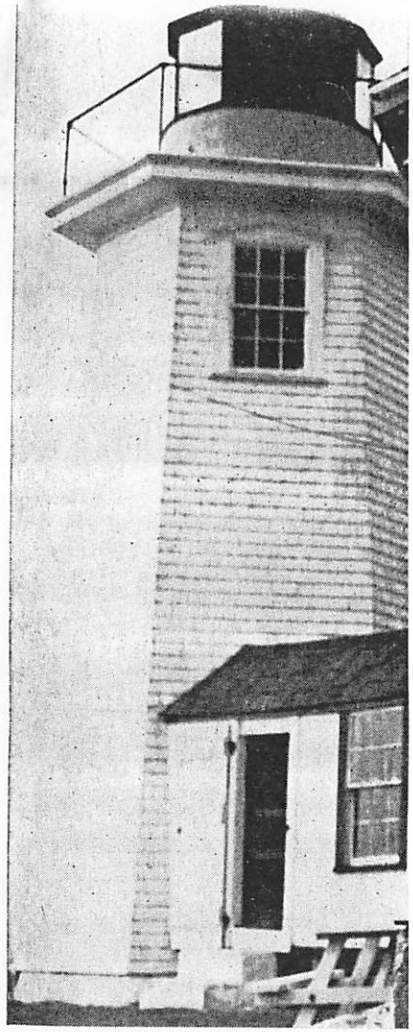
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Lighthouse Keeping

by ETHELDA BEDFORD

SOMETIMES A HOUSE IS PURE FUN—to some. Take the Frank Flanagans and their two children. Their house exudes constant exotic interest, adventure and entertainment. It's a lighthouse! It stands tall and stark on the jutting rocky end of Wings Neck, Pocasset, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Here it has served as friend and guide to sailors for nearly a hundred years. (The Flanagans bought it a few years ago when the old Wings Neck light was renamed Cleveland Light and moved across Buzzards Bay to the opposite shore.)

Fun living in a lighthouse? The star-spangled waves lash and caress it by night; the pearl-capped waves woo it by day. Winds, soft and wild, threaten and whisper. The sun lavishes warmth and bright smiles upon it. Gulls cry out their hearts over its head. The blue waters reflect the tall whiteness and water fowl scream and flutter for attention. Boats bob in every window. You can climb to the high tower and see the ocean meeting the bay and devouring a startling sunset.

But, how does one decorate a lighthouse? How does a wife and mother and frequent hostess go about keeping house in a lighthouse? Starting from the stark functionality of a lighthouse, where does one go? Many windows, steep and winding stairs, huge fireplaces, and thick walls require ingenuity to convert to modern liveability. Yet Irene Flanagan has conquered through experience, and the gifts of driftwood and cork washed up on the rocks have aided her. One would have to see to believe the complete harmony of the setting and the interior.

In fact, harmony is the word for the Flanagans. Frank believes that singing companions make for a happier world. "Keep the world singing," he often says. Irene sings; their daughter Beth is a concert pianist, a choir director, a musical instructor, and a musical favorite of radio and TV. Of course, there is a piano in their lighthouse as well as hi-fi and loads of records. Their son Bill, a teen-ager, also sings. The Flanagans are a ready-made quartet.

There's always singing going on here. Each summer members of the Society for the Preservation of Barber Shop Singing congregate on the Flanagan lawn. (There are 2,000 members of the Society in New England alone.)

But to get back to houses—

"Once we bought an old church in Monument Beach," Irene recalled thoughtfully, ". . . made it into a kind of studio-home. Everyone thought it the really unique home. Yes, it was fun. It called deeply upon our imaginations for its transformation . . . . even more of a challenge than a lighthouse. Folks seldom live in churches. Oh, but the church house made a wonderful place for our Barber Shoppers."

A far-away dream shadowed Irene Flanagan's eyes as she said, "But now, guess what Frank plans to have next as our fun-home."

Conjure up a guess before you read on.

Irene said it quickly.

"Frank is looking for an airport! Yes, with a hangar. Imagine the high roof. Can't you hear the Barber Shoppers harmonizing? The great place will fill with song."

Yes, dear housekeeping lighthouse keeper, we'll inquire right here: Anybody want to sell an airport with hangar?

Irene and Frank Flanagan love odd residences, music and barber shop singing. Their lighthouse, above, is full of activity and fun for all. Opposite page: Every ship passing through the Cape Cod Canal must clear at this station—only a few yards from the Flanagans' lighthouse.



