

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

ADDRESS REPLY TO
 COMMANDANT
 U. S. COAST GUARD
 HEADQUARTERS
 WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



CPI
 • 29 January 1952

Mr. G. F. MacMullen
 1428 Fifth Street
 Coronado, California

Dear Mr. MacMullen:

Acknowledgment is made of your letter dated January 5, 1953. The Point Conception Light was one of the first authorized to be built on the Pacific Coast, Congress having appropriated \$15,000 for its construction on March 3, 1851. Built under contract, the tower and keeper's dwelling were completed in 1854. Due to extensive alterations which were necessary before the light could be exhibited, it was not put in operation until February 1, 1856. Because of its height above sea level - 250 feet - the fog bell was deemed "useless and a detriment to navigation." Funds for a steam fog signal were approved March 3, 1871, and the bell was removed to Yerba Buena Island, San Francisco Bay.

Some damage was done by an earthquake in 1871. That year Congress was asked for an appropriation of \$40,000 for the construction of a new tower, which was built on less elevated land more for the accommodation of station personnel than because of the presence of low fogs. On the original site there was only room for the tower itself, with the keeper's dwelling being erected on a lower level. This arrangement proved to be highly inconvenient for the keeper and his family, so it was decided to construct the new tower on the more expedient level. A first order light, of the same type that was used in the original structure, was installed, and the light was first exhibited on June 20, 1881. Records indicate, but do not state directly, that lard oil was used to light both lamps. In 1888, these lamps were replaced by those burning mineral oil.

An electric lighting system was instituted at Point Conception on September 24, 1948. The first keeper of the original station was a George Parkinson, who was appointed in a temporary status on September 6, 1854, and was re-appointed in a permanent status on November 7, 1854. A Thomas L. Perry was appointed keeper on May 22, 1872, and was not relieved until May 14, 1895 (by Harley A. Weeks). This would indicate that Perry was appointed shortly after the original light was damaged, and was retained throughout the construction of the new tower.

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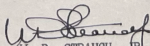
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Mr. G. F. MacMullen

I am enclosing a copy of the booklet HISTORICALLY FAMOUS LIGHTHOUSES, which may be of interest to you.

Thank you for your interest.

Very truly yours,


 W. D. STRAUCH, JR.
 Commander, USCG
 Assistant Chief,
 Public Information Division

Encl:
 (1) Booklet (1)