



## Southold Historical Museum PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate release

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A notable local woman is recognized 120 years after she served.

Southold Historical Museum proudly announces that Stella Maria Prince Terry is taking her rightful place in history after the Coast Guard added her to the official list of Women Lighthouse Keepers on February 17, 2023, 120 years after she served.

<https://www.history.uscg.mil/Browse-by-Topic/Notable-People/Women/Women-Lighthouse-Keepers/>

Stella was the only woman lighthouse keeper at Horton Point Lighthouse, Southold, NY. From June 1903 through November 1904, she officially served as the 'Acting Assistant Keeper' - a federal job title indicating the holder to be the temporary head keeper by order of President Theodore Roosevelt. She lived at Horton Point Lighthouse for 34 of her 60 years.

Mary Korpi, a volunteer docent at Southold Historical Museum's Nautical Museum at Horton Point, learned of Stella's work and searched original sources to uncover the untold story. From that research, Korpi wrote *The Lady Lighthouse Keeper* (Lulu.com, Feb. 2022), a work of historical fiction based on the life of Stella Prince. One of the original documents Korpi examined was the Coast Guard's Official list of Women Lighthouse Keepers authored by researchers Mary Louise Clifford and J. Candace Clifford. The list included 138 women keepers who served between 1828 and 1947 but not Stella.

To rectify the oversight, Korpi communicated with Mark Mollan, Coast Guard Deputy Historian in Washington. Over many months of email exchanges, Mollan explained that the Coast Guard required documentary evidence of Stella's employment. However, since the Coast Guard did not oversee lighthouses until 1939, they did not have access to employment records for employees prior to that time. He suggested contacting the National Archives to obtain her employment history. With the assistance of Reference Librarian Jerry Matovcik, from Mattituck-Laurel Library, Korpi contacted an archivist at the National Archives in New York City, where federal employment records are housed on microfiche. After many months of email exchanges, proof of Stella's employment was obtained and forwarded to Mollan, who added her to the list.

Stella Maria Prince Terry has finally taken the appropriate place in history - with her female peers who served in this most atypical role. She was a remarkable and extraordinary woman of her day.