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LIGHTHOUSE DIGEST

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Our cover image for this issue is a whimsical painting of Michigan's 1892 Mackinac Point Lighthouse in Mackinac City, Michigan done by Maine artist Virginia Souza. This is the 18th year that Virginia Souza has painted a holiday cover for *Lighthouse Digest*. It is available for purchase in two versions, one with "Lighthouse Digest" on the delivery truck and the other with candy canes instead of the words "Lighthouse Digest." These images and past holiday covers can all be ordered from *Lighthouse Digest*. See the full page advertisement in this issue.

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Haunted Lighthouses

"It was a dark and stormy night..."

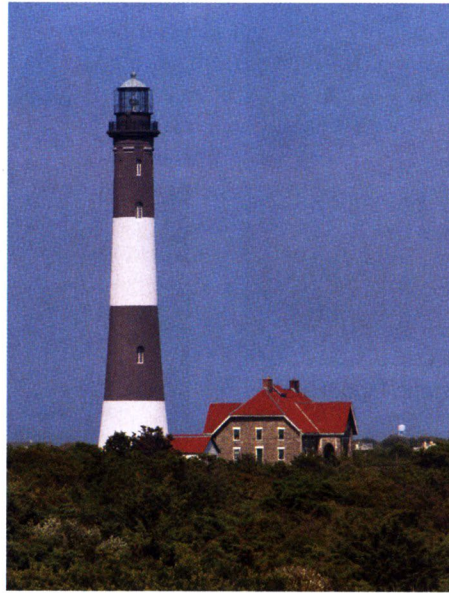
So many stories of shipwrecks, maritime disasters, and heroic rescues begin with that oft-used clichéd line.

And so do stories of ghostly apparitions, paranormal activity, and creepy hauntings. Lighthouses, perhaps because of their unique place as sentinels keeping watch over dangerous coastlines and treacherous waters, have their fair share of stories attached to them. Some of those stories involve ghosts, hauntings, and unexplained phenomena.

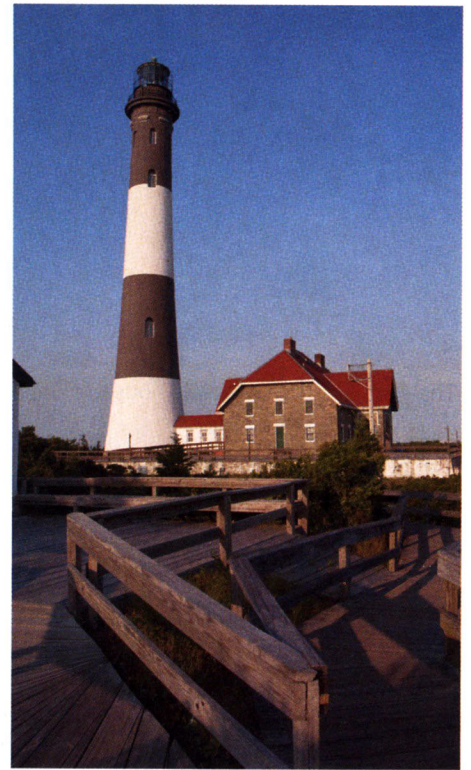
Several of the most beautiful lighthouses on New York's Long Island are the subject of persistent tales of supernatural activity - some of them playful and curious, and some of them ominous and terrifying.

The Long Beach Bar "Bug" Lighthouse, located near the seafaring town of Greenport, is a replica of the original Bug Light that was built in 1870 and discontinued in 1948. Because the original lighthouse rested on screw piles and was open underneath, it looked like a giant "bug" from the distance and this was the inspiration for the nickname. The original structure was destroyed in a fire on the night of July 4, 1963. The reconstructed lighthouse was built in 60 days on land at the Greenport Yacht and Shipbuilding Yard, and then was brought to the site to much fanfare in 1990.

But the story only begins then, for shortly after that, stories of ghostly goings-on began to emerge from the newly installed lighthouse. For a time, the lighthouse was used as a unique bed and breakfast, and guests reported hearing the sounds of creaking steps and unexplained noises at night. In one corner of the building, a feeling of being cold could be experienced, even on the warmest of evenings. Some visitors have reported feeling queasy when standing near this corner, a feeling that fades when they move away. There have been reports of unexplained indentations in the bed that is used in the residence. Perhaps most interesting to paranormal aficionados is the playful nature of what may be the ghost of a dog, nicknamed "Brownie." In 2012 and 2014, paranormal investigations took place here, trying to determine the veracity of these reports. In one such investigation,



The Fire Island Lighthouse has often been the center of stories, ghostly laughs, shadowy figures, and unexplained noises.



