The Lost Lights of Cape Cod

The Three Sisters of Nauset Together Again



Nauset Light, the last of the active Three Sisters Lights from a 1977 photograph. It was then affectionately known as "The Beacon."

by Timothy Harrison

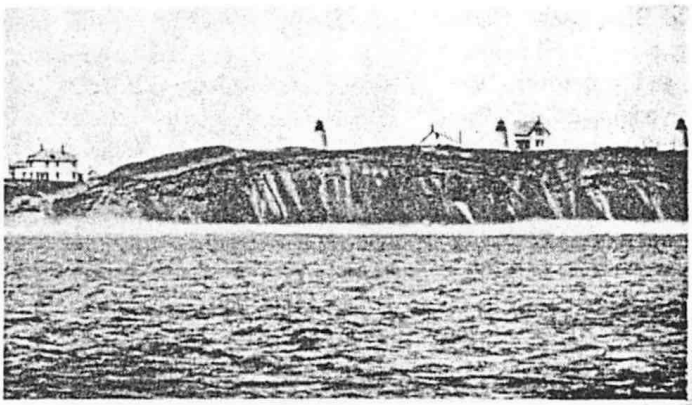
Established in 1838 three brick towers were built on Nauset Beach. This was the only three light navigational aid in the United States.

In 1892 erosion threatened the three brick towers and three wooden towers were built replacing the brick ones which eventually collapsed.

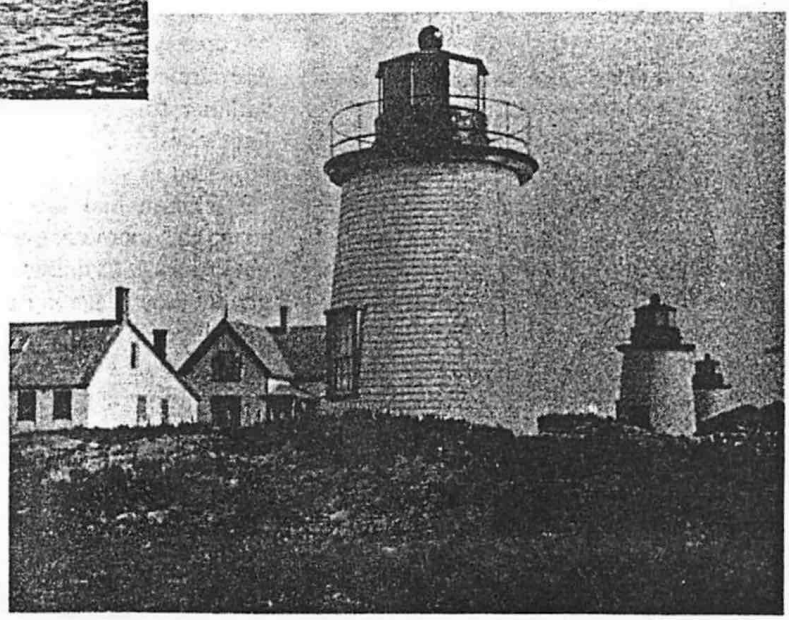
In 1911 when erosion again threatened the towers, the center tower was moved to a safer place and the other two were discontinued. In 1918 the two discontinued towers were sold.

Finally in 1923, the remaining tower, then called Nauset Light but referred to affectionately as "The Beacon," was also discontinued and sold. It was replaced by one of the twin towers of Chatham which was moved to Nauset Beach where it still stands today, although it to is now threatened by erosion.

