



The plank road to lonely Point Conception Light Station circa 1940s. Photo by John Twohy courtesy of Jan Mattson.

Harry Weeks - The Keeper's Son

*I*t was plain to see the years were heavy upon him. More and more often he rested in the big reclining chair before the television. Always watching it – well, not really.

Many times a wistful expression crossed his face, but with eyes closing, this disappeared and a look of pure enjoyment took over. One could see that although present in body, his mind and vision were far away. Where did he go? “Tell me about it,” I asked, and he did.

This is his story – my husband's story, and these are the words that took me back to share his boyhood – to a time I had not known and a place I had never been.

—Alice Weeks

A Point Conception Lighthouse Keeper's Son

By Alice Weeks

Have you ever been on the coast of California, especially on a July day? There is no scene more beautiful, as I remember it. Although over seventy years have passed, even today I close my eyes to see it clearly as it was then. Not cluttered by the debris of civilization, but wild and free.

There are no words to describe that exhilaration of looking out to sea, the thundering waves edged with foam, and sea gulls shrilly circling, or perhaps fog falling thick as dew, and through it all the deep tone of the foghorn.

You see, I lived there. I was born at the Point Arena Light Station, the keeper's son. You may have your "Garden of Eden," but give me again the coast of California as it was in the early nineteen hundreds. My first twenty-one years spent there were among the happiest of my life!

I do not remember my birthplace - only what was told to me, because my father was appointed head keeper of the Point Conception Light Station when I was about three years old, and we moved there.

Memories of it flow thick and fast. Others have sometimes described this place as one of almost continuous high winds and loneliness, but to me it was a boyhood paradise.

The Point Conception station consisted of a group of buildings - the light tower, foghorn and warehouse buildings, a large duplex and two smaller dwellings. There was also a very big barn and near it, a tool shed, carpenter shop and laundry.

Four families lived there, almost isolated from the rest of the world. Before the railroad was constructed nearby, government vessels brought supplies, landing them on the beach from the tender's launch. Sometimes the sea was so rough the tender had to stand by, anchored offshore for several days. Then, when the ocean was calm enough, the launch came through the surf to the beach. The keepers hitched mules to a buckboard and hauled the supplies from the beach to the station. This was through heavy sand and very hard work for the mules.

Supplies were landed only about twice a year: kerosene in five-gallon cans (two to a box) for the light and house lamps (there was no electricity), coal for heating and the steam fog signal, raw coffee by the hundred pounds and huge sacks of sugar, flour and

other basic supplies, enough for four families.

We lived in a house right at the top of the bluff. The larger double dwelling was next to ours, where the 1st and 2nd Assistant keepers and families lived. The 4th Assistant and family lived down on the lower level, by the lighthouse and fog signal building. There were 184 wooden steps down to the lower level.

About a quarter of a mile north of the lighthouse, a windmill stood close to a bluff. It furnished power to pump water from a creek up to the dwellings and to the fog signal.

Only about twenty feet from our back door was a path we called the south trail. It was very steep with no railings and was literally a path over the cliff and down to the beach. Near the bottom were some rocks and an ideal spot for fishing. Then, further on, it ended up in a sandy cove with a small beach. Mussels and abalone were abundant here, and when the tide came in it was a perfect place to fish from the rocks.

Everything at the station had to be kept spic-and-span. No mops were allowed in cleaning. Cleaning had to be done by hand, that is, to get down on one's knees or "marrow



Point Conception dwellings and store houses. Stairway to lighthouse at right. Photo courtesy of Dixie Cumings.

bones" and scrub away with cloth and sponges. Every nook and cranny had to be spotlessly clean.

A government inspector checked on this. We never knew when he was coming. It could be at the most inopportune times. He always wore white gloves and ran his hand all around the sills and base boards and heaven help the keeper if he found any dust! There was only one warning if he did, because on his next visit if things didn't improve the keeper was usually transferred or fired. When he came Ma used to fix a big meal for him. She was, I believe, the world's best cook.

At first I was the only child at the station. Although the assistants were married, none had children. Perhaps this is the reason I received more fussing over than most kids. As a little fellow I came to expect this as my due, and I was not above stirring up something to draw attention to myself.

One day Ma was chatting with the other women and they ignored me, so I went outside and came in again feigning great excitement and shouting, "The Inpeckor's coming, the Inpeckor's coming!" They looked at each other in consternation, then scattered like a bunch of chickens, each to her own house to set it in order before his visit.