The Fire Island Lighthouse looks out over the Atlantic Ocean.



The tower top of the Fire Island Lighthouse.



The Plum Island Lighthouse is believed to be haunted by the spirit of a Revolutionary War hero.

of Long Island



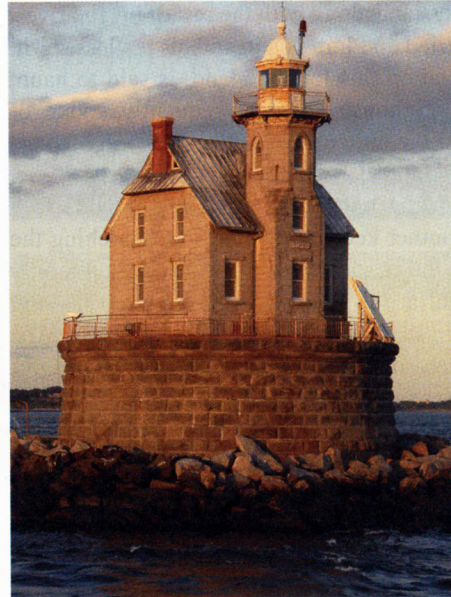
The Montauk Lighthouse has a ghost story attached to it.



The Long Beach Bar "Bug" Lighthouse is a replica of the original lighthouse which burned in 1963.



The Montauk Lighthouse and the nearby bluff into the Atlantic Ocean.



The Race Rocks Lighthouse has been investigated by many paranormal investigators.



The Long Beach Bar "Bug" Light is believed to be haunted.

a dog bone was placed on the floor, inside a string curled in a circle. The bone reportedly was moved, overnight, when nobody was present inside the lighthouse!

Perhaps Brownie the dog continues to inhabit the lighthouse, looking for someone to play with on those long and lonely nights offshore.

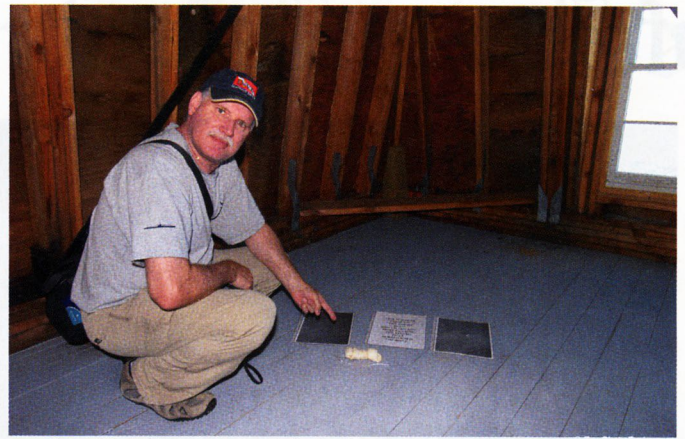
Located just east of Orient Point on Long Island's North Fork is Plum Island, a three-mile long, one-mile wide mysterious island that is the subject of frequent speculation and fanciful storytelling. For instance, the island is home to the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, and many tall tales have emerged over the years concerning the often secretive work, which

goes on there. The first lighthouse built on this island was constructed in 1826, and the current Plum Island Lighthouse was erected in 1869. Originally outfitted with a 4th order lens with a range of 14 miles, this navigational aid worked in conjunction with the nearby Orient Point Lighthouse to help mariners navigate the tricky and treacherous Plum Island Gut, an area of water subject to swift currents, deceptive tidal changes, and chaotic wave motion. The Plum Island Lighthouse was discontinued as an active beacon in 1978. Efforts continue to help stabilize the bluff upon which it sits and, hopefully, re-light the structure in the future.

And many believe the lighthouse itself



Author Chris Weaver ascending the stairs inside the Long Beach Bar "Bug" Lighthouse



Author Chris Weaver points to the location where the ghost of Brownie the dog is reported to have played with a dog bone.

is haunted.

The story is often told that Colonel Thomas Gardiner, a Revolutionary War hero, died of an infectious disease, and because of fear of this disease, he was buried on Plum Island instead of on Gardiner's Island along with the rest of his relatives. He is the only person buried on Plum Island and his restless spirit, unhappy at being interred on this lonely island, is said to haunt the lighthouse. Early lighthouse keepers frequently spoke of hearing strange noises in the attic of the lighthouse. A lighthouse keeper of more recent vintage, Rich Kenney, reported hearing someone plodding down the lighthouse stairs and outside to a landing while he and another keeper watched TV. Searching the grounds and the island, they determined that they were the only two people on the island at the time. He also reported hearing the sounds of walking in the attic and could even make out the indecipherable mutterings of someone upstairs. Others report closing the curtains in the windows every night, only to find them open in the morning!

