

## Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association Timeline

In addition to regular ongoing maintenance and repairs, the following is a summary of restoration projects and capital improvements completed by the Preservation Association between 1972 and 2019:

- **1972** A group of concerned local residents convinces the Town of Ponce Inlet to acquire the abandoned Ponce Inlet Light Station from the Department of the Interior. The property is deeded to the Town in June, 1972. The Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association is founded as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation within weeks of the light station's transfer of ownership. The Association's founding members are united in their mission to the preservation and dissemination of the maritime and social history of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse.
- **1972** The Preservation Association begins stabilizing the light station's structures and cleaning up the grounds. The Second Assistant Keeper's dwelling is reroofed and broken window panes are replaced in all the buildings. A small light is installed in the tower's lantern room and a chain link fence is erected around the perimeter of the property. The concrete block wall that was installed by the Coast Guard to seal the tower's entrance is removed. The light station grounds are opened to the public on weekends.
- **1973** The First Assistant Keeper's Dwelling receives a new roof and city water is piped to the facility. The Preservation Association petitions the Coast Guard for the return of the tower's 1933 third order rotating Fresnel lens which is returned later in the year, reassembled, and put on display.
- **1974** New tower entry doors are installed and the lighthouse's windows are repaired. The tower is opened to the public on weekends. Admission rates are 25¢ for children and 50¢ for adults.
- **1975** Volunteers stabilize and restore the exterior of all three keeper dwellings and replace the pump house roof. The historic picket fence surrounding the light station is repaired and the interiors of the second assistant and principal keepers' dwellings are restored.
- **1976** The electrical service in the second assistant and principal keepers' dwellings is updated. A new septic tank is installed. A small administrative office is established and the Association begins acquiring artifacts and historic documents for the museum. The tower's 1933 rotating third order Fresnel lens is assembled and placed on public display. The Association's quarterly newsletter is published for the first time. Flood lights are installed around the perimeter of the tower. The interior of the First Assistant Keeper's Dwelling is restored, staged with 1890's era furnishings, and renamed the Gladys Meyer Davis House.
- **1977** A ticket gate house is established and the light station and museum is opened daily to the public at 10:00 am.
- **1978** The organization's first full-time employee is hired. The tower's badly deteriorated metalwork is partially restored by the Association. The generator building is utilized as a gift shop.

- **1979** The Preservation Association begins offering free educational tours to all Volusia County school groups.
- **1980** Steel safety grates are installed behind all tower windows. A new gift shop/main entrance building is constructed. The Association raises funds for the replacement of the tower's rusted gallery deck.
- **1981** An administrative office is established in the Principal Keeper's Dwelling and the generator building is converted into museum exhibit space.
- **1982** The lighthouse gallery deck is replaced and the tower is partially restored. The Coast Guard officially reactivates the Light Station beacon when a new condominium building blocks their tower light. The new lamp is a modern Carlisle and Finch DCB-24 aero beacon with a range of about 25 nautical miles.
- **1983** Nature trails are cut through the oak hammock on the east side of the light station grounds. The Sea Museum is opened daily to the public.
- **1984** A hard freeze kills the site's Australian pine trees which are removed.
- **1985** Ann Caneer, a long-time volunteer who helped convince the Town to acquire the light station from the Federal Government, is named the Association's first Executive Director. The laundry enclosure on the south side of the First Assistant Keeper's Dwelling is restored. Air conditioning systems are installed in all three keeper dwellings. The Preservation Association joins the American Association (now Alliance) of Museums.
- **1986** The porch railings of all three keeper dwellings are restored and rotted floor joists are replaced. A new Program of Utilization is approved by the US Department of the Interior. The interior of the tower is restored. A 4.75 acre parcel of untouched land stretching from the eastern boundary of the light station to South Atlantic Ave is purchased by the Association to protect the historic site from encroaching development.
- **1987** The exterior of the tower is cleaned and repaired and new flood lights are installed. The lighthouse museum grows with the installation of new exhibits in the keeper dwellings. The historic wooden tug boat the *F.D. Russel* is moved onto the lighthouse grounds for public display.
- **1988** The historic picket fence is restored and a new roof is installed on the gift shop. The tower balcony is repainted.
- **1989** The Oil Storage Building, partially destroyed by vandals in 1970, is restored by the Association using historic blueprints of the original structure. The Second Assistant Keeper's woodshed/privy is restored and utilized as the museum's video theater. The chimneys on all three keeper dwellings are capped and new copper roof gutters are installed.
- **1989** The Second Assistant Keeper's Woodshed and Privy are restored and converted into the museum's Woodshed Theatre.
- **1992** The Preservation Association constructs a three-story main entrance building and Gift Shop modeled after a multi-family dwelling that was originally planned for the Mosquito Inlet Light Station.
- **1993** The Preservation Association begins to restore the historic Cape Canaveral first order rotating Fresnel lens which was removed from the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse due to damage sustained by rocket launches from Cape Kennedy and Patrick's Air Force Base.