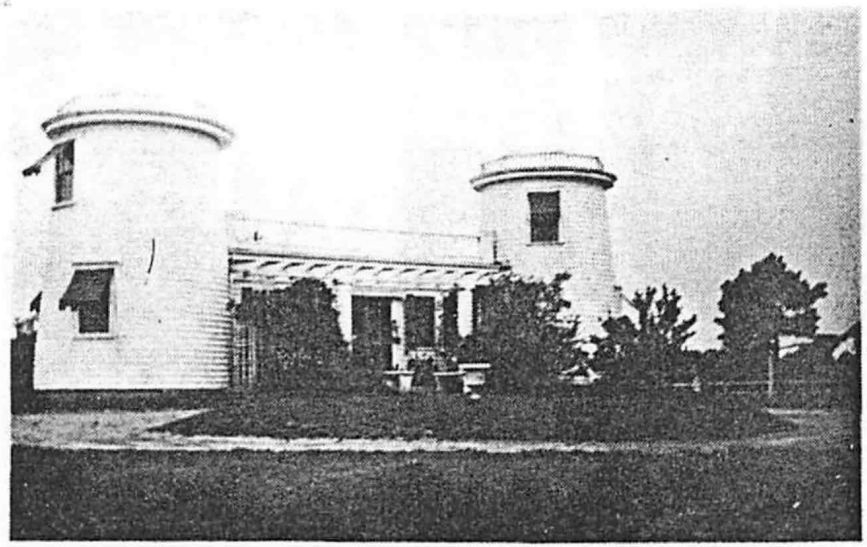
In 1965 the Cape Cod National Seashore acquired the two old towers and 1983 they acquired the third tower. They have since restored them and they are now on display in a small wooded area on Nauset Light Road a short distance from Nauset Light.



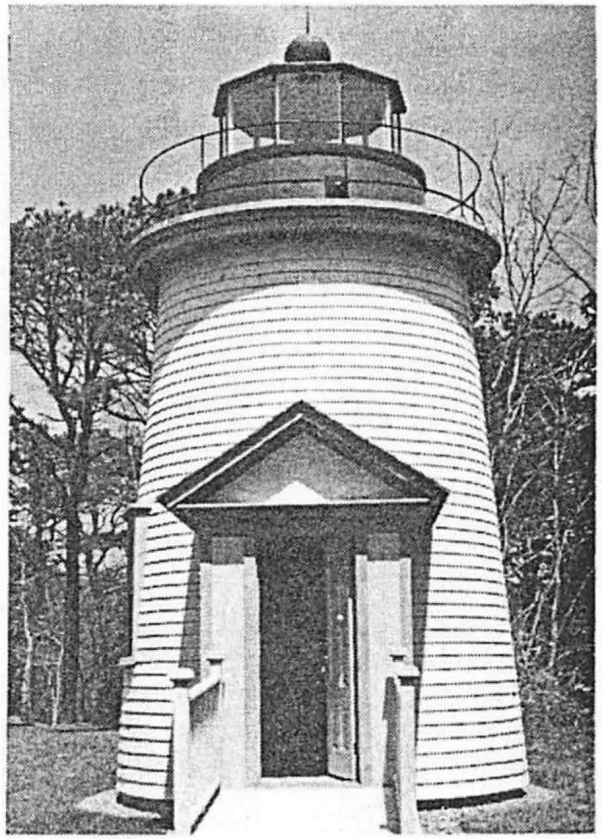
ABOVE is from an old post card are the Three Sisters when they were active aids to navigation. *Photograph courtesy of Steven Johnson of SEJET.*



RIGHT: The Sisters in a picture from the 1890's when all were active.



Two of the Three Sisters after they were sold in to private ownership and converted to the summer home of Mr. & Mrs. P.J. Cummings.



One of the Three Sisters as she looks today, totally restored.



Nauset Light today. This tower originally was one of the twin towers of Chatham and was moved to its current location in 1923. The light is in danger of toppling over the bluff and now is only approximately 50 feet from the edge. The Nauset Light Preservation Society is currently raising funds to save the light.

Lease Signed for Nauset

The Nauset Light Preservation Society now has an official long term lease from the United States Coast Guard. Nauset Light, now stands less than 50 feet from the eroding cliff. Plans are now underway to move the light to a safe location.