



THE LIGHTHOUSE AT COVE POINT:

A GUIDE TO MARINERS
FOR OVER A CENTURY

A welcome sight to men who sail the seas, the Cove Point Lighthouse spreads its light over the waters at day's end.

By Hazel Harper

ON A POINT of land shaped like a bear's nose, 60 miles southeast of Washington, where the Patuxent River joins the Chesapeake Bay, a round white tower, Cove Point Lighthouse, has stood since 1828. A guide to mariners by day, by night its white flashing light, visible 12 miles away, warns ships to stay a prudent distance from the sandbar shallows.

Chief Lighthouse Keeper James T. Somers and Assistant Keeper Charles L. Sadler, Coast

Guard civil service employes, have had long experience in such work. They served in the United States Lighthouse Service before its transfer to the Coast Guard. With their families, they live in a three-story stucco house close by the tower.

Less isolated than many other lighthouses, Cove Point has a nearby summer colony of neat cottages clustering along its crescent beach. Several families live there all year. Towns are within easy driving

distance. A school bus takes children to Prince Frederick daily.

"We don't mind that 'lonely' stuff," says Mr. Sadler. "There is too much to be done. They used to have four men here, but they can't get that many any more. We take turns standing watch, one on duty, the other nearby. Some one must be on duty 24 hours a day."

A swivel telescope stands trained through a window. Ten

or 20 ships a day may pass. Each is scanned and its name, kind and nationality recorded, as tanker, collier, fruitship, ore-ship, freighter. One day's log listed ships from Norway, France, Uruguay, Italy, Great Britain and Cuba.

No major disasters or rescues have occurred in Keepers Somers' and Sadler's eight years of service here—a tribute, perhaps, to duty well done. But, like all lighthouse keepers, they are always alerted,

charged with the duties of giving and summoning aid to any vessel in distress, public or private, and of assisting in saving life and property from any perils of the sea.

In addition to keeping the light, operating the radio to send and receive weather reports or emergency calls, scanning the bay and maintaining logs, they wield paint brush, hammer and screwdriver, keeping equipment ready for instant service.