI 49630 616-326-5118
if you expect to attend!!!!!!
I anticipate a fun-filled Island adventure for young and old alike! Please encourage your entire family to share in this outing together! I will have further news to report in the next Newsletter ... and if need be - a special mailing! I look forward to hearing from you all! (p.s. we may have some special birthdays"" to celebrate on this occasion!!!!!!!!!!!!)

**NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL PARK
HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE**

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore had anticipated funding the Historic Structure Report for the Island Lighthouse this fiscal year. However, after speaking with Bill Herd, Cultural Resource Specialist for Sleeping Bear, he informed me this project was "put on hold" this year - due to financial budget constraints. Perhaps disheartening at first, this is truly GOOD NEWS! The report has finally reached the "top priority" list at the Regional Level of the National Park Service! This is the report that precedes restoration efforts at the Lighthouse complex. Sleeping Bear Dunes Superintendent, Ivan Miller has also placed this project at the top of his priority list.

The Report is anticipated to be funded next fiscal year. It will be contracted out to an Engineering/Architectural Company, most likely. The funding level is anticipated at \$60,000 - with additional funding available the following years to begin needed preservation of buildings. The study will include the following: A background history of the buildings. Changes made and additions to the buildings over time. Analysis of interior and exterior paint colors/wall-coverings etc. Documented use of building - past/present. Architectural drawings of buildings. Engineers analysis of structural stability. Engineers also consider future problems the buildings may have. They look inside walls for deterioration. The study also determines what uses would be acceptable for the buildings. They make recommendations as to possible uses, allowable numbers of visitors the building can sustain and special care the NPS should provide the buildings.

Thanks to Bill Herd for providing this information. We look forward to a healthy budget next year to fund this project! Thanks also to those individual Society Members who wrote letters of concern to the NPS for preservation of the Lighthouse.

ISLAND REHABILITATION PROJECTS

This summer the National Park Service's Sleeping Bear Dunes maintenance crews - under the direction of Historic Architect, Kim Mann, will be rehabilitating the following buildings on South Manitou: The interior of the Furst (Kramer) house and the Robinette (Burdick) house. The interior and exterior of the Selma Hutzler house. The interior of the Post Office/Visitor Center.

"MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT"

At our Annual Meeting in July we discussed developing a formal agreement with the National Park Service. Thanks to Johanna de Kok, this agreement is close at hand. Johanna is working with Ray Kimple, of Sleeping Bear Dunes N.L. to draft this agreement. The following are it's contents(abbreviated):
OBJECTIVE: The Society desires to make available to the NPS financial contributions and in-kind services for the preservation and maintenance of cultural resources within Sleeping Bear Dunes N.L.
STATEMENT OF WORK: The Society shall comply with all federal laws and regulations involving the preservation and maintenance of Lakeshore cultural resources. We must notify Superintendent before work and after, for direction and inspection of work. The NPS will accept funds donated by the Society for purposes of carrying out preservation and maint. of Lakeshore cultural resources. The United States and its employees shall be free from all liabilities associated with the Society's work and its workers. In addition, the Society agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the U.S., its agents and employees from all liabilities.
TERM: 5 year term with renewal possible upon mutual agreement.
TERMINATION: Upon breach of Agreement conditions, at the discretion of the Superintendent. Or either party may terminate MOA with 60 days written notice to the other.

The Agreement is to be signed and in place by April 1. We welcome any and all comments! Thank you Johanna!!!!

1912 + MYRON HUTZLER VENT + 1992

In August, 1992, my father received a wonderful card signed by many Memorial Society members. I read him the card, filled with well-wishes and blessings, and the names of so many familiar relatives, friends and acquaintances. Although he could do little else on his own, he still could hear me: by the tears that welled in his eye and the press of his hand in mine, I knew he had heard and been moved! Thank you!

On October 31, 1992, after twelve years battling Parkinson's Disease, his spirit was released. The obituary which appeared in Washington has been sent to the Memorial Society separately. The following responds to an inquiry from Kathy Bietau whether I would offer some thoughts about Myron and the Island.

For while Myron was a native of the Elgin/Chicago area; had a successful career and family in Washington, D.C.; and travelled several times around the world; he was at heart a child of South Manitou Island. So it is fitting that an appreciation of his life and works be undertaken from the point of the Island.

Myron was brought up to the Empire and South Island area by his mother, Louisa Hutzler Vent, when she made summer visits to the relatives in Empire and to the family farm on the Island. Started by immigrant Georg Hutzler and continued by Uncle John Hutzler, the farm included numerous buildings, horses, cattle, small livestock, extensive orchards, pasturage, and crops in rotation.

On his visits to the Island, usually with William (Bud) his older brother, Myron found connections, roots, and warmth which frequent moves around the Chicago environs during the Depression may not have provided. Enduring characters, like Bertha Peth; or Uncle John with his cats and his laugh; energetic Aunt Lillian at the post office; hard-working farmers who maybe even let a young city guy help with the mowing or animal husbandry; these all came to be reliable features of every visit to the Island.

