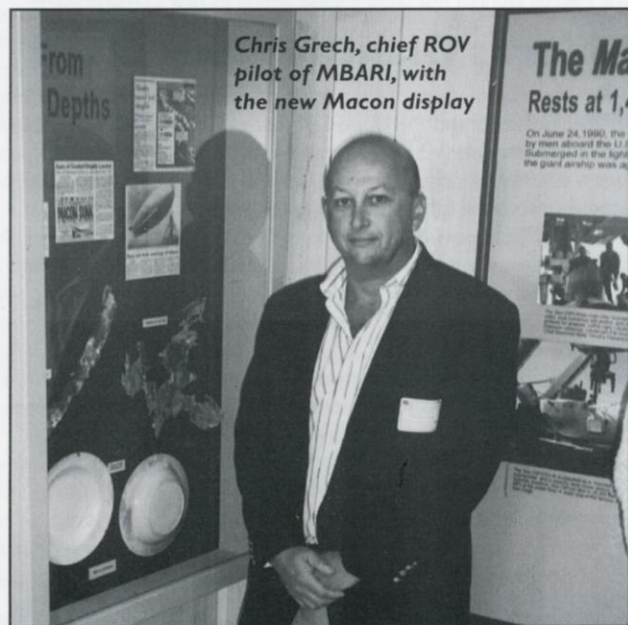


LIGHTHOUSE

Quarterly

CENTRAL COAST LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS

FALL 1996



Macon Room and Exhibit Opens

On June 30, 1996, after two years of planning and preparation, the new Macon Room was formally opened at the Pt. Sur State Historic Park Visitor Center. Artifacts from the *USS Macon*, the U.S. Navy's great airship lost off Pt. Sur in 1935, are on display with interpretive panels, a new video film, and finely crafted models of the *Macon* and her aircraft. The crash of the *Macon*, the best known of all the Pt. Sur ship wrecks, was reported by the press worldwide.

The construction of the project was sponsored by the Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers and assembled by Pt. Sur State Historic Park volunteers. Kurt Loesch was the lead designer of the display. The interpretive panels and display cases were created by artist Frank Perry. The long list of contributors to the display is headed by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI), the National Geographic Society, the U.S. Navy and Capt. Gordon "Scroggie" Wiley, son of the *Macon's* commander at the time of the crash.

Carol Henderson, director of the Moffett Field Historical Society museum, donated a plaque on behalf of the society in memory of the loss of the *Macon*. The plaque will be displayed at Pt. Sur State Historic Park.

Who Was That Man in the Blue Suit?

Courting the Ghosts of Pt. Sur Lightstation

by Jaci Pappas

Our first ghost incident took place in 1984, right after State Parks obtained Pt. Sur Lightstation. The Big Sur Historical Society arranged for a tour. At that time, it was possible to enter the triplex and wander through on your own. As the park ranger closed up after the tour and was locking the door, he jokingly said, "Count noses — is everyone out of the triplex?"

"No," said a 10-year-old girl. "Where's the man in the blue suit?"

When asked what she meant, she said, "I was wandering through the rooms looking for Mom and looked into one room and saw a man in a blue suit, like a uniform. I smiled at him and he smiled back and I went on looking for Mom." There was no man in a blue suit on the tour that day.

In mid-1994, a coast guardsman was taking his family on a tour of the lightstation and asked me to tell his family a ghost story. I did so and then he told one of his own:

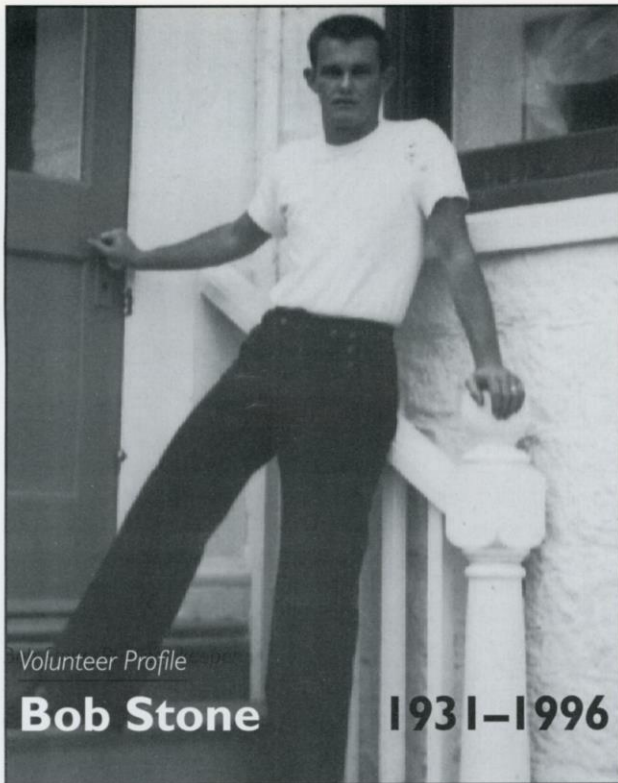
"While stationed here, a couple of us were performing a radio check one evening. The radio beacon was still in use then and we were making sure that the equipment was working. We noticed a light upstairs in the triplex but didn't think too much about it. The next morning when we got back to Monterey, we mentioned the light to the duty officer. He looked at us a little strangely and said, 'There's no electricity in the triplex.'"

