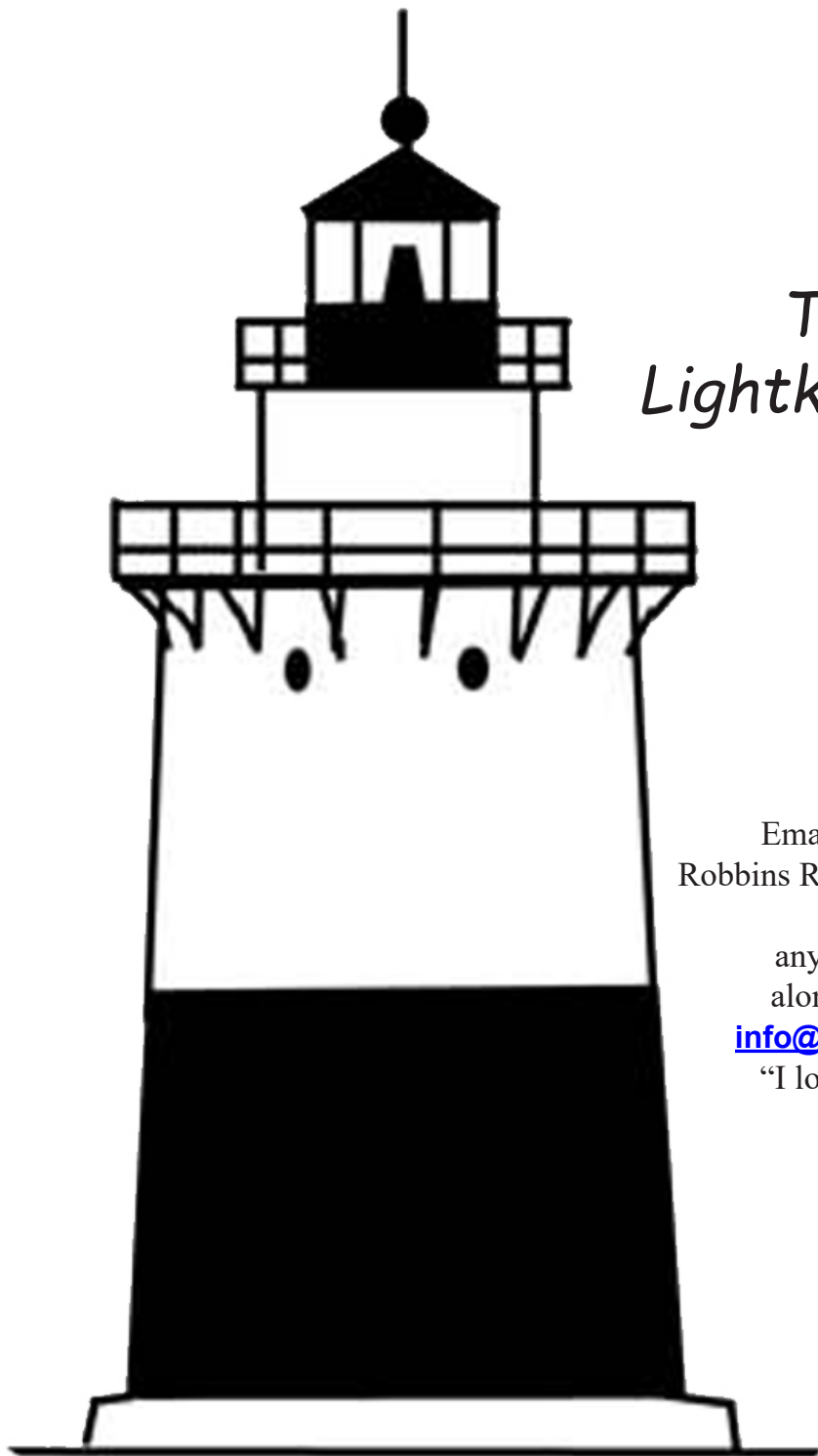


The U.S. Lighthouse Society is proud to present:

Lighthouse Fun 4 Kids



Featuring:
*The Little Lady
Lightkeeper of New York*

Issue #12

Feeling creative?
Email your colored in version of the
Robbins Reef Lighthouse, featured on the cover,
or
any of the other coloring pages. . .
along with your mailing address to
info@uslhs.org, and we'll send you an
"I love lighthouses" bumper sticker!

