

**Hard Luck Coast—The Perilous Reefs of Point Montara**

By JoAnn Semones  
Reviewed by Wayne Wheeler

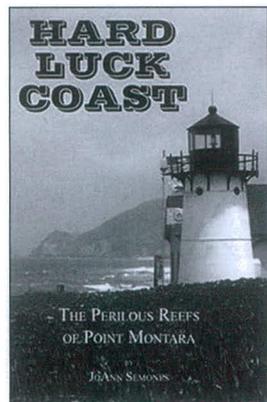
It's amazing how many areas of the Atlantic and Pacific Coast are called "The Graveyard of the..." This work by Semones is yet another "graveyard." This time it's an area located about 20 miles south of the entrance to San Francisco Bay. And, darned if there weren't a few wrecks in that area. Actually, one could pick any limited stretch of the Atlantic or Pacific coast and find a slew of shipwrecks—coasts are dangerous, especially during the age of sail.

The author presents a broad-brush account of 12 shipwrecks (each a chapter) that occurred between 1856 and 1946 near Point Montara, California. There just happens to be a fog signal station there from 1875 and

1900. The station acquired a lens lantern in 1900 and light tower in 1912, thus becoming a light station. However, although the light station tower is on the cover and the station history is mentioned briefly, the station

has little to do with the several shipwrecks detailed in this work.

Semones has created a chapter for each of the shipwrecks. She has apparently done

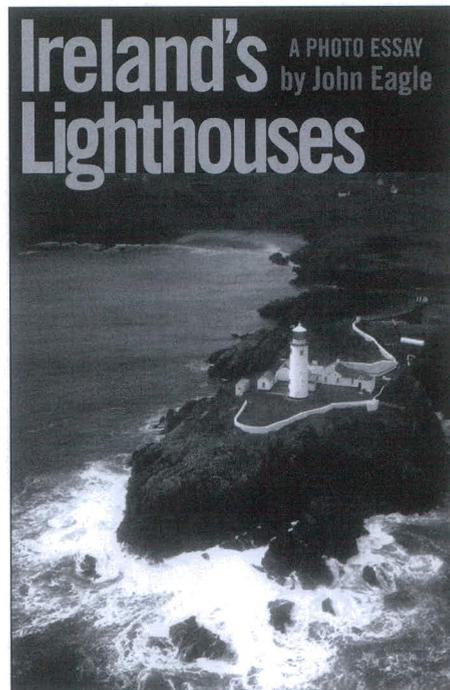


good research, as we learn who had the vessels constructed, which shipyards constructed them, and who were the skippers (and their backgrounds) when the ships came to grief.

There is a 13th chapter, "Other Shipwrecks," that, with a very broad brush, tells of 13 other shipwrecks that occurred in the area. The tale of these misfortunes ranges from two sentences to several paragraphs. The author either didn't consider them worthy of a chapter or, perhaps, was tired of researching the "hard luck coast."

Overall, a fairly interesting book, nothing to write home about and certainly not a work about a lighthouse.

Hard cover, 6 x 11 inches, 188 pages, several photos and drawings.



**Ireland's Lighthouses**

A Photo Essay by John Eagle  
Reviewed by Thomas A. Tag

John Eagle is famous for his beautiful picture post cards of Ireland's lighthouses. Now he has collected the best shots of each lighthouse into a comprehensive book showing the lighthouses county by county in Ireland.

The book is much more than just a photo essay of each light. John has included the location details for each lighthouse as well as instructions about how to see them from land or sea. These descriptions give a handy

traveling guide that will allow you to travel more easily to each lighthouse on your own if you are visiting Ireland or to review the details and photo of each lighthouse if you are on a U.S. Lighthouse Society tour.

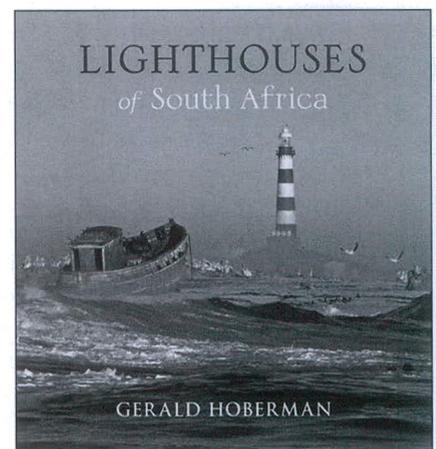
Another addition to the book is a listing of lighthouse details for each lighthouse. These include when built, builder, elevation, range, structure type, characteristic, and when it was automated. For some of the lighthouses, he goes into further detail with a short story about the lighthouse, how it was photographed, or other interesting facts.

All in all, I consider this a good read if you are mostly interested in the facts about each lighthouse and how to get there to see them. The book will also make a handy guide to quickly look up any Irish lighthouse and see its photo and a short listing of its facts.

The 216 pages are crammed with great photos and facts and will be a great addition to your lighthouse library.

The book was published in early October 2010.