My favorite ghost story, however, was told to us by one of the former residents of the lightstation. Back in the 1940s, there was a keeper stationed there that loved to read ghost and horror stories. He would read these books on his watch and get himself so scared that he would phone his wife to come down from the triplex and walk him home!

In 1994, I led a moonlight tour. As I was letting the tour group out the gate, one of the ladies said, "You're sure you'll be okay going back up to the Visitor Center to close all by yourself?"

"Sure," I said. "It will just be me and the ghosts."

I succeeded in spooking myself. I arrived at the Visitor Center, left my car headlights on, scooted in and closed up as quickly as I could and raced back to my car. I could hear the ghosts laughing at me all the way back down the rock!



Volunteer Profile

Bob Stone

1931-1996

Bob Stone was our *only* member who served as a keeper on an active lighthouse. He was sent to Pt. Pinos as a young Coast Guard seaman in 1953 and stayed at Pt. Pinos as assistant keeper until 1956 when he was discharged from the service. During his stay, he did occasional day work for the Coast Guard at Pt. Sur where he acted as relief keeper for a brief time.

The day after leaving the Coast Guard, he started his 32-year career with the telephone company. However, Bob was drawn back to the lighthouses and joined CCLK in 1995 as a docent and teacher.

In 1995, Bob was interviewed by Dr. Ed Beechert. Those transcriptions are now recommended reading for all Pt. Pinos docents. Bob's wonderful stories include working with well known Pt.

Pinos Head Keeper Tom Henderson; the elderly lady in Pacific Grove who would telephone to tell the keepers when to turn the fog signal on; the skunk that fumigated the stone basement in the lighthouse; a mountain lion killing a deer on the front lawn; and his pet lighthouse bluejay that would land on his hand and accept food.

Bob's living quarters were in the Pt. Pinos lighthouse. In those days, the Fresnel lens clockwork mechanism at Pt. Pinos could be operated; a Coleman lantern was used as a backup lamp in the tower; and all three of his senior lighthouse keeper companions still wore the old uniform of the United States Lighthouse Service.

At Pt. Pinos, Bob taught docent training classes, which his students greatly enjoyed. He even shared the best kept of Pt. Pinos Lighthouse's secrets — where the keeper hid his money.

Keep the light burning, Bob!

Lighthouse Information

Pt. Sur State Historic Park, Big Sur: Lightstation tours are scheduled throughout the year on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and on Sundays at 10 a.m. April through October; Wednesday tours are scheduled at 10 A.M. and 2 P.M. Sunset/full moon tours are offered April through October. Call (408) 625-4419 for tour information. Special tours for 20 or more people may be scheduled by calling (408) 649-7139.

Pt. Pinos Lighthouse, Pacific Grove: The lighthouse is open on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Special tours can be scheduled for large groups. Telephone (408) 648-3116 for information.

Pigeon Pt. Lighthouse, Hwy 1, 25 miles north of Santa Cruz: Grounds are open every day from 9 a.m. to sunset for self-guided tours. Docent led tours (October to March) are conducted every Sunday and the first and third Saturday of each month. Tours depart every hour 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Telephone (415) 879-2025 for information.

Piedras Blancas Lens, Cambria: The first order lens from the old Piedras Blancas Lighthouse can be viewed on the main street of Cambria in its new cupola built by the Cambria Lions Club. Telephone Friends of Piedras Blancas Lighthouse Lens at (805) 927-0459 for information. The Piedras Blancas Lighthouse is closed to the public.



P.O. BOX 223014
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Board of Directors

Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers

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Rob Carver, Vice Chair, Big Sur

Harry Wareham, Treasurer, Monterey

John O'Neil, Government Advocate, Monterey

Kurt Loesch, Interpretive Chair, Carmel

Loren W. Rice, Director Emeritus, Carmel



Message from the Chair

With regret, we announce the resignation of Loren Rice as chairman of the CCLK board. He has been a volunteer at Pt. Sur Lightstation for nearly 10 years. Three years ago, answering the personal mandate of Director of Parks Donald Murphy, Loren and a handful of volunteers founded

our nonprofit organization to preserve and protect the lighthouse and its unique 19th century buildings. In addition, the volunteers decided to offer support, advocacy and assistance to all lighthouses of the Central Coast.

