

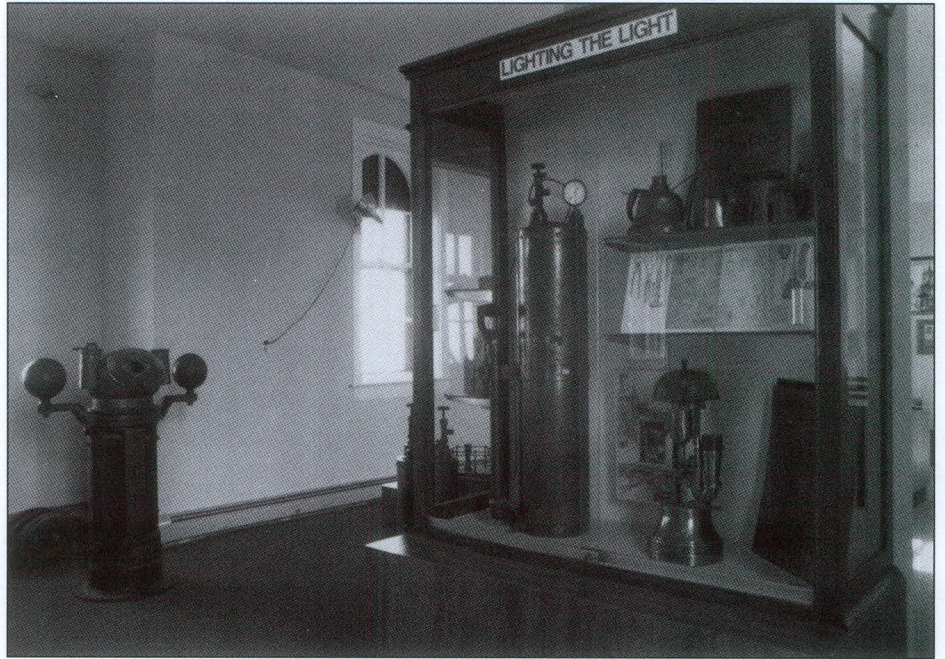
Navesink Twin Lights Museum

The Navesink Light station was declared surplus property in 1953. Several people had ideas about the future of the retired light station. One person wanted to make the light station a religious shrine with large statuary gazing out from the lighthouse grounds towards the ocean. Another idea was to convert the center of the building into a restaurant and use the towers as a tourist attraction, presumably to entertain people while they waited for seating.

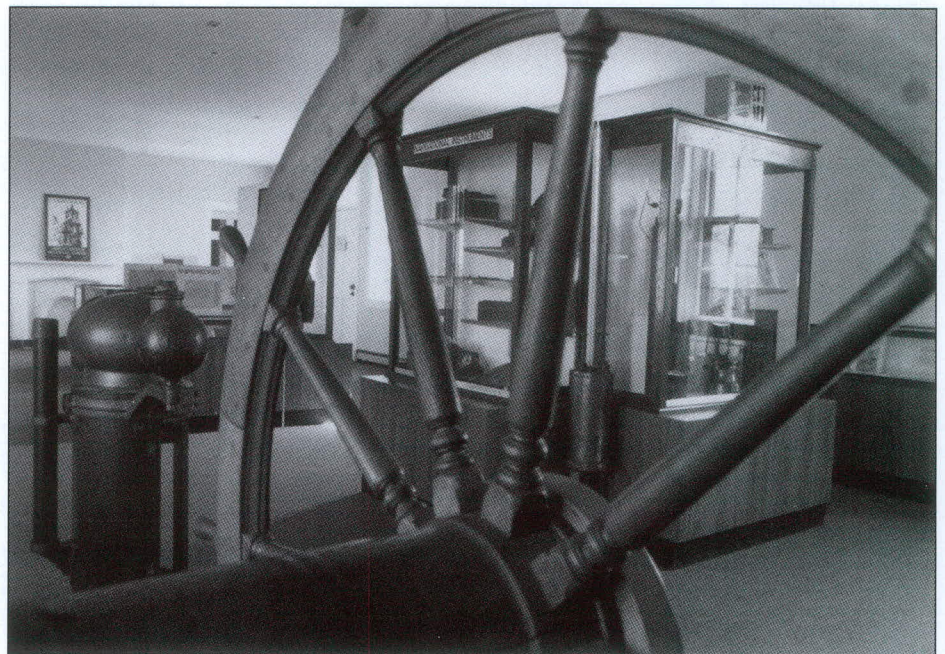
None of those proposals became reality. On September 22, 1953, the town of Highlands, within whose boundary the lighthouse stood, made an application to have the property transferred to the town for use as a museum and public park. The Borough Council appointed a Twin Lights Commission to oversee the planning and development of the property, while a Historical Society was formed to establish a museum and staff the building with volunteers. In 1954, the General Services Administration turned over the Navesink Twin Lights to the town of Highlands. For several years the Commission and the Society struggled to maintain the lighthouse and provide park facilities. Unable to keep up with the required maintenance, the town convinced the State of New Jersey to take over operation of the facility in 1962. The Historical Society continued its association with the lighthouse and became partners with the State in the preservation and interpretation of the light station.

