

Fall 2000

SECOND RE-LIGHTING OF HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE

For the past 18 months a team including the Coast Guard Civil Engineering Group, Art Makenian USCG Auxiliary, and Dave Butler for HLPS have studied alternatives for the lens rotation. Finally a commercial bearing was found, and purchased. Installation has been performed by the Coast Guard Auxiliary devoting 3,500 hours of volunteer time. The Lighthouse Society under President Harry Cushing, has worked closely with the Coast Guard on the project, and the Lighthouse Keeper has attend the HLPS Board Meetings so close coordination was maintained. HLPS has provided many services for the project, includinG special hydraulic jacks and other tools needed for this complex work. The Coast Guard provided \$ 27,000 for the new bearing.

Finally after much testing, the re-lighting ceremony was held August 18, with Harry Cushing HLPS President as Master of Ceremonies. It was a great time, and Pompano Mayor Bill Griffin is shown speaking. At 8 PM the light was turned on and Hillsboro became once again the most powerful Lighthouse in Florida,.



HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE



PRESERVATION SOCIETY

WRECK OF THE SPANISH BRIG "GIL BLAS" 1835

There are some very important historical things close to Hillsboro Lighthouse which are invisible to most of us. These are the many shipwrecks which occurred off our shores, and lead to the building of the Hillsboro Lighthouse in 1906.

In September 1835 a Spanish brig was driven ashore just north of Hillsboro Inlet by a terrible hurricane. It was a tragedy for all concerned. The "Gil Blas" was about 90 feet long, able to carry 200 tons of cargo. She was returning to Spain with a cargo of sugar and cigars from Cuba. It was nearly new, and well built with the bottom sheathed with expensive copper plates. The ship was a typical small commercial vessel of the early nineteenth century. As the ship was driven ashore an anchor was thrown overboard offshore, and the hull was not badly damaged. Salvage operations were started using all the available manpower in Fort Lauderdale. Operations were under the direction of William Cooley, who brought men up the coast from the New River settlement for the work. As the cargo of cigars and sugar were unloaded they were moved to warehouses along the New River. With the primitive equipment available this took some time, and on January 6, 1836, in the middle of the Second Seminole War the Indians attacked the Fort Lauderdale settlement, and killed Cooley's wife and children. The other settlers fled to the Key Biscayne Lighthouse. On January 10, 1836 the settlers boarded Cooley's schooner, and traveled south to an island known as "Indian Key" where about 45 people were located. Later Cooley sailed north to the Gil Blas, and

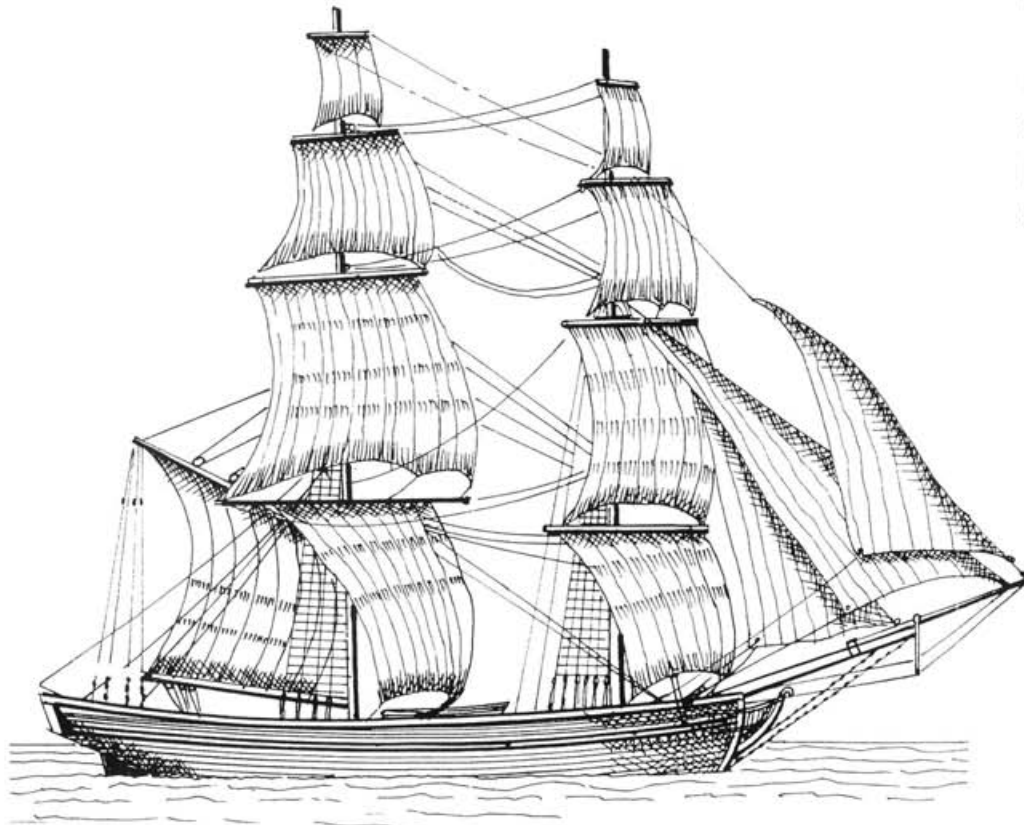


A MEETING AT HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE

1998 LIGHTHOUSE RENOVATIONS

During 1998 the Coast Guard Seventh District hired Engineers and Contractors who installed new 120 volt electric power lines, repaired worn and rusted tower parts, some 85 years old, and repainted the entire Lighthouse inside and out. The SERVICE ROOM at the 100 foot level was gutted, and rebuilt like new, with insulation, new wall paneling and oak flooring. The Contractor also installed new

