



THE MARITIME MEMORY PROJECT

A permanent Oral History Program, in partnership with the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, the Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program, and the Junior Service League of St. Augustine, Inc.

Project History

From the Museum's inception, the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum has conducted oral histories. In 1992 lightkeepers' descendents participated in an historic roundtable to share their memories about life on the lighthouse grounds in the 1920s & 1930s. With support from the Florida Humanities Council, Dr. Jay Anderson, Professor of History and Folklore, interviewed the keepers' children on tape.



The addition of the Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program (LAMP) expanded the museum's mission to embrace maritime history and underwater archaeology.

In 2001, the Lighthouse organized an oral history workshop with Dr. Julian Peasants, Director of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida. Museum staff, volunteers, and participants from other historical institutions were trained to design and implement oral history projects.

The same year, some eighty persons shared their experiences in preparation for the 2002 *Guardians of the First Coast*, USCG WWII exhibition. In 2004, the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum was accepted as a partner repository for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project in recognition of the importance and scope of our veterans maritime history collection.



In keeping with this rich tradition, the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum is seeking stories from our maritime past to hold in trust for future generations.

Oral History Collection

St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum maintains an oral history library that links to images and objects in its permanent collection. Oral histories join the Museum's permanent collection. The collection is available by appointment for use by students, researchers, and the public. Anyone with a link to maritime history, the Junior Service League lighthouse restoration, lighthouses, local life, shipping, commercial fishing, and other maritime topics is encouraged to share their oral history with the museum.

My daddy (lightkeeper) used seine nets. He put the fish in a big wash tub. I sold them to Corbett's Fish Market on Bay Street. Daddy would give me half the money, 'cause I'd take them over. I was driving at 14. Back in those days there was one keeper on duty. Everyday they took tours in the lighthouse starting at one o'clock. The horse and carriages used to bring from town the tourists.



WWII U.S. Coast Guard Barracks 1964
O'Donnell & Moore Collections

Rachel Lightsey-Daniels

The house was a little wood cottage. Hotter than sin. No air conditioning. We never went inside the lighthouse. We didn't hang around much. We went there to sleep at night. We played around on the beach...going to the fort. My uncle Bill got us to stay there. We weren't real wealthy, just a struggling family. That's why we always went to St. Augustine. I think the reason we stayed there was because it was free.

Patrick O'Donnell



Rae Daniels, age 16

Veterans History Project—Library of Congress Repository

We seek to expand our knowledge of military service in the waters of the first coast while supporting the Library of Congress Project and our regional military history project. Oral Histories of maritime military personnel, active or retired, complement an expanding and important collection of artifacts, letters, and objects representing life along the First Coast during World War II and after. Our permanent collection includes life at the light station under the USCG, and honors those in all branches of service.



Donald Pierson Collection

Dear Mother,

October 13, 1943

I arrived safely here at St. Augustine. I found out that I had been assigned to company A2 of which a first class boatswains mate is co. commander. I worked out the boat crew he had selected and raced them on Saturday. They finished third which was mighty good.

Love to all, Don

I don't remember a lot of details except how badly I felt that he (dad) wasn't home. He worked for the Record (local newspaper). In the Coast Guard he was Public Relations. His uniform had three stripes and PR on it. My mother made a very authentic SPAR outfit for me. She got the insignias and the patch for me.



Vee Markel Collection

Vee Markel-Wilson

Educational Oral History Program

In conjunction with Florida colleges and universities, and local schools, the museum's Education Department provides maritime oral history programs as a learning experience. Students are invited to work with the museum to gather information on topics that range from shrimping to the weather. Director of Education Paul Wenglowsky is the special contact for this program.

Sea Tales

Museum visitors can share memories with others by submitting illustrated stories that may be incorporated in future museum displays. Background data will be archived at the museum.

Roundtables and Reunions

Join us as we host a series of roundtables on specific topics such as “How Keeping the Light has Changed Over Time.” On-site reunions of military or Junior Service League members who saved the Light Station are great opportunities to bring photos or tell your stories.



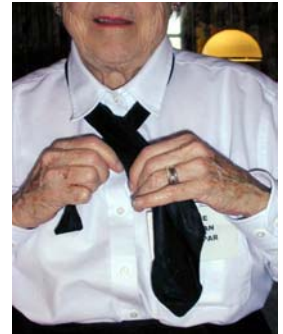
U.S. Coast Guard Ponce Training Station
Annual Veterans Reunion at the Museum



Veterans sharing their stories with the public in the USCG exhibit on Veterans' Day



History – past & present
WWII Veteran Ed Bean and
CDR Haines, USCG Mayport



Demonstrating how to tie a donated SPAR scarf

Would you like to share your local maritime memories with the Maritime Memory Project?

We would *love* to hear from you!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. () _____ Email: _____

Experience you wish to share: _____

Please contact:

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*(Q: Is there a way to fill out the form & email it?
Q: Can people click on photos to enlarge image?)*