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**Light house old, but tale Drake saw it is myth Lighthouse old, but  
tale Drake saw it is myth**

Hampton Dunn

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## LIGHT HOUSE OLD, BUT TALE DRAKE SAW IT IS MYTH

ST. AUGUSTINE --- One expects anything connected with St. Augustine to be "old," and, the St. Augustine Lighthouse shining forth from its commanding spot on Anastasia Island is, indeed, old.

But painstaking research by the U.S. Coast Guard itself fails to substantiate the romantic yarn that the great English seaman, Sir Francis Drake, centuries ago sighted an old Spanish lighthouse at this spot. Commander A. E. Carlson, USCG, is the debunker of this tale.

Thomas Cato's "Narrative of Drake's Expedition," published about 1586, had recounted: "...we described on the shore a place built like a beacon, which was indeed a scaffold upon four long mastes raised on end, for men to discover to the seaward, being in the latitude of thirtie degrees, or very neare thereunto..."

There was an old Spanish tower, 44 feet high, on the isle which the Collector of Customs in 1823 recommended could be converted to a lighthouse. Congress appropriated \$5,000 and the light -- first on the Florida seacoast-- went on a year later. It was a fixed light with 10 14-inch reflectors.

A 4th order revolving light was substituted in 1855. It was doused during the Civil War and rekindled in 1867. Beach erosion threatened the tower and a new one was constructed in 1874. Arid this is the one that functions today. It is a first order light 165 feet above sea level, seen 19 miles to sea.

The St. Augustine Light has a conical tower, white base with black cornice; black and white spirally-banded shaft (like this from the beginning) black below the lantern deck and red above.

What do you suppose that was Sir Francis saw?

