Sankaty Lighthouse Move Saves Beacon From Toppling

Mysterious hidden steps uncovered



This aerial image shows just how close the eroding bluff was to the Sankaty Lighthouse before the move. The new location where the structure was moved to is shown cordoned off with orange fencing. Photograph by Rob Benchley, courtesy of the Sconset Trust.

The last image of Sankaty Head Lighthouse at its original location before it starts on the tedious move to its new home. Photograph by Rob Benchley, courtesy of the Sconset Trust.

The historic Sankaty Lighthouse on Nantucket Island in Massachusetts has been saved from tumbling over the side of the steep bluffs that had eroded within 75 feet of the tower.

Although a number of subcontractors were used, the actual physical move of the lighthouse was orchestrated by International Chimney Company and Expert House Movers, famous for having moved others lighthouses such as Rhode Island's Southeast Lighthouse and the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, which had also been threatened by erosion.

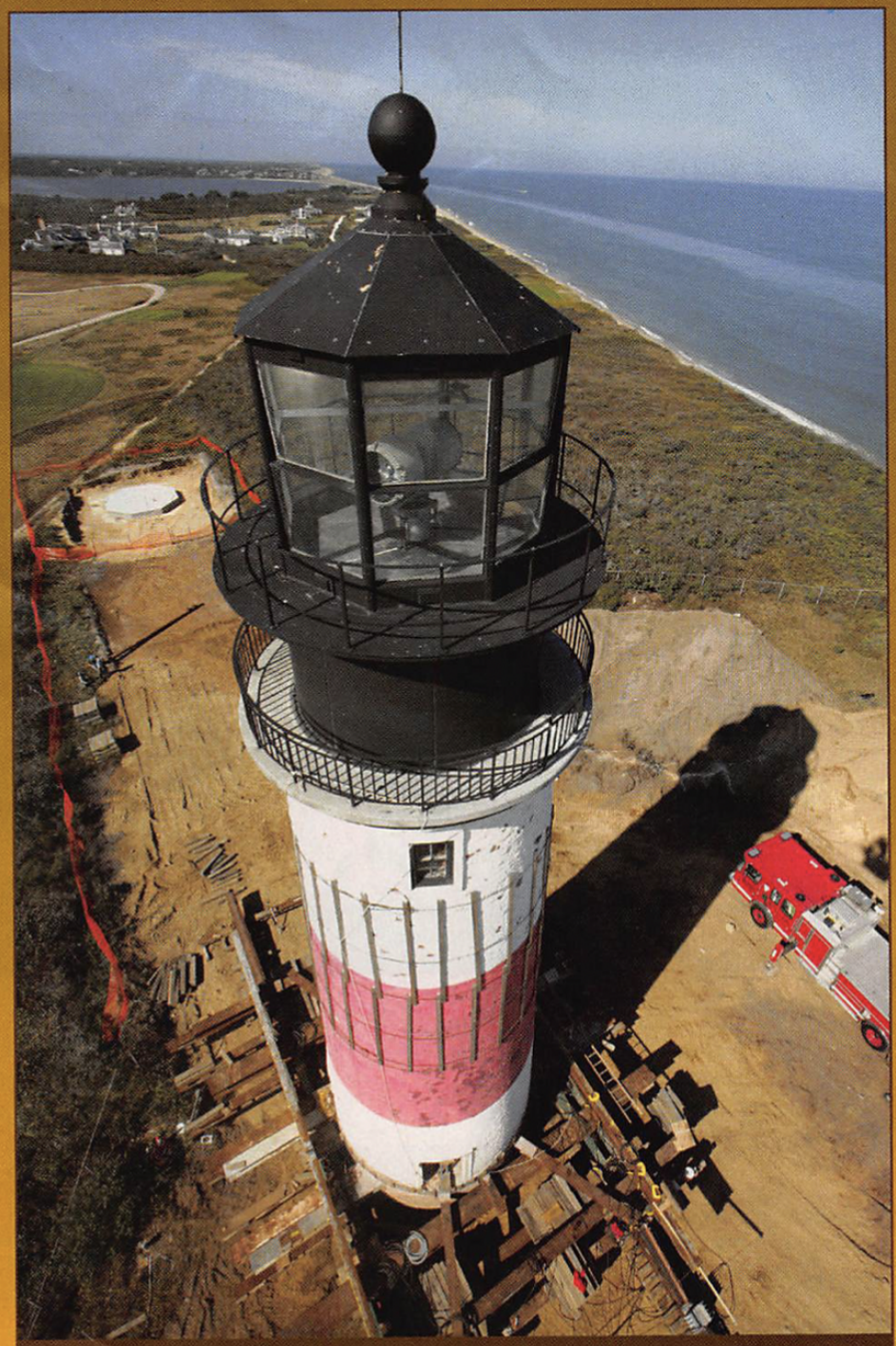
In fear that more of the bluff would fall away, the move had to take place now or it would have been too dangerous, if not impossible, to get heavy equipment close to the tower.

In preparation for the move, as the floor of the lighthouse was dug out, two additional steps of the spiral staircase were uncovered buried beneath the surface. No one seems to know how or when this happened or why they would have been buried, making the staircase actually 18 inches higher than it was for the move.