Learn more about the U.S. Lighthouse Society and lighthouse preservation!
Visit our website at **USLHS.org**

Reprinted from the U. S. Lighthouse Society's The Keeper's Log - Winter 2023
www.USLHS.org

Lighthouse Fun 4 Kids



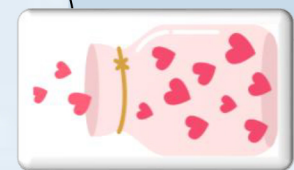
DAYMARK DESIGN

The color and design on a lighthouse tell sailors where the lighthouse is located. West Quoddy Lighthouse in Maine has red and white stripes. The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in North Carolina has a black stripe that wraps around the lighthouse like a barber pole. Cape Lookout Lighthouse, also in North Carolina, is painted in a black and white checkerboard pattern. Montauk Lighthouse in Long Island, New York has a big brown band around its base.



How many differences can you find between these two lighthouses?

- Score yourself:
- 1-5: Sandcrab
 - 6-10: Seahorse
 - 11-15: Flying Fish
 - 15+: Tiger Shark



A Valentine Poem

I will be your ship at sea,
 Your lighthouse you will be!
 If my lighthouse you have found,
 I will sail the world around;
 Until your bright light I have found,
 Your steady beams will guide my way.
 As I travel the roughest waves,
 I will be your ship at sea,
 If my lighthouse you will be!

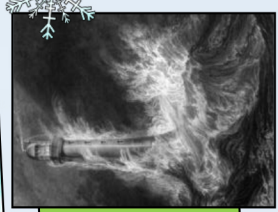


Happy Valentine's Day



Henry Osmer at his favorite lighthouse in 1957. Do you know which one this is? **Montauk!**

Check out this lighthouse Valentine from 1940. That's eighty-two years ago!



How do you get to the top of a lighthouse during a storm? (Answer—climate)



Winter!!

Winter!!

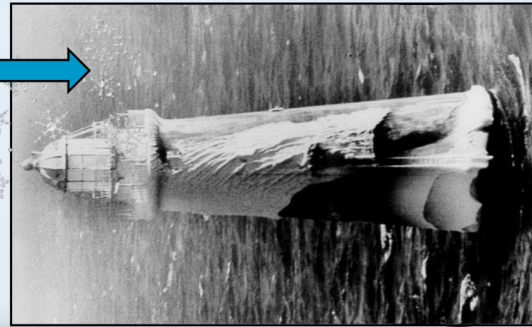


Where are you!

