George A. Troy

My father, George A. Troy, Sr. was born in upstate New York in 1888 and grew up in New York City. In November of 1909 he took the test to be a lighthouse keeper or assistant. According to the record of the Department of Commerce and Labor, Lighthouse Establishment, he scored 81.6…he needed at least 70 percent. On March 10, 1910 he was appointed assistant keeper of Latimer Reef Light Station, N.Y. off Stonington, Conn. at the southern tip of Fisher Island in the Long Island Sound. He was fourth in line for the position and got the job when numbers 1, 2 and 3 refused because there were no accommodations for families. Further memories of his time on this light are in the interview he gave to Art Rosalin in 1976, that I already sent to you.
March 19, 1911 he was relieved as assistant keeper and on March 20, 1911 he was assigned as keeper of Plum Beach Light Station, Rhode Island. January 15, 1913 he resigned from the lighthouse service. Total service time in the Lighthouse Service, 3rd District, Tompkinsville, N.Y.-Department of Commerce and Labor, 2 years and 10 months. Salary as assistant keeper, $40.00 per month and as keeper, $600.00 per year.
He tried various other jobs, Jail guard at the Detroit House of Detention, salesman for the Texas Company (Texaco) in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and prior to WWI, had been a member of the Connecticut National Guard for 3 years. He was honorably discharged as a corporal of the 6th division of that group because he moved back to New York.
While in Connecticut his love of the sea and boats, speed boats in particular, filled his life....he owned 3 different speed boats as a young man . When he met my mother, he gave all that up.
In 1918 he married my mother, Anna Cammeratt, and they spent their honeymoon in South Plainfield, New Jersey!
In 1919 they welcomed their first son, Robert Kenneth Troy and in 1921 their second son, George Alexander Troy Jr. In 1922 Robert died of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria, and they moved to New Jersey. Dad worked at various jobs, chauffeur, tool-maker and fireman. In 1925 they welcomed their third son, Kenneth Jay Troy and in 1927 the fourth son, Howard Cornelius Troy.
In 1928 Dad found the job he had been looking for, purchased an established locksmith and repair business in Plainfield, New Jersey, and renamed it Troy's Lock Shop. He built this company into one of the five top locksmith's companies in the state of New Jersey, so named by the Yale Lock Company.
In 1932, they finally welcomed a daughter, Martha Elizabeth Troy (me) and the family remained at 3 boys, one girl.
Dad never gave up his love for the sea. As children we were all happily loaded in the old Packard for a Sunday at the beach. Mom packed sandwiches, her preserved grape juice and we were off! Sometimes we took a tent to dress in, and sometimes we were allowed to change at the place he parked the car. Dad and mom would hold on to each other and jump the waves…if one was knocked off their feet, the other would haul them up. Neither could swim. One of my fondest memories would be to ask dad the time. He would squint up at the sun and tell us. My brother, Howard, and I would race back to the car and look at the clock on the dashboard. Dad was always right. He told us it was something he learned to do in his lighthouse days.

When the war broke out, all my brothers went off to fight and the days at the Jersey shore were gone for a while.
Dad bought Mom a house on a lagoon on the Jersey Shore when he was 69 years old, telling her, “When we got married I promised you a house with a fireplace, so here it is!” They spent many years going back and forth from their house in Plainfield to the shore house in Shore Acres, and Dad painted, scraped and landscaped both places to keep them “ship shape”. At 70, Dad fulfilled another dream he had and bought his last speed boat! It was a 17 foot mahogany-hulled; inboard motor Chris Craft, that he proudly named “Gramp” in honor of his 10 grandchildren. Everyone loved going out with him except my mother. I think the speed and the closeness to the water frightened her. Dad, on the other hand, was happiest when ever he could get that boat charging across Barnegat Bay. He belonged to many organizations in his lifetime, the Freemasons, the Shriners, the New Jersey Master Locksmith Association, but the last one he joined was the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, and I think he loved that the most. He proudly took part in inspecting boats as well as helping to teach classes in small boat handling. He loved it when his fellow teachers would introduce him as an ex-lighthouse keeper and tell the students he was really only 49, just looked as if he were in his 70’s because the keeper’s life was so difficult! When he died in 1976 he was buried in his Coast Guard uniform, as per his request. He was 88years old and had been married to my mother for over 60 years.
I remember as a child being frightened when a storm was coming up and the wind was moaning through the big trees around our house. Dad always comforted me by telling me it was alright, that the sound was just the mermaids singing. I always believed him, even though we were at least 35 miles from the ocean!

Martha Troy Rosalin
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