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**Fannie May Salter, Lighthouse Keeper
U. S. Coast Guard**

Turkey Point Light Station, Maryland

C. W. "Harry" Salter served as the keeper of Turkey Point Light from 1922 until he died in 1925. Salter's wife, Fannie May Salter, took over her husband's duties in 1925 thanks to the personally granted authorization of then President Calvin Coolidge. Because of her age, the Civil Service had told Fannie that she could not succeed her husband. However, she appealed to her senator who took it to the White House, which then overruled the Civil Service. She served until August 1947 when she retired at age 65, with 22 years of service as lighthouse keeper, and another 23 years previously assisting her late husband who was keeper at several stations. She stated, "Oh, it was an easy-like chore, but my feet got tired, and climbing the tower has given me fallen arches."

Before the station was electrified, Fannie would fill and light one of the two lamps at dusk, climb the tower and place the lamp within the lens, then recheck it about one hour later, and again at 10 pm before going to bed. From her bedroom in the keeper's quarters she could see if the light was functioning properly and would immediately awake if the light ever went out. With electricity installed in 1943, she only had to turn on a switch, which lit a 100 watt bulb, which in combination with the lens produced 680 candlepower of light. Once she had to manually strike the fog bell when it suddenly failed as a steamer was heading for the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in a fog. She rang the bell four times a minute for 55 minutes until the steamer had safely passed. In so doing, she was away from the phone when her son-in-law tried to call and tell her that her daughter had given birth to her granddaughter.

The Lighthouse Board in 1928 authorized \$25 per month for a laborer to wind the fog bell striking mechanism for Mrs. Salter during months of the year when fog was prevalent. This fee was reduced to \$15 per month in 1932. Upon retirement, she moved to another house six miles away, but she was still within sight of the light. She died at age 83 in 1966. Turkey Point Lighthouse had more women lighthouse keepers than any other lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay.



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WOMAN LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER SERVES
COAST GUARD ON CHESAPEAKE BAY
(No. 1 in series of 3)

Polishing the great lens in the Turkey Point, Maryland, Light is a weekly task for Mrs. Fanny [sic] May Salter, the only woman lighthouse keeper in the U.S. Coast Guard service. For 43 years, Mrs. Salter's efforts have been devoted to keeping that Chesapeake Bay Beacon burning. She assisted her husband for 23 years and after his death in 1925 was appointed permanent keeper by the late President Coolidge. Turkey Point Light is high up [the] Chesapeake Bay near Baltimore.

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Note added:

Mrs. Salter retired on October 1, 1947, after serving as Keeper of Turkey Pt. Light for 22 years. Her plans then were to build a house six miles from the light station, raise jonquil, and continue watching the ships in upper Chesapeake Bay. Mrs. Salter was the third woman to perform the keeper's duties at Turkey Pt. Light since its establishment in 1833. Shortly after her retiring, however, the light was fixed on automatic control."