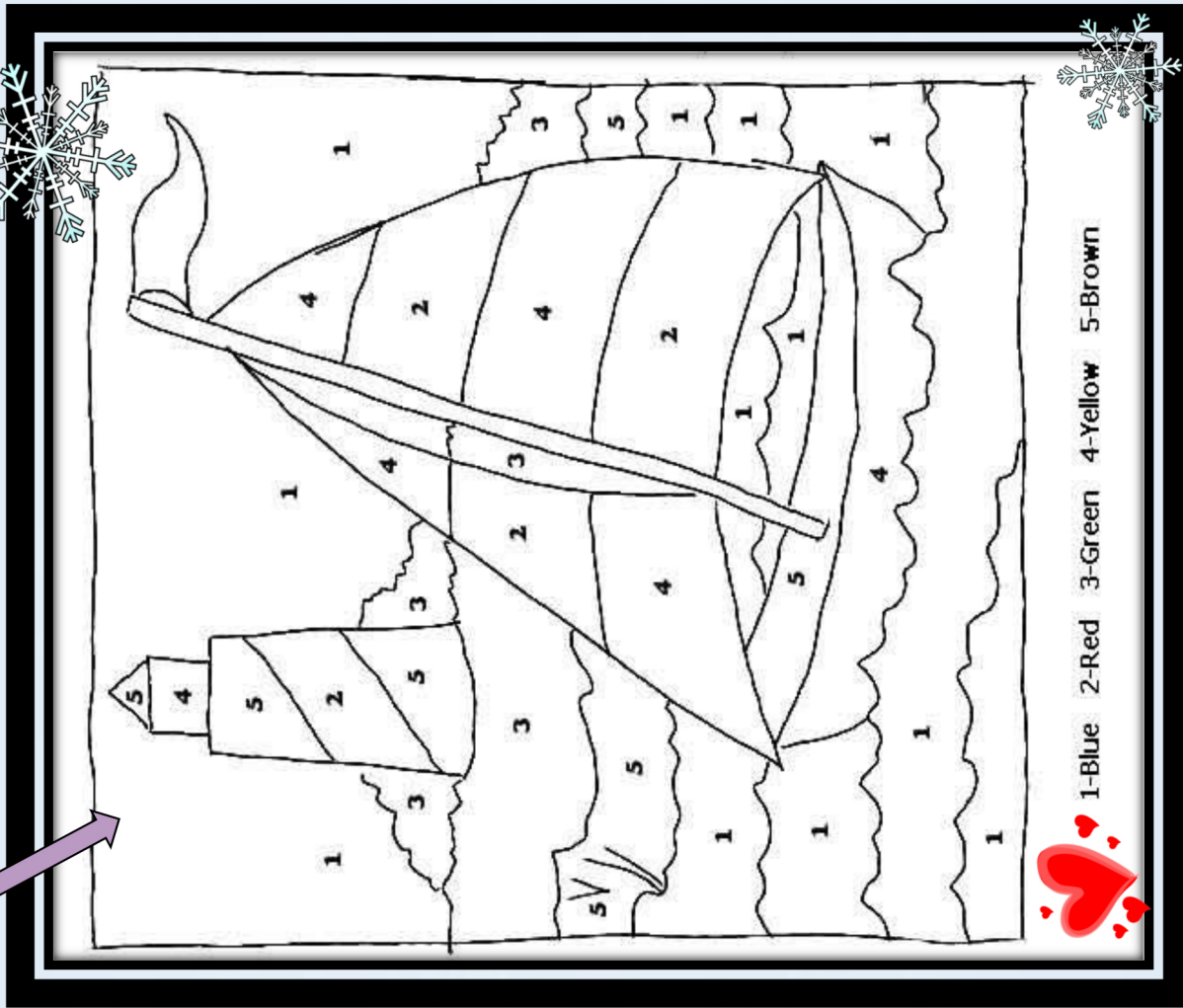
- You are in Europe.
- You are standing guard over the dangerous North Sea.
- The nation you're visiting is known for its dikes, tulips, and wooden shoes.
- The town you're in is called Den Helder.



Lang Jaap Lighthouse



Grab the Crayons, Markers, or Colored Pencils!



The Little Lady Lightkeeper of New York

A read-aloud story for kids to read with adults.

By Elinor DeWire

Graphic Design By Richard Gales



March is “Women’s History Month,” and what better way to celebrate than to learn about a famous woman!

Katie Walker was both a lightkeeper’s wife and lightkeeper herself. She lived at Robbins Reef Lighthouse in New York Harbor for many years. Here’s her story—

Feisty little Katie was born in Germany in 1848 and emigrated to America, where she took a job in a Sandy Hook boarding house serving food. It happened that the assistant keeper of Sandy Hook Lighthouse, a man named Jacob Walker, ate his meals in the boarding house. He and Katie soon fell in love, and Jacob asked her to marry him. She imagined her life as a lightkeeper’s wife would be idyllic, living at a lighthouse firmly anchored to solid ground, with a road leading to it and neighbors nearby to visit.

Not long after the couple married, Jacob was made keeper of Robbins Reef Lighthouse. It was an entirely different place from Sandy



Hook. It was lonely and isolated, though just a mile or so from the bustling New York City areas known as Staten Island and Manhattan.

Katie was miserable when she first saw the squat lighthouse in the middle of New York Harbor. It sat on a pile of rocks to guide shipping past a dangerous reef, into Ambrose Channel and the large port of New York City. Lighthouses



like Robbins Reef were called sparkplug lighthouses, because they resembled a sparkplug such as would go in a car engine. It was round like a can. It smelled like the sea and the seals that roosted on its rocks. It was cramped.

“I cannot live there,” she told her husband. “The sight of water whichever way I look makes me lonesome and blue.”

“You’ll grow to love it,” Jacob Walker told Katie. “It’s a very important lighthouse, signaling to dozens of vessels each day.”

“I’ll go with you when you start your work there,” Katie replied. “But I won’t stay. I won’t unpack my bags.”

Katie couldn’t leave Jacob alone his first night at Robbins Reef, for who would cook his dinner and take over the watching of the light if he grew tired? She stayed that first night, and the next, and the next. She lived out of her suitcase for a week or so, then unpacked. Slowly, she went about making Robbins Reef a comfortable home.

