

# PRINCIPAL KEEPERS OF THE POINT PINOS LIGHTHOUSE 1855-1964

## Charles Layton (1854 – 1856)



Charles Layton was the first Point Pinos lighthouse keeper. He arrived with his wife, Charlotte, and their four children, in 1854. He watched over the house until the lens was installed and lit on February 1, 1855. He was appointed lighthouse keeper and Charlotte was hired as his assistant. In November of 1855, while a member of a posse, he was shot and later died from his wounds. The citizens of Monterey suggested that Charlotte be appointed keeper as she knew the job and had four children for whom to care. The beginning of 1856 she was appointed keeper, thus becoming the first woman principal keeper on the west coast.

Whale Oil Lamp, Pre-toilet Paper, Outhouse, Cistern Only, Fuel Stored in Basement, Horse, Mule, Walking, Dirt Path to Monterey

## Charlotte Layton (1856 – 1860)

Charles Layton married Charlotte while he was in the army in North Carolina where their first son was born. Charles' company sailed to Monterey, CA. Charlotte and her son followed on a six month voyage with the three-year-old boy. When Charles was out of the army with three children, he was appointed keeper at the Point Pinos Lighthouse. Their fourth child, a daughter, was born and the light was finally exhibited, after 6 months, on February 1, 1855. By November Charles was wounded with the posse and died three days later. Charlotte faced destitution until she was appointed keeper on January 4, 1856, with her husbands' salary, later reduced. After four years, Charlotte met and married George Harris where he was appointed the new keeper for a year until he was removed. The family lived in Monterey with George operating various taverns and saloons. George died in 1890 and Charlotte in 1896 at age seventy-two.

Whale Oil Lamp w/ Fuel Stored in Basement, Pre-toilet Paper w/ Outhouse, Cistern Only, Horse, Mule, Walking w/ Dirt Path to Monterey

## George Harris (1860 – 1863)

Married Charlotte Layton and she became the assistant keeper.

Added access to Letter & Telegraph

## Andrew Wasson (1863-1870)



Born in 1839 in New York, Andrew Wasson was appointed keeper (with Anson Smith as assistant keeper) in 1863 by Abraham Lincoln after serving as deputy sheriff of Monterey County. After seven years as keeper he was elected Sheriff and Tax Collector of Monterey and served two years. He later went on to have adventures in Mexico, Oregon and Washington, as farmer, miner, customs officer and capitalist. Died in Sacramento in 1911 of stroke.

Used a Lard Lamp, as this was less expensive than whale oil

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## Allen Luce (1871 – 1893)

During which time he saw and was a part of many changes. In 1875 the second house in the area was built and the Pacific Grove Retreat, a Methodist summer camp, was formed. The "Retreat" grew into a tent city and was incorporated as the City of Pacific Grove in 1889. Luce had a famous visitor during this time who wrote about Luce, the lighthouse, and the tent city. Robert Louis Stevenson wasn't yet a famous author, but his family had designed and built lighthouses in Scotland, and although a writer, he still had an interest in lighthouses. Luce also cleared a trail from the lighthouse through the forest to Monterey. This trail became the modern-day Lighthouse Avenue. By the time he left the lighthouse, Pacific Grove was a city with Victorian homes and hotels. Trains and streetcars ran from Monterey through Pacific Grove to Pebble Beach and back. Married and had two sons while in lighthouse, and a daughter who died at age 3. Organized the Pacific Grove school district and helped to get bonds to build school building

Lamp now used Kerosene, stored in the basement, Toilet Paper, Outhouse, Spring Water, Horse, Mule, Walking Road to Pacific Grove, Letter & Telegraph

## Emily Fish (1893 – 1914)



Emily arrived at the lighthouse in 1893. She had lived an amazing life with her husband but was widowed at age 48. Her son-in-law helped get her appointed keeper at Point Pinos at age 50. She was active and well-liked in the community. She was keeper when the 1906 earthquake hit, damaging the lens and weakening the tower of the lighthouse. The lens was sent out for repair and the tower was repaired and reinforced. Emily was also keeper when the "eclipser" was installed in 1912, giving the light its own signature. She retired in 1914 and lived out her life in Pacific Grove. When the city began showing the lighthouse it was unfurnished. The Adobe Chapter of the International Questers, in keeping with their mission to preserve and restore historic buildings, selected the lighthouse and furnished it as it might have looked when Emily was there.

Pressurized Kerosene, Eclipser, Toilet Paper, Indoor Outhouse, City Water, Brick Oil House, Model T, Paved Road to PG

## John Heatly Jeffrey (1914-1919)



Fought in the Civil War. Married and left Boston in 1868 for CA via Panama Isthmus. Worked at Custom House in S.F. Entered Lighthouse Service and worked at Battery Point (Crescent City) for 40 years, raising four children there, before coming to Point Pinos.

Lamp is witted to a far less dangerous incandescent lamp, flush toilet added.

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### **Richard Williams (1919-1931)**

Born in 1872, he served his apprenticeship on the Farallons, where he collected sea bird eggs to sell. Richard Williams was keeper at Point Pinos from 1919-1931. His wife Mary G., was assistant keeper for part of that time. Upon retirement he stayed in Pacific Grove for a number of years before moving to Willow Glen. Died in 1964.

Electric Fog Signal, Cars, Paved Road to Pacific Grove, Telephone and Radio

### **Peter C. Nelson (1931-1938)**



Capt. Peter C. Nelson, 1871-1964, served as Principal Keeper at Point Pinos from 1931 to 1938 and called this duty "cream of the crop". Peter and his wife grew roses and dahlias behind the lighthouse during these years. He refuted the notion that lighthouse duty was a lonely and isolated existence. He and his family had many visitors at the lighthouse and entertained them by playing the harmonica. Prior to his coming to Point Pinos, Nelson had served 39 years in the Lighthouse Service, starting as 3rd assistant at Pt. Sur Light Station. He served 30 years at Lime Point Lighthouse and Fog Signal Station, located near water level at the Golden Gate. He transferred to Pt. Pinos right before construction began on the Golden Gate bridge. He and his family watched in horror across the water as San Francisco burned after the great 1906 earthquake. A lot of debris washed by the lighthouse.

### **Thomas Henderson (1938-1955)**



Served at Point Sur before Point Pinos. Family moved to first Coast Guard house during WW II (see below). Second bedroom at Lighthouse used as Coast Artillery's command post. Lens was lit with occasional blackouts.

Family cat, Jiggs, brought in cement crypt from Point Sur and buried near oil house.

Electronic Flashed instead of the eclipser

### **William F. Wilkinson (1955-1957)**

### **Truman E. Cook (1957-1960)**

Last civilian USLH keeper at Point Pinos.

### **Frank Tower (1960-1964)**

USCG (United States Coast Guard)

Halogen Lamp, Separate Cottage, possibly TV