

New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL



My Adventures on the Nantucket Lightship

by Linda Graham

NELL Fall Meeting

Saturday, September 24, 2005

Most of you know me, but for those that do not, my name is Linda Graham and I have been a member of NELL for almost three years and enjoying every minute. NELL is the only place I have ever been where you gather 70+ perfect strangers and end up with a family.

My love of lighthouses goes way back to when my family moved to Portland, Maine from Binghamton, New York in 1964. We made weekly visits to Portland Head Light and Two Lights in Cape Elizabeth. As a kid, I was enchanted by the lighthouses and read several stories about the aids to navigation and the lonely and dangerous lives of the keepers.

In the early 80's I was a volunteer photographer for a man named Paul Carter who had a public radio show, "On the Coast of Maine with Paul Carter". Now I know you are all wondering why someone with a radio show would need a photographer? He used to set up displays at all the local fairs, malls, Yankee Home Coming, and the Yarmouth Clam Festival to advertise his program. One of the most memorable times for me was in 1982, when we went by Coast Guard Cutter to Burnt Island Light off Boothbay Harbor, Maine to interview the keeper and his family. As you can imagine, I was fascinated by the stories the keeper told, I really enjoyed my very first experience inside a lighthouse and took many, many pictures.

Several years later this same man got me involved with the Nantucket Lightship as a volunteer crewmember. He had been hired as their Executive Director in charge of operations and public events. During my 4 years as member of Nantucket Lightship, Inc., I did everything from swabbing decks, to chipping paint, to hauling lines (and boy were they heavy), to cooking in the galley and serving up to 450 cups of fish chowder, giving tours, telling stories and even engine watch when we didn't have the ability to plug into shore power. It was so exciting, as I climbed down the ladder into the engine room that smelled of diesel with my ear protectors on, my heart would start to race. I would document the reading of 5 pressure valves on a clipboard hanging on the wall. I had to go down the ladder every 20 minutes during my 4-hour watch.

I have put this memory book together to document my time onboard and to donate to Ken Black, our Mr. Lighthouse. I got to know Ken when he was one of our volunteer captains. There are several articles and pictures of him in this book. One of

the times I remember most favorably was when we were chugging from Portland up to Rockland for Schooner Days. It was a very long trip only traveling at a maximum speed of 12 knots (approximately 15 MPH). I was up on the bridge with Captain Black getting a lesson in navigation. At noon he wanted to go to the galley for some lunch so he put me at the helm and asked me to keep her on course until he got back. I was so thrilled and scared to death at the same time. Yes, very exciting and I have the pictures to prove it.



My Adventures on the Nantucket Lightship

by Linda Graham

A few Statistics

The Nantucket Lightship LV-112 was the largest lightship ever built.

Built in 1936 in Wilmington Delaware, financed by the British.

The original Nantucket Lightship was rammed and sunk by the HMS Olympic, sister ship to the Titanic.

Length: 150 feet

Width: 32 feet

Draft: 12 – 16 feet

Weight: 1100 tons

Height: 68 feet above the water level

Engine: 900 horsepower diesel

Fuel Capacity: 50,000 gallons

Maximum Speed: 12 knots

She has two mushroom anchors on the bow -

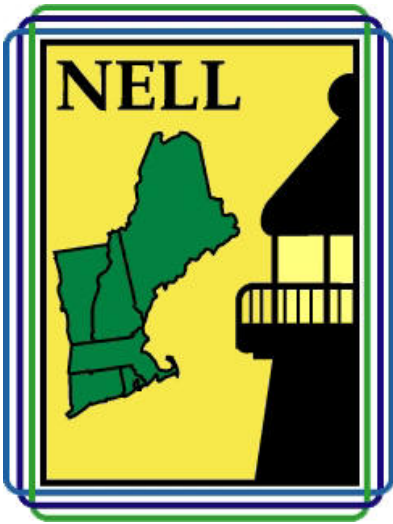
one weighing 7,000 pounds and the other 5,000 pounds

The reason she was so near and dear to the hearts of the people in Portland is because during World War II, she was pulled off her station, painted grey and fitted with guns and guarded Portland Harbor.

I believe her current location is at Captain's Cove in Bridgeport, CT.

Please take a minute and look through the book, I think you will enjoy it. If you have any questions I'll be happy to answer them.

The End



New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL

Member of the American Lighthouse Foundation