Katie and Jacob had two children at the lighthouse, Jake and Mary. When the kids were old enough to attend school, Katie rowed them to Staten Island and back each day so they could learn with other kids. Then, every evening, Katie sat at the small kitchen table in the lighthouse and helped them with their



homework. Katie became an excellent boat-handler, a skill she would use later in life to rescue people from drowning in New York Harbor.

In the winter of 1886, Jacob Walker caught a bad cold. As the days passed, his illness grew worse until he developed pneumonia. Finally, one morning a boat came and rowed Jacob to Staten Island to the hospital. Katie went to his bedside, but he slowly became sicker. In the late afternoon near dusk, Jacob took Katie's hand and said—

“Go and mind the light, Katie. Mind the light.”

So, Katie left Jacob's side and rowed back to Robbins Reef Lighthouse. She lit the beacon and stood watch all night. Her two children, now grown up, sat by their father's bedside.

In the morning, Katie put out the light and cleaned the lantern room. Then she rowed back to Staten Island to see Jacob. Sadly, she was met by her children at the dock.

“Father died a few hours ago,” they told her tearfully. “We have arranged his funeral. He will be buried on Staten Island. But someone needs to take care of the lighthouse until the government finds a new lightkeeper.”

Sad and lonely, Katie rowed back to the lighthouse. She wrote of her husband's death in the logbook. She took care of the lighthouse for many weeks, not returning to the shore except to attend her husband's funeral. After that, she spent many hours sitting on the deck of the lighthouse looking across the water at Staten Island's big cemetery. She imagined she heard Jacob telling her to “Mind the light, Katie.”



*Kate writing in her logbook
from Noble Maritime.org*

A year passed before a government agent came to see Katie. She had been keeping the lighthouse all those months. Still, the agent thought she was too small for the job. She was only four-feet-ten inches and weighed less than 100 pounds.

“I have been tending this light faithfully for a year,” she told the man.

She pointed proudly at the newly-built Statue of Liberty standing not far from the lighthouse.

“A woman can keep a light shining bright as easily as a man! I am fit for this job.”



The agent agreed and appointed Katie the official keeper of Robbins Reef Lighthouse.

Her size and pluck were severely tested over the next thirty-five years. It was not so much the lighthouse that demanded stamina and bravery but the people who traveled in and out of New York Harbor. Hardly a week went by that someone didn't call on her for help. Small boats would swamp, fill with water, and sink. The ferries would lose power, so Katie would go ashore for help. Even large ships were watched carefully by Katie and guided by the beacon of her lighthouse.

Katie Walker was eventually credited with many rescues. She discovered that most people did not realize how near to death they had come before Katie saved them. She was seldom thanked. One castaway, however, *was* thankful. But he could only say it with his eyes and tail. His name was Scottie, and he was a small dog that belonged to the captain of a three-masted schooner that had run into trouble and sunk not far from Robbins Reef Lighthouse. The crew of five men jumped into the water. Katie saw them and launched her rowboat. She took them to the lighthouse and gave them blankets and hot coffee. Scottie was nowhere to be found, however, and the captain feared the little black dog had drowned.



Katie Walker launched her boat and rowed to the site of the

wreck. She searched and searched the water, holding an oil lamp to light her way. Soon, a set of eyes appeared. She rowed toward the shiny eyes and found Scottie paddling toward her rowboat. She slid an oar under his belly and lifted him into her the boat. Then she rowed back to the lighthouse.



Scottie appeared lifeless when she carried him inside the light tower. Katie forced some warm coffee down his throat and massaged his small body. After a few minutes, he woke and wagged his tail. But he was very weak. Katie placed him in some warm blankets by her stove. When a boat arrived to fetch the five crewmen, Scottie was unable to go ashore. Katie was asked to keep him until he was well enough to travel.

A few weeks later, the captain of the sunken schooner rowed out to the lighthouse to get his little dog. He and Katie shared a cup of coffee and some cake. Meanwhile, Scottie padded about the lighthouse, completely recovered. The little dog may have thought his two favorite people were planning to stay together and keep him on the lighthouse. That would have satisfied him enormously, for he had grown to love the small sentinel and the tiny woman who tended it.

It was not to be though. When they finished their coffee, the captain hugged Katie and thanked her for saving Scottie. The little dog felt himself being pressed to Katie's chest with a firm hug.

"Always remember how much I love you, Scottie," Katie said, a bit choked up.

