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LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS.

THEY ARE INTELLIGENT, FAITHFUL AND WELL DISCIPLINED.

Once the President Himself Appointed Them—How They Are Paid—Instances of Personal Bravery—Organization of the Service—Cost of Uncle Sam's Lights.

WASHINGTON, July 23.—In my letter the other day on the lighthouse service of the United States I had not the space to write on that branch of the subject which is of equal interest to that of the lighthouse structures themselves—the personnel of the establishment. The lighthouse keepers form quite a little army in themselves. The first light keeper in this country, of whose appointment there is authentic information, was George Worthylake, aged forty-three years, who was made keeper of the lighthouse on Little Brewster island in Boston harbor in 1716. His compensation was fifty pounds a year.

When the federal government took charge of the lighthouse establishment the appointment of keepers was made by the president, and quite a number of commissions bear the signature of George Washington himself, who took great interest in lighthouse affairs. One of the first official acts Washington as president performed, was to write to the keeper of Sandy Hook light, directing him to keep it burning until congress had opportunity to provide for its continuance. Jefferson also took personal interest in lighthouse affairs and in its personnel. There are hanging in the office of the lighthouse board in this city a number of letters from Washington and Jefferson on lighthouse matters.

But as the number of lighthouse keepers increased presidential interest in their welfare ceased also. Now the appointments are all made by collectors of customs subject to the approval of the treasury department. There are something like 1,200 lighthouse keepers now in the employ of the government. While it does not require a high order of talent to become a lighthouse keeper, it does require intelligence, faithfulness, strict sobriety and a willingness to lead a life of isolation, often accompanied by dangers and hardships. The appointment of lighthouse keepers is restricted to persons between the ages of eighteen and fifty. They must be able to read, write and keep accounts and do the requisite manual labor. They must be able to pull and sail a boat, and have enough mechanical ability to keep the premises in repair and in order.

Keepers are forbidden to engage in any business which can interfere with their presence at their stations, but it is no unusual thing to find a keeper working at his station as a shoemaker, tailor or in some similar capacity, and there are light keepers who fill the neighboring pulpits, who hold commissions as justices of the peace, and there are still others who do duty as school teachers without neglecting their lighthouses.

Lighthouse keepers and their families are made very comfortable. Their pretty and substantial houses are often surrounded with ground enough for garden and poultry raising or any other light business. When they are so far distant from market as to make the carriage of the necessities of life a burdensome tax, the government provides them with fuel and provisions. Every keeper has his boat, usually a very handsome little yacht, and the government also builds him a barn for his cattle and horses. Something is also done for the intellectual needs of himself and family. The board has provided over 500 circulating libraries. These libraries are arranged in cases so constructed that they make rather a neat appearance when set upright on a table, and they only need be closed and locked to be ready for transportation.

Each library contains an average of fifty books, historical, scientific, poetical and good novels, together with a Bible and a prayer book. One of these libraries is left at a station for some three months, when it is exchanged, and the first is passed on to another station. So each of the stations to which libraries are furnished sees some 250 different books each year. Lighthouse keepers are paid all the way from \$100 to \$1,000 a year, according to the nature and importance of their services. The latter figure, with the perquisites, such as house rent, etc., which go with it, make it a very respectable income. The discipline of the service is rigid and severe and has been from the beginning. A keeper found intoxicated is not only summarily dismissed the service, but he is instantly ejected from the station; and a keeper who allows his light to go out is dismissed without excuse or regard to his previous good conduct.

The board considers it the duty of every lighthouse keeper to stand by his light as long as the lighthouse stands, and that for him to desert it when in danger is as cowardly as for a soldier to leave his guns on the advance of the enemy. His failure to keep his light burning, especially in time of danger, may cause the wreck of vessels looking for it and result in the loss of much property and many lives.

Keepers are trained to consider the light and the lighthouse property their paramount duty beyond any personal consideration, and the esprit du corps is such that instances have happened where the keepers on duty have, as in the case of the first light on Minot's ledge, gone down with their lighthouse and died at their post; others, where the keeper has saved his lens, letting his family shift for themselves, and there are repeated instances where the keeper has saved the lighthouse property and lost his own.

An instance of heroism is that of the keepers of Sharp's Island lighthouse, in Chesapeake bay. It was lifted from its foundation, thrown over on its side and carried away by ice early in February, 1861. The keeper and his assistant clung to the fallen house, and, although one of their boats remained uninjured, they were adrift in the bay sixteen and a half

hours without fire or food, always in imminent danger, as the heavy floating ice constantly threatened to swamp the house. It grounded, however, on an island shortly after midnight, at high tide, and was full of water. Being satisfied that it would not float off again, the two keepers went ashore in their boat, and when the tide had fallen they returned, saved and took to the shore the lens, its pedestal, the oil, the library, much damaged by water, and even the empty oil-cans. Meantime the keepers of another lighthouse, fearing the ice, had deserted their post and gone ashore. These were promptly dismissed from the service, and the two keepers who had spent these terrible hours afloat and finally saved their apparatus were highly complimented by a letter from the board and were appointed to the deserters' places.

