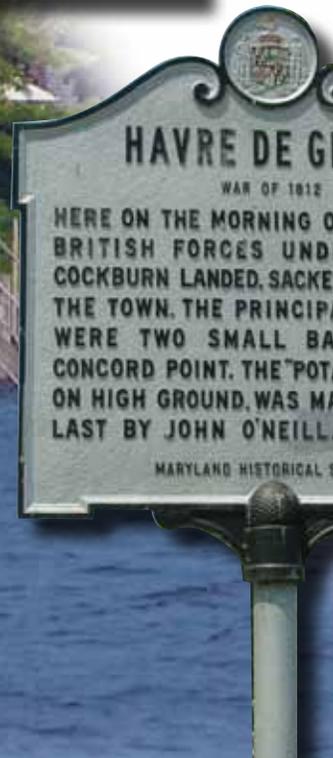


Lighthouse Legacy

By Ellie Mencer

John Donahoo, a well-known and respected lighthouse builder, built the Concord Point Lighthouse and light keeper's house. He was also a key figure in the commercial and economic development of our community.



My friends and I would sneak into the old hotel that is now apartments (Bayou Apartments) near the Decoy Museum. It was a condemned building then. We always thought it had ghosts. The Concord Point Lighthouse is where we used to play pirates and run up and down the stairs. No one paid much attention.

Mrs. Jacksteit ... was a really great lady. She wanted to save the lighthouse. (She) was fired up about keeping our historical landmark.

Quotes from Jill Hartsell, of NC, resident of Havre de Grace in her youth

The Concord Point Lighthouse

has seen tens of thousands of visitors since Jill's early years living in Havre de Grace. It has become a symbol for our city's tourism and steadfastly marks our Heritage Park and the much-visited Promenade.

In the fall of 1998, I had the opportunity to interview the late Jane Jacksteit for the *Lockhouse to Lighthouse* publication. Jane and Bert, her retired minister husband, made Havre de Grace their home in 1976. After spending many years moving from one church to another, Jane had found our community had quickly become 'home'. From her new home on Market Street, she could see the lighthouse – sad, broken. She thought, "I should care what happens to that piece of history."

Jane Jacksteit did get 'fired up' as Jill describes. Along with Anna Long and Arnie Stackhouse, The Friends of the Concord Point Lighthouse was established. Her passion inspired others and today the lighthouse is a tribute to the persistent efforts of those early years.

The next large project by "The Friends" was the effort to restore the Light Keeper's House in 1993. Bill McIntyre shared the details of this effort in another article in the Fall 1999 edition of the *Lockhouse to Lighthouse*.

Excited to work with retired archaeologist, Dr. Kenneth Gordon Orr, Bill, and 23 enthusiastic volunteers, painstakingly sifted shovels full of dirt, hoping the ground would give up pieces of information. Bill explained, "Water came in where Penn's Beach is now (presently Heron Harbor) and would run around the back of the O'Neill property. There are pictures of row boats in the mud flats where the Maritime Museum now sits."

Bill continued, "This explains why some stories talk about the lighthouse being on an island. It would appear that way during heavy storms and in the spring rains."

Today the restored O'Neill house

offers exhibits, artifacts and a gift shop giving us a detailed glimpse of life as a light keeper's family in the mid-1800s. Looking at the north side, you'll notice a bare stone section. This would have been the original building of 1827 – a small rectangle with a kitchen off the back. The next change was in 1884 when the roof was raised over the house and kitchen adding upstairs rooms.

In the 1930s more of the roof was knocked out and raised so that the whole building looked like a big rectangle. Around that time it became a restaurant and in time a pool room and dance floor were added.



1930's - 1992

For many decades the building was used as a restaurant, bar and dance hall.



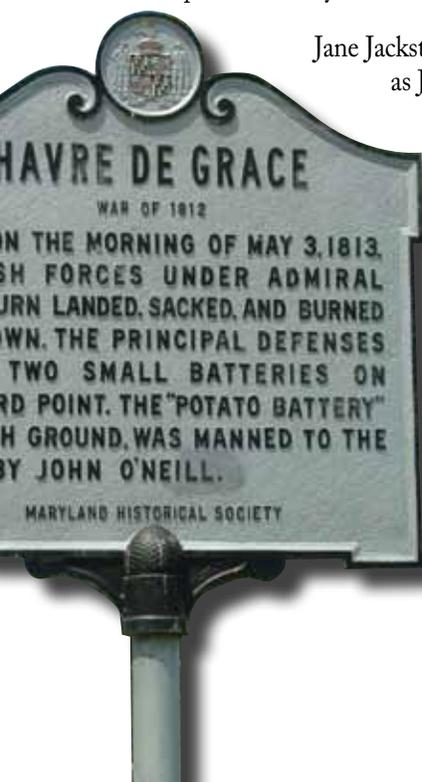
1998

All post 1920 structures were removed, fireplaces repaired, and stone replaced where windows and doors had been created after the period of light keeper occupancy.



2004

The structure with roof and exterior restorations completed, as well as installation of electric, heat and water, climate controls and handicap access walkway plus the addition of a replica of the wood kitchen.





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Inside the Lighthouse looking up!

A few years ago Marsha Jacksteit returned to Havre de Grace to be with her mom the last year of her life and made a promise to her.

Jane explained to Marsha that a great deal of effort had been put into the keeper's house over the last decade or so, the lighthouse once again required much needed maintenance. Marsha's promise resulted in Tom Vincenti recently painting the outside of the lighthouse and volunteers painting the inside.

Future plans include adding a fence around the light keeper's house, a shed for the pump and well, a coal shed and a privy; all showing how four generations of O'Neill's would have lived from 1827 to 1919. Landscaping and gardens have been started with the hopes of more to come.

This brings us to the latest "Friends" project – *Save the Cannon*. The cannon and its base, located at the Concord Point Lighthouse,

needs to be refurbished. Approximately \$10,000 will be required. The Friends encourage everyone who enjoys the promenade, museums, lighthouse and keeper's house, and our local history, to contribute to this renovation project.

Wondering how the cannon and John O'Neill as lighthouse keeper in 1827 are connected? Well, that's very good reason to visit Concord Point Lighthouse in Havre de Grace. It also leads to another event.

In 2012, the Maryland State Tourism Office will be celebrating the **Bicentennial of the War of 1812**. This war wrought havoc on Havre de Grace with the burning of much of our town in 1813. There is an effort begun to create a celebration commemorating this important year. Several plans are presently being considered that will hopefully culminate in our own 2013 event.

Jane Jacksteit left us a double legacy: the restored Concord Point Lighthouse with accompanying projects and a daughter to guide us forward.

Jane and Marsha have been and are living examples of our historical traditions. The many volunteers over the years are to be commended for their hard work in these efforts. You are encouraged to join them and lend an hour or two, contribute financially, and/or donate artifacts recovered from your attic. Many tasks lie ahead and many hands will make it light work as the community, and the Friends of the Concord Point Lighthouse, prepare for our own 2013 War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebration.

Resources:

*Friends of Concord Point Lighthouse 410-939-3213 • email: directorcpt@verizon.net
www.LightHouseFriends.com
www.HavredeGraceTheMeetingPlace.com
The Archaeological Investigations at the Concord Point Light Keeper's Dwelling 2008, William L. McIntyre*