- **1994** The Ayres Davies Lens Exhibit building, named in honor of Ponce Inlet's first mayor and Association founding member, is constructed to house the museum's growing collection of historic Fresnel lenses and other lighthouse artifacts.
- **1995** An historic boatyard exhibit is opened on the north side of the lighthouse property.
- **1996** An intercom system is installed in the tower's watch room.
- **1997** The Preservation Association requests, and receives, the Ponce Inlet Light Station's original 1887 first order Fresnel lens from the US Coast Guard. Restoration work on the damaged lens is completed by the Association's lens restoration team in 2003.
- **1998** The Preservation Association petitions the United States Government to designate the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station as a historic landmark. Years of research, correspondence, and hard work pay off when the Light Station is officially designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998.
- **1999** The courts grant joint ownership of the *Steamship Commodore* wreck site to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Association and to Don Serbousek, a diver who originally located and identified the wreck.
- **2000** After many years of fund-raising, a full restoration of the lighthouse begins. The extensive project includes repairs to the entire brick structure, replacement of most of the tower's exterior iron work, restoration of the cupola roof, vent ball, lightning rod, lantern room, interior spaces, spiral staircase, and the repainting of the tower's interior and exterior brick walls. The historic wooden charter vessel the *Gay Wind* is added to the museum's outdoor boat exhibit.
- **2001** The Preservation Association's tower restoration project is completed and a new three-story building is constructed on the north side of the historic grounds to house the administrative staff and maintenance department, assorted equipment, archival documents, and artifacts not on display.
- **2002** The First Assistant Keeper's Woodshed/Privy foundation is stabilized after the Town's digging of a retention pond in the Ayres and Kay Davies Park undermines the structure. The Association's records and archives are digitized and the first Ponce Inlet Lighthouse website is launched.
- **2003** Restoration of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse's original 1887 first order Fresnel lens is completed. The lens is put on display in the Ayres Davies Lens Exhibit Building.
- **2004** Museum staff restores the tower's historic third order rotating Fresnel lens and reinstalls it in the lantern room. The US Coast Guard designates The Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse an active private aid to navigation, maintained solely by the Preservation Association.
- **2005** The Association constructs a new public restroom facility and group tour entrance to accommodate the museum's growing number of annual visitors. The museum's former main entrance and gift shop building is repurposed as a classroom for educational programs.
- **2006** Association maintenance personnel are trained in historic masonry restoration and begin repointing the exterior brick walls of the three keeper dwellings. The Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association

relinquishes its partial ownership of the *Steamship Commodore* wreck site. A weather monitoring station is installed in the Generator and Radio Room Building. The museum board agrees to de-accession the wooden tugboat *F.D. Russell*.

