

# Remembering Those Who Served

## *Seven Lighthouse Keepers Honored at One Cemetery*

This past July 27th seven lighthouse keepers were honored in a ceremony to place historical United States Lighthouse Service lighthouse keeper markers at their gravesites at the Mt. Height Cemetery in Southwest Harbor, Maine.

The *Lighthouse Digest* sponsored event was cosponsored by the Marshall Point Lighthouse Museum, David W. Granston III, Wreaths Across America, West Quoddy Head Lighthouse Keepers Association, Dorothy Meyer, the Muise family, and others.

Under the blazing heat of the afternoon sun on one of the hottest days of the season, the tent canopies offered little relief from the heat and the humidity as speakers told the stories of the amazing lives of the seven lighthouse keepers who served as far back 1871 and all the way up to 1952 at a large number of lighthouses on the rock-bound coast of Maine. As the speakers spoke and the musicians performed lighthouse songs, the United States Coast Guard Color Guard from Southwest Harbor, Maine stood at full attention under the steamy rays of the hot sun during the hour-long ceremony, never moving a flinch.

Elaine Jones, Education Director of the Maine Department of Marine Resources who oversaw the restoration of Maine's Burnt Island Lighthouse, spoke of the lives of keepers Joseph Muise and Albert Staples who were stationed at Burnt Island Lighthouse and Cornelia Cesari, president of Keepers of Baker Island talked about the tragic event that befell the Muise family at Baker Island Lighthouse. Diana Bolton, Chairperson of the Marshall Point Lighthouse Museum, offered remarks via letter on the life of Joseph M. Gray, and saying how honored they were to be a cosponsor of this historic event.

Timothy Harrison of *Lighthouse Digest* then covered the lives of the rest

U.S. Coast Guard salute and final honors following the placement of a wreath and the United States Lighthouse Service lighthouse keeper markers at the final resting places of lighthouse keepers Joseph M. Gray and Howard R. "Bob" Gray.



Some of the attendees at the July 27th ceremony that honored the memory of seven lighthouse keepers. Seated at the end of the middle row is Dorothy Meyer, daughter of lighthouse keeper Howard "Bob" Gray and great granddaughter of lighthouse keeper Joseph M. Gray.



Chief Brian Hawkins, USCG, OIC, ATN, Southwest Harbor, Maine addresses the attendees at the Lighthouse Keeper Grave Marker Ceremony in Southwest Harbor, Maine.



Lt. Jeffrey L. Verville, USCG, Southwest Harbor, Maine being interviewed by WABI-TV-Maine at the July 27 ceremony honoring seven lighthouse keepers.





of lighthouse keepers who were honored James A Morris, Elmer Conary, Leverett S. Stanley, Joseph M. Gray, and Howard "Bob" Gray.

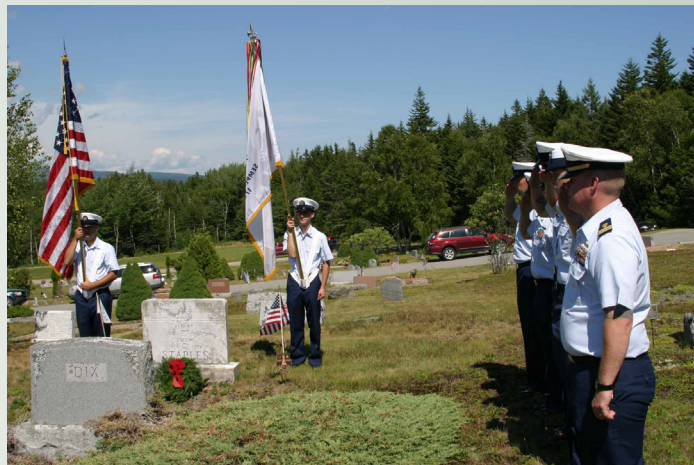
Harrison also talked about the roles of the lighthouse families, especially the wives of lighthouse keepers. Harrison cited in particular the story of Alice Morris, wife of lighthouse keeper James A Morris, who in 1882 had to row her ill husband and three children in the large lighthouse dory some twenty miles from the isolated and remote Mt. Desert Rock Lighthouse to the mainland and a doctor. By the time she reached the mainland, her hands were bloody and blistered from rowing. To make matters worse, the doctors said that James Morris could only be treated at a Boston hospital, so the family took a steamship to Boston. Upon her arrival in Boston, Alice Morris received a telegram telling her that she needed to return to Mt. Desert Rock Lighthouse to fulfill her husband's duties or he might be fired. She returned to the lighthouse and her husband returned shortly thereafter, only to subsequently die at the desolate Mt. Desert Rock Lighthouse.

Chief Brain Hawkins, OIC of the Aids to Navigation of the U.S. Coast Guard in Southwest Harbor, Maine, told of the development of lighthouses over the years and of Coast Guard's modern role with lighthouses. A letter was read from United States Senator Angus King who publicly thanked those who made the event possible, and he reminded those in attendance of the sacrifices that were made by the lighthouse keepers of Maine for the safe commerce of all.

