

Lighthouse News Line

Neil Hurley Visits Storage Site



Historian Neil Hurley (right) views the remnants of the Cape St. George Light with ANERR Stewardship Coordinator Roy Ogles.

Lighthouse historian Neil Hurley, on his way back from working on a PBS lighthouse documentary in Pensacola, visited the Cape St. George lighthouse storage site in Eastpoint on Monday, June 26.

Hurley, the author of several books on Florida's lighthouses, was fascinated by the huge chunks of the fallen Light which exposed the 1852 wythe-and-rowlock construction technique and the different vintage bricks re-used from the two previous lighthouses on St. George Island. He and his son Seth spent most of the afternoon with SGLA President Dennis Barnell, pouring over photographs and drawings of the lighthouse and trying to determine how the recovered iron pieces of the lantern room fit together.

Since returning to his home in Virginia, Neil has already identified two possible sources of valuable construction information on the Cape St. George Light. He has confirmed that the National Archives has copies of the original construction contracts for the Light, which should detail the requirements presented to the builder in 1852. He has also discovered the Light was included in the Historic American Building Survey, which means drawings and photographs of the structure are on file at the Library of Congress.

Neil is a retired Coast Guard Commander and developed an interest in lighthouses while servicing those on Lake Superior during his assignment to a Coast Guard buoy tender more than 10 years ago. While serving on the staff of the Aids to Navigation Branch of the Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami, he began the extensive research on Florida lighthouses which has resulted so far in three books and numerous articles and papers.

The St. George Lighthouse Association thanks Neil for taking the time to visit our project and for his interest in helping us rebuild our fallen treasure!