Currently, the Pt. Sur volunteer organization numbers more than 70 members, and CCLK has 120 donating members. Loren has decided to take a well-deserved rest from the position and get back to his first love — leading tours at the park. Loren will continue to advise the board, and will remain as Director Emeritus. From all of us who have worked with him, a hearty thank you and our deepest appreciation for what you have accomplished. Without Loren's energy, wisdom and guidance, Pt. Sur Lightstation might not be open to the public today.

The government's second grant of funds for historic preservation under the ISTEA program mentioned in the last issue is now, unfortunately, in jeopardy. As public funds become more limited, we must rely on private donors to fund the restoration of the historic Pt. Sur Lightstation. To date, CCLK has raised only 30 percent of the money needed to preserve and restore the site. Even though we have a very long way to go, the work has begun. State Parks employees and volunteers are working side by side. Volunteer labor allows us to leverage donations and grant money many times over with the tax-free donations going toward materials and specialized labor costs.

Current restoration is focused on the blacksmith shop and stabilization of the main buildings. Our goal is to completely restore all the buildings and give visitors a sense of what life was like at the Pt. Sur Lightstation.

Thanks to the leadership of Coast Guard LCDR W. Dean Lee, the deck, which decayed many years ago, will be rebuilt next to the lighthouse. The restoration is being designed by Big Sur Architect and CCLK board member Rob Carver. The material costs are being donated jointly by the Coast Guard and CCLK. Both Coast Guard personnel and volunteers will be working on the project, which should be completed by the new year.

CCLK needs members and volunteers to help in marketing, fundraising, the gift shop, data processing, and other areas. Also needed are suggestions for future topics for this publication and contributions of short articles. If you are willing to lend a hand, please call me at (408) 375-7670.

New docent training classes for Pt. Sur and Pt. Pinos begin by early 1997. Call (408) 649-7139 for more information.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Central Coast lighthouses. Visit one soon.

— Kathleen Llewellyn



The Piedras Blancas first order Fresnel lens in its new Cambria home

Piedras Blancas Lens Saved

A dedicated group of volunteers has joined with the Cambria Lions Club and the U.S. Coast Guard to restore the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse first order Fresnel lens damaged by a severe storm in 1949. The classic Fresnel lens and lantern structure were removed from the lighthouse and a modern optic was installed. The Lions Club moved the old Fresnel lens and base assembly to Cambria where it was placed on display (exposed to the weather) beside Cambria's Main Street.

In 1990, Coast Guard Group Monterey led by CWO Craig Bitler joined with the Lions Club and the Friends of Piedras Blancas Lighthouse Lens volunteer group led by Bob Carter in a brilliant restoration effort. The lens base was transported to Group Monterey to be cleaned and painted while Cambria's local volunteers and craftsmen restored the rotating machinery and cleaned and polished the lens itself. The Friends and the Lions donated \$35,000 to build a structure to enclose, protect and display the lens.

Today, the restored lens can be easily viewed in downtown Cambria at no charge. The next time you visit Hearst Castle, make the short side trip to Cambria to see it. The Piedras Blancas Lighthouse itself and its grounds are not currently open to the public.

If you would like to help retire the Friends remaining \$13,000 restoration and construction debt, please send your tax-deductible donations to Friends of the Piedras Blancas Lens, P.O. Box 1688, Cambria, CA 93428-1688, or telephone Bob Lane at (805) 927-0459 for information.

CCLK Membership Benefits

Individuals who join Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers will receive:

- Two free passes to regularly scheduled tours of Pt. Sur (a \$10 value)
- *Lighthouse Quarterly*, our information newsletter
- A Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers decal
- Voting rights for election of the board of directors
- Invitations to special events
- Satisfaction in preserving the historic lighthouses of California's Central Coast
- Tax deduction for charitable donations

