

The U.S. Lighthouse Society is proud to present:

# Lighthouse Fun 4 Kids

Featuring:  
*The Amateur  
Lighthouse Scientist*



## *Issue #9*

Feeling creative?

Email your colored in version of the Santa Cruz Lighthouse, featured on the cover, or the beach scene - on the back page. . . along with your mailing address to

[info@uslhs.org](mailto:info@uslhs.org), and we'll send you an

"I love lighthouses" bumper sticker!

Learn more about the U.S. Lighthouse Society and lighthouse preservation!

Visit our website at **USLHS.org**

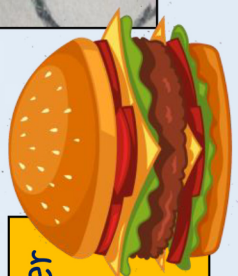
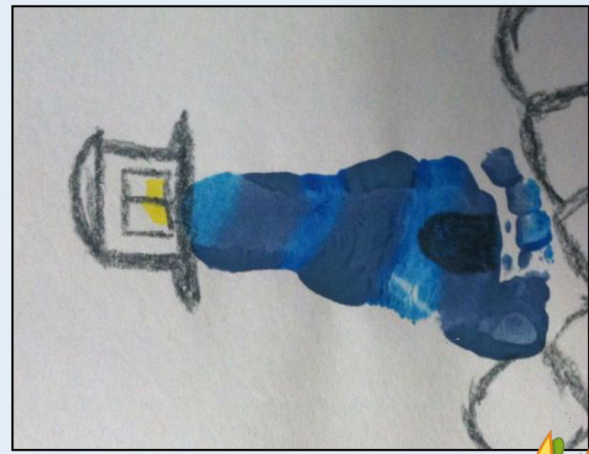
# Lighthouse Fun 4 Kids



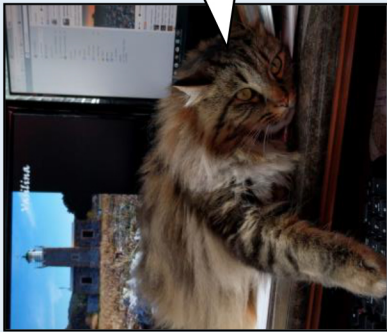
## Make a Sun Print!

Use the power of the summer sun to make a lighthouse print. You'll need a sheet of dark paper and a couple dabs of glue. Cut a lighthouse shape out of cardboard. Put tiny dabs of glue on the ends of the lighthouse shape. Press it onto the sheet of dark paper. Lay this in a windowsill where it gets lots of sun. After about 2 weeks, remove the lighthouse shape. The dark paper will have faded to a lighter color. But under the lighthouse shape will be a dark lighthouse! Whoa!

Got an some washable paint? Paint the bottom of your foot. Make a footprint on some paper and turn it into a lighthouse!



What did the lighthouse keeper order at McDonalds?  
Answer: A "Beacon Double Cheeseburger"!



I'm the tired lighthouse cat. Please finish my poem. I need a long, long nap!



I saw a mouse \_\_\_\_\_ across the lighthouse floor.  
 He \_\_\_\_\_ behind an oil can by the lighthouse door.  
 Quietly, I \_\_\_\_\_ for the sound of rodent feet;  
 Then, I \_\_\_\_\_ that fun and furry, four-legged treat!  
 But when I \_\_\_\_\_ my paws and looked into his eye,  
 He \_\_\_\_\_ at me, that cute, sweet, little guy.  
 I decided to \_\_\_\_\_ him as my lighthouse pet,  
 Now, he's the best lighthouse pal I've had yet!

