

This magnificent rare First Order Fresnel lens that once graced the St. George Reef Lighthouse is housed in the Bolen Annex of the Del Norte County Museum on H Street.

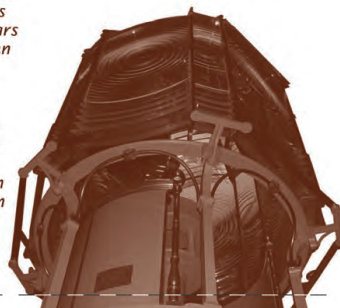
Known as the "Jewel of the Northcoast", this lens warned passing mariners of the treacherous Dragon Rocks for over 80 years.



In 1982, Bob Bolen and other volunteers assisted the Coast Guard in dismantling the 5,000 pound, 18 foot high Fresnel lens, then helped reassemble it and construct an addition to the museum to house it.

(Above) View of the lens from upstairs in the Bolen Annex.

(Right) View of the lower portion of the lens from downstairs in the Bolen Annex.



March 28, 1964



In the early morning hours of March 28, 1964, a series of five tsunami waves swept into Crescent City killing 11 people, injuring 24, destroying 29 city blocks and causing 7 to 15 million dollars in damages. It was the worst tsunami damage along this country's West Coast in recorded history.

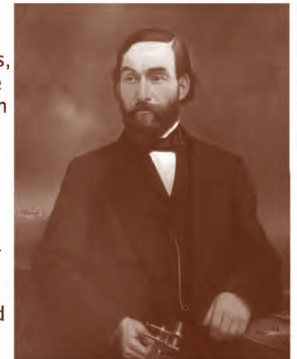


"The event is forever etched in people's minds in Crescent City", says Sean Smith of the Del Norte County Historical Society.



The ill-fated Brother Jonathan was lost in stormy seas on July 30, 1865. This steam-driven side-paddle wheeler went down four miles off Point St. George, just north of Crescent City.

With the loss of over 200 lives, the wreck of the Brother Jonathan remains the worst shipping disaster on the Pacific Coast. Only nineteen people survived. Some of the victims were buried in the old cemetery near Pebble Beach, where a memorial now stands.



Captain of the Brother Jonathan, Samuel J. DeWolfe

Some Highlights of the Museum

Without dedicated and wonderful volunteers and Board members, the Del Norte County Historical Society would not exist. To become a volunteer please call (707)-464-3922

To become a member, please contact us and include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address.

Members receive admission at no charge in both museums, a discount in both gift shops and a quarterly newsletter.

The Society is non-profit and staffed mainly by volunteers.

Donations are gladly accepted.

We also have a "Book of Memories" Memorial Fund.

The Del Norte County Historical Society Museum

577 H Street,
Crescent City
(707) 464-3922
manager@delnortehistory.org

Mid-May - September
Open Monday - Saturday
10 A.M. - 4 P.M.

October - Mid-May
Open Mondays & Saturdays Only
10 A.M. - 4 P.M.

Battery Point Lighthouse Museum

Foot of "A" Street
Crescent City
(707) 464-3089

April - September
Open Daily - Tides Permitting
10 A. M. - 4 P. M.

October - March
Open Weekends - Tides Permitting
10 A. M. - 4 P. M.

History

More Precious Than Gold

The Historical Museums
of
Del Norte County





The Historical Society, established in 1951 has operated the current building as a museum since 1965. Built in 1926, it served as the Hall of Records, Sheriff's Office and the County Jail until the mid-1960s. Located in downtown Crescent City, it occupies the corner of 6th and H Streets.

Board members keep the Historical Society going. Continually striving to improve exhibits and archives, the Society always welcomes contributions from local citizens.

Along with extensive research archives - books, newspapers and other reference materials - that are available to the public during normal operating hours, the museum houses two stories of displays, artifacts and exhibits that bring to life the history of this section of northcoast California.