If Colonel Gardiner does, indeed, haunt the lonely Plum Island Lighthouse, he joins the mysterious and very rich lore of an island that continues to be shrouded in mystery.

The Gothic Revival styled Race Rocks Lighthouse guards a perilous stretch of water off the east end of Long Island known for unpredictable currents, confused seas, and dangerous submerged ledges and rocks. The construction, completed in 1878 after

seven years of labor, involved thousands of tons of riprap, and the dogged and courageous efforts of many workers.

Over the years preceding and following the lighthouse installation, there have been hundreds of shipwrecks in this area, with untold numbers of fatalities. Reportedly, there is even the death of lighthouse keeper Neil Martin who died while attempting to get to the lighthouse during a ferocious storm.

The Race Rocks Lighthouse is considered Long Island's most haunted lighthouse. Coast Guard members, who have serviced the lighthouse, report hearing laughing, whispering, yelling, and other strange sounds coming from inside the building. Some stories tell of visitors being called by name, and others say they were pushed, touched, or poked as they walked through the halls of the lighthouse. In fact, there is so much unexplained activity here that many Coast Guardsmen refuse to come to this place at night.



Visitors have reported mysterious indentations in this bed located inside the Long Beach Bar "Bug" Lighthouse.



The stories are not confined to Coast Guard members. There have been claims of hearing footsteps by other visitors, and of wet footsteps appearing from a shower, and the sounds of running water even though the lighthouse is no longer supplied with water and the shower no longer exists.

Sailors venturing close to the uninhabited lighthouse at night report seeing the shadowy figure of a man in the tower. Upon closer approach, the figure disappears.

Paranormal investigations have taken place here. The Atlantic Paranormal Society (TAPS) came here in 1999 and filmed an investigation for the SyFy Channel, and reportedly captured video footage of a chair moving on its own across the upstairs room.

Who is haunting this lighthouse? Perhaps the old lighthouse keeper Neil Martin himself continues a restless existence in the place for which he gave his life.

There are many other lighthouses on Long Island, and some of those also have ghost stories attached to them. The Fire Island lighthouse is the center of stories of shadowy figures, ghostly laughs, unexplained banging noises, and the unsettling opening and closing of heavy doors and inaccessible windows. The Execution Rocks Lighthouse is located in the middle of Long Island Sound. It is rumored to be haunted by the spirits of Revolutionary War era soldiers who were captured and executed on these rocks by British soldiers. In addition, a serial killer in the 1920s named Carl Panzram reportedly dumped the bodies of many of his victims in the waters nearby, and the spirits of these unfortunate victims also are rumored to haunt this infamous lighthouse.

Even the iconic Montauk Point Lighthouse has a ghost story attached to it. On December 25, 1811, seventeen-year-old Abigail Olsen washed ashore near the lighthouse, the only survivor of a shipwreck in the Atlantic Ocean off Montauk Point. She died hours later. There have been sporadic reports over the years of the sounds of strange noises coming from the tower at night. Perhaps Abigail's spirit remains here, trapped and restless from her unfortunate Christmas Day tragedy.

Are all of these lighthouses haunted? Are these tales of terror the fanciful workings of over-active imaginations, or are the reports of paranormal activities based on something real and unexplained? These stories endure, and even though they are best told on Halloween nights in October, they persist through the years.

And so, as the stories often go, "It was a dark and stormy night. "

The Race Rocks Lighthouse is considered Long Island's most haunted lighthouse.





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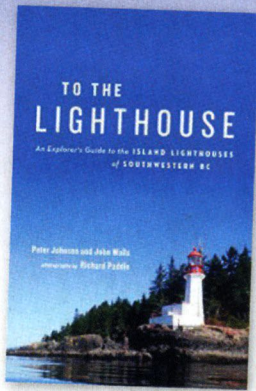
Makes a Great Holiday Gift


To the Lighthouse: An Explorer's Guide to the Island Lighthouses of Southwestern BC

The new publication offers a comprehensive and fascinating look at these remarkable landmarks, blending practical information on location and accessibility with riveting facts, local lore, and gorgeous photography. The book includes the community-supported preservation project at the Sheringham Point Lighthouse site. From Heritage House.

A portion of the proceeds of each sale goes directly to support Society preservation efforts.

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