

# LIGHTSHIP CHESAPEAKE

## WELCOME ABOARD

### A Proud Ship With A New Mission

Anchored in coastal waters where other types of navigation aids were impractical, they marked major shipping channels and harbor entrances. A welcome sight to ships' captains for many years, these vessels were easily identified by their bright red hulls, the name of their duty station painted on the side in large white letters, and the beacon lantern atop the mainmast. Gradually, lightships have become victims of technology.

The Chesapeake was designed for maximum stability while riding at anchor under high wind and sea conditions. The high bow, rounded stern, and high freeboard (sides) are characteristic of lightships. Other unique features include the "mushroom" anchor in the bow near the waterline and the double lantern atop the masthead. While on station, the Chesapeake also collected meteorological and oceanographic data.

Gradually, lightships have become victims of technology. Most of those that dotted the United States seaboard have been replaced with modern, automated "super buoys", or steel tower structures.

Thus it was, after 40 years of distinguished service that Lightship 116, the Chesapeake, was returned in 1971 and transferred to the National Park Service for conversion to a floating environmental study site. When refurbishing of the ship was completed at the Washington Navy Yard in the fall of 1972, the Chesapeake moved to her permanent mooring site off East Potomac Park in the Washington Channel.

June, 1981 Mayor William Donald Schaefer and the Citizens of Baltimore proudly accepted the Lighthouse Chesapeake from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior. The Chesapeake is docked at Pier IV, Pratt Street in the Inner Harbor area and is operated by the City's Department of Recreation and Parks. Tours conducted daily, except Tuesdays and Wednesdays. For additional information and group rates phone area code 301-396-3854.

### Service Career

- 1930 Built in Charleston, South Carolina, for the Bureau of Lighthouses and designated LS 116. Maiden voyage on August 17, from Charleston to Norfolk. First duty station: Fenwick Island Delaware.
- 1933 July 17, began 29 years of service off the mouth of Chesapeake Bay.
- 1939 Lighthouse Service absorbed into the U.S. Coast Guard. Ship redesignated WL 538.
- 1940 Pressed into service by the U.S. Navy during World War II and activated off Sandwich, Massachusetts.
- 1945 Returned to the Chesapeake Bay Station.
- 1965 Replaced at Chesapeake Bay Station by platform light.
- 1966 Jan., moved to entrance of Delaware Bay assuming the name Delaware.
- 1970 Replaced at Delaware Bay station by large navigational buoy.
- 1971 Decommissioned by the U.S. Coast Guard, transferred to the National Park Service.

Length: 133'3"  
 Beam: 30'  
 Draft: Loaded - 12' forward, 13'9" AFT  
 Displacement: 630 gross tons  
 Propulsion: Diesel electric, 350 horsepower  
 Maximum speed: 9 knots  
 Berths: Staterooms - (1) Captain, (1) Cook, (4) Officers, (10) Seamen

