

Thacher Island Association Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

March 2001

Cape Ann Light Station designated National Historic Landmark.



On January 3, 2001, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, designated Cape Ann Light Station on Thacher Island as a National Historic Landmark.

Thacher joins the ranks of such famous National Historic Landmarks as the U.S.S. Constitution, Boston's Faneuil Hall, Lexington Green, West Point Military Academy, and the U.S. Capitol building.

All National Landmarks are included in the National Register which is the official list of the nations historic properties worthy of preservation. Landmarks constitute about 2100 of almost 65,000 entries in the National Register. Thachers was placed on the Register on October 7, 1971.

Paul St.Germain, President of the Thacher Island Association, said "This is a great honor for Rockport and an opportunity for us to attract private and public grants for our on going preservation efforts for this historic site. Thacher Island's inclusion on this very exclusive National Historic Landmarks

list signifies that we are in very special circumstances as a highly regarded significantly historic site."

In order to be selected and approved as a N.H.L. a thoroughly researched and documented study must be written and submitted to the National Park System Advisory Boards Landmark Committee. Once they have evaluated and approved the study it is passed on to the full National Park System

Advisory Board .If this committee finds that the nomination meets the criteria of the National Historic Landmarks Program it is passed on the Secretary of the Interior for final action.

The purpose of the National Landmarks Program is to focus attention on properties of exceptional value to the nation as a whole rather than to a particular State or locality.

The program recognizes and promotes the preservation efforts of federal, state and local agencies, as well as of private organizations and individuals and encourages the owners of landmark properties

to observe preservation precepts. This nomination is required to prove and document the historical significance of the site and its relevance to America's history. There are several criteria applied to evaluate properties for possible designation as NHL. The quality of national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting , materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

(Continued on page 2)

National Historic Landmarks

PROGRAM

(Continued from page 1)

Authored by St.Germain , a 30 page nomination study was submitted over a year and a half ago. “I had terrific assistance from the Sandy Bay Historical Society as well as Eleanor Parsons’ definitive book on Thachers. I also did quite a bit of research at the National Archives in Washington D.C.. Joe Garland of Gloucester was helpful in reviewing my work before I sent it to NHL. Joe was instrumental in having the fishing schooner “Adventure” declared a landmark in 1994.”,said St.Germain.

Also helpful were George and Dottie Carroll, the most recent full time keepers of the island and Mary Bennett co-chairman of the Thacher Island Committee. All of whom have a wealth of knowledge on the history of the island especially over the past 20 years.

In addition, the staff at the National Historic Landmarks Survey office in Washington D.C. Candace Clifford, Kevin Foster ,Patty Henry and John Sprinkl all need to be thanked for their valuable assistance in shepherding this nomination through the system.

Of the approximately 2100 landmarks today, only 8 lighthouses are designated as NHLs, including Boston Harbor Light, Cape Hatteras Light along the Outer Banks of North Carolina , Sandy Hook Light at the mouth of New York Harbor, Block Island Southeast Light, Old Cape Henry Light in Virginia, Grosse Point Light on Lake Michigan, Ponce DeLeon Inlet Light in Florida, and Thomas Point Shoal Light in Maryland..

Combining this honor with the expected reopening of the island to the public this summer, makes it a very special time for Rockport and Thacher Island. Once the newly constructed boat ramp is approved by the Coast Guard it is expected that they will begin the legal procedures to turn over the deed to the southern end of the island to the Town of Rockport. Hopefully this will happen sometime this

summer.

Thacher’s designation was one of 20 sites to be declared a landmark by Secretary Babbitt including Ryman Auditorium in Tennessee, home of the Grand Ole Opry, the Wisconsin State Capitol, and the Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitors Center in North Carolina. If you would like to read more about the Cape Ann Light Station nomination and the other designated Landmarks go to the the National Parks Service web site at www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/designations/

KEY HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT

THACHER ISLAND

1. One of the 12 original “Colonial Lights” built in America.
2. Last lighthouse built under British rule in 1771.
3. Second twin light built in America (first being Plymouth Lights in 1769.)
4. First lighthouse to mark a “ dangerous spot” when all previous lights were built to mark harbor entrances.
5. First test site for Winslow Lewis’ modified Argand lamp in 1814 which was later adopted for all U.S. lighthouses.
6. Remain the only operating Twin Lighthouses in America.

Thacher Island Committee prepares to reopen Island in May

At a recent joint meeting of the Thacher Island Committee and Association it was decided to reopen the island to the public on May 15. Dottie Carroll has been busy contacting interested parties who have volunteered to be full time keepers. The Association has created a subcommittee to review and rewrite policies and procedures for managing the island and setting new rules and regulations for its daily operation.

Keepers who have volunteered include the following.

May & June

John and Vi Materkowski of Ormond by the Sea ,Florida.

July & August

Merrell and Nancy Beebe of Mt.Dora ,Florida.

September

Andy and Kathy Heinze of Rockport.

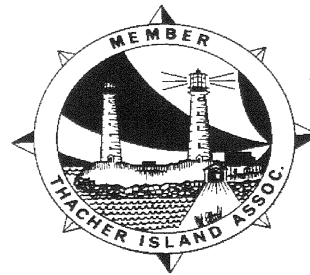
October

Alan Tomaska and Ann Hernandez of Park Forest ,Illinois.

All of these folks have had prior experience on the island as keepers. They will be backed up by George and Dottie Carroll who were keepers from 1986 to 1992, and Armand and Betty Desharnais keepers in winters from 1985-1992. Thanks to all of these folks for their help in keeping an eye on things for us this summer.



Renew your membership today!



