



PALMETTO DUNES™

OCEANFRONT RESORT

H I L T O N H E A D I S L A N D

About the Hilton Head Rear Range Lighthouse at Palmetto Dunes

The Hilton Head Rear Range Lighthouse at Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort – also known as the Leamington Lighthouse -- serves as a familiar sight overlooking the resort's award-winning Arthur Hills Golf Course.

This historic lighthouse, which is featured on the National Register of Historic Places and part of the Inventory of Historic Light Stations, occupies a unique place in Hilton Head Island history. One of only a handful of surviving lighthouses in South Carolina, the Hilton Head Rear Range Lighthouse is the only historic lighthouse on Hilton Head Island.

This distinctive structure, now located in the Leamington neighborhood in Palmetto Dunes, was built between 1879 and 1880 as part of a larger system of navigation lights guiding ships into Port Royal Sound. The original lighthouse complex included a keeper's house, forward beacon and rear lighthouse.

Today, only the 94-foot Rear Lighthouse survives, along with a vintage brick oil house and a water cistern located on site. Sheltered by towering pine trees, the main lighthouse structure, which is now inactive, consists of a unique cast iron skeleton, a cylindrical stair tower, a wooden watch room and a cypress lantern room.

A number of interesting ghost stories and legends surround this historic lighthouse. In 1898, a major hurricane lashed the South Carolina coast. Determined to keep the light burning, lighthouse keeper Adam Fripp died of a heart attack during the storm. At his urging, Fripp's 21-year-old daughter, Caroline, kept the navigational light burning in the wake of her father's death, but she passed away only three weeks later, inspiring haunted sightings of a female ghost in a long blue dress on dark, rainy nights.

The lighthouse, which originally included a wooden exterior, was deactivated in 1932. During World War II, however, the structure served as an important lookout tower for enemy ships and anchored Camp McDougal, a network of U.S. Marine temporary barracks and ammunition sheds.

Greenwood Communities and Resorts, the parent company of Palmetto Dunes, restored this historic structure in 1985 and opened the lighthouse grounds to the public. Today, the Hilton Head Rear Range Lighthouse serves as a popular landmark and historic treasure at Palmetto Dunes.