All the keepers in the sixteen lighthouse districts are under a lighthouse inspector, one for each district. The lighthouse inspector is always a naval officer, usually of the rank of commander. He is detailed to this duty for a period of three years. This detail is regarded as the softest shore duty that a naval officer can have, and it is eagerly sought after. It is the duty of an inspector to attend to supplying the lights of their respective districts; to keep up the discipline of the light keepers; to inspect the light stations, lightships and light tenders, and all the lighthouse people and property in his district each quarter; to attend to the examinations, promotion and transfer of the keepers; to act as purchasing and disbursing officer, and to pay each keeper his salary each quarter. As a disbursing officer he is responsible for very large sums of money, but no pecuniary bond is required of him, as his commission in the navy is at stake for the proper performance of his duty. It may be said here with credit to the officers that the government has never lost a cent intrusted to any of them.

But the officer on duty as lighthouse inspector, as was said before, has a very pleasurable assignment. He is permitted to live in any portion of his district that he may choose. He has absolute control of the lighthouse tender, which is a vessel fitted up like a millionaire's yacht. He patrols his district in this vessel at will, and in the summer time, as may well be imagined, he keeps her very busy. He is amenable to no authority but the treasury department.

Associated with the naval lighthouse inspector in each district is a lighthouse engineer, who is always an officer of the engineer corps of the army. It is his duty to prepare plans for lighthouse structures, to purchase the material, arrange for the labor and take charge of their erection. He and the naval inspector usually live in the same portion of their district, and with the naval inspector he has equal enjoyment of the beautiful steam yacht at their disposal. The duties of the inspectors and engineers are not only difficult, but often dangerous. Two inspectors recently lost their lives while on duty—Lieutenant Commander Wright by yellow fever and General O. E. Babcock, of whisky ring fame, was also drowned while trying to land at the site of a lighthouse which was being built under his charge.

There are 9,939 nautical miles of lighted coast on the ocean, gulf, bay, sound, lake and river shores, not counting the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri rivers, which are lighted on a different and cheaper plan. The sums actually expended in lighting and buoying these 9,939 miles of coast during the year ending June 30, 1890, was \$2,300,000. The average sum paid for maintaining an average light station during the same year was from \$3,842 for stations of the first class, to \$532 for stations of the sixth class. For maintaining a lightship the average cost was \$5,000 per annum, for the average fog signal \$2,300 per annum, and for maintaining each steam tender or yacht \$15,000 per annum.

A question having arisen as to the length of our coast line, the lighthouse board recently asked the coast and geodetic survey to furnish it with a statement of the length, in statute miles, of the general seacoast of the Atlantic, Gulf, Pacific and Alaskan waters, and also the coast line in statute miles of the same coasts, including islands, bays, rivers, etc., to the head of tide water. In reply to this the coast and geodetic survey sent the following statement:

Table with 2 columns: Statute Miles, and 4 rows: Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean, Alaska. Total including islands, bays, rivers, etc., to the head of tide water.

Still Vigorous at Eighty. Pope Leo XIII selected Archbishop Kenrick, who is soon to celebrate his golden jubilee, to confer in his name the red hat on Most Rev. James Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore. The cardinal in his sermon at the time expressed delight at the selection. "We venerate you as the senior of us all in years," said the cardinal, turning to Archbishop Kenrick, "as well as in episcopal ordination; but still more do we revere you for your learning, your piety, your unflagging zeal—in a word, for all those virtues of a bishop which have for so many years made you an example and shining light to our steps in the work of ruling our dioceses, and feeding the flocks committed to us with the food of sound doctrine."

And yet, despite the fact that this summary of his career might lead one to believe he must be a feeble old man today, Archbishop Kenrick is younger looking and more active than in 1872 when Archbishop Ryan, now of Philadelphia, was his coadjutor. In 1884 Archbishop Ryan was transferred, and Dr. Kenrick has alone managed the affairs of the see of St. Louis since.

COLONEL GREENE'S LONG CAREER.

A Man Who Knows Lincoln and Practices Law at the Age of Ninety-one.

