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IN ITS NEW HOME AT LAST!!

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# Lifesaving station begins new career

By Gregory Katz

With the help of the tugboat *Taurus*, the Provincetown dragger *Petrel* and a bulldozer named *Fat Allis*, the Old Harbor Lifesaving Station moved Friday to its new home at Race Point.

The 81-year-old station weathered the harsh winter in the protected waters of Provincetown Harbor. Wednesday it was towed away from MacMillan Wharf and anchored halfway toward Long Point. Friday morning, amidst dense fog, the station was towed to Race Point.

At 6:30 Friday morning, when the familiar structure left Provincetown Harbor for good, the fog was so heavy that spectators in the parking lot at MacMillan Wharf could not see the buildings at the end of the wharf, much less the station as it left the harbor.

Visibility at Race Point was near zero. While *Fat Allis*, the largest bulldozer on Cape Cod, dug a channel at its new site for the barge carrying the station, work crews laid wooden planks to support two mammoth cranes. There was no way of knowing how the harbor station was faring in the open Atlantic.

The *Petrel*, skippered by Capt. Ralph Andrews Jr., was towing the station. Mrs. Jane Andrews paced the sand at Race

Point, confident her husband could handle the task.

"He's not nervous. He's excited," Mrs. Andrews said. "He's been fishing in the fog for 12 years."

Twenty minutes later the piercing whistle of a ship's air horn shattered the eerie silence. A rumbling was heard at sea. Then a voice penetrated the mist, shouting, "Are you ready yet?"

Still invisible, the station had arrived ahead of schedule. With high tide still an hour away, the movers wanted to allow the channel being dug to fill with water to provide extra buoyancy.

Suddenly the station came into view, just 30 feet from shore. The sea was flat as glass. Then the waiting began.

When the tide was high, the tugboat *Taurus* nudged the station into the channel. Welds connecting the station to its barge were burned off, and workers began the delicate task of attaching two cranes to the old wooden structure. It was another hour before the station was properly rigged.

Minutes before cranes lifted the station, the sun burst through the fog for the first time. The dunes were lined with spectators. Suddenly both *Petrel* and *Taurus*, which had been shrouded in fog, were visible in back of the station. A signal was given. The cranes kicked up. The 81-year-old-structure slowly rose from its barge, swung in the air and was gently lowered into the sand at Race Point.

At sea since last November, the old station rested on dry land once again.

Marsha Fader, historical director, and Jack Corey, contractor, heaved a huge sigh of relief as the prized cargo sat safely on the beach. Workers began readying the station's boathouse, still floating on the barge, for its move to the beach.

Two hours later, the cranes were ready and rigged. While spectators tanned themselves and tossed Frisbees, the boathouse was lifted and landed next to the old station. Both structures were at the water's edge, several hundred feet inland of the foundation being dug for the structures.

The exhausted movers, who had been working at Race Point since 6 a.m., were in no condition to step the station up the

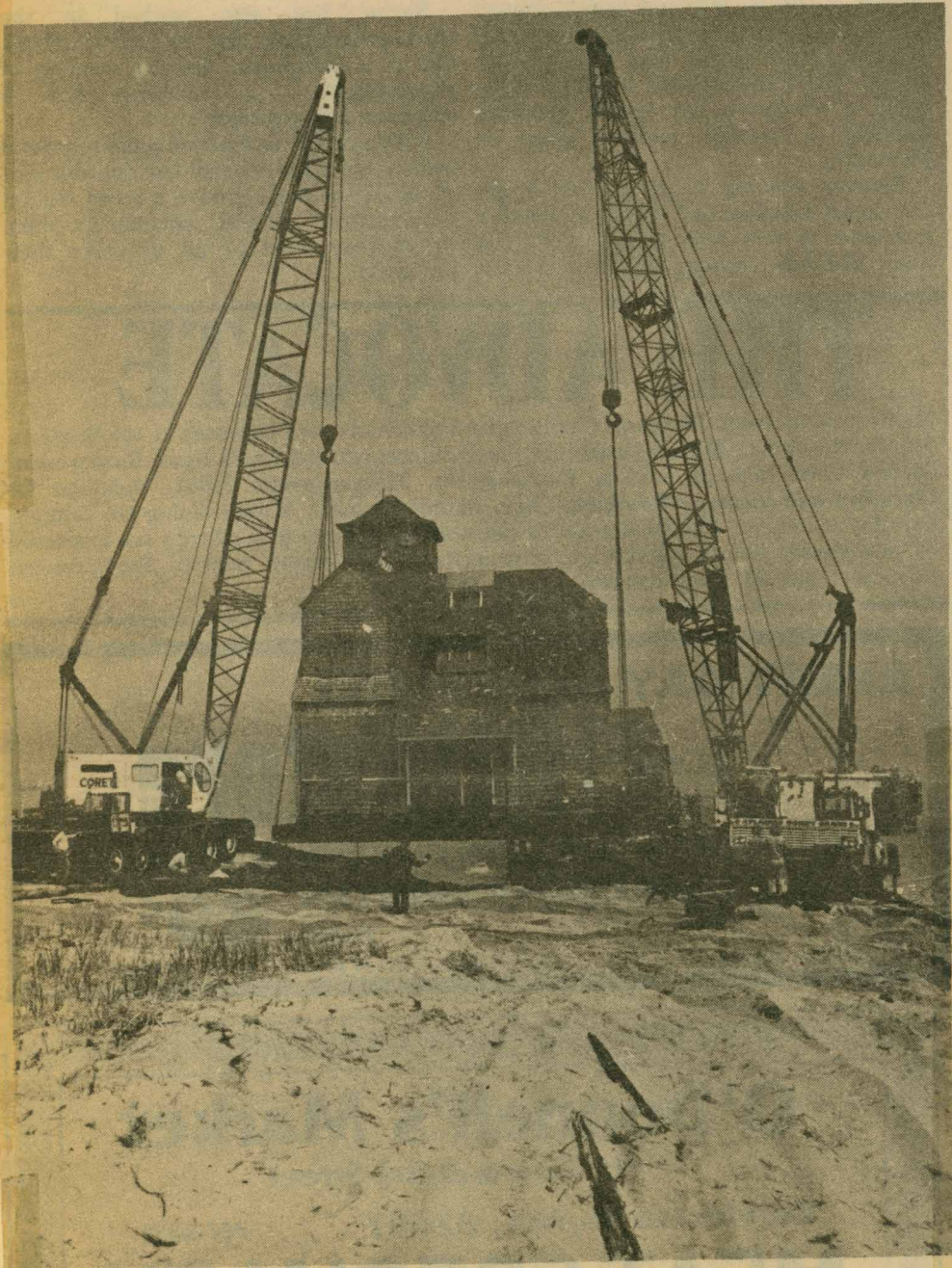
beach. But one tactical problem remained before they could call it a day—the barge that supported the station all winter now sat empty, high and dry. The tide had receded. The barge was stuck.

With *Fat Allis* digging away, aided by a smaller bulldozer, a new channel was dug. With the help of the two cranes, the huge barge was successfully floated out to sea.

The old station, floated to Provincetown from Chatham in November, will eventually house a museum. But the Seashore is strapped for money. Marge Burling said it will be several years before a museum can be opened. The immediate goal is to secure the building on its new foundation.

The foundation isn't finished yet. Fader said the station will be placed on cribbing on top of the foundation. The foundation will be built up to the station.

On Monday movers lifted the station once more and inched it closer to the foundation. By Tuesday at noon, after two more lifts, the station was resting on the cribbing above its new foundation.



Advocate photo by Gregory Katz

Station being coddled onto Race Point Beach.