The women's section of the former jail has been kept intact on the second floor and the cells hold various pioneer exhibits, including a blacksmith's shop. In the main foyer is a gold coin from the shipwreck of the Brother Jonathan. Various rooms are devoted to documents and letters, and feature artifacts used by the early settlers. There is a large collection of quilts, and many displays that feature fashions of the times.



The Bolen Annex houses the magnificent First Order Fresnel lens from the St. George Reef Lighthouse, as well as a logging exhibit, mining equipment and ore samples, a railroad display and a model of the old Hiouchi Bridge.



There are memorabilia from all American wars given to the Society by local families. Musical instruments, old radios, phonographic and photographic equipment, needlework and fashions and furniture from yesteryear are just some of the objects on display.

Photo carousels throughout the museum chronicle the historical visual representations of people, places and events.



One room of the museum is devoted to artifacts of the local Northcoast Tolowa and Yurok people.

(Right) Yurok family home in Requa. The oldest structure in California, until it was torn down in 1996.



(Above) Robert Spott was a Yurok dance owner from the village of Requa.

There is also a room housing, not only the ever growing collection of local Native American artifacts but also artifacts from the Native American tribes all over the United States

The photo carousels in the Tolowa/Yurok Room comprise an evocative and informative pictorial history of the native people of the area throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All photos have been donated from local families.



(Above) Bertha Grimes Stewart (Tolowa) at the age of 20. Photo taken in 1920 at "The Big Sea Water".

(Left) Tolowa basket weaver "Bah-Gesh". Photo taken in 1940.



Del Norte County's Lighthouses

Battery Point Lighthouse Museum

St George Reef Lighthouse



Turn left at the end of "A" St.

Accessible Only during low tide!

(Below left) 200-watt bulb used when light was electrified in 1907.

Fourth Order lamp and chimney used in lens on display.



During the 1964 tsunami, the keepers were stranded in the lighthouse. There was no damage on the island itself, but the trapped keepers watched in horror throughout the night, as the series of waves wreaked havoc on the mainland and swirled around the base of the lighthouse.

The first oil lamp was lit at Crescent City Light Station on December 10, 1856. Many keepers have come and gone since then. Today Battery Point Lighthouse Museum serves as a private aid to navigation, and gives you a rare glimpse into the daily operation and history of an active lighthouse.

The museum is filled with artifacts and historical information, as well as displays of maritime events. The tour includes a climb to the tower, which houses a 375mm Drumm lens operating on electricity.



(Left) The "Esley" organ was donated by Mildred Robinson Felkel in 1976.

(Right) This room is dedicated to Wayne Redrick Piland, Battery Point Light Keeper from 1946-1953.



Many stories are part of Battery Point's history, including tales of a resident ghost that sometimes appears in the saltbox-style keepers house.

(Right) This Fourth Order Fresnel lens was put into service in the Lighthouse in 1907 when an electric bulb was used for the first time.



Guided tours & helicopter fly-bys are available.

NOAA permits and weather permitting

November - April
Reservations Required

Go to www.stgeorgereeflighthouse.us or call (707) 464-8299 for more information.

The spectacular St. George Reef Lighthouse (SGRL) crowns Northwest Seal Rock, 7 miles off Point St. George. Built in the late 1800s, it was abandoned by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1975, replaced by an automated buoy. Now owned by Del Norte County, it is leased to the SGRL Preservation Society, formed in 1986 to help preserve the structure, and to interpret the human story of its three eras of maritime history.

Restoration has been underway since 1996 under strict federal guidelines. Eventually the engine room and galley will represent the Coast Guard era ending in 1975, the three individual room levels will represent the U.S. Lighthouse service era to 1939, and the lantern room will represent 'back to the future' with its new solar powered light.

St. George Reef Lighthouse Preservation Society

P.O. Box 577
Crescent City, CA 95531



(Left) The Banjo Clock arrived on January 17, 1857 and has been at Battery Point ever since.

