Woman's Work: Female Lighthouse Keepers in the Early Republic, 1820–1859

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Abstract
During the Early Republic between 1820 and 1859, women, on average, comprised about five percent of the principal lighthouse keepers in the United States. These women represent a unique exception to the experience of the majority of working women during the Early Republic. They received equal pay to men, and some supervised lower-paid male assistants. They filled these predominately male positions because lighthouse work had much in common with stereotypical woman's work, they were most often related to the previous keeper, and they fit within cultural ideals of gender roles. Inquiry beyond the romantic image crafted for these light keepers reveals real woman struggling to survive in a turbulent period of American history. The history of female lighthouse keepers from 1820 to 1859 thus broadens our understanding of American women's occupational history as well as the interplay of cultural constraints on women's employment.

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the most efficient shipping method was by water. First Woman Lighthouse Keeper in Florida In December 1859, Joseph Andreu was white-washing the lighthouse tower when the scaffolding he was standing on broke and Joseph fell sixty feet to his death.