



# National Archives and Records Administration

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
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## *Lighthouse Service Employees, 1801–1912*

In 1791, the Treasury Department created the Lighthouse Establishment to administer the nation's vital network of coastal lighthouses. Followed in turn by the Lighthouse Board in 1852 and the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1910, these agencies supervised construction of new lighthouses, appointed lighthouse keepers and assistants, and maintained vessels and equipment. In 1939, the Lighthouse Service merged with the U.S. Coast Guard.

### **Official Register of the United States**

The *Official Register of the United States*, a directory of employees published by the Federal Government from 1816 to 1959, lists Lighthouse Service personnel from 1816 to 1924. Listings can include information about lighthouse keepers, inspectors, Lighthouse Board members, and lighthouse district employees; later listings from 1907 to 1924 do not include lower-level employees such as assistant lighthouse keepers.

For more information, see the following reference report: *Using the Official Register of the United States to Research Federal Employees, 1816–1959*.

### **Microfilm**

\_\_\_M1373, *Registers of Lighthouse Keepers, 1845–1912*. 6 rolls. DP. Information in the registers documenting lighthouse keepers and their assistants includes the employee's name, rate of pay, annual salary, date of appointment, date of vacation, birth place, and whether army or navy records exist for the employee.

The 19 register volumes are filmed by five regions: New England; New York through Virginia; North Carolina through Texas; Great Lakes; and West Coast, Alaska, and Hawaii. The film contains an index for each volume arranged alphabetically by the keeper's surname, located just before the registers. At the beginning of each roll are reference maps showing lighthouse districts for each region; the earliest maps are dated 1889. If you do not know where a lighthouse keeper worked, see the *Official Register of the United States*.

### **Textual Records**

Textual records relating to employment in the Lighthouse Service are located in Record Group 26, Records of the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and are described in Forrest R. Holdcamper, comp., "Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the United States Coast Guard," NC-31 (1963).

\_\_\_**Miscellaneous Records, 1816–1929** (NC-31, Entry 16).

See File 22, "Applications for Appointment as Lighthouse District Inspectors, 1910–1912." This series consists primarily of letters received from and sent to people applying for the post of district lighthouse inspector, but there may be oaths of office and other information. The series is partially arranged by lighthouse district.

\_\_\_ **Correspondence Relating to the Appointment of Lighthouse Keepers, 1801–1852** (NC-31, Entry 17-I). Primarily arranged in chronological order, this series contains letters received and sent relating to nominations of keepers and their assistants, testimonials, lists of examination questions, notifications of appointments, oaths of office, requests for transfers, recommendations for promotion, resignations, complaints, petitions, and reports of inspectors.

\_\_\_ **Records Concerning Lighthouse Personnel, 1822–1849** (NC-31, Entry 56). The records contain files relating to claims filed by and cases filed against six lighthouse keepers: John E. Skaats (1822); Col. George MacDougall (1830); Joseph S. Locke (1836–1840); Richard Linthicum (1844); D. B. Travey (1844–1845); and M. C. Mordecai (1849).

\_\_\_ **Correspondence Concerning Keepers and Assistants, 1821–1902** (NC-31, Entry 82). Arranged alphabetically by surname, this series contains letters received relating to nominations of keepers and their assistants, testimonials, lists of examination questions, notifications of appointments, oaths of office, requests for transfers, recommendations for promotion, resignations, complaints, petitions, and reports of inspectors.

\_\_\_ **Correspondence Relating to Personnel of Light-House Vessels, 1850–1902** (NC-31, Entry 85). Arranged alphabetically by name of vessel, and only includes vessels with names beginning with A through L. The records relate to nominations for masters, engineers, mates and other crew members, and include correspondence, claims, resignations, and transfers.

For more information, see the reference report: *The Lighthouse Service in The American State Papers, 1793–1820*.

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