Early Photo of Pt. Sur Lightstation Reveals More History

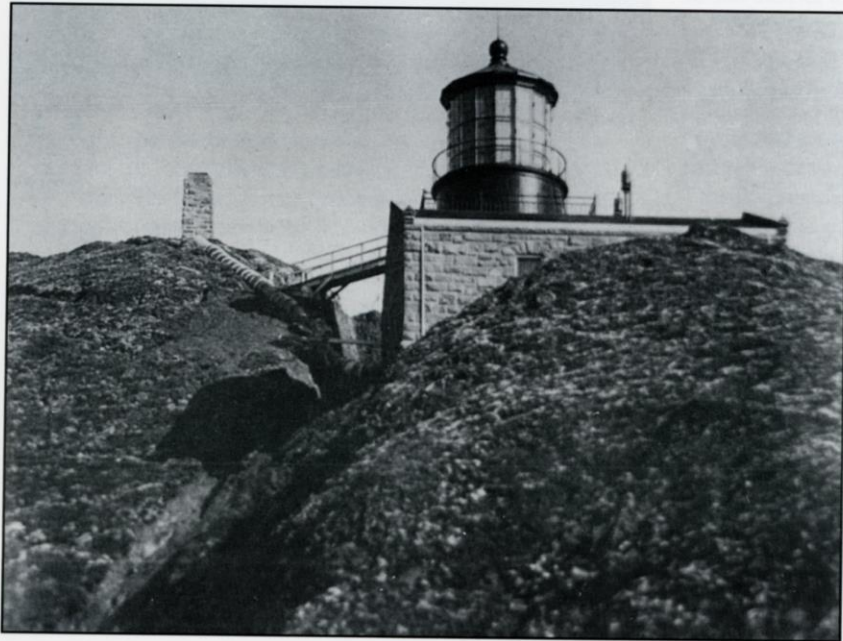
by Dr. Ed Beechert

Ever on the alert for Pt. Sur materials, Bob Llewellyn has located an excellent photograph of the lightstation, taken in the 1890s by H. Bamber, an engineer who inspected and photographed lightstations. Bamber used an 8-by-10-inch camera and made cyanotype prints of exceptional quality.

CCLK now has four outstanding pictures of the early period. One, in particular, features the exhaust pipe and smoke stack of the fog-signal boiler. The exhaust pipe can be seen emerging from the corner of the building, running up the hill to the brick smoke stack. Until this photo was discovered, we did not know what the smoke stack looked like. The station was originally equipped with duplicate 12-inch steam whistles, visible on the roof.

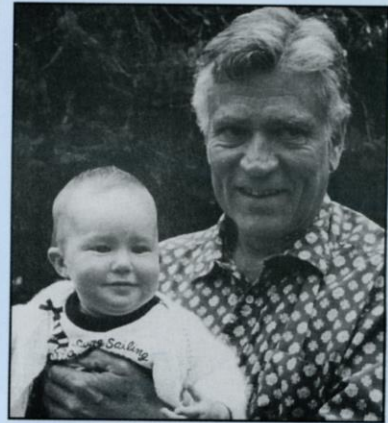
When the station opened, the Notice to Mariners specified that "during foggy weather, a 12-inch steam whistle will be sounded, giving blasts of five seconds at intervals of twenty seconds." Within two months, the fog-signal was changed. On November 1, 1889, the signal became five seconds at intervals of thirty-five seconds.

Some idea of the extent of fog-signal use is seen in the figures of operation for 1901. The whistles were sounded for 810 hours, using over 95 cords of wood. In 1904, the station used 26 tons of coal and 68 cords of wood in 993 hours of operation.



The next major change came in 1902 when cracks appeared in the lighthouse retaining wall, caused by the weight of the fill behind it and the weight of the foundations. Buttresses were put in place and the rear wall was remodeled. Steel doors were placed in the wall to permit access to the boiler tubes.

With the arrival of gasoline engines in 1908, the inspector recommended the conversion to compressed air signals at Pt. Sur. The changeover was completed on April 15, 1910, when an air-horn was sounded. This was further changed when sirens were substituted for the airhorn on May 9, 1910. The last vestiges of the steam plant were "removed in May ... the boilers, engines, whistles and piping were placed on the outer side of the wagon road, south of the signal. The mortar [sic] and broken brick were thrown over the bank to the north and west of the signal. The bridge at the end of the signal building was repaired; the south end raised and 4 x 4 posts placed under each stringer; a concrete wing abutment was built against the retaining wall at the north end of the bridge; and a cover was built over the old wooden tank at the east end of the signal. Fuel pipes outside of the building were covered and 18 feet of old steel smoke stack was laid in place of terra cotta flue outside the signal. ..."



Harry Wareham with granddaughter Emily

CCLK Treasurer Harry Wareham Loves a Challenge

In 1986 Harry Wareham joined the Pt. Sur volunteer program as a docent. He chaired the 1989 Centennial Celebration of the lightstation.

Harry's interest in lighthouses arises from their "uniqueness and physical setting. I also appreciate being part of a growing, developing organization and find it to be an interesting challenge."

In 1993, when Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers (CCLK) was founded, Harry became treasurer, responsible for the collection and recording of funds, controlling the assets of the organization, budgeting and statistical gathering. He finds being responsible for the financial health, stability and care of the organization's assets to be very rewarding. "I am enthusiastic about the relationship that CCLK has developed with the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History and Pt. Pinos Lighthouse, and I look forward to developing further relationships with other Central Coast lighthouse volunteer organizations."

Harry is retired from the U.S. Navy, having served 26 years in financial administration. He is a native of Kansas and received an MBA from George Washington University. In addition to his duties as CCLK treasurer, he is a part-time instructor in computer applications for the Pacific Grove Adult Education Center.

Harry lives with his wife Amy in Monterey. When not teaching and performing treasurer duties, he enjoys running in 10k races.