The New Jersey State Park Service, assigned to manage and develop the lighthouse as a park and museum, was initially hampered by the costs required to operate the facility. A joint effort of the State Park Service, Twin Lights Historical Society and Rumson Garden Club raised close to a million dollars through grants and donations. In 1978 a

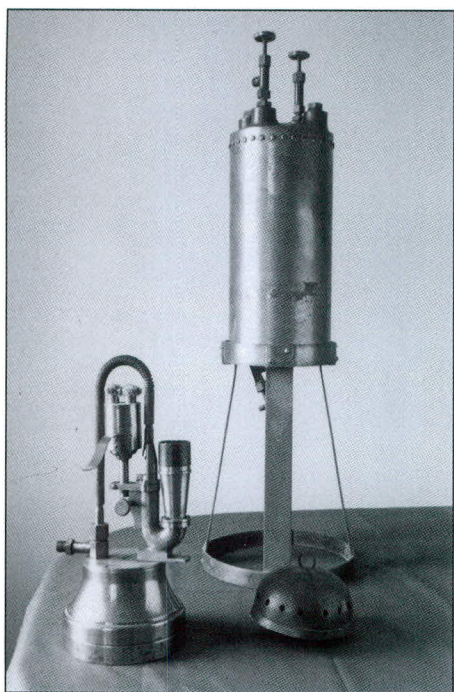
By Tom Lavery



Above – Recent funding has allowed the Navesink Lighthouse museum to improve the displays. A comprehensive display of the various lighting apparatus is seen above. Photo by Keeper George L. Scott.



Above – In addition to the lighthouse artifacts the museum features nautical equipment and material that reflects the nautical heritage of the area. Photo by Keeper George L. Scott.



Left – One of the many types of lamps on display at the museum. Photo by Keeper George L. Scott.



Above – A rare example of an early Life Saving Service station. This station dates from 1849 and is located on the grounds of the station.

Right – Other Life Saving Service artifacts are on display in the lighthouse museum reflecting the close association between the two services. Navesink Twin Lights Museum is generally open Wednesday through Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. the rest of the year. Group tours may be arranged by calling (908) 372-1814. All photos this page by Keeper George L. Scott.



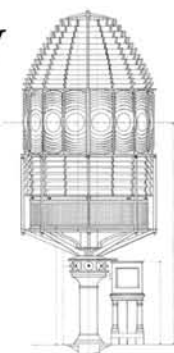
major restoration and renovation of the building began. Exterior stone and brick work was cleaned, repainted and repaired, the glass in the two tower lantern rooms replaced, public restroom facilities were added, and exterior walkways, overlooks and landscaping created to complement the restored building.

The last area to be addressed was the interior museum exhibition space. In 1987, the Twin Lights Historical Society began a review of the exhibits which had grown as a general maritime display of the Northern New Jersey coastline. A decision was made to redesign the exhibits and center them around the history of the Navesink Lighthouse and its contribution to lighthouse technology and navigation. Part of the new exhibits also focus on the United States Life Saving Service. Over the years the Society had collected a small but historically valuable collection of life saving equipment used under the "loom" of the Navesink Light.

In 1990, the new museum area was partially open. Budget shortfalls in the State of New Jersey caused previously allocated money for fabrication of new cases, lighting and graphics to be held up. Using the new design gained from the Historical Society's review, a temporary exhibit following the new themes was installed and is now open to the more than 80,000 visitors who come to the Navesink Twin Lights each year.



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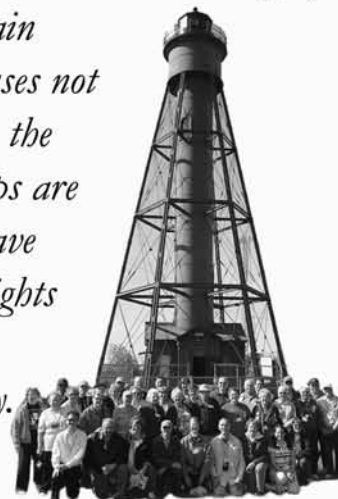
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The Society organizes domestic and international lighthouse tours. Many of our excursions gain access to lighthouses not normally open to the public. These trips are a great way to have fun, see lots of lights and learn about lighthouse history.



Tinicum Lighthouse, NJ