

**STORY OF LIFE IN A LIGHTHOUSE  
LONELIER THAN ANY OF THOSE  
EXPERIENCED IN THE COASTLAND**

Cape Hatteras Light Keeper Gets Recital By Fellow Light Keeper "Down Under" off Queensland, Australia.

NOTE: The old days of lonely living in the lighthouses of the Carolina Coastland are history. Lighthouses have been replaced by mechanical gadgets, visited periodically from the mainland. No longer do we have individual light-keepers who remain on their job for long periods, seldom getting home. It is therefore interesting to note how in some parts of the world, there are still lonely outposts where men keep watch, and we therefore print a letter recently sent to Cape Hatteras by light-keeper John Jespersen, across the world, in Queensland, Australia.

"I am one of the three men stationed here, whose job it is to keep the Commonwealth Lighthouse at North Reef functioning efficiently. North Reef is a small coral atoll about seventy miles off the Queensland coast in latitude 23° S. and to my knowledge is the only bachelor station on the Australian coast. Gladstone is the nearest port. At high tide the island has a perimeter of just 900 paces, so there is no chance of getting too far away. However, at low tide the reef dries for nearly a mile all round and there is quite a variety of shells to be found. I am rather fond of spear fishing and the rock pools are usually full of big sweetlip so that I get plenty of practice. There are also big crayfish to be found under the coral ledges. I don't often go in the water at high tide because of the many sharks—especially at this time of year when they are attracted to the island by the young turtles which hatch in thousands. The department supplies us with a 14-ft. dinghy and we have only to row a few miles offshore to find splendid fishing grounds. Obviously we eat quite an amount of fish. The nearest island is just 7 miles away, but that is too far without a power boat.

"The tower here is approximately 65-ft. high and is made of steel and timber. The light, which flashes 12 times every minute, is the kerosene mantle type and we keep the pressure of 75 lbs. up by means of a hand pump. We each have a four-hour watch at night and every two hours we wind up the weights which drive the clock-work mechanism that keeps the lens revolving. To make sure that we don't go to sleep on the job, the department last month installed a time-recording clock in the top of the tower. By turning a key in it every half hour at night the key number and time is stamped on a paper tape which is posted to Brisbane every fortnight for inspection.

"The living quarters are built around the base of the tower and are quite comfortable. There are three separate bedrooms, kitchen, living room, office, pantry and workshop. We are supplied with two kerosene refrigerators and a pressure kerosene stove. The store-boat from Gladstone is by contract with the department supposed to call here every fortnight with our supplies and mail, and sometimes actually does get here on time, but as there is no refrigeration on the boat, perishable stores are always a headache to us during the summer months.

"Lighting for the living quarters is 110V, and we have a diesel plant to keep the battery bank charged. This also supplies power for our radio transmitter which is used to call the mainland four times daily, mainly to report our condition. We are not a weather station and are not compelled to call up passing ships, though we often do so at night with the signal lamp. During the day from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, we work at keeping the place in good repair, usually with a paintbrush.

"The pay here is reasonably good. I received 23 pounds gross (about \$65—Ed.) per week. After 12 months service here we receive one month's shore leave. There is also an allowance for sick leave of 3 weeks for serious injury or sick-

ness. Those are just a few facts to give you a general idea of the kind of life which we lead here. I am curious to know how our conditions compare with those on an American lighthouse and I would be very pleased if you choose to reply to this letter for that reason. I hope you find the above mentioned interesting.

"With best wishes to you for the coming year, I remain, yours sincerely,

"JOHN JESPERSEN"

North Reef, C/o H. M. Customs Gladstone, Queensland, Australia

**WINS EXECUTIVE POST IN  
UNITED STATES LINES**



MUCH INTEREST is manifest in the advancement recently of Capt. "Solly" J. Topping, a Belhaven native who is now General Operating Manager of United States Lines, according to announcement of the company president, John M. Franklin.

Capt. Topping, born and educated in Belhaven, followed the sea for many years, and has long been Marine Superintendent of U. S. Lines. He is often a visitor to Belhaven, and hunts and fishes in the area, usually bringing with him many shipping officials, and was here during the recent hunting season.

His immediate relatives living in Belhaven are two sisters, Mrs. Jule Puris and Miss Katie Topping and a brother, Roswell Topping, who is a retired mariner.

Captain Topping first went to sea as a second class quartermaster in the U. S. Navy during World War I. As a crew member of the U.S.S. Lake Bridge in 1918 he helped to thwart an attack by a German submarine in mid-ocean. The vessels on which he was employed during World War I were carrying mines to the north of Scotland for mine fields that were being laid between Scotland and Norway.

After the War Captain Topping rose from third officer to Master of vessels operated by Trans Marine lines and the Grace line and later ships of the American Pioneer line, a subsidiary of the United States Lines, operating to the Far East and Australia.

He came ashore in 1935 as assistant to the marine superintendent at the company's home port in New York City and in April of 1941 was promoted to the post of marine superintendent.

The United States Lines owns and operates a fleet of 55 modern passenger and cargo vessels, including the Superliner United States, fastest ship in the world and flagship of the fleet. These vessels operate in regular service to and from Ireland, the United Kingdom, Continental Europe, Hawaii, the Far East and Australia.

Captain Topping has been active in the affairs of the American Merchant Marine Post of the American Legion and his hobbies include stamps, gardening, baseball, Americanism and the lives of former Presidents of the United States. He now resides in Rutherford, New Jersey.

**BIRTHS**

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Sawyer of Wanchese a son, Elmer Eugene Sawyer, Jr., on April 19 in Memorial Clinic, Manteo; weight seven pounds, 14½ ounces. Mrs. Sawyer is the former Betty Jo Love of Wanchese.

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Lindsey of Norfolk, Va. announce the birth and death of twin daughters in Norfolk General Hospital. The little girls were born April 14 and one of them lived until April 16. Mrs. Lindsey is a sister of Mrs. Robert K. Gunn of Manteo. She and Mr. Lindsey have many friends in Dare County, Mr. Lindsey having worked for some time at the Carolinian Hotel, Nags Head.

**COLINGTON PERSONALS**

Troy Beasley is a patient in the Albemarle Hospital, Elizabeth City.

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**ROANOKE ISLAND CLUB  
AND LODGE MEETINGS**

MASONS: Manteo Lodge, Second and Fourth Monday Evenings, in Manteo Town Hall. Wanchese Lodge, First and Third Thursdays, Wanchese Lodge Hall.

EASTERN STAB, Second and Fourth Thursday evenings in Wanchese Lodge Hall.

ODDFELLOWS, Each Tuesday evening in Manteo Town Hall.

REBEKAHS, First and Third Monday evenings, Manteo Town Hall.

MANTEO ROTARY, each Monday evening, and MANTEO LIONS, First and Third Tuesdays in Community Building.

WANCHESE RURITAN, third Fridays, Wanchese schoolhouse.

DEGREE OF POCAHONTAS, Second and Fourth Fridays, 7:30 p.m., Wanchese Masonic Hall.

AMERICAN LEGION, Ft. Raleigh Post No. 26, 2nd Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Community Bldg., Manteo.

ROANOKE ISLAND GARDEN CLUB meets at 2:30 in the afternoon, first Thursday of each month, in the homes of members.

MANTEO WOMAN'S CLUB, second Tuesday each month. Homes of members, 8 p.m.

DARE CO. SHRINE CLUB, first Monday each month, 8:00 p.m., clubhouse, Nags Head.