When I was old enough, my mother took me with her down to the light tower. On foggy days, she carried a lunch to dad because he had to go straight from the light watch to an extra three-hour shift at the fog signal. The thick fog, almost like dew falling, lasted sometimes for as much as a week. The loud, hoarse voice of the foghorn kept going incessantly, telling ships along the coast of our location.

Every day was a new adventure, there were so many things to see and learn. On serene days, at the top of the bluff, one could look out over the water for miles and see oceangoing ships plying their way along the coast. In threatening weather, huge waves came in to strike the cliff with a sound like thunder, throwing salt spray clear up to the light tower. It was a magnificent sight to see.

A big celebration was held at the station every 4th of July. Preparations began several days before. The mules, hitched to a buckboard, were driven to Lompac, some twenty-five miles away, for supplies. This was a two-day chore as there wasn't enough time to drive there, shop and return the same day.



Point Conception in recent years. U. S. Lighthouse Society photo.

The first celebration I clearly remember was when I was five. My parents made the trip to Lompac for supplies and took me with them. While my mother was shopping, Dad and I went to a saloon. He bought a whiskey for himself and a mug of root beer for me. The men propped their feet on the rail of the bar, but I had to stand on the rail to see over the bar. In those days, free lunches were set out on the bars – cheese, sandwiches, cold cuts, boiled eggs, etc. in great array.

We stayed in a hotel that night and early the next morning we began our return trip to the station with a load of things for the celebration: a sack of French bread, half a beef to barbecue, kegs of beer. A large blanket covered a sawdust-filled box, which held a large block of ice to keep drinks cold and to make ice cream.

There was a willow grove at the station, some distance from the windmill, a peaceful place where we held our picnics. Benches and tables had been made by the men of the station and placed about for such occasions.

The evening before the celebration, a pit was dug and lined with red-hot embers. Beef heads were placed in it and covered up to cook all night. Barbecuing the side of beef was begun the next morning - it was turned on a spit until golden brown.

Women of the station brought salads, cakes and pies, each trying to outdo the others. I ate something of everything, except the beef head. There were games and some rough play before the feast, but afterward,

everyone was too full to move. They just sat around talking or telling jokes. Late in the afternoon we cleaned up and returned to the station, but the best part was yet to come.

Fireworks were brought out as darkness closed in. A great variety of these had been delivered a long time before by the government vessel, along with the regular supplies. There were rockets with flags, flowerpots, star cluster designs and even some small firecrackers and torpedoes for me.

A natural stand jutted out at the very highest tip of the point. From there my father did the honors, firing off the rockets. After each one we clapped and whistled.

When I grew older, I helped with chores around the house like fetching supplies from the cement cellar and helping scrub floors. I was also allowed to descend the 184 wooden steps to the lighthouse level and visit the assistant and his wife who lived on that level. Mr. Souza was a man of many talents and he taught me many things. His wife was a small, wiry, excitable woman, bubbling with energy, who often visited our house to chat with my mother.

Mr. Souza liked practical jokes. Sometimes stirring a cup of coffee, he would look me straight in the eye, talking until he had my full attention, then suddenly he would pull his spoon out of the coffee and touch my hand. Although it wasn't hot enough to burn, it did cause me to jump. The Souzas were very hospitable and insisted on serving food and drink to anyone stopping by.

After a storm or at low tide, the north trail lured us to the beach, for that was the best time to look for seashells. Always there were new and different ones of varied colors and beauty, from tiny periwinkles to huge rainbow-colored abalone. I began a collection and my father fixed up a grindstone for me to use to polish the shells.

My mother taught me to fish. She tied a rope around both our waists as the trail was only a foot wide and very steep. We made our way, descending carefully to a spot where wide rocks jutted out over the water. Mother took the rope from her waist and tied it around a large boulder and tied to my fishing line to it, too. This protected me from falling in or having a large fish pull me in. The first fish I caught was a bullhead, which seemed prevalent in the area. They were good eating and weighed up to six pounds.

Once a year, in the summer, there was a big fish run, which lasted about two weeks. They came from the north, going south to Mexico. When the fish were running you could see them for miles, swimming just under the surface, millions of them causing a dark patch below the surface. Flocks of sea gulls followed the migration, swooping down to snatch small fish. First came schools of sardines and smelt, followed by sea bass and yellow fin tuna trying to catch them; they in turn were chased by barracudas.

