



America's Lighthouses: An Illustrated History (Dover Maritime)

Francis Ross Holland Jr.

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"A detailed, scholarly, masterly book...and yet the romance is still there." — Chicago Tribune

Beacons of light along the shore have guided mariners for thousands of years — from the days when olive oil lamps burned on darkened hillsides to signal the location of ancient harbors, to modern times when automated stations sent out 350,000 candlepower beams that cut through darkness and fog.

The present volume, the first full-scale study of the United States Lighthouse Service, is a celebration of these vanishing symbols of security. Written by a historian of the National Park Service, this book describes the founding and operation of over 200 famous lights located along U.S. coastal and inland waterways. Beginning with the Boston Light, first lit in 1716, this carefully researched yet romantic account takes readers to every notable light installation in the nation — from New England to Delaware; the South Atlantic to the Florida Keys; the Gulf Coast; San Diego to Cape Flattery; the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain as well as Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

An informative section on lighthouse administration tells of the station's early days — when local authorities attempted to operate them — and their eventual takeover in 1939 by the U.S. Coast Guard. Subsequent chapters describe the development of diverse illumination systems as well as the vast number of changes and technological advances that have occurred in lighthouse construction and maintenance over the past century. In addition to its wealth of technical data, Dr. Holland's fascinating volume also includes dramatic vignettes — about heroic rescues of wreck-strewn sailors and valiant efforts to keep the lights shining in the face of human violence and natural calamity.

This vivid, fact-filled history, enhanced by exciting tales and colorful personalities, is abundantly illustrated by over 100 historic engravings, drawings, and photographs. It is a book that will be prized not only by marine historians and armchair adventurers but by anyone who has ever felt the lure and romance of lighthouses — the lonely sentinels by the sea that have played such a crucial role in the maritime history of America and other sea-faring nations.

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