

# HISTORY NOOK

## The Patos Island Lighthouse

By: EDRIE & TERRI VINSON

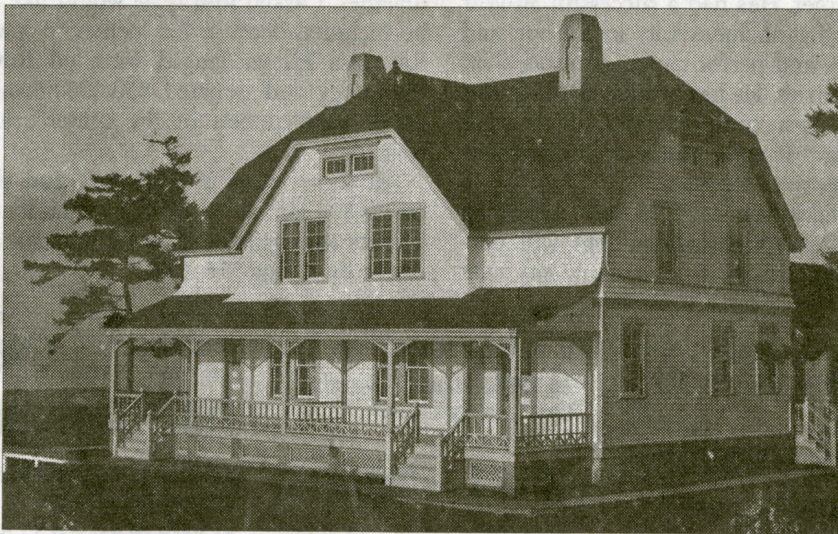
While the Saturna Island residents warmed themselves on the coal they stole from the hold of the wreck of the John Rosenfeld, Parliament erected a lighthouse on East Point, its light shining first on 1888. And the U.S. Light House Establishment made plans to take the sting out of the treacherous currents through Haro Strait, Boundary Pass, and the Strait of Georgia.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer announced on May 6, 1890 that Portland US Engineer Major T. H. Handbury arranged for two new lighthouses to be built in the Puget Sound, a light and fog signal on Patos Island, and a light at Turn Point. Details of exactly what was to be built appeared in the same paper on August 2, 1892, when Handbury requested bids for the construction. Patos was to receive a "double Keeper's Dwelling, a Fog Signal Building, Cisterns and Draining, Grading, etc.," and the same, plus a Barn, for Turn Point.

With a dateline of Port Townsend, July 28, 1893, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer said that

Collector Saunders announced the appointment of Ed Durgan of Whatcom as the keeper of the light on Patos Island, and John O. Latta of Pierce County as keeper of the Turn Point light on Stuart Island. The paper went on to say that "The fact is not generally known that the collector of customs practically appoints the keepers of all new lighthouses established by the government. That is, his recommendation is virtually an appointment for these places..."

Imagine the surprise on faces when a few days later Harry D. Mahler is appointed Keeper of the Patos Island Fog Signal Station. Mahler is married to Louise Rilling, daughter of Robert Rilling, a dairy farmer of Eastsound. Did Rilling have power beyond his apparent position? Edward Durgan and his wife Estelle, and their three children moved in as Assistant Keeper. Durgan was on Patos for less than a year. He did, however, return to take over the Keepers' position on December 5, 1905, and stayed there until February 22, 1911.



Thank you to the History Nook Sponsor



**Madrona Point Insurance**

Home | Auto | Commercial  
A Chele Enterprises Company

**Michele Wiley**  
licensed independent agent

365 North Beach Road, #106, Eastsound  
360-376-5707 office | 360-722-2802 direct

[www.cheleent.com](http://www.cheleent.com)