### Where are you!

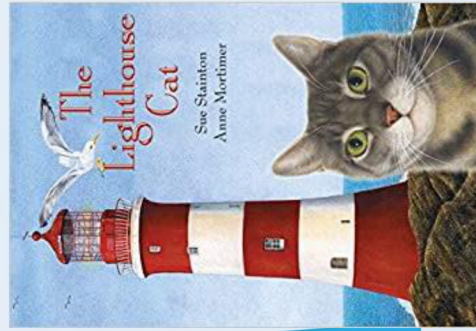
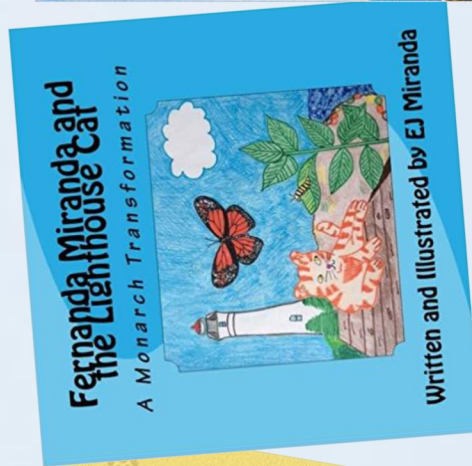
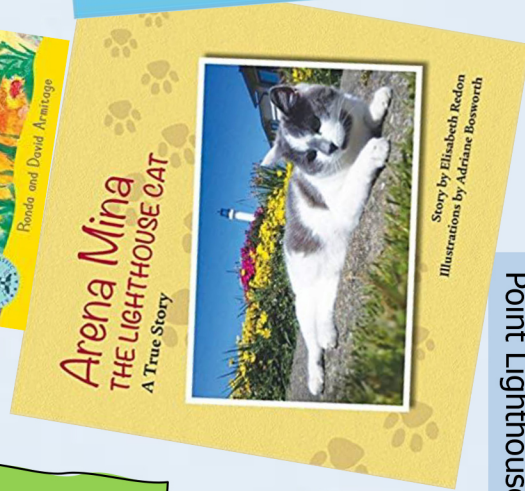
- You are in the United States.
- The St. Lawrence River is here, separating the U.S. from Canada.
- People can stay overnight here in the keeper's house.
- The point is called Cape Vincent.



Answer: You are in New York State at Tibbits Point Lighthouse.

## Summer Reading!

Pour a cool drink and find a quiet place for reading. Maybe you can curl up and read to a cat!



A book is like a lighthouse that shines lots of information into your brain.

# The Amateur Lighthouse Scientist

A read-aloud story for kids to read with adults.

By Elinor DeWire

Graphic Design By Richard Gales

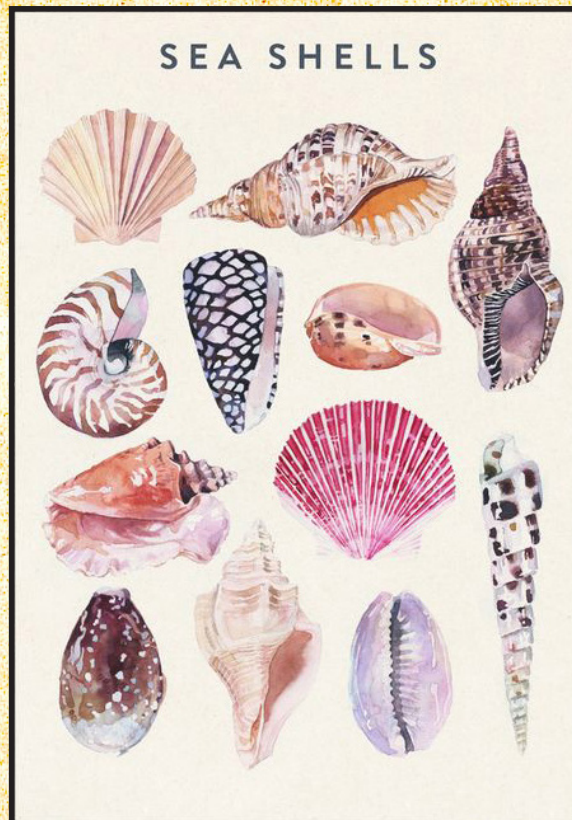


Lighthouse keepers were great collectors. Anything cast ashore by the sea was examined and, if considered valuable or interesting, it was saved.