We are already one quarter of the way into year 2001 and we need you to renew your membership for this year as soon as possible. Your Association has spent most of its reserves to pay for the 400 tons of rip rap rock placed to protect our new ramp. (Over \$130,000). We really need your support this year to continue our efforts to reopen the island to the public. Many new items will be needed including a new composting toilet, a new water pump and hose for fire protection, repainting the keepers houses, and much more.

Today we have over 450 members many of whom are life members. Now that we will be reopening the island we are hoping more people will join and that our current membership participates on a more active basis. We have work parties that go out on most Wednesdays during the summer and would like to have more of you join us, but you must be a current member to do so. So "reup" now!

Look on the mailing label on this issue and you will see a two digit number indicating the year through which you are paid up. Most of you will see "00" some "99" and more "98". We need everyone to have "01" on their next newsletter.

Dues are only \$25 per year (\$250 for a life member) and include 2 or 3 issues of the newsletter, a window sticker for your car or boat, attendance at our annual meeting in June, participation in Association field trips in the Thacher Island launch, and the satisfaction that you are supporting a newly designated National Historic Landmark. Donations are tax deductible. Please fill out the form attached to this newsletter and send with your check payable to Thacher Island Association, P.O. Box 73, Rockport ,MA. 01966.

D.A.R. Award presented to Thacher Island Association.

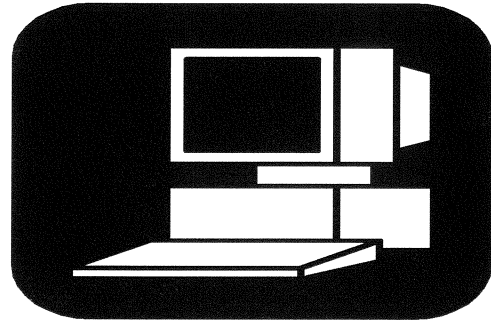
The Thacher Island Association received an award at the Annual D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution) Christmas Tea held at the Gloucester House Restaurant on December 2. This event was sponsored by the officers and members of the Cape Ann Chapter.

The Association was presented a check for \$400.00 in recognition of its constant contribution to the Cape Ann community by physically preserving Thacher Island. In accepting the award for the Association, Dorothy Carroll of the Board of Directors, spoke of the progress that been made during the past five years when the island was closed due to the ramp destruction. She covered such topics as Representative Tierney's obtaining the needed \$250,000 to rebuild the ramp, the approval of the island as a National Landmark, the coming transfer of the island to the Town of Rockport by the U.S. Coast Guard, the return of full-time keepers to the island in the spring, and plans for future educational programs. She also publicly thanked the Chapter for their "constant support of the island through their past financial contributions as well as donations of American flags which for many years have flown over Thacher Island as

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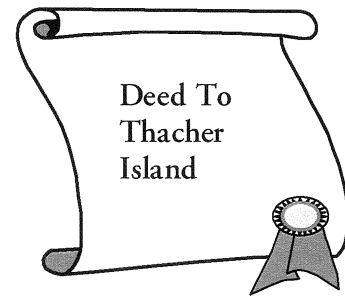
symbol of America.".



New Web Site address announced

We have updated our Web site address to make it easier for people to find us. It is now www.thacherisland.org. we also have two new E-mail addresses, Thacher2@shore.net and Info@thacherisland.org
Let us know if you like what you see.

Island Turnover Status



Now that the ramp has been approved by the U.S. Coast Guard the Town of Rockport is prepared to accept the southern end of the island. The town attorney has reviewed the first draft of the proposed deed along with your Committee Board members and sent it back to the Coast Guard Chief Real Property Board for their finalization.

Hopefully we may own the island by summertime!

**Thacher Island Association
P.O.Box 73
Rockport MA. 01966
Annual Solicitation**

For Membership Year 2001

Standard

Individual or family, minimum \$25.00

Business or Corporate

Minimum of \$50.00

Life

Individual or family, minimum of \$250.00

Donations are Tax Deductible

(to the extent allowable by law)

Name _____

Address _____

City or Town _____ **State** _____ **ZipCode** _____

Comments or Suggestions:

Please make checks payable to Thacher Island Association

Send me the following:

Quantity:

Total

_____ Khaki/Navy Hat \$18 each _____

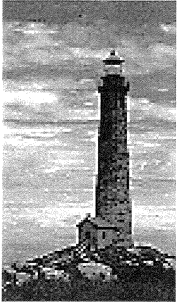
_____ Thachers' Island of the Twin lights Book \$22 each _____

Thacher Island Association

P.O. Box 73
Rockport MA.01966

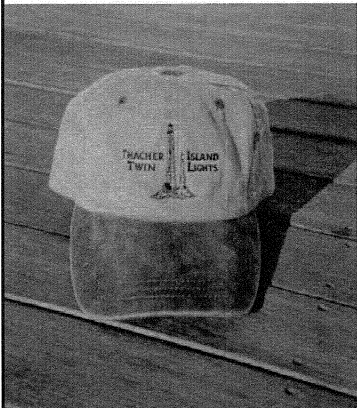
Non-Profit
Organization
U.S.Postage Paid
Rockport ,MA.

Newsletter



The
Mailing
Address
Goes
Here

Its Membership Renewal Time!



Thacher Hats and Books are still available.

Summer is coming you will need a hat for those hot sunny summers days and a good book to read on the beach. We have both and all procceds go to the island restoration efforts.

The hat is all cotton in khaki with a navy blue bill for \$18.00 and Eleanor Parsons' 149 page book on the history of Thachers is only \$22.00.

Order them while you send in your membership renewal.

Written & Edited by Paul St.Germain