There are two small bays south of the point. The smelt and sardines swam into

these bays to escape the larger predators and waves washed many up onto the beach where we could pick them up.

Summer was ending and a disturbing change came to my idyllic existence; I had to go to school. The nearest school was in Lompac, too far to travel back and forth each day, which meant that I had to board with a family during the school months.

Arrangements were made for me to stay with Jim and Jane Bailey, a childless couple who lived on a small farm five miles from Lompac. My mother packed my clothes and gave me a lecture on manners.

The separation was difficult for me as well as my parents. But they couldn't have selected a better couple to place me with. The Baileys became second parents, next in affection only to my own parents. As I was understandably upset the first weeks with the Baileys, they went out of their way to make me feel at home. Mrs. Bailey cooked my special treats and told me stories. I know this kind woman lavished the love on me that she would have given a child of her own.

The Magdoleta School was situated on a flat area above a canyon, out in the open with eucalyptus trees in back. It was a little white building with a large bell in the roof cupola. Heat was provided by a potbelly stove in the middle of the room. There were about twenty students of all grades and one teacher. Each student brought his own lunch. The Bailey farm was one mile from the school

and I walked it every day.

Associating with other children was a new and exciting experience for me. I took to them like a duck to water and at recess time played their games no matter how rough and tumble.

After school I helped around the farm with chores and sometimes helped Mr. Bailey set traps for the raccoons in the peach orchard. Raccoons just wouldn't leave the fruit alone. A small creek ran through the farm and the raccoons liked living there, along with bobcats, skunks and coyotes.

In late spring, school let out for summer and I was wild with joy and intended to make every minute of it count.

My parents picked me up in the buckboard. It was a poignant reunion and all the way home I chatted about my experiences like a magpie.

That first summer back at the station Dad gave me the job of raising the American flag every morning at sunup and taking it down at sunset. I also went to the beach landing and helped the men load supplies delivered by the Lighthouse Service tender. We had to get the mules and hitch them up to the buckboard, not always an easy task. The two mules, furnished by the government, were, without a doubt, the omeriest critters that ever walked on four legs. They ran and hid behind sand dunes when they saw us coming to hitch them up. Sometimes it took four keepers to catch them, as they separated and ran in different directions. One assistant kept a saddle horse and often used it to go after them. He carried a quirt and they didn't like the taste of that. A good crack on the rear from it sent them heading for the barn.

One day, Uncle George came with his wife and my cousin Eva to visit. Eva was a pretty little girl about my age. I showed her my favorite sights, but she was most impressed with my shell collection. I was flattered and looked around for other ways to impress her. Our house had a high porch on the back and we took turns jumping off of it. Every time I jumped Eva "oohed" and "ahhed," which goaded me into leaping farther. I ran the length of the porch and flew toward an area which sloped away from the yard and I ended up going farther than intended. I landed in a heap, causing a searing pain in my leg, which turned out to be broken. As I couldn't get up, Eva ran for help.



The keeper taking a break fishing with the light station in the background. Photo courtesy of Dixie Cumings

The break appeared to be a simple fracture, so my parents decided to set it themselves with the aid of an assistant who had some medical training. Mom held my hand while the men set my leg and put on splints. It was apparent that there would be no running and climbing for some time. My summer appeared ruined. Mr. Souza fashioned me a pair of crutches.

Sometimes on an isolated station like ours, one family might run short of supplies until the tender arrived. In that case other families loaned provisions. Or if someone was sick, all on the station banded together to assist. This was truly a place where all were for one and one for all. So the people on our station did all they could to make the summer a happy one for me. Toys were left at our front door, extra stories were read to me and games played. For my birthday all the families held a picnic for me on the beach and my father gave me a .22 rifle, which was enough to gladden the spirits of any boy. He taught me the proper use and care of the rifle.

The lighthouse building had an extra large basement with a polished cement floor. A winding metal staircase led up to the upper deck, where steel doors opened into the tower. On the first floor above the basement, equipment was stored and a log kept. Everything was spotless. Dad showed me how things operated and told me stories of the sea and the history of the lighthouse. The big [1st order] Fresnel lens was made in France and brought to Point Conception in 1854, coming around Cape Horn. It had sixteen bull's-eyes which revolved around the lamp, shooting a beam out to sea at timed intervals. A steel cable, with weights attached, was used to power the clockworks which rotated the lens. Before leaving their watch, each keeper wound the weights up to the top, making them ready for the next watch. Each keeper had a stop watch to time the revolutions to ensure the lens was providing the proper characteristic. During daylight hours a linen curtain was drawn around the lens to shield it from the sun.

