
Lighthouses, icons of the North Carolina coast, have shone across the Outer Banks for well over two centuries as aids to navigation and safety in the treacherous shoals. *North Carolina Lighthouses: Stories of History and Hope* is a beautifully illustrated and informative trip through the history of the lighthouses of North Carolina. The authors, established lighthouse folklorists and co-founders of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society, have produced an overview of the major North Carolina lighthouses that will be helpful to anyone interested in an introduction to the historical evolution of lighthouses.

*North Carolina Lighthouses* is primarily an historical overview of the lighthouses of our coast. Detailed discussions of the history of lighthouse building in North Carolina are accompanied by rich, full-color illustrations from contemporary and historical pictures. Political, maritime, and local history are woven together to tell the tales of our coastal lights. Together the discussions and illustrations guide the reader through how the lighthouses came to protect the coastal waterways and the sailors who travel them.

Individual chapters focus on the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, the Ocracoke Lighthouse, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, the Bodie Island Lighthouse, the Currituck Beach Lighthouse, and the Cape Fear lighthouses including Old Baldy. For each major lighthouse there is a timeline and information on both lost lights and the development of lights that still exist. The authors also discuss affiliated lights such as beacon lights, lightships and other light vessels, lesser light towers, river lights, and range lights connected to each lighthouse. The historical timelines for each lighthouse and the larger timeline of all the lights of North Carolina will be especially interesting and useful to novice lighthouse aficionados. Some technical and engineering evolutions are also included, such as the types of lenses and changes in fuel and design.

Background stories enrich the book with related coastal history. Stories of engineers, keepers and their families, wild horses, and other island tales add a personal flavor the narrative. War tales, especially blockade-running and other engagements during the Civil War, add interesting details that help to tie the stories of the lighthouses into the larger historical context of North Carolina. Up-to-date information on the current status on each lighthouse, preservation efforts, and caretakers past and present is included as well.

The writing style and organization are likely to be accessible to high school readers and up. Some parts are moderately technical, but good organization helps make it accessible to a broad audience. Wonderful illustrations broaden the appeal. This book is appropriate for high school, community college, and undergraduate collections interested in an introduction to North Carolina's coastal lights or in coastal and island history as a whole. Coastal enthusiasts cannot help but enjoy this book, and any reader interested in North Carolina history will learn from reading it.
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