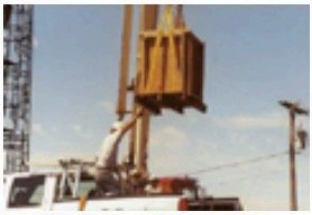
Salute to the Coast Guard: Restoration of Point Judith Lighthouse

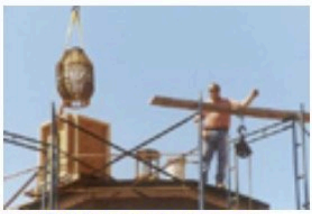
By Jeremy D'Entremont

Comments?



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Rhode Island's Point Judith, part of the town of Narragansett, extends more than a mile from the Rhode Island coast, marking the entrance to the Narragansett Bay to the north and Block Island Sound to the south. The passage past Point Judith is a dangerous one, with a treacherous ledge to the west and frequent fog in the area. A day beacon at Point Judith dated back to before the American Revolution, and the first lighthouse was built at Point Judith in 1810. It was the third lighthouse in Rhode Island.



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The 51-foot octagonal tower that stands today was built in 1857. It was later given a distinctive color scheme, with the upper half brown and the lower half white. It has long been a familiar landmark to the thousands who take the ferry to Block Island from nearby Galilee. Thanks to a recent $230,000 Coast Guard restoration, the tower is in its best condition in many years.



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Coast Guard architect Marsha Levy did the design work and oversaw the restoration performed by Campbell Construction Group of Beverly, Massachusetts.



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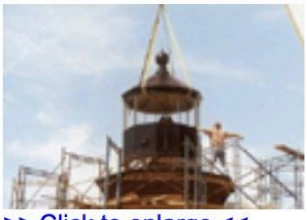
In April the fourth order Fresnel lens was removed from the tower and was transported to the Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team at Bristol, Rhode Island. The lantern was removed and thoroughly refurbished by Campbell Construction Group; some of the original panels had to be replaced.

Levy has been involved with a number of recent restorations at light stations, including Maine's Petit Manan Light and Wood Island Light, and Massachusetts' Hospital Point Light and Baker's Island Light. Point Judith proved to be one of the most difficult. Most of its contemporaries were constructed of granite or rubblestone, but Point Judith's lighthouse was built of brownstone. The soft brownstone "weathers horribly," according to Levy. The stone around the windows was in



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especially bad shape and had developed bulges.



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Some of the original blocks had to be replaced, not an easy task since brownstone is rarely quarried today. A quarry was located in Cheshire, Connecticut, in the same Connecticut River Valley area that the original stone most likely came from. The replacement stones were dyed to match the original ones. Rather than repaint the upper half of the tower brown, it has been left its natural brownstone color, darkened slightly by a dye.



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A special product, Jahn mortar from Holland, was used to patch the tower. The mortar is custom formulated to match any kind of stone. The mortar used at Point Judith is flexible and will expand and contract with the brownstone. The inside of the tower was cleaned and patched as well. There was a severe moisture problem inside the leaky lighthouse and a good deal of mold and lichen growth on the inner walls.



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Coast Guard architect Marsha Levy and Dave ...

New galvanized steel windows with six panes of safety glass are due to be installed this fall. The new windows will be similar to the tower's original wrought iron windows, and will replace the thick glass block windows of recent years.

Campbell Construction Group is a mid-sized general contractor with extensive experience in historic masonry restoration, renovation and new construction. The company has made quite a name for itself in lighthouse restoration. Their recent projects include work at Petit Manan Light, Boston Harbor's Long Island Head Light, Maine's Isle au Haut Light and Dice Head Light, and New York's Eaton Point Light. Campbell Construction Group received the 1999 Contractor of the Year Award from the U.S. Coast Guard CEU Providence. Another of their current restoration projects is the lighthouse tower and keeper's quarters at Annisquam Light in Massachusetts, and soon they'll begin work on Nantucket's Brant Point Light.

Dave Campbell, owner of Campbell Construction, performed the restoration work along with site supervisor and mason Martin Nally (vice president of Campbell Construction Group), mason Clem Fraize, and mason tender Jeremy Campbell.

According to Marsha Levy, the restoration should leave the tower in excellent condition for at least 100 years.