



In the darkness a light still shines

The Docent Diaries of the Point Pinos Lighthouse

First Lit 1855

The Oldest Continuously Operating Lighthouse on the West Coast

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Jerry McCaffery Memorial



1936-2023

Jerry Lee McCaffery was born in Stoughton, Wisconsin. He attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison (BA, 1959; PhD, 1972). From 1984-2007, Jerry taught at the Naval Postgraduate School as a professor of financial management and budgeting. While living in Pacific Grove, California, Jerry became a docent at the Point Pinos Lighthouse in 1995. It was a hobby he enjoyed so much that he wrote a book on the building's history (see next page) and would become chairman of the docents. Jerry provided the docents with new information based on his research as well as readings for them to use for presentations. He enjoyed talking to visitors, sharing his love of history, and enjoying the beauty of the windswept greenery that runs down to the rugged rocky coast. He often said that the 11 years he spent docenting at the lighthouse were among his happiest memories. He also volunteered at, and wrote the newsletter for, Point Lobos State Park for some years.

Frequently Asked Questions

by Docent Lorrie Bridges

I'm sure you've heard it said, that there are no dumb questions. As docents, we have numerous inquiries from visitors about our famous lighthouse. Here are some of the most frequent, and interesting ones I've received.

Is the lighthouse on at night? Why, yes it is! We are the oldest continuously working lighthouse on the west coast.

How long did the lighthouse have someone living in it? In WWII keepers made the transition to the side cottage(s). No one has lived in the lighthouse proper since.

Why is the lighthouse in the middle of the golf course? It's the best spot at 89 foot level to project the light out seventeen miles. The golf course was added later in the late 1950's.

Who was our most famous lighthouse keeper? Emily Fish, a socialite from Oakland, California who was a keeper for 21 years 1893-1914.

Does the lighthouse have ghosts? No, it does not.

How many lighthouses have you visited? My husband John and I have visited about 350.

What was your favorite lighthouse? Point Pinos Lighthouse of course!

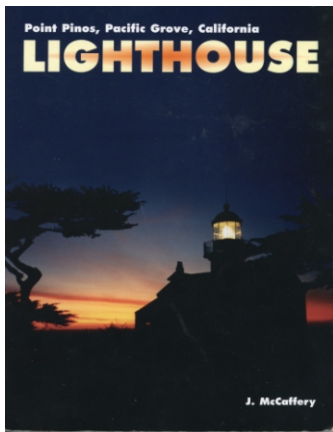
The Decent Diaries of the Point Pinos Lighthouse

Restoration Report

Damaged fence from a previous storm has been repaired. Work continues on the lantern room panels.



Fence was damaged again in a more recent storm further down. Significant tree fall damage throughout the city, with power outages lasting days.



This book is a valuable resource we use to train with.

Lighthouse : Point Pinos, Pacific Grove, Ca", 2001, by Jerry McCaffery.

Jerry at the buoy tender

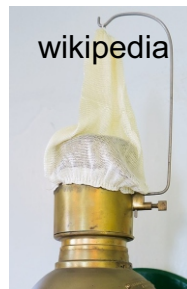
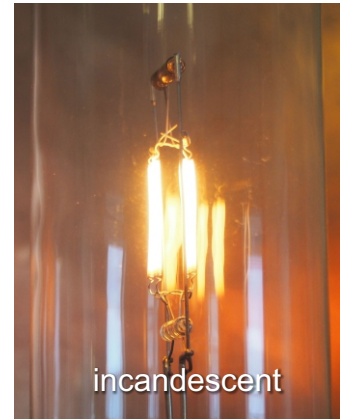


Keeper John Heatly Jeffrey

(1914-1919)

After fighting in the Civil War, John got married and left for Boston in 1868. He came to California via the Panama Isthmus and worked at the Custom House in San Francisco. He entered the Lighthouse Service and worked at Battery Point (Crescent City) for 40 years.

Moving to Point Pinos, John took over from Emily Fish and saw the change-over from pressurized kerosene (1914) to the first incandescent electric lamps (1919).



Tech Corner

Pressurized Kerosene Lamp 1914-1919

Kerosene is poisonous and extremely flammable. It was first used in wick lamps (1882-1914). By using a thorium impregnated mantel, the light output increased several fold. BUT, cost and maintenance were higher and dangerous. Thus this lamp was quickly replaced by incandescent electric lamps when they became available in 1919.

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