Then too, folks on the Island were at once closer and more heroic: there might be swell relatives in Chicago, even policemen, firemen or labor leaders among them; but how many were *surfmen* or *lighthousekeepers*, like the Burdick, Tobin, Haas, Crouner, and Hutzler relations on the Island!

In contrast to the urban prospect of Chicago, the wondrous northwoods world of the Island - particularly its birds and plants - was etched into my father's memory from an early time. As he grew older, he also entertained broader thoughts on the rural immigrant life on the island, and its meaning for the 'modern' New Deal times.

And so between 1937 and 1939, after he'd obtained a degree from the University of Chicago and was completing work at Northwestern, he was drawn to Empire to teach and serve as

principal, during a period of consolidation of the regional school system, in the old school house recently up for sale.

World War II found Myron enlisting and rising from PFC through Officer Candidate School in the Army Air Corps, with intelligence service in England supporting the Allied bombing campaigns. Shortly before D-Day, he was assigned Military Government duties in occupied territories.

Coming to the European continent must have triggered thoughts in Myron about Georg Hutzler, his immigrant grandfather from Oberkrumbach, near Nuernberg, and the content of his 'American dream'. He began to haunt book stores for information about the Nuernberg area, its customs and culture in the 1850's. Ultimately, he commandeered a jeep and a driver, and drove out to Oberkruzbach.

First came fascination that Oberkruzbach indeed existed; then came recognition of similarities between the farm buildings and orchard lay-outs in Oberkrumbach and those on the Island! He tried to locate the Hutzlers last visited by his Aunt Anna Hutzler Guckemus, but without success. As I later learned, the German Hutzlers weren't sure in 1944 whether he was an American, to be welcomed, or a Russian, to be avoided. So Dad

left Oberkruxubach again, with at least half a notion that, had he - like Georg - faced depressed farm prices, increasing taxes imposed by an oppressive government, and a wife and children to feed, he might have dreamed the American Dream as well!

After the conclusion of World War II, marriage, a Ph.D. and some children, he returned to the Island, both alone and with my mother, Henrietta. While he appreciated the work of his brother to maintain dwellings on the farm - including not only the pioneer 'pig barn' but also the 1920's house in which they spent summer vacations - he also realized how much of what he had counted on as a youngster had vanished or deteriorated over the years. Uncle John was dead; the old farmhouse burned; grandfather's gravesite covered by weeds; the schoolhouse, the lighthouse, the cemetery all neglected; families gone; and the threat of commercialization, or an unknown nationalization drive in the air.

So, he decided to memorialize the Island, its history, culture and ways as best he could. After all, he reasoned, why should generations of easterners have the elegant, but colonial Williamsburg to lionize, while successive generations of hard-working Midwesterners lost their simpler, but more truly *democratic* American pioneer heritage.

Thus was born The Book. Every aspect was painstakingly researched, in many cases using excellent archival facilities in Washington, D.C. and Michigan; in many cases relying on family knowledge and photographs; in other cases relying on contacts with newly-assigned Sleeping Bear Dunes Lakeshore National Park Service officials concerning the Lakeshore and the Island.

Everything was cross-checked. And given his experience with some of the Census and Customs data, he never had a problem revising something. A number of those reading this will know of special assistance given to Myron of which I would not be aware of to mention. (I think Myron would have appreciated Don Roy's recent note - in Society Vol. 3, No. 3 - for example, that Florence Haas was married in 1879, at age sixteen, rather than at age fourteen in 1877, as the information Dad had seemed to indicate.) He always thought more could be done.

It was a source of great pride to him that the Book received such a warm welcome. He enjoyed sending out the packets of books himself, especially to the many regional libraries, as well as to schools. Ultimately the book needed a second edition, which the Park Service undertook. He donated the proceeds of the book to the Service.

In the interim, Uncle William (Bud) Vent had collected numerous stories concerning their mother Louisa and the Island. Where my dad's work had had an academic and historical focus, Uncle Bud's work satisfied the everyday questions of how the folks on the Island lived. Bud and Myron collaborated initially on the stories, until dad's illness required Bud to finish the full book on his own.

We read the stories in Uncle Bud's book to Dad over and over again in the last months of his hospital stay. I know they always distracted him from a painful present to many warm memories of a good childhood and wonderful people on the Island.

My father was concerned that his grandfather had emigrated and worked to attain the American Dream, and that he had had to go to war to protect the American Dream. On the other hand, my brother, three sisters and I were of the "affluent generation" which inherited the benefits of the American Dream without even appreciating what they were!

We post-war tribe of five - accustomed to eastern ways and Atlantic beach vacations - were the "affluent generation" that scoffed when Dad would assert that the sand on the Island was cleaner and finer; that the water around the Island was crystal-like; that the skies there were clearer and bluer; that the people were friendlier, and the gulls more numerous, yet louder. I even questioned whether the engraving of the Oberkrumbach town of origin of Georg Hutzler in the book was not just a generic German scene.