removed two cannons and a lot of ammunition for the defense of Indian Key

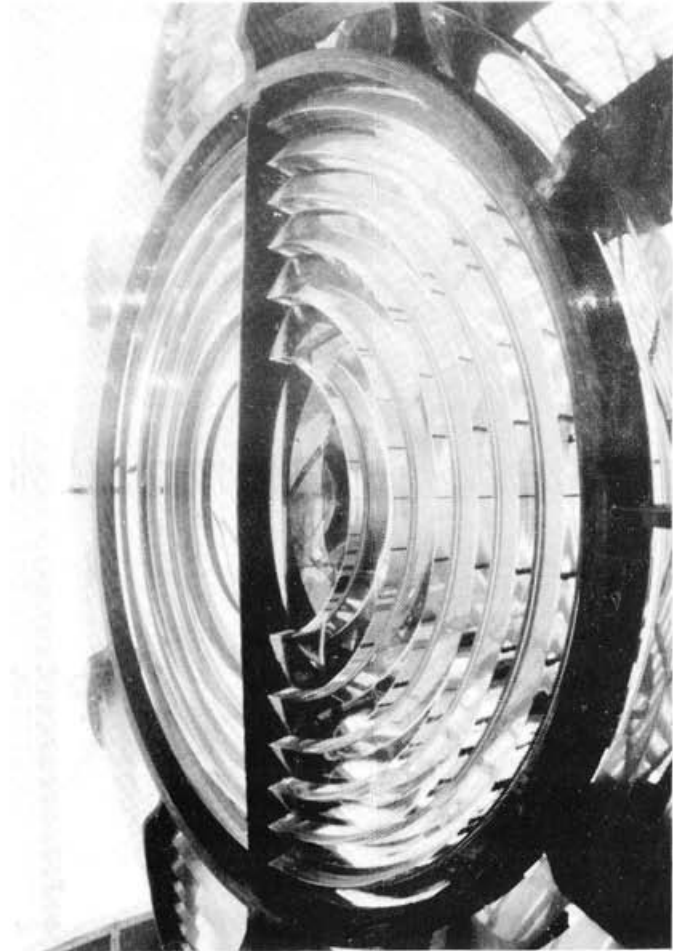


The wreck was badly damaged during this long period, but still clearly visible. There was concern that the lead ballast might be salvaged by the Indians and used for ammunition, so a naval party was sent to burn the ship to the water line. The Gil Blas is north of Hillsboro Inlet about a mile north of the "Alice Holbrook" and three miles north of the "Copenhagen". Spanish coins and other early nineteenth century materials have been brought up, but a wooden hull is pretty well destroyed after 165 years in the warm Florida waters, and solid documentation of this wreck is difficult. Dr. Ray McAllister (HLPS Director) and Stephen Attis are two marine archaeologists diving the site, and developing new and better information on this early Pompano wreck

Editor...*Dave Butler*

3/4 HP motors to rotate the lens, and installed a custom built ball bearing with split upper and lower races.

In all about \$ 220,000 was spent in these 1998 renovations, between Engineering Studies and Contract work, and all the efforts were successful except that the "ball bearing" on which the two ton lens assembly rotated was not properly built, and it failed in the spring of 1999.



LENS IN HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE
THE MAGNIFICENT NINE-FOOT DIAMETER
FRESNEL "CLAMSHELL" LENS IN HILLSBORO
LIGHTHOUSE HAS BEEN POLISHED SO ALL THE
256 PRISMS SHINE LIKE NEW.

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PIONEER DAYS OCTOBER 14-15

Pioneer Days this year will be held in Deerfield at Pioneer Park, 425 Northeast Third Street. The Hillsboro Lighthouse Society will have a booth, and we need VOLUNTEERS TO MAN THE BOOTH. Please come, join the party, and sit and answer questions for two hours on either SATURDAY or SUNDAY. CALL 781 7458 to schedule a time.

The Theme is "Memories and Milestones". There will be a beautiful model of Hillsboro Lighthouse built by Harvey Villa of the Historical Society, and we will also have old photographs, and an exhibit of SHIPWRECKS off Pompano. Photos, paintings and articles will be used.

Deerfield is a great location with a Historic Center at Pioneer Park. We plan to have three booths together for the Pompano Beach Historical Society, the Hillsboro Lighthouse Society and the Sample-McDougald House. PLEASE COME!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Once again the Hillsboro Inlet lighthouse shines brightly over the Atlantic Ocean. In a brief sundown ceremony on Friday August 18, 2000 at approximately 8PM, a group of lighthouse enthusiasts (including many HLPS members) gathered to countdown the event. I was honored to once again be able to emcee the event. See the lead article in this issue for more info.

Our next lighthouse visit for HLPS members is in the planning stages and will be announced in the next newsletter. We will be negotiating with the Coast Guard for a monthly date to be set aside for visitation. Stay tuned!

Harry Cushing



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