Lightkeepers sometimes found pieces of lumber that had slid off barges or drifted away from lumber yards. Boards were of great value as building materials. A young boy named Jens Pederson at Point Robinson Lighthouse on

Puget Sound, Washington collected boards of many sizes that washed ashore at the lighthouse. He sold the wood and saved up the money he made to buy himself a small boat!

There were many different kinds of sea treasures that lighthouse families gathered from beaches. Some found shells. These could be used to make art, like picture frames or Sailors'



Valentines. (Sailors' Valentines often had flowers made of shells!) Various types of rocks were valued too, such as striped agates and smooth, flat rocks for painting. Painted beach rocks are still popular today. You may have seen them on hiking trails.

What makes beach rocks so smooth? It happens when the sea tumbles the rocks with sand for a long time. The sand (like sandpaper) smooths the rocks.



Another popular item collected from the seashore was sea-glass. This consisted of broken pieces of glass, mostly from bottles, that had been smoothed by the sea, the same way rocks are smoothed. The cool thing about sea-glass is

its many colors—green, red, brown, blue, and sometimes patterned, as when the pieces come from a broken vase or dish. Lighthouse keepers and their family members



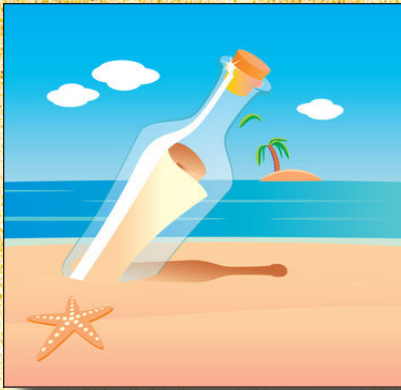
*Driftwood bench and driftwood horse located at the Point No Point Lighthouse USLHS Headquarters in Washington*

made jewelry from sea-glass, wind chimes, and mosaic pictures.

Driftwood was a source of fuel for lighthouses. It was collected, usually by the lightkeeper's kids, and burned in the kitchen stove or in fireplaces. Artistic lighthouse keepers liked

to paint scenes on pieces of driftwood. These decorated their houses or sometimes were sold to visitors.





Perhaps the most exciting seashore treasure was a message in a bottle. Writing a message and sealing it inside a bottle was a popular activity years ago. People enjoyed tossing the bottles from ships or piers and seeing how far they traveled

on the sea. People always included their address so the person who found the bottle could write back. Some bottles traveled long and far. In 1907 a bottle was dropped in the ocean off Virginia by scientists studying the tides. Lightkeeper Raimon Romera found the bottle five years later at Port Ferro Lighthouse in Puerto Rico.

One of the most ambitious collectors of sea treasures was Laura Hecox, nicknamed the “Lady Scientist Lightkeeper.” She grew up at Santa Cruz Lighthouse on Monterey Bay in California where her father became the first keeper in 1869. Her parents and four of her siblings had



*Laura-Hecox*



traveled to California with a wagon train in 1846. Her mother wrote a book about the experience called *California Caravan*.

Laura was born in Santa Cruz in 1854. She was fifteen when her family moved to Santa Cruz Lighthouse. She often helped her father with

the lighthouse work, but most of her days were spent beachcombing. In the evenings before bed, she would organize and research the things she had found. She had many books about marine science so she could identify the plants, animals, and other things she collected. She also wrote letters to marine scientists asking questions and sending drawings of her finds. Laura's father was proud



