Tarrytown Light

By Timothy Harrison

It was back in 1847 that funds were set aside for the construction of a lighthouse at Tellers Point near Sing Sing. However officials changed their minds and the funds were decided to be used for the construction of a tower at Tarrytown, only after a third site proved to be too costly.

The lighthouse was first lit on October 1, 1882 and Jacob Ackerman served as its first keeper, a position he held at this location for an amazing 21 years.

The tower's first deck was 18 feet in diameter and was a combination kitchen, dining room and living room. A spiral staircase led to the next two decks that served as bedrooms. On the fourth deck there was an additional room that could be used for an additional bedroom or storeroom and the fifth floor housed the fog bells equipment and had a door that opened onto the catwalk around the lantern which was considered the sixth floor.

In an interview conducted with the Sunday Mirror Magazine in the mid 1950's Keeper Richard Moreland recounted lighthouse living with reporter James H. Winchester. Of all the lighthouses near New York City, Moreland along with his wife Agnes and two small children, Mary Lou and Diane, were the only lighthouse family to actually live in the tower itself.

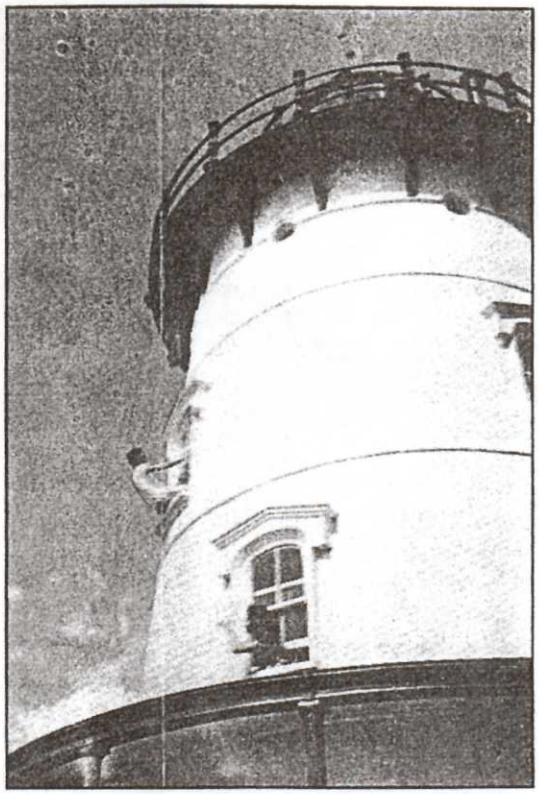
continued on next page



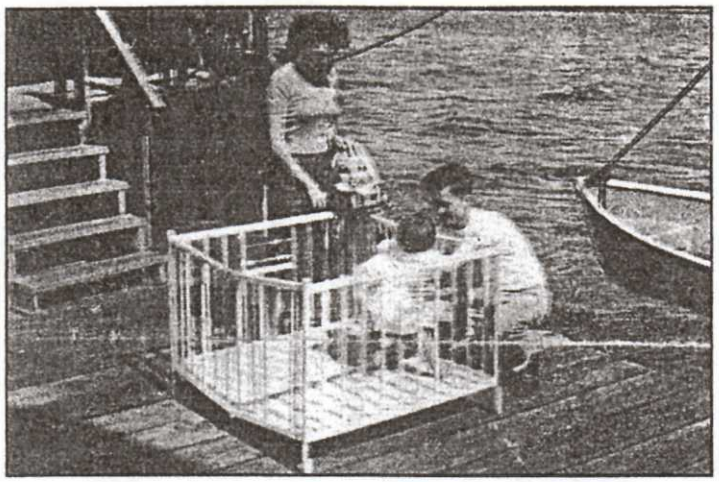
Keeper Moreland rowing from the mainland back to Tarrytown Light with the weeks groceries in the boat. (1956)



The Moreland family inside the circular living quarters of Tarrytown Lighthouse from a 1956 photograph. Notice the old washing machine and if you look closely you will see the round walls. Cover photo: Tarrytown Light as it appears today by Carolyn Ortiz.



Keeper Richard Moreland doing lighthouse chores at Tarrytown Light (1956), and wife Anges from lower window, perhaps calling him home for lunch.



Keeper Richard Moreland and wife Anges with one year old daughter Mary Lou in playpen at the Tarrytown Lighthouse in 1956. With water surrounding them, keeping a close watch on the small children was always vital.

The lighthouse was automated in 1959 and the power of its flashing red light was reduced from 7000 candlepower to 1500. In 1961 the light was distinguished as obsolete and in 1974 came under the ownership of Winchester County. Over the years landfill extended the shoreline to within 50 feet of the tower and in the late 1970's a footbridge was connected from the shore to the tower.

Fitting square furniture into round room always seemed to present a problem, but only one of the unusual oddities they experienced. To shop, Moreland had to row a half a mile to shore for groceries or in the winter he could walk across the frozen ice, which could prove dangerous in itself.

The couple never went anywhere together, since one of them was always required to be at the lighthouse. One time they recalled a power failure which darkened the light and silenced the fog horn. He lit an emergency kerosene lantern in the cupola and rang the fog bell by hand for two hours.

For entertainment, the Morelands relied heavily on TV. The one thing they really loved to do was fish right out of their front door.

Moreland said it was the best job in the Coast Guard and a great place to save money.

MAINE'S LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM

Now available!

Set of 47 different Maine Lighthouses on continental size postcards.
$13.70 pp

13 Silverman Lighthouse pencil drawings of Massacusetts and Rhode Island on continental size post cards.(limited supply)
$7.80 pp

15 over-sized (approx $4^{7/8}$" x $6^{7/8}$") Lighthouse postcards of Massachusetts and Maine.
$8.70 pp

Order from
The Shore Village Museum
104 Limerock St
Rockland, Maine 04841

MAINE'S LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM

Lighthouse Digest
P.O. Box 1690, Wells, Maine 04090
Phone 207-646-0515, Fax 207-646-0516
December, 1995 Vol IV no. 12

Lighthouse Digest is published monthly by Lighthouse Digest, Inc., PO Box 1690, Wells ME 04090. Second class postage paid at Wells, ME 04090. Postmaster send address corrections to PO Box 1690 Wells, ME 04090.

Publication dates vary depending on current lighthouse events but is always mailed by the 15th.

Subscription rates $24 per year or $42 for two years

Editor: Timothy Harrison
Assistant editor: Kathleen Finnegan
Correspondents: Steven Johnson, Doug Bingham

ISSN# 1066-0038

All material is copyrighted and cannot be used or borrowed without prior written permission from the publisher.

Internet Address is:
http//www.biddeford.com/lhdigest/
Email us at lhdigest@biddeford.com