Paperback 7 x 10 inches, 216 pages, \$34.95. Distributed by Dufour Editions, Inc.; call (610) 458-5005 or email info@dufour-editions.com. ISBN 978-1-84889-024-4.



**Lighthouses of South Africa**

By Gerald Hoberman  
With James Collocott and Harold A. Williams  
Reviewed by Thomas A. Tag

This is an amazing book. The quality of the photos, the writing, and the book itself are outstanding.

The book was brought to my attention by Toby Chance, the great-grandson of James Timmins Chance of the firm of Chance

Brothers in England, the famous lighthouse lens makers. Chance, who lives in South Africa, suggested that this is one of the best books he has read about the lighthouses of South Africa, and I agree.

I enjoyed the style of the book immensely. About six to eight pages of descriptions; dramatic photographs taken by world-renowned photographer Gerald Hoberman with views from the land, the sea, and the air; and a page or two covering general history illustrate each lighthouse. Hoberman consulted with James Collocott, manager of the Lighthouse Service of the Transnet National Ports Authority and vice president of the IALA (International Association of Lighthouse Authorities), and Harold Williams, retired lighthouse engineer, to provide additional technical and historic details about each light. Also included are more than 45 maps of the various locations, along with nautical poems and quotations and a general view of the surroundings of each lighthouse location.

Each lighthouse listing includes its position, nearest town, date commissioned, architect, builder, material from which constructed, cost, height of tower, height of focal plane, optics (original and replacements through time), light source, light character, intensity, range, other equipment, South African heritage status, whether manned, and if open to the public.

While the book covers 45 of the lights in South Africa, it also includes photographs giving a much broader view of the country's fauna and flora, as well as many detailed photos of interesting artifacts in and about each lighthouse, including some of the keepers. It also provides graphic accounts of the terror of shipwrecks in the area and the story of the local and colonial lobbying for the establishment of the lighthouses.

You can take an armchair trip around the coast of South Africa seeing each lighthouse and learning about the area. Although it is not as good as taking a U.S. Lighthouse Society tour of the lights, you will still come away with a full understanding of the lighthouses of South Africa.

The book is on the more costly side due to import costs, yet it is still an extraordinary buy based on its quality and contents. If you are at all interested in the South African lighthouses or if you just want a fantastic coffee table book to impress your friends, I suggest that you buy a copy.

Hard cover, 384 pages, 12 x 12 inches, more than 600 photographs, \$69.35. Published in November 2009. Available on Amazon.com. ISBN 978-1-919939-51-3.

### **The Lighthouses of Greece**

By Elinor DeWire &  
Dolores Reyes-Pergioudakis  
Reviewed by Wayne Wheeler

I am always pleased to learn that another Elinor DeWire lighthouse book has rolled off the press. DeWire is one of the few premier authors on lighthouses. She is a no-nonsense writer who does her homework and more often than not conducts on-site visits to those beacons she is writing about. This work on the lighthouses of Greece is no exception. Additionally, in this case, she had the good sense to team up with Dolores Reyes-Pergioudakis, who, the cover states, "... is a multilingual cultural liaison and freelance writer and photographer who has lived in Greece for almost two decades." Reyes-Pergioudakis also happens to be married to a Hellenic Naval Officer and that, of course, helps one get the "keys" to the kingdom, as it were.

I am also pleased to see a comprehensive volume on this subject, as I led three Society tours to the lighthouses of Greece, each slightly different than the previous tour. How I wish this book had been available during those tours. But, at least I can now fill in some blanks to what we experienced

during our wide-ranging, two-plus-week travels around that country.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, the "Introduction," includes the obligatory mention of the world's first lighthouses (mentioned in so many books we should know this area by heart). But it also has some very interesting information on the sordid journey that Greek lighthouses have had to thread over the years. Poor Greece, for so many years it was under somebody's thumb: Romans, Venetians, French, British, Ottoman, and Germans. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Greece was twice controlled by the Turks. So severe was the Turk domination that much of their history was obliterated, including the history of their lighthouse service.

The "Introduction" includes a section on "The Ravages of War and Reconstruction" and the "Modern Era," ending with a nice sidebar about the "Father of the Modern Greek Lighthouse Service."

"Part II" contains 10 sections, each addressing a different geographical section of Greece: the mainland, Peloponnese, Crete, and island groups. Each light station covered is allotted one page, at least one photograph, and a listing of five facts (location, date established, height of tower and focal plane, and its characteristic). The facts are followed by an interesting condensed history of the station and occasionally information on access.

The book contains some very interesting human and technical sidebars, a few historic photographs, and a simple map in each section roughly illustrating where the light stations in the section are located.

This is a "meaty," well-researched book (not an easy task) that required the authors to travel far and wide visiting the scattered areas (islands) of Greece. It includes several interviews with keepers and members of the Hellenic Lighthouse Service and some wonderful photographs.

*The Lighthouses of Greece* is a keeper and one that you will want to add to your collection and an absolute must for any lighthouse enthusiast traveling to the area.

Soft cover; full color, 11 x 7 inches, 170 pages, \$16.95.