When school opened in the fall I returned to the Bailey farm and was greeted like a long-lost son. Mrs. Bailey had my room all fixed up and Mr. Bailey gave me a tour of the farm.

The next summer, after I returned to the

station, Mr. Souza taught me to swim. He was a powerful swimmer who swam far offshore and dove to deep depths. It was about this time that the railroad was extended to our area. The line ran about a mile from the light station where a depot and telegraph office was installed. This meant that our supplies could now be delivered by rail. With the coming of the railroad we had more visitors, some were relatives, some just people wanting to see the station. We also had another type - hoboes or "tramps" as we called them. They began to frequent the station looking for handouts. My mother never turned any away or asked that they work. These "knights of the road" must have gotten wind of her marvelous cooking and had some sign or signal put up somewhere, because they always came to our house. Mom seemed delighted in cooking special food for them, until something happened to disgust her with the lot.

One morning a hobo came to the door saying he was hungry. Mom packed him a nice lunch, and then he asked for coffee. We had run out and wouldn't have any until the next government shipment, so she offered him tea or cocoa. He angrily refused both, and set off in a huff. I saw him go behind the chicken house, then continue off the station. I went behind the chicken house and found that he had thrown his lunch away and strewn it about. Mom was so angry that she put an end to free lunches. Later I broke her rule.

One day when my parents were away, and I was older, a man came to the door. He looked weak and pitiful. I couldn't refuse him and invited him in. I cooked up a batch of eggs and coffee and brought out cake and cookies. He ate enough for three men and kept saying, "Hey kid, you sure are a good cook!"

As soon as the railroad telegraph office was established, the Dollar Steamship Line furnished us with binoculars to watch for their passing vessels and relay messages, which was done by signal flags. When a ship wished to send a message, they blew the whistle to attract our attention. Then we got out the binoculars and read their signal flags, telling of a change of course, change of arrival times, etc. Then we took the message to the railroad station and it was wired to the Dollar Company.

Summers I spent a lot of time at the lighthouse when Dad had the watch. Sometimes we listened to the phonograph. It was an old Edison with a big fluted horn and played cylinder records. Dad placed it downstairs and the music came wafting up to us through the spiral staircase. The staircase must have had a magical quality, because music has never sounded so beautiful to me since. Our favorite records were the *Peer Gynt Suite*, *Over the Waves*, *Blue Danube*, Souza's *Marches*, *Wedding of the Winds* and band music. Occasionally the lighthouse station couples danced to the music in the basement.

My father always had the first watch of



Third Assistant Souza's dwelling at right.

the night, from sundown to nine. The other shifts were one to midnight, midnight to three and three to dawn. If it was foggy each man had to also stand a watch at the fog signal building after his lighthouse watch.

Coal had formerly come to the station via the tender, but now it came by train. However, we occasionally ran out of coal and had to cut wood from a nearby grove of trees to power the steam fog signal and for use in the dwellings.

One year a Mr. Rieberg replaced one of the assistants who was transferred. The Riebergs had two daughters, Rose and Etta. I was slightly older than the girls, but we were soon



Assistant keeper with large squid. Photo courtesy of Cora Owens.

roaming the light station together. One foggy, gloomy day we were halfway down the wooden stairs to the lighthouse and we stopped to rest. The girls shivered and huddled closer in anticipation, and sitting there, I told them the story of the lighthouse ghost. According to the story, many years before, a man on watch had about finished his shift and wound up the weight of the clockworks. His relief was just entering the building as the weights reached the top, and the cable broke, causing the weights to fall. They hit the relief keeper on the head and killed him.

After that, from time to time, some of the keepers claimed that late at night they could hear eerie footsteps slowly walking up the spiral stairs and then stopping just at the hour that the keeper was killed. I used to listen for those steps, but I never heard them, neither did Dad. He said the whole story was a lot of nonsense.

One night a ship wrecked about a mile-and-a-half south of Point Conception. It broke up on the rocks the next morning, and bales and boxes of supplies began to float in. All of us went down to the beach and salvaged as much as we could as the supplies washed up within reach.

