



Work Week Sept. 6 - 10, 2006

Report by Phil von Voigtlander for the MI Department of Natural Resources

On September 6, Andy Thomas transported George Carpenter, Ron Fitzsimmons, John McKinney and Phil von Voigtlander to South Fox Island aboard the *Showboat*. On arrival we discovered the NE breeze was making the boathouse anchorage uncomfortable and after Ron and Phil confirmed that the surf and boulder landing was untenable, we elected to move to the west side and carry our gear, tools and supplies around to the Lighthouse. We completed that, had lunch and then set to work.

George immediately got back to his metal priming project on the historic Light. Phil spent the afternoon cleaning debris out of the Keepers Quarters. Ron single-handedly navigated the 9 ft 8 x 8 replacement sill plate timber around from the west beach to the Boathouse. Meanwhile Andy with the help of the crew set up the ladder and ladder jack to work on the Lighthouse Quarters chimney. He sealed the cap bricks with mortar and installed an anchored plywood chimney cap. Phil subsequently tuck pointed the water-damaged areas of the chimney and retrieved the pieces of the original sheet metal cap/vent and stored it in the first floor of the building.

Later in the afternoon, Andy and Ron returned to Northport.

On subsequent days, George and John concentrated on the metal work on the Light and the Oil House. They prepped the metal, and applied 2 coats of primer and 2 coats of paint to the areas that they completed. Four full days of their work has made a remarkable improvement in the appearance and undoubtedly in the longevity of these structures. This work is now more than 3/4 completed and with one more work session should be complete. In the course of prepping the cupola roof it was discovered that it had been painted red. Andy subsequently painted it so.

Phil concentrated his efforts on stabilizing the Boathouse. First he cleared the vegetation from the south wall and dug out the cobbles, sand and soil that had built up against and lead to the rot of the SE corner sill plate and collapse that portion of the wall. He then installed the new 8 x 8 sill plate section and the original 4x 4 vertical post. This he supplemented to 2 temporary posts to support the sagging header and SE corner. After disassembling the collapsed wall section he reinstalled it. Additionally Phil cross braced the structure and installed a temporary prop of the north wall. Subsequent work this season will focus on providing a more substantial propping up of that wall which is threatening to pull the building over as it lists to the north. All of this work is aimed at trying to prevent the total collapse of this building prior to more extensive correction.

The trip was extended from 4 to 5 days by near gale force winds on the 9th. On the 10th, Andy returned with Tom and Deb Wetherbee. Andy set up the ladders and cleaned 100's of pounds of sod, shrubs and trees out of the eaves of the Keepers Quarters and prepared a grilled salmon and burger lunch for the hungry crew.

Tom and Deb set about the roof work on the Keepers Quarters with ladders, safety harnesses and climbing gear. With Deb handling the ground lines, Tom scaled the roof to replace all of the missing gable tiles with heavy galvanized formed sheeting. This work was critical as the interior of the structure is suffering water damage at the sites of the missing tiles. Tom also inspected and measured the chimneys and removed the accessible vegetation that was growing in the mortar. He has assessed that these 3 chimneys need further attention because of the water and vegetation damage the mortar.

Phil secured all windows and exterior doors and reinstalled the security screens on the Quarters and Lighthouse. We then returned to Northport into a building ENE wind. Andy skillfully navigated the waves and we were home in time for dinner. It was an excellent group effort throughout the week and has greatly benefited the Lighthouse property.

My humble thanks to all involved and to the DNR for providing us with the use permit to help preserve this public historic asset.

Phil von Voigtlander Sept. 12, 2006