

Haunted Lighthouses of Maine

Ghostly forms, loud voices, ethereal whispers, phantom lights, the cries of drowning men on a cold still night are all part of haunted lighthouse legends. Maine holds the title for the most haunted lighthouses in New England.

We start our tour at Nubble Light on Cape Neddick where the legend of the ghost ship *Isadore*, is a favorite among the locals.

Capt. Joseph Smith, petitioned Congress for a lighthouse at York Ledge where mariners were constantly lost to the treacherous Bald Head Cliffs. Congress allocated the money, but the cliffs remained dark, causing more loss of life. Nubble Light, built in 1879, came too late so save Leander Foss, Captain of the *Isadore* and his crew.

Thomas King, a seaman on the *Isadore* had a vivid nightmare of the ship and crew crashing on the cliff rocks and perishing. The captain, hearing his story was suspicious and scornful, and refused to relieve him of duty. King was not aware that a shipmate had a similar dream and saw seven coffins including his wash up on shore.

In spite of the crew's fears, they sailed on a bitterly cold November day with wind driven heavy snow swirling about, greatly reducing visibility. Shortly after leaving port, the *Isadore*, crashed against Bald Head Cliffs, killing everyone except Thomas King, who escaped to Kennebunkport.

Many fishermen reportedly have seen the ghostly shadow of the *Isadore* and her crew sailing along the coastline.

Suicide Light Mantinnicus Lighthouse

Lighthouse keeping, a lonely life at best, saw several keepers unable to deal with the constant danger and loneliness commit suicide.

The new keeper of the Mantinnicus Rock Lighthouse, unaware that his predecessor killed himself, decided to open a portion of the lighthouse he found closed. Suddenly, doors angrily slammed open and shut, light bulbs died when placed in their sockets, cups and dishes flew off the table in a rage and cupboard doors refused to remain closed.

Peace returned when the new keeper re-closed that area. During a scheduled inspection, the area was re-opened and everything broke loose, however the inspectors reported "nothing unusual" to their superiors.

Division of Labor Owl's Head Light

Two ghosts haunt this lighthouse off the coast of Rockland.

The first, keeper hated the daily task of polishing the brass, and when finished walked outside to relieve his stress and boredom. Several successors reported seeing his footprints in the snow after a storm. According to legend, a three-year-old girl, awakened from her sleep, urged her parents to ring the fog bell, to warn approaching ships of danger. When questioned, she told them her invisible friend who looked suspiciously like the keeper's portrait, told her to warn them.

The keeper still polishes the brass each day and saves energy by lowering the thermostat.

The second ghost, or "the little lady," is a pleasant peaceful presence who is sometimes seen performing various kitchen duties. People report hearing rattling silverware, and doors opening and closing.

Play It Again...and Again Seguin Lighthouse

Seguin Light, off the coast of Boothbay Harbor is the highest above sea level is home to one of the most grisly haunting legends.

Lighthouse keeping was not for the faint of heart. While men kept busy with required duties, wives often found the loneliness, boredom and isolation nearly impossible.

One newlywed keeper brought his bride with him to Seguin Light. Her complaints of loneliness and boredom prompted him to order a piano to help occupy her time.

Although delighted with the gift, she found the piano came with just one piece of sheet music, which she repeatedly played throughout the long, isolating winter, driving her husband mad. When spring arrived, her husband purchased new sheet music, but she insisted on playing only the original tune. Driven insane, he took an ax to the piano, and then turned the ax on her, nearly decapitating her before killing himself.

Locals say that on a still, cold night, they can hear the tinkle of the piano, and see the keeper performing his duties.

The Lady in White Ram Island Light

Before a lighthouse appeared on Ram Island, a fisherman started the tradition of hanging a light on his dory, warning mariners of impending danger. Other fishermen soon followed his example.

When the light was not bright enough for sailors to see, a woman in white reportedly appeared waving a brightly lit torch. Several fishermen reported seeing her just in time, avoiding disaster.

Some reportedly still see her waving her torch and saving lives.

What Beauty Walks Here? Hendrick's Head Lighthouse

A beautiful ghost whose identity and fate sparked much speculation walks on the beach near Hendrick's Head Light.

During a March gale, a ship crashed on the ledge a half mile from the lighthouse. The keeper, unable to rescue the passengers watched helplessly as the ship, its passengers and cargo disappeared under the waves.

The next day, while searching through the debris, the keeper and his wife found two feather mattresses tied together, and heard a strange noise coming from inside. When they untied the mattresses, they found an infant girl snuggled inside a wood box. Believing the mother placed the baby in the box to save her life, they took the child home and raised her as their own.

Many believe the beautiful, grief stricken woman seen walking on the beach is the child's mother.

Dark Shadows Wood Island Light

Murder and mayhem stalk this lighthouse. Sheriff Fred Milliken rented a chicken coop on Wood Island to a drifter named Howard Hobbs.

When he threatened to arrest Hobbs for fighting with Mrs. Milliken, Hobbs shot him. Witnesses helped carry the mortally wounded sheriff to his house where he died. A distraught Hobbs raced to the lighthouse keeper's house, and despite Keeper Orcutt's attempt to calm him shot himself.

Locals believe the strange noises heard coming from the chicken coop belong to Milliken and Hobbs. They also reported seeing dark shadows roaming the grounds and hearing locked doors mysteriously flying open.

Keeper Orcutt's terrified successor, fled to a mainland boarding house one night, and jumped to his death the next day.

There are many seemingly haunted American lighthouses, and each has its own chilling tale. Several are open to the public.