



THE LIGHTSHIPS OF CAPE COD

By Frederic L. Thompson
Reviewed by Wayne Wheeler

At long last, Frederic Thompson's book, *The Lightships of Cape Cod*, has been reprinted. The most comprehensive book on America's lightships and lightship stations was written by Willard Flint and published by the Government Printing Office (GPO). However, that volume was mainly a statistical compilation of facts and contained no photographs. Additionally, the book was generally not available to the public. The limited GPO run, now out of print, was made available to museums, libraries, and societies like ours.

Other than Flint's guide, Frederic Thompson's book is the only one ever written solely about lightships in this country; it really provides the 'flavor of the bean' when it comes to what lightships were all about.

The waters around Cape Cod had the highest concentration of lightship stations of any area of the country. Stations — with colorful names such as Hen and Chickens, Shovelful Shoal, and Handkerchief — proliferated the Cape Cod waters from 1828 until 1984 when the last station, Nantucket, was discontinued.

This thorough book will acquaint the reader with the different styles, or types, of lightships used over the years, lightship life and lightship tragedies — like the Nantucket station vessel which was cut in

half by the White Star liner *Olympic* (sister of the *Titanic*) with the loss of seven lives.

The book is laced with 93 vintage photographs and numerous drawings. All the photographs used in the first edition have been reproduced and are of better quality than in the original book. Both the cover and paper stock used are also higher quality than the original version.

The unique life of the lightship sailor has disappeared over the horizon, along with the tall ship and the age of steam. This book preserves that way of life and tells some fascinating tales of those 'floating lighthouses' anchored off Cape Cod. It's a must for any maritime or lighthouse lover's library.

Soft cover, 8 1/4" by 10 3/4", 112 pages and available through the Keeper's Library for \$21.95 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling.

MAINE LIGHTHOUSES: A PICTORIAL GUIDE

By Courtney Thompson
Reviewed by Lisa M. Truesdale

There's something I'd like to say to Courtney Thompson, the author of *Maine Lighthouses: A Pictorial Guide* . . . Thank you.

Courtney visited 68 light stations with camera in hand. She then was kind (and ambitious) enough to combine the information she gathered, and the nearly 250 gorgeous color photographs she took, into a breathtakingly beautiful book for all lighthouse lovers to enjoy.

And enjoy it, I did. There are at least two color photographs for every light station and Portland Head Light Station earned a three-page spread with seven photographs. I liked seeing the different views of each light station taken from land, sea, and air, but what I really appreciated were the photographs taken at different times of the day or year. For instance, the spread for Blue Hill Bay Light Station shows two fascinating aerial views of Green Island: one at high and the other at low tide. Some photographs show the light stations adorned with Christmas wreaths and surrounded by snow, while others show such signs of the warmer months as lush green trees and colorful flowers.

The book is neatly arranged into geographical sections, like "Downeast coast" and "Penobscot Bay," making it extremely helpful for someone visiting only a certain area.

Though the text accompanying each light station is short, it is packed with the usual vital statistics (such as when the station was constructed), but there are also interesting historical details. One story tells how, at Owls Head Light Station in the 1930s, a dog named Spot was credited with guiding a mailboat safely past the peninsula when the fog bell rope was buried in the snow.

Readers will also appreciate the added tidbits of information that will enhance a visit to the sight — for instance, the fact that Monhegan Island reportedly has more than 600 varieties of wildflowers.

The directions to each light station, accompanied by small maps, will be appreciated by everyone for their detail: "The path begins straight ahead . . . listen for the sound of the water and look for the shoreline." She even tells you what to expect when you get there: "The climb to the lighthouse is fairly steep up a narrow path."

As an added bonus, there are two special appendices. The first one lists "Scenic/Tour Boat and Charter Information" — a must have for travelers. The other is a four-page chart of all 68 light stations along with their color, characteristics, height, and range of visibility.

Courtney Thompson didn't just go out and take a picture of every light station in Maine. She put her heart and soul (and a lot of her time) into this project, and lighthouse fans will be thanking her for this masterpiece for years to come.

Soft cover, 8 1/2" by 11", 128 pages, with color photographs throughout. Available through the Keeper's Locker for \$19.95 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling.

OOOOOPS!

Keeper Ned Dietrich pointed out that in the *Fall Log* we spelled the Canadian Abino lighthouse as 'Albino.' Perhaps the stark white nature of the lighthouse caused the mental slip and addition of the 'l.'