Although we now had train service, Mr. Hewston hitched up the mules to the buckboard to take me to the Baileys that fall. He had to go to Lompac to pick up supplies for the station anyway, and he planned on killing a deer on the way. We were halfway to Lompac when we saw a deer up on a hillside. It seemed to be moving around a lot. Mr. Hewston got out the binoculars (Dollar Company

furnished) and saw a magnificent buck killing a rattlesnake! The deer bounced up in the air as if it were on springs and came down with all four hooves bunched together, then jumped to the side and repeated the stomping, over and over. Then it walked slowly around the snake, apparently satisfied that it was dead. We were impressed by the deer's bravery and as it left Mr. Hewston said, "Well, there is a deer I won't kill. I don't want one that badly."

Walking to school every morning, up Magdoleta Canyon, was always exhilarating – a place untouched, rugged and beautiful, with birds and wildflowers everywhere. Our teacher had three young children of her own, who were also pupils at the Magdoleta School, and all of them came to school in a small buckboard. One morning on the way to school, as they drove under an oak tree, a cougar came leaping down and just missed the horse's back. No doubt the horse smelled the scent of the cougar, because it bolted and ran a split second before the cougar leaped. They had difficulty in bringing the runaway horse back under control.

That winter I went home for Christmas, taking the train from Lompac. Dad was waiting for me with the buckboard when I reached the depot near our station. On Christmas morning Assistant Keeper Hewston presented Dad with a package from all three assistants. When my father opened it I saw his eyes mist over with emotion. It was a lovely silver shaving dish and engraved on the side were these words: "Xmas 1903 To H. A. Weeks L. H. Keeper From His Assistants." Dad was deeply moved by this token of respect. His voice was a little unsteady as he warmly thanked them and shook each assistant's hand.

A bond of loyalty and close friendship held these men together in a common cause. No matter what came up: bad weather, machine failure or health problems, they were bound to keep that light flashing all night, every night.

Summer was especially a time for painting and renovating the light station. Mr. Souza was a fine carpenter and he built cupboards and fences and did a lot of repairs. The government furnished a very high grade of paint for the main buildings, but Mr. Souza mixed up a whitewash for the fences and outbuildings that seemed even better, because the salt spray didn't discolor it as much. Upkeep



Third Assistant's house at bottom of the staircase. Photo courtesy of Dixie Cumings, late 1930s.

of the grounds was shared by all the keepers. I helped some, but spent most of my time hunting quail and rabbits. However, by the age of thirteen I had almost reached my full height and could hold my own in duties with any of the keepers. I often washed the lantern windows and did other chores around the station.

One night a fierce storm came up with low scudding clouds and high winds. I was sitting with Dad that night when suddenly there was a loud crash. The weight cable (of the clockworks) had broken. Dad began to turn the lens by hand, while I went to get help. I donned a slicker and ploughed through pounding rain to Mr. Souza's house, which was nearest to the lighthouse. Then I returned to help Dad.



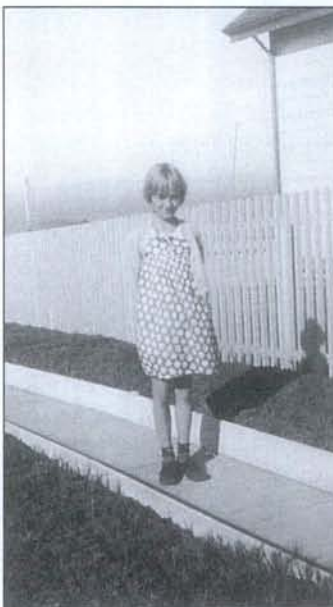
Above left – Teacher Miss Kindred at the Point Arguello lighthouse with her students. The Moll girls traveled to school from Point Conception by train.

Above – Keeper Moll with a newly-shined oil can.

Left – The keeper's daughter, Dixie Moll Cumings, 1939. These three photos courtesy of Dixie Cumings.



Cora Owens with her five daughters. She would have one more child — a daughter! Cora Owens photo.



Turning the lens by hand wasn't too difficult because it was on ball bearings. We took turns, and while one turned it the other timed the turns with a stopwatch. There were 16 sides, or flash panels, and the characteristic was a flash every 30 seconds, so the lens made a complete rotation every eight minutes. Mr. Souza arrived with the other two keepers and it took them two hours to rig a new cable and attach the weights.

