

A Short Bright Flash
by Theresa Levitt

This is an amazing book. The quality of the writing and the research into the various topics is outstanding.

The book begins with the story of the sinking of the frigate *la Méduse* and discusses how that terrible tragedy affected the need for lighthouses in France. It happened that this shipwreck occurred at the exact time that public interest needed to be aroused in order to promote the construction and improvement of lighthouses on the French coast.

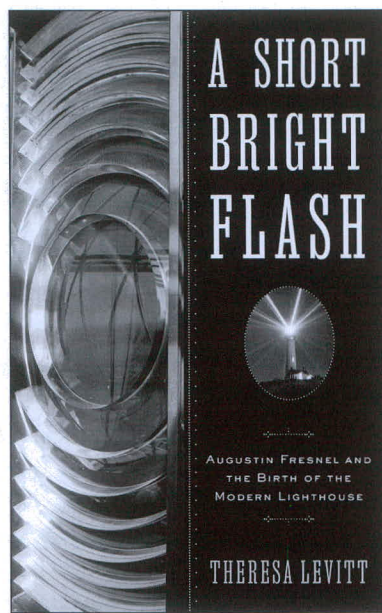
I enjoyed the style of the book immensely. It is broken into seven major sections, each highlighting an era of lighthouse history and how that era came to affect the lighthouses of the day. It begins with the early history of lighthouses and progresses to the story of Augustin Fresnel's life, the early development of the Fresnel lens, the eventual perfection of the lens' features, the use—or lack thereof—of the Fresnel lens in America, lighthouses during the American Civil War, and the end of the lighthouse construction age.

Each of these sections is thoroughly researched and described with interesting side stories and other details. I was particularly impressed with the section on the American Civil War and all of the interesting stories the author was able to find about Fresnel lenses and their ramifications during the military action.

The book will not be released until June 3, 2013, and is available only in hard cover, which makes it slightly more expensive; yet it is still an extraordinary buy based on its quality and contents. You can pre-order the book now on Amazon.com. This book is a

must have for any lighthouse organization. For the rest of us, if you are at all interested in the story of Fresnel and the lighthouse lens – I suggest you buy a copy!

192 Pages, with 60 illustrations and 6 maps
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Lighthouses of Liverpool Bay
by John and Diane Robinson

I seldom find a lighthouse book that really meets my standards. That is because I don't like the fluff books that just give you an overview of a lighthouse's history and a general description. I truly enjoyed reading the book *Lighthouses of Liverpool Bay* because I found, in one book, a complete history not only of one light, but also of a group of nine lighthouses in the Liverpool area.

England's lighthouse authority is Trinity House based in London. However, Trinity House had almost nothing to do with the lighthouses in the Liverpool area. The lights in and near Liverpool were administered locally, first by the Liverpool Dock Trust and then by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. They were operational from the mid 1700s until they were demanned in the early 20th century.

Each lighthouse is covered in detail from its inception to its eventual demise. Included are all of the details of the keepers, the history, the construction, and more. After reading this book you will have a thorough understanding of each of the lighthouses of Liverpool Bay. The only way to get more information would be to take the Wales–Midwest

England tour by the U.S. Lighthouse Society and see each of the lights for yourself. I took that tour in 2008 and that is what first drew me to this wonderful book.

The book is an easy read and has a number of very interesting stories of happenings at the lighthouses and of life in the 1700s and 1800s in the English countryside. There are stories of wreckers, rescues, fires, keeper's running illicit pubs, signal and telegraph stations, and the lives of the many families of keepers at these mostly isolated lights. Maintaining many of these lights became a family profession with wives and children often brought into the work. In several cases this tradition continued for 30 to 40 years with the next generation taking over as keeper.

The book allows you to take an armchair trip along the coast near Liverpool and the Mersey River seeing each lighthouse and learning about the area. It also gives you information about the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, which is one of the lesser known lighthouse authorities in England.

The book may be harder to find because it is currently out of print, although I understand that the publisher may make a third printing soon. It may also be 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 Liverpool lighthouses – I suggest you buy a copy!

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