Colonel Isaac R. Greene, of Louisville, is ninety-one years old, in firm health of body and mind, and still active and successful in the practice of law. He enjoys life, too, and is a champion checker playing. All this is good, but the chief point of interest in the old gentleman is the close personal acquaintance he enjoyed with all of Kentucky's great orators from 1835 to 1860, and when he is in a reminiscent mood his talk is more fascinating than poetry or romance.

Henry Clay, Ben Hardin and Tom Marshall are his favorites, but he has pleasant recollections also of S. S. Prentiss, Jo Holt and Abraham Lincoln. He was a boy companion of Lincoln's, and met the future liberator again many years later when both were soldiers in the so-called Black Hawk war. In boyhood he was often put up to race with Lincoln, and it was an even thing between them, but when they met in the "war" he was nowhere. Lincoln easily outran every man in the command, and in a wrestle there were but few who could match him. He could also throw the iron bar further than any competitor. "But it was in story telling," says Colonel Greene, "that Lincoln won the admiration of all. Night after night his tent was crowded, and we all forgot his homeliness when he began to talk. We agreed he would grow to be considerable of a figure in the world, but none of us dreamed he would become as great as he did or in the way he did."

Colonel Greene was born on a farm near Albany and tilled the soil at various western places to the age of twenty-eight, when he went to Kentucky. When the Black Hawk war ended he engaged in collecting claims for his fellow soldiers and was so successful at it that his friends advised him to study law. The \$400 he had earned as a claim agent was expended in getting his law knowledge and his library, and in 1834 he began to practice in Louisville, where he has ever since resided. He takes long vacations, however, and his aged wife spending the hot weather with their daughter in Chicago.

NEARLY FORTY YEARS IN OFFICE. A Missouri Man Who Has Been Postmaster Since Pierce's Time.

Probably the oldest postmaster in the United States is Elijah Watson, of Rushville, Buchanan county, Mo. He was appointed postmaster by President Franklin Pierce in June, 1853, and has held the office continuously until the present time. Mr. Watson is a Democrat, but no objection



has ever been made to him on account of politics, although he has served under more Republican than Democratic presidents.

Rushville is a village of less than 300 inhabitants, yet six railroads pass the place, and Postmaster Watson, who is now seventy-five years old, "makes" twenty-four mail trains daily, carrying the sacks on his back nearly half a mile. In his thirty-eight years' service he has not lost a single letter. Once during the war bushwhackers broke into the office and robbed it of the supply of stamps, and at another time guerrillas attempted his life. Mr. Watson is of Kentucky birth, and is also his wife. They have had twelve children, six of whom are living. April 15 last ten days before their birthday, Mr. Watson's twin brother Elisha died. They had lived in the same vicinity since 1842.

Irrigation in Utah.

A recent census bulletin says that in the territory of Utah there are 9,734 farms that are irrigated out of a total number of 10,757. The average size of the irrigated farms, or more strictly, of those portions of farms on which irrigation is practiced, is twenty-seven acres. The average first cost of water right is \$10.55 per acre, and the average cost of preparing the soil for cultivation, including the purchase price of the land, is \$16.10 per acre. The average present value of the irrigated land of the territory, including buildings, etc., is reported as \$24.25 per acre, showing an apparent profit, less cost of buildings, of \$7.60 per acre. The average annual cost of water is \$0.91 per acre, which deducted from the average annual value of products per acre, leaves an average annual return of \$17.12 per acre.

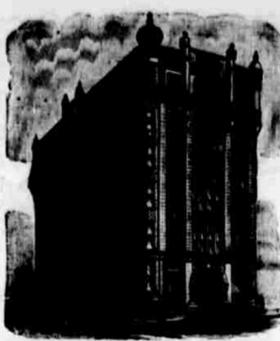
Her Husband Struck Oil.

People are not always ashamed of the source of their wealth. Witness the case recently reported from Pennsylvania. Among those who rose from poverty to fortune by the discovery of coal oil upon their farms was a family named McCane, living just outside of Pittsburg. When the husband died the wife expended more than \$10,000 in a burial plot and its decoration, and she has now erected a monument costing \$40,000 more, upon which is cut an immense oil derrick, as she desires, she says, that her heirs and friends shall remember the means by which she was enabled to fully enjoy this life.

A New Drama by Dumas.

A comedy on which Alexandre Dumas has been at work for more than a year is now approaching completion. Last winter the brilliant dramatist spent several weeks at Monte Carlo, where he watched intently the operations of the gaming tables, and it is conjectured that the casino will figure among the scenes of the forthcoming play, but it is not likely that his Monte Carlo will equal his father's Monte Carlo in general interest.

A seeker after curious and little known facts has discovered that all the presidents of the United States save William Henry Harrison had blue eyes.



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