

## James W. Turner

This month we will introduce an Assistant Keeper, James William Turner that served at Hunting Island Lighthouse as Second Assistant keeper from September 1924 to February 1925 and was promoted to First Assistant Keeper serving from February 1925 to May 1928. Although the Principal Keepers were in charge of the light station the Assistant Keepers were absolutely necessary to operate and maintain the station and all its equipment and therefore served a vital role at the Hunting Island Light Station.

Assistant Keeper Turner came to the Hunting Island Light Station from a significant career as a seaman, having served as a seaman in the US Coast Guard, the US Navy and in the Lighthouse Service as a lighthouse tender crewman. As a resident of Lynn, Massachusetts (a coastal suburb north of Boston) he would have grown up near the sea and was undoubtedly drawn to it. There are indications his maritime career began at the age of 14 and he may have served on at least one sailing ship.

James Turner enlisted in the US Coast Guard on the Coast Guard Cutter ANDROSCOGGEN based in Boston, MA, in November 1916. His rating was Boy 2nd Class. He enlisted for one year (the normal Coast Guard enlistment at that time) however he served until August 1918; his enlistment having been extended for several reasons, including the entry of the United States in WW I. James Turner was promoted to Ordinary Seaman in October 1917. His previous occupation was given as a waiter. Although a Coast Guard Cutter, ANDROSCOGGEN operated as part of the US Navy during WW I. Since Seaman Turner had served in the armed forces during WW I (April 1917 to Nov. 1918) he was eligible for the WW I War Bonus and probably the WW I Victory Medal.

James Turner's next military service was an enlistment in the US Navy from May 1920 to May 1922. He began as a Seaman 2nd class and was promoted to Seaman 1st Class in October 1921. For two years he served on the destroyer USS BUSH, (DD-166). Although BUSH was based in Newport, RI, it spent winters in Charleston, SC where it operated training Naval Reserves. His military service records include a US Navy Health Record for James Wm. Turner, Seaman 1st Class, which gives his former occupation as Surfman, Station #24 Nahant, Mass. It is likely that he served a one year or longer enlistment at the Nahant Coast Guard Life-Boat Station sometime between August 1918 and May 1920 and this was missed by the National Archives. This may have happened shortly after he was discharged from the ANDROSCOGGEN as we know he was registered for the draft and with WW I underway would probably have been subject to be drafted. More research is needed, however, this would explain the photo of him in a Coast Guard Surfman uniform standing in front of the Relay House beachfront hotel which is very near the Coast Guard Life-Boat Station in Nahant, MA. A blow up of James in this photo is on display in the Hunting Island Light Station storage building, HI-65.

James Turner received an Honorable Discharge May, 2, 1922 in Philadelphia, PA. He returned to Charleston where on August 1st, 1922 he signed on as a Seaman on the US Lighthouse Service Tender CYPRESS based at the 6th Lighthouse District Depot in Charleston. He served on USLHT CYPRESS until April 30, 1923 when he was discharged at his request. He may have been promoted to Quartermaster during his service on USLHT CYPRESS.

While in Charleston he met Juanita Herbert, they fell in love and were married in 1922. Upon his discharge from CYPRESS in April 1923, with his wife now expecting a child, the couple moved to Lynn, MA to live with members of the James Turner family. A son, James William Turner, Jr. was born in December 1922. The next year the Turner family returned to Charleston where James signed on the USLHT MANGROVE (6th District tender) as a Seaman on June 11, 1924. His service was short as he was discharged at his request on June 30, 1924 to accept a position on July 1st 1924 as an Additional Lighthouse Keeper with the 6th Lighthouse District. Additional Keepers served at the Lighthouse District Headquarters where they were detailed to various light stations in the District as "occasion requires" to fill in for keepers who were away on leave or other reasons. These short temporary assignments are not recorded in their service records.

Effective September 16, 1924, James W. Turner was appointed, 2nd Assistant Keeper, at the Hunting Island Light Station. His salary was \$900 per year. He and his family and household effects took passage on the USLHT MANGROVE and left Charleston Sept. 9, 1924. 2nd Assistant Keeper Turner was in a probationary status until Dec. 31, 1924, a normal situation for a new keeper. He received a "good" report and was considered qualified by his Principal Keeper, Clarence Malloy, and received an "absolute appointment", Dec. 31, 1924. He subsequently received a promotion to 1st Assistant Keeper on Feb. 1, 1925. His salary was now \$1260 per year.

In May 1928, James Turner exchanged positions with Assistant Keeper George B. Jackson at the Sapelo Island Light Station, GA. This exchange was approved by their respective Keepers and the 6th District. Such exchanges were not unusual within a District in the Lighthouse Service. His transfer to Assistant Keeper at the Sapelo Island Lighthouse was to be effective May 7, 1928. There was a reduction in his annual salary of \$60. As this transfer was at his request, he was responsible for the movement of his family and personal effects. This he did himself by boat but didn't arrive at Sapelo Island until May 20, 1928, after a "hard trip".

In October 1929 James W. Turner submitted his resignation from the US Lighthouse Service to be effective Oct. 9, 1929. His reason was given as "I have a better position and more money and a good chance for advancement". The resignation was accepted, thus ending James Turner's Lighthouse Service career. There is some indication the family may have then moved to Beaufort and lived here with his brother-in-law on Craven Street. Shortly after, however, they moved to New England where James Turner, sadly, died of a burst appendix in 1931.



**Coast Guard Surfman James W. Turner standing in front of the Relay House Hotel, Nahant , MA. The Nahant Coast Guard Life-Boat Station was near the hotel.**