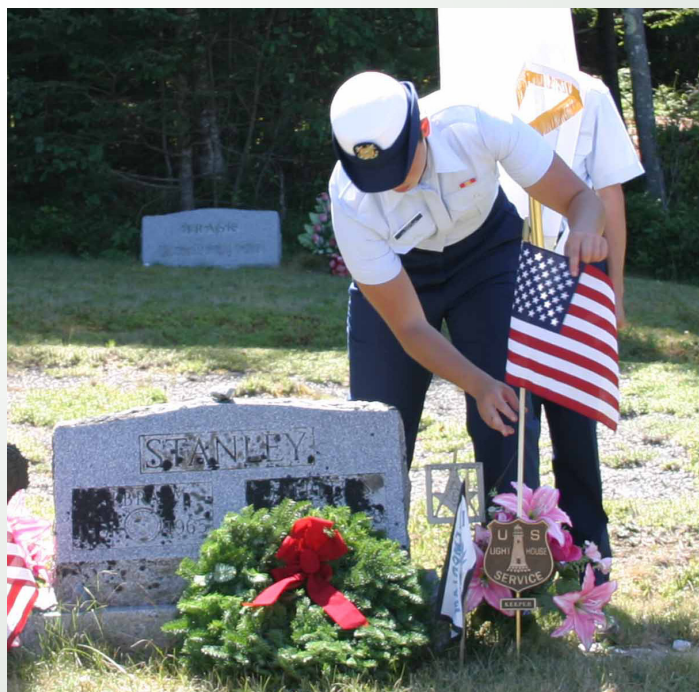
Watch for the individual in-depth life stories of all of these keepers that will appear in future issues of *Lighthouse Digest*. Interestingly, there are 12 more lighthouse keepers buried in this same cemetery, and they will be honored with lighthouse keeper markers in the very near future. (Photos by Kathleen Finnegan.)



Placing a U.S. Lighthouse Service marker at the grave of lighthouse keeper Albert Staples.



U.S. Coast Guard salute and final honors at the gravesite of lighthouse keeper Albert Staples. Holding the flags are MK2 Brandon Mandella, USCG and EM2 Trevor Schultz, USCG.



The placement of a U.S. Lighthouse Service plaque at the grave site of lighthouse keeper Leverett S. Stanley.



The U.S. Coast Guard pays its respects with a hand salute at the grave site of lighthouse keeper Capt. Elmer Conary.



After the placement of the U.S. Lighthouse Service plaque at the gravesite of lighthouse keeper James A. Morris, the U.S. Coast Guard pays its respects with a hand salute.



# The Keepers Honored and Where They Served



**James A. Morris - Lighthouse Keeper at:**  
 Mount Desert Rock Light 1871 to 1876  
 Deer Island Thorofare Light 1876 to 1881  
 Mount Desert Rock Light 1881 to 1882



**Joseph M. Gray - Lighthouse Keeper at:**  
 Crabtree Ledge Light 1898  
 Mount Desert Rock Light 1899  
 Great Duck Island Light 1913 to 1917  
 Marshall Point Lighthouse 1917 to 1921  
 Bass Harbor Head Light 1921 to 1938



**Capt. Elmer Conary - Lighthouse Keeper at:**  
 Relief keeper at Maine lights Various dates  
 White Island Light, NH 1921  
 Deer Island Thorofare Light c. 1923 to 1935



**Albert Staples - Lighthouse Keeper at:**  
 Boon Island Light 1913 to 1923  
 Wood Island Light 1923 to 1926  
 White Island Light 1926 to 1930  
 Burnt Island Light 1930 to 1936



**Joseph Muise - Lighthouse Keeper at:**  
 Moose Peak Light 1926  
 Mount Desert Rock Light 1926 to 1931  
 Baker Island Light 1931 to 1935  
 Moose Peak Light 1935 to 1936  
 Burnt Island Light 1936 to 1951



**Leverett S. Stanley - Lighthouse Keeper at:**  
 Great Duck Island Light 1924 to 1940  
 Bass Harbor Head Light 1940 to 1950



**Howard "Bob" Gray - Lighthouse Keeper at:**  
 Boon Island Light 1930 to 1932  
 West Quoddy Light 1934 to 1952





Ann and Adele Muise, the last surviving children of lighthouse keeper Joseph Muise, being interviewed by a reporter from WABI-NBC-TV. They said that they were "just plain happy to live long enough to see this honor bestowed upon our father." The night before the ceremony to place the U.S. Lighthouse plaque at the gravesite of their father, the two sisters spent the night at Burnt Island Lighthouse where they grew up.



The gravesite of lighthouse keeper Joseph Muise with the U.S. Lighthouse Service marker plaque and the wreath from Wreaths Across America.



Petty Officer 3rd class Kelly Aerts, USCG, played the taps at the closing of the ceremony.

The removal of the colors as the U.S. Coast Guard Honor Guard departed from the ceremony.



## WEST QUODDY HEAD LIGHTHOUSE

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