For some time work had been progressing on the new duplex dwelling and we were finally allowed to move in. All the rooms were spacious, with several bedrooms and a large living room in each unit and a modern bathroom. It was really fitting that we should be living in the front unit considering that Dad was the head keeper. Sometimes he entertained people in our house on business. The new quarters looked down on the light tower and the long flight of wooden stairs leading down to it. We had a magnificent view of the ocean.



Supply chute from bluff to fog signal building at left, stairway at right. Photo by John Twohy.

That Christmas when I went home I learned that I would finally have a brother or sister, although I would be sixteen years older than the new addition! Mom got a new washing machine that year. It had a push and pull lever, which to her was the latest thing. Before this, clothes had to be soaked overnight, then boiled in a copper boiler and scrubbed on a washboard.

One year Mr. Newell retired and he and his wife bought a home in Santa Cruz. He was replaced by Mr. Lunbarner, a bachelor. He purchased a new REO automobile, which was to be delivered by train to the nearby depot. I went with Mr. Lunbarner in the buckboard to get the new car. It was the first car I had ever seen. It had an open tiller (a stick to steer it with in lieu of a steering wheel), it was crank-started on the side and had no gears. It ran on high octane gas and a flywheel furnished the power. But the car couldn't make it up the hill and had to be pulled to the station by the mules. The only place he could drive it was down on the hard-packed sand of the beach, and he had to have the mules haul it down and back each time, a chore they decidedly did not like.

After many years of working at the station, Mr. Souza retired. The Souzas purchased a home in Goleta and I helped them move. They were good friends as long as I could remember. My parents considered them family, their lives were so interwoven with ours,

and I felt a deep sense of loss at their leaving, even though I would visit them occasionally. He had taught me so much over the years.

There was some unfinished carpentry and cement work to be done to the new duplex. Being short of help, the carpenter from the district asked if I would like to help with the job and earn some extra money. He said the government would pay for this and he added my name to the payroll. Well, I worked hard enough for two men, pushing a heavily loaded wheelbarrow up the steep hill all day long, carrying heavy lumber and actually doing some of the construction work. But when he turned in my hours the government refused to pay me because I was the keeper's son. There was a rule that relatives of keepers couldn't be paid unless specifically appointed by the government. The carpenter was angry about this and offered to pay me from his wages, but I refused the offer.

The Point Arguello Light Station was twelve miles north of Point Conception. Some ships met disaster after passing this lighthouse because of fog or high winds and swift currents set them ashore. Although there were only a few such tragedies in my time, the daily log attested to the fact that many vessels perished in spite of the light and fog signal at both lighthouses. It was near here about 12 years later (1923) that seven Navy destroyers were to pile up on the rocks, all in one night.

I began work as a substitute assistant at the Point Arguello Light Station. My wages were paid by the men for whom I substituted, as I was not government appointed. When they took vacations I stepped in and took over their duties. There were three keepers at Point Arguello and a wireless station with four telegraphers. The men at the station were all single and spent a lot of their free time playing cards. At home I assisted Dad with his work and helped my mother with her chores and the two brothers I now had.

One day when I returned from one of my many fishing trips, my mother met me at the door saying there was a government letter for me. Wonderingly, I opened the official looking letter and read that there was a vacancy at the Santa Barbara Lighthouse and I had been recommended for the job as an assistant keeper! Somehow I seemed to grow a foot taller as I read the letter. It gave me a sense of achievement to be stepping into the same kind of work as my father had, and pride in knowing the government considered me qualified to be a full-fledged keeper.

The families held an impromptu farewell party that evening as I had to report to the Santa Barbara keeper as soon as possible. Dad took me to the train station in the buckboard the next day. We stood on the depot platform, saying our goodbyes. My mother's eyes misted up as she kissed me and Dad gripped my shoulder and shook my hand firmly. He gave me a man-to-man look, mingled with love and pride that said, "You are grown up now, my son, and on your own."

As the train got underway, I somehow sensed that something precious was moving into the past, to become part of my memory – a time and era never to return. My premonition was correct, because soon after this Dad was appointed head keeper of the Santa Barbara Lighthouse and fate took me far afield, away from the coast. I never went back to Point Conception.

They tell me that it has changed and no longer looks the same, but even now, in the twilight of life, it is there in the background of my mind. Closing my eyes I can remember it all, and again I walk those shining beaches and feel the wind on my face, as it was then.



The second (1911) Point Arguello Lighthouse. This was replaced in the 1930s. U. S. Lighthouse Society photo.

Some names of people in this story were changed by Alice Weeks to protect their privacy.