*Santa Cruz Lighthouse*





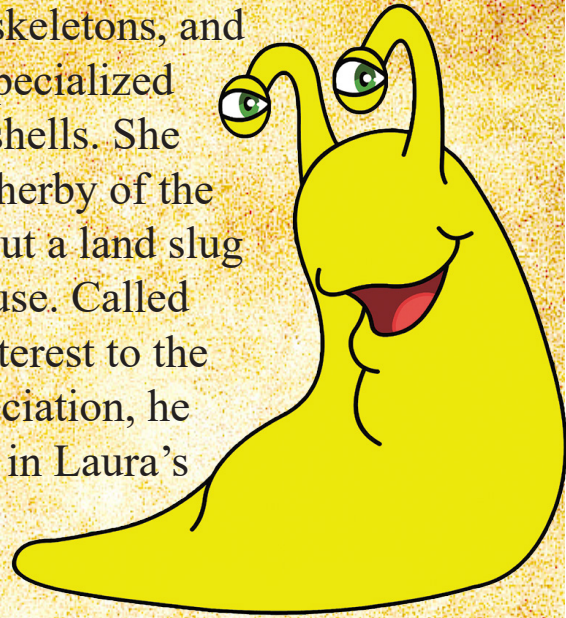
*Santa Cruz Lighthouse*

of her work and built a glass case to display her treasures.

Laura loved her father very much, but in the early 1880s he became sick and died. She was terribly sad. She decided, as a tribute to him, she would take over his job as lightkeeper. There were few women lightkeepers at the time, but the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment knew Laura Hecox could do the job. She had helped her father for years. She officially took over the lighthouse duties in 1883.

By this time, her impressive collection of seashore items filled an entire room in the downstairs of the lighthouse. It included fossils, minerals, shells, bird nests and bird eggs,

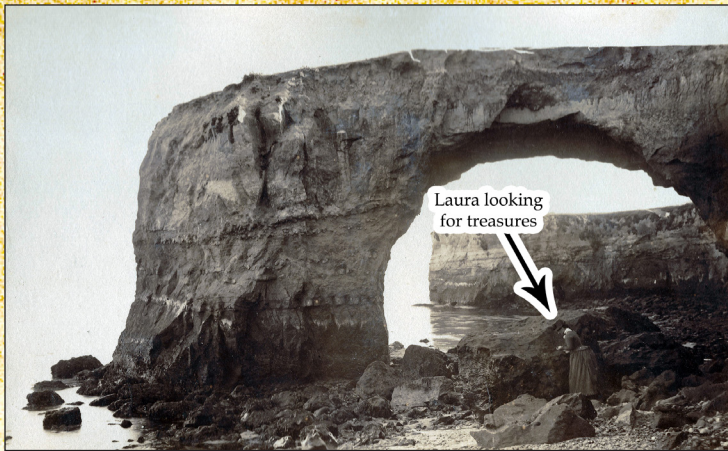
First Nations relics, marine skeletons, and dried marine plants. Laura specialized in conchology, the study of shells. She wrote to Professor A.G. Wetherby of the University of Cincinnati about a land slug she had found at the lighthouse. Called Ariolimax, it was of great interest to the professor. To show his appreciation, he named a new variety of slug in Laura's honor.



In 1892, she made a list of birds found within a twenty-mile range of the lighthouse. The list was co-published with a bird scientist (called an ornithologist) named E. H. Fiske, who added information on each type of bird. Later, he gave his collection of bird skins, nests, and eggs to Laura's little museum in the lighthouse. By this time, Laura had become known as an amateur naturalist—a person who learns on their own about nature and tries to share it with others.

Laura Hecox received more honors when the USGS (U.S. Geological Survey) named a new fossil species of spindle snail in her honor. In a report for the USGS, scientist Ralph Arnold said Laura's "collection of specimens and interest in natural history has been an inspiration to all who have had the pleasure of her acquaintance."

In 1902, Laura donated her collection to the brand-new



Santa Cruz Public Library. She wanted to share it with her community and help others to learn from her work. She eagerly went

about designing displays and moving her collection from the lighthouse to the library basement. Her speech on the day the new basement exhibit opened expressed her feeling that she was giving something important to the citizens of Santa Cruz.

Laura Hecox retired from lighthouse keeping in 1917 and died two years later at age sixty-five. She was buried alongside her parents in Santa Cruz Memorial Park. Her “marine curiosities,” as a newspaper reporter once called them, remained on display in the library of Santa Cruz City Museum until 1917. At that time, they were moved to Santa Cruz High School. There, they inspire young women who hope to become marine scientists.

Laura is remembered for her enormous curiosity and her determination to study and share the world around her, all while serving as one of few female lighthouse keepers and amateur naturalists of her day.