Then she kissed Scottie's small head and handed him down the lighthouse ladder to the captain. She could have sworn the dog had tears in his eyes as she waved good-bye to him.

"We'll come visit you whenever we're in New York City," the captain said. And, of course, they did!





*Katie was an avid reader.
U.S.C.G. Historian Photo*



*Katie fills a lamp with oil.
USCG Historian Photo*

Katie Walker retired from lighthouse keeping in 1919 when she was age seventy-one. Her son, Jake then became the keeper of Robbins Reef Lighthouse. Katie moved to a small cottage in Staten Island. She remained there until she died in 1931. She was buried next to her husband. But that was not the end of Katie's story.

Today, the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter, WLM 552 *Katherine Walker*, is named for the little lady lighthouse keeper! It's a modern coastal buoy tender in charge of maintaining navigational aids, such as buoys, fog signals, and lighthouses, in and around New York City. The cutter is one of numerous "Keeper Class" ships the Coast Guard had built to honor famous lighthouse keepers. It is 175-feet long and has a crew of 25. It is homeported in Bayonne, New Jersey.



USCG - Katherine Walker 552

There are also books written about Katie Walker and other lady lightkeepers. You can get one of them from the U.S. Lighthouse Society. It's called *Mind the Light, Katie*. Find it here: [Mind the Light Katie | US Lighthouse Society \(uslhs.org\)](https://www.uslhs.org) To learn more about Robbins Reef Lighthouse, which now operates automatically and needs no keeper, go here: [Robbins Reef Lighthouse, New Jersey at Lighthousefriends.com](https://www.lighthousefriends.com).



*The following page is a full-page tribute to Kate Walker
published in the New York Tribune
February 21, 1919*

Kate Walker--everyday heroine

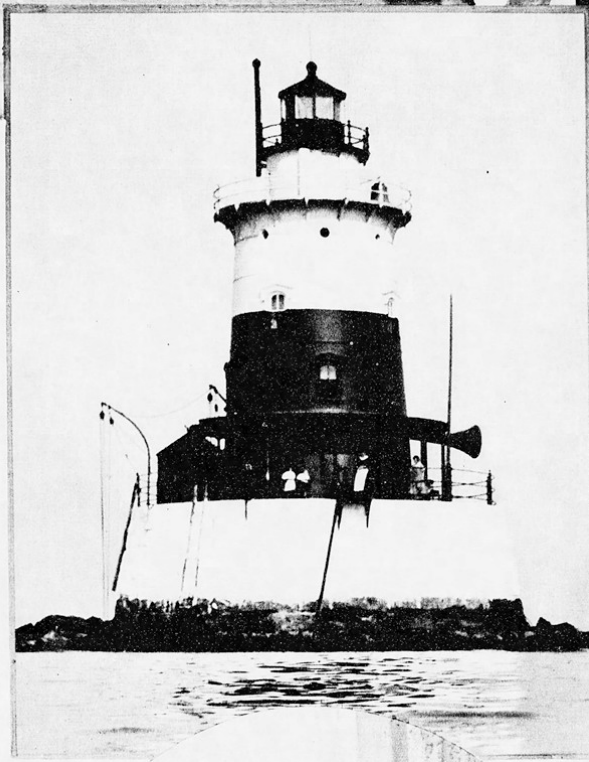
—for thirty years keeper of the red and white lighthouse tower of Robbin's Reef, at the entrance to New York's inner harbor. Her light has pointed the way toward France for hundreds of darkened transports and fantastically painted destroyers during the last two years. Photos by Paul Thompson



Operating the siren looks like heavy work. But it is Mrs. Walker's chief joy these days to blow the siren and ring the fog bell to greet the homecoming troops. She is the first woman to welcome them back, as she was the last to wave them farewell.



Hauling up and making fast the lifeboat that is Mrs. Walker's means of communication with the mainland is all a part of the day's work for this courageous harbor woman.



Nervous people needn't attempt to call on Mrs. Walker. To reach her front door it is necessary to scale this almost perpendicular ladder. Having the water directly below wouldn't be likely to increase one's confidence.



Filling the big lamps that throw their light far out to sea by means of huge reflectors. Everything is polished and shining; no smoke specks are tolerated for a second on these lamp chimneys.

The keeper of the light certainly earns her cup of tea, enjoyed in this inviting corner. We can just smell the Atlantic's fresh salt breeze blowing in the window.



SCOTTIE