- **2007** The Preservation Association recreates the historic Coast Guard-era Radio Room and launches the museum's *Lighthouses of the World* interactive exhibit. An archeological survey of the light station is completed by New South Associates.
- **2008** The Preservation Association restores the Second Assistant Keeper's kitchen, living room, and small bedroom. The lens restoration team restores a rare third-middle Fresnel lens which is placed on public display in the Ayres Davies Lens Exhibit Building. The laundry shed of the First Assistant Keeper's Dwelling is restored
- **2009** The Principal Keeper's kitchen is restored and becomes home to the museum's new USLHE Airways Division exhibit. The light station's pump house is restored.
- **2010** A two year, multi-phased project to fully restore the tower's interior and exterior ironwork is completed. The exterior siding enclosing the principal keeper's bathroom and office is restored.
- **2011** Restoration of the interior of the First Assistant Keeper's Dwelling begins, the laundry shed on the back of the building is removed and the front porch is restored. A new handicap ramp leading to the back porch is constructed. Fiber optic cables are run to all buildings. A Barbier Benard et Turenne 4th order port light used in Madagascar is purchased by the museum.
- **2012** The electrical service in all of the light station's historic buildings is updated to modern standards. The charter boat *Gay Wind* is deaccessioned and demolished after the museum fails to find a new home for the vessel during a year-long search. The Association celebrates the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station and establishes the Lighthouse Endowment Fund. A BBT France 4<sup>th</sup> order landing field light c. 1920 is acquired.
- **2013** A new Cuban Raft exhibit is installed in the former Boat Yard. The museum adds three Fresnel lenses to its collection; two sixth order Chance Brother Fresnel lenses with original pedestals from England, and an Australian fixed fifth order Chance Brothers harbor light. All three lenses are placed on exhibit following conservation and stabilization by museum staff. The Pump House is restored to its 1940s appearance. A six-year project to update all museum exhibits is completed. *The Lighthouse Service and the Great War* is published. The large bedroom in First Assistant Keeper's Dwelling (Bldg. 8) is restored.
- **2014** The small bedroom and hallway of Bldg. 8 are restored. Federal Masonry restores the exterior of the Principal Keeper's Dwelling, all historic chimneys, and the First Assistant Keeper's cistern. A BBT modified clamshell lens with blue shade, rotational mechanism, IOV lamp, and fuel tanks is acquired by the museum. The tower's exterior is cleaned and repainted with venetian red mineral coating. The Preservation Association publishes *A Beacon for Mosquito* and produces the *Science of Light & Lighthouse Illumination* DVD.

- 2015** Federal Masonry restores and repairs the Oil Storage Building plus the tower entrance and granite steps and lower granite ring. A BBT sixth order clamshell and a sixth order Barbier et Fenestre beehive lens are purchased. Reproduction pedestals, lamps, and a rotational mechanism for the clamshell are ordered. The Woodshed Theater receives interior restoration work and a new climate control system. A new Cuban raft is acquired and put on exhibit in the Cuban Raft Enclosure. The St. Marks Lighthouse's Fresnel lens is removed and restored by museum staff for the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge. Two BBT sixth order harbor lights used on the Normandy coast are purchased.
- 2016** Federal Masonry completes the exterior and interior restorations of the 3 outbuildings plus spot repairs to Principal Keeper's Dwelling. PILH staff restores the interior of the Generator Building and installs a two-zone climate control system. Two 4th order drum lenses once used in the Panama Canal are purchased. In October, the Pump House is destroyed by Hurricane Matthew. Only the original slab floor remains. A new Cuban raft is added to the collection. (Catamaran style.)
- 2017** The pump house is reconstructed and work is completed in early February. A new door for the tower main balcony is fabricated and the original door bolts are used in the restoration. The gift shop is refurbished and a new point of sale system is installed. The curatorial department conserves five historic Fresnel lenses and places them on exhibit. The Preservation Association celebrates the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse.
- 2018** Floor joists are repaired on the front porch of the Second Assistant Keeper's Dwelling. Restoration of the interior of the Principal Keeper's Woodshed begins. New stainless steel flood lights are installed around the perimeter of the lighthouse. All interior and exterior tower metal work is cleaned, treated, and repainted.
- 2019** The interior of the Oil Storage House is cleaned and storm damage to the building's roof is repaired. The two 500-gallon oil tanks located inside the structure are cleaned, treated, and painted with a protective coating. The interior restoration of the Principal Keeper's Woodshed is completed and work begins on the two rooms inside the Principal Keeper's Dwelling. The Administration Building, Lens Exhibit Building, and Principal Keeper's Woodshed receive new roofs.