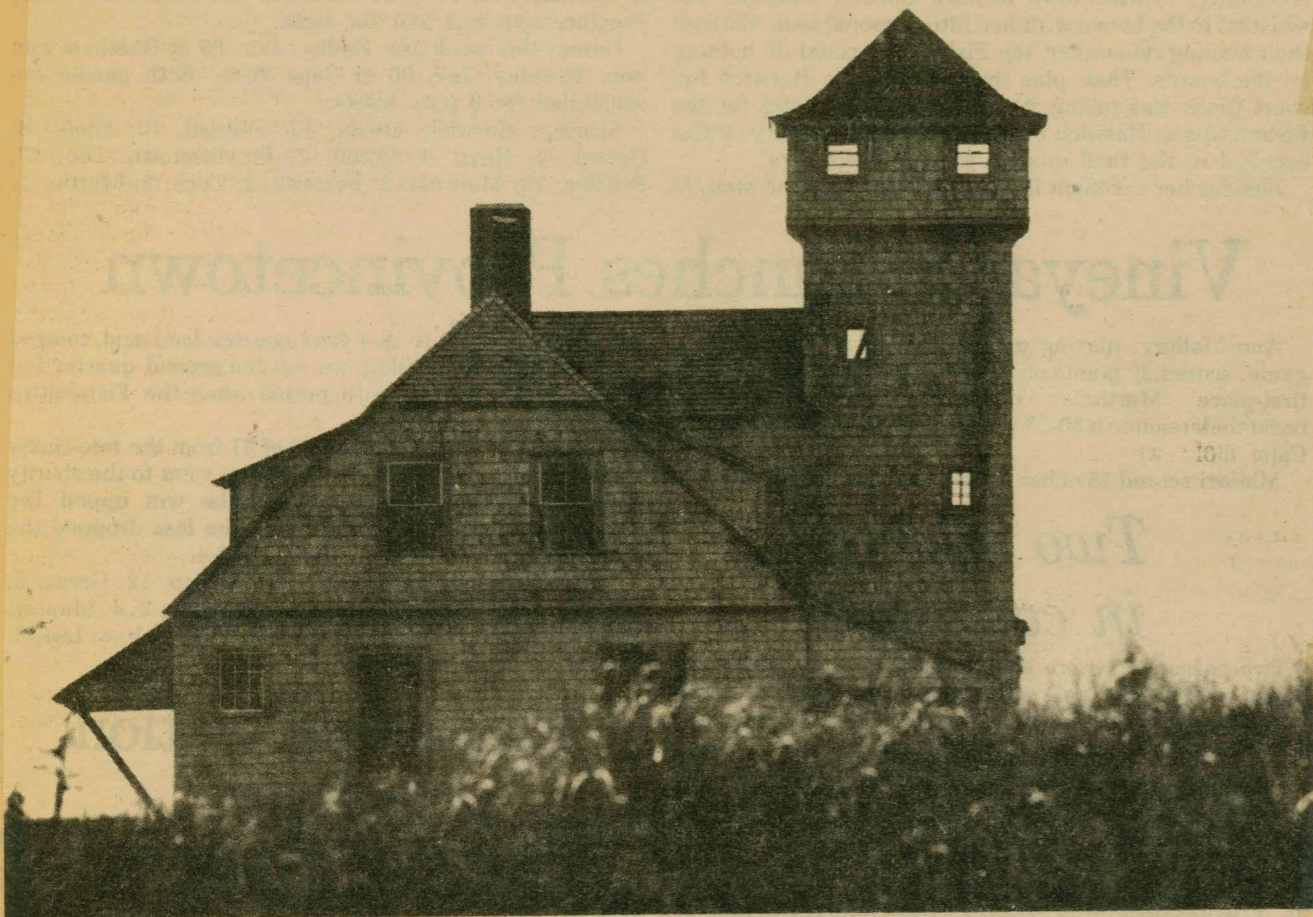


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Future of lifesaving station to be discussed today at Seashore



Old Harbor Fishing Station at Race Point.

Advocate photo by Duane Steels

By Susan Areson

Cape Cod National Seashore officials are meeting today to discuss plans for the Old Harbor Lifesaving Station, which sat on a barge in Provincetown harbor all last winter and was moved last spring to a new foundation at Race Point.

The old lifesaving station is now secured to its foundation and most of the building, which was battered from the harsh storms last winter, has been reshingled. The Seashore eventually hopes to open the historic building as a museum but plans are still sketchy because there is no money available now to revamp the interior.

Project director Marsha Fader said the Seashore was lucky enough to get the \$8000 from the National Park Service reserve money to do the exterior shingling and some repainting.

Fader, a historical architect for the North Atlantic Preservation Center in Boston, said the whole move had to be done with emergency funds. The 82-year-old station had to be moved here from Chatham where it was threatened by the encroaching sea.

It was floated to Provincetown harbor by barge in November 1977 and weathered the winter there until the new foundation at Race Point was built. It wasn't until

May that the station was put in its new home.

The entire move, including building the foundation, cost \$120,000, Fader said. But the moving contractors have since put in a claim for \$50,000 more for the move. The Seashore is now applying for money from the North Atlantic region of the Park Service to do the interior.

The exterior shingling work was done by CETA crews under the supervision of Roland Verfaillie of Eastham who also worked out the preservation center. Verfaillie is now in the hospital because of a heart attack, Fader said, but the work is almost complete. She said the seashore is pleased it has moved so far along in working on the old building especially because money has been so tight.

At today's meeting officials from the regional office in Boston and the Seashore superintendent will discuss different alternatives for what should be done with the interior. Fader said it is the Park service's policy to treat the station as a historic building and try to restore it back to its original state.

The station might be furnished as it was back in 1897 with iron beds and coal stoves, Fader said. About seven men and a keeper lived in the old lifesaving station. Fader is now gathering data about the lifesaving station and the

people who worked there to prepare a historical pamphlet about the building.

Mike Whatley, from the Seashore's interpretive division, said there are still uses for the building that are compatible with its historical value.

Whatley said there was not water, electricity or sewerage in the old station so the Seashore would look for activities that don't require those services.

Fader said one suggestion for the building was to use it for environmental education groups. Right now the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies is using the station for whale watches.

Another suggestion, Fader said, is to turn part of the building into summer quarters for Seashore employees. But that would require water and electrical services.

One activity Whatley is definitely planning for the station are old lifesaving drill demonstrations. One drill, using the breeches buoy and a Lyle gun, will simulate rescue methods of the late 1800's.

The breeches buoy was used for rescues when the weather and surf were too rough for lifeboats. The buoy was made with a pair of canvas breeches attached to the inside of a life ring and was suspended from a line and pulley system set up between the stranded ship and shore. The Lyle gun was used to shoot the line out to the stranded ship.

Whatley said he hopes to do the demonstration for tourists several times a month as part of the Seashore's interpretive program. He said he will start practicing from Race Point sometime this spring.

Fader said the Seashore also plans to move an old sea rescue exhibit now at the Coast Guard Station in Eastham

to the boathouse of the old Harbor Station.

"Chances are fairly good that by this summer we may have the building in shape for a visitor's center," Fader said. The old station is nestled among the sand dunes behind the Seashore's Race Point Visitor's center and Fader said she wasn't sure whether access paths or boardwalks would be built in the near future.

Fader said the Seashore is optimistic that they will get money from the National Park Service to do the interior of the building.

Whatley said the Seashore has also requested money in the National Park 1980 budget to staff the station.



At its new location - Race Point
Coast Guard Station - September - 1978