That is, we doubted until my brother Jay and I visited South Manitou Island recently. And, 'by golly', the skies were bluer! the sand cleaner! the water clearer! the gulls louder laughing! and the people direct but friendly. When I travelled to Oberkrumbach, in 1990, the village still looked *exactly* like the engraving in Dad's book. I brought a picture back for the Museum for any other doubting Thomas! Though he

gave me credit for helping type the manuscripts in 1970, I didn't credit him fully until twenty years

later!

But in 1991, Jay and I did videotape our visit to the Island and brought Dad much excitement and enjoyment as he viewed the tape, seeing the familiar sights again. He was especially touched by the results of obvious hard work by the Park Service and, more recently, the Memorial Society, in upkeep of both pioneer and second generation buildings, cemeteries, and farm areas.

We are thankful that we can now appreciate Myron's work, both that done on his own, and that done in collaboration with others, especially his brother William, on behalf of the Island. Not only did he research and mark out the past of South Manitou Island; not only did he nurture others similarly interested; but in the process he helped undergird renewed interest in the future of the Island.

Myron recorded the important history of the Island, and its place in the American Dream, while pointing at the same time to its environmental fragility. Myron's memory will best be served by our continued reverent enjoyment of the beauty of the Island, coupled with efforts to preserve its remaining facilities, so that the pioneer community heritage can meaningfully be revisited by and interpreted for us and the next generation (s) - including Myron's five young grandchildren - and thereby enrich our American Dream!

Henning Vent, February 1993

MYRON HUTZLER VENT

December 3, 1912 - October 31, 1992

With great love and in deepest sadness

Henrietta Wicht-Vent

Henning and Jane Vent, with Susan

Johanna and Douglas McPherson, with Megan

Olivia and Peter Trutmann, with Julian and Christel

Astrid and Robert Mueller, with Amy and Andrew

Joachim Vent and donna Merrill

William Vent

Fay Raidiger

Chevy Chase, Maryland





Flashback To The Past

By Sandra M. Black



A BRIEF HISTORY OF U.S. COAST GUARD OPERATIONS (1)

The U. S. Lighthouse Service was the first of the four agencies that would eventually make up the U. S. Coast Guard on the Great Lakes. The service traces its roots to 1716 with the establishment of a lighthouse on Little Brewster Island, at the entrance to Boston Harbor. By 1866 there were 72 lights guiding ships to safety.

Lighthouses may seem a perfect place for many of us in this hectic, modern age. However, the words most used by keepers to describe their existence are "loneliness" and "monotony." A great deal of a keeper's life centered on the mundane duties of keeping the station and its equipment clean.

For the most isolated and dangerous duty, one had to serve aboard lightships. These small, special ships guarded areas where it was impossible to build a light structure. The first lightships on the Great Lakes took their stations on Simmons Reef, White Shoal, and Gray's Reef in northern Lake Michigan on October 22, 1891.

The U.S. Lighthouse Service also operated another fleet of ships - known as Lighthouse Tenders. The tenders provided the means to bring supplies and needed work parties to the scattered and isolated lighthouses.

The next predecessor agency of the modern day U. S. Coast Guard to be mentioned on the Great Lakes was the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service. Established in 1790, the service was formed to help combat the loss of revenue by sea-going smugglers. By the 1820's, U. S. Revenue Cutter Service cutters were cruising the Great Lakes enforcing revenue laws and assisting lakers in distress.

The next predecessor organization to appear in the Great Lakes was the U. S. Life-Saving Service. The mission of this service was to launch small boats in an effort to rescue people shipwrecked close to shore. Officially, the service began on the Great Lakes in 1876 with 11 stations. Surfmen soon began to be dubbed "soldiers of the surf" and "storm warriors." The men who served at the stations led lives that could be best described as consisting of hours of boredom, interspersed with seconds of sheer terror.

The last of the four predecessor agencies to eventually form the U.S. Coast Guard on the Great Lakes is also the one that has been the least documented. The Steamboat Inspection Service came about due to the large growth of steam powered ships. There were two Steamboat Inspection Service Districts on the Great Lakes.

On Jan. 15, 1915, the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service and the U. S. Life Saving Service were amalgamated to form the U. S. Coast Guard. The first major task of the new service came in 1920 with the passage of the Volstead Act, the experiment to outlaw liquor in the United States. For the next 14 years the U. S. Coast Guard waged a war against the smugglers of illegal spirits. To combat the rum runners on the Great Lakes, station crews were doubled, patrol boats were increased, and a 75 foot picket boat class was added to the U. S. Coast Guard inventory. The role of the new U. S. Coast Guard in the effort to keep America dry was not a popular one.

In 1939, the U. S. Lighthouse Service was taken over by the Coast Guard. Shortly after this, the service itself became part of the U. S. Navy as the nation prepared for World War II. In 1942, as a wartime measure, the Steamboat Inspection Service, now called the U. S. Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, was transferred to the U. S. Coast Guard. In 1967 another major administrative change came to the U. S. Coast Guard on the Great Lakes. After nearly 177 years in the Treasury Department, the service became a part of the Department of Transportation.

Like the old U. S. Revenue Cutter Service, the U. S. Coast Guard still continues to perform a multitude of duties on the Great Lakes.

