Pencarrow Head lighthouse, at the entrance to Wellington Harbour, was lit for the first time amid great celebration. After years of inadequate solutions, Wellington finally had a permanent lighthouse – New Zealand’s first. Equally notable was the lighthouse’s first keeper, Mary Bennett, who had tended Pencarrow’s temporary light since her husband’s death in 1855 – she remains New Zealand’s only female lighthouse keeper.

During the day, many settlers visited their new lighthouse on the SS Wonga Wonga. The 10 a.m. excursion carried about 65 people. The afternoon excursion, which left at 4 p.m., was much more crowded.

When the Wonga Wonga anchored off Pencarrow about 7 p.m. nearly 40 people, including officials, went ashore and walked up to the lighthouse, where engineer Edward Wright gave a tour.

Wellington’s provincial superintendent, Isaac Featherston, had the honour of lighting the light for the first time. Although those on the Wonga Wonga were initially concerned at its apparent inefficiency, their disappointment soon gave way to pleasure as a brilliant light came into view.

Read more on NZHistory
Timeline – Pencarrow Lighthouse
The lighthouse and its surroundings – Pencarrow Lighthouse
Pencarrow Lighthouse – 100 New Zealand Places
Mary Bennett

External links
Pencarrow lighthouse (Heritage New Zealand)
Pencarrow lighthouse (Te Ara)

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