

January 15, 2003 Issue

A Trek To Florida Lighthouses



Are you into "journaling"? I just returned from a visit with friends in Portland, Oregon. Candace is a bright and involved lady whom I have known for over a decade. Last night I had the rare opportunity to catch her when she had time for conversation. I bugged the daylights out of her, asking a whole lot of questions about the research she was doing into genealogy (A growing pursuit of many people across America, I understand). She patiently answered me, and imparted insights into what the process meant to her, as well as giving me information to read concerning writing, and specifically, journaling. Now, I have long been one to keep my private thoughts in my head, and it has been my policy to; "...not put into writing, anything I don't want the whole world to know." This is different. It is personal, in the matter of who I am in the thread of history. This process would be to leave a legacy of information about myself in a way that generations can identify with their roots. Who knows? A whole new field of endeavor may just have opened up before me!

Next Issue: The Ocean Calls.

Once upon a time....Wait! That is how a fairy tale opens. Well, my trip to Florida to see the lighthouses was a whirlwind of a magical adventure. At my request, our dear friends who resided in Titusville, Florida, agreed to chauffeur my husband and I to some of the regional lighthouses within driving distance of their home. The first one we visited was the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse in Palm Beach. The access was off limits to us, but with a high powered lens on my camera, I was able to get some good research photographs. I will supplement that with published material from reliable sources when I am ready to do a painting of it.

"The first one we visited was the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse"

The next on our trek was the Hillsboro Inlet Lighthouse, in Pompano Beach. We arrived on a beautiful winter afternoon, the sky was a gorgeous clear blue and the lighting was perfect. While I studied it from a wide, soft towel on the warm sandy beach, my husband took off toward the distant light and photographed it. I read the literature and the legends surrounding it, from the travel and tourism guide. Too soon we had to depart for our next destination, the Ponce de Leon Lighthouse, just south of Daytona Beach. The lantern room of the lighthouse was bedecked with a Christmas star festooned with shining lights. The setting was awesome. The grass was beautifully manicured. The brick home and lantern room were right out of the anti-bellum old South. A pristine white picket fence ran the course surrounding the grounds. At the rear of the property was a wire fence, with just enough room for us to "squeeze" through to allow us to get a focus point far enough away from this mighty, high, tower to shoot it without

distortion. We both were a little uneasy about the possibility of unknown creatures in the tall grass. As Ed was focusing the camera, intent only on the job at hand, I was seized by a mischievous urging. I plucked a length of grass, sneaked up behind him, and lightly ran the blade of grass across the back of his bare leg. (Somehow it wasn't as funny to him!) I sure got a giggle out of the prank! (Still do.)

"I was seized with a mischievous urging"

The lighthouse at Saint Augustine was worth the trip. It's black and white "swirl" grabbed my attention from miles away. It seemed as though we would never get to it! There were numerous tall, old trees around the lighthouse and buildings. It was a difficult decision as to which view would make the best painting.

Our final leg of the lighthouse tour was the small lighthouse on the Mayport Naval Air Station, in Mayport near Jacksonville. Since we could not gain access to the base, we parked at the end of a road nearest the lighthouse. Ed stood on top of the vehicle in order to see over the fence and get the most out of the scene. He took numerous pictures of the lighthouse with the battleships in the background. Needless to say, I returned to Olympia satiated with the joys of Florida, and bursting with the desire to paint her lighthouses. And I did!

Carol Thompson

Featured Artwork

Ponce de Leon



"Lit in 1887, this red brick lighthouse, at 175 feet tall, is the second tallest tower on the East coast of the United States. It is open to the public and you can climb the 203 steps to see the 3rd order Fresnel lens in the 'lantern' room."

Mayport



"Near Jacksonville, Florida stands the Mayport lighthouse, on the grounds of the Mayport Naval Air Station. No longer an active aid to navigation, only the small brick tower remains as a tourist attraction."

St. Augustine



"The site of St. Augustine Lighthouse has been continuously occupied since 1586. Located on Anastasia Island on the eastern Florida coast, the 165 foot tower holds a rare 1st order Fresnel lens. Completed in 1874, the spiral striped St. Augustine lighthouse was Florida's first official lighthouse."