



Guardians of the Lights: Stories of U.S. Lighthouse Keepers

Elinor De Wire

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In a charming blend of history and human interest, this book paints a colorful portrait of the lives of a vanished breed—the lighthouse keepers—from the year 1716, when the first lighthouse was established in America, to the early 1980s when automation replaced the last human “guardian of the light.” A wealth of material from the archives of the 19th and 20th centuries—primarily letters, diaries, and newspaper accounts—provides vivid stories about lighthouse keeping in this country: the daily work; coping with fog, storms and other catastrophes; legends and ghosts; women’s and families’ roles; lighthouse children and pets; the natural world around lighthouses; and the diverse characters of those who held the job. Lighthouse keeping was a unique occupation, now obsolete, and this book is a fitting tribute to these tough, usually solitary, and dedicated heroes who kept the lights burning every night, without fail.

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