Efforts to save the lighthouse started in 1992 and went through a number of difficult and lengthy procedures before the Sconset Trust assumed official ownership of the station to manage what is estimated as four million dollar move, restoration project and money for an endowment for the future care of the lighthouse. And, much of that money still needs to be raised.

Preparations for the move actually started in October of 2006 that included site preparation to create a path for the move, which would take the lighthouse down a 15-degree grade and 400 feet to its new home near the fifth hole of the Sankaty Head Golf Course, which has deeded an easement for the lighthouse.

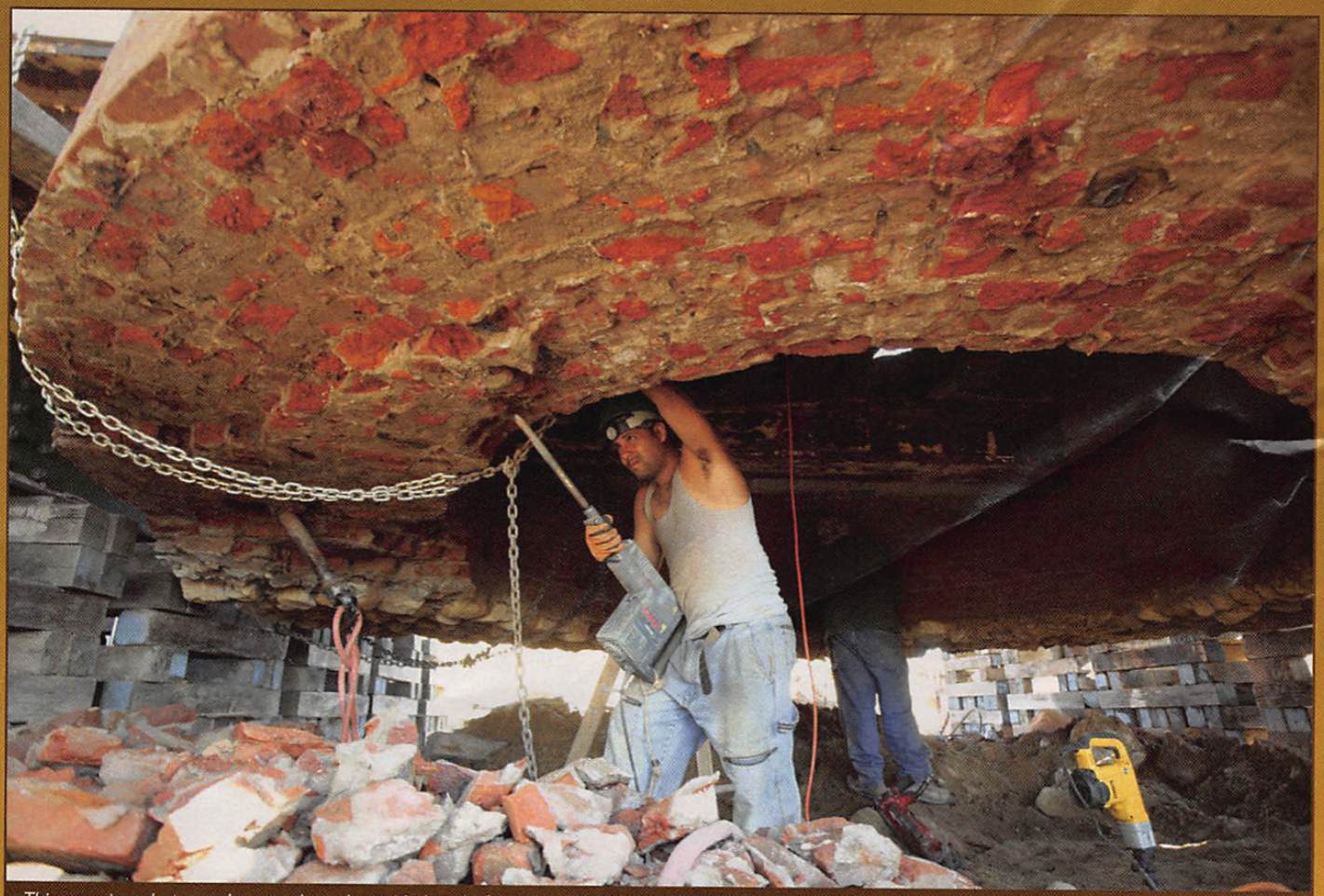
A project as big as this takes the dedication and commitment of a large number of people who have taken a major risk to save an important part of America's maritime history and they are to be congratulated and supported.



Sankaty Lighthouse "On the Move" as seen from atop the Nantucket Fire Department's Ladder Truck. Photo by Rob Benchley, courtesy of the Sconset Trust.

Donations can be made on line at
www.sconsettrust.org or by mail to Sconset Trust,
P.O. Box 821, Siasconset, MA 02564.

More photos on the next page...



This amazing photograph was taken about 10 days before the move as the tower is lifted up by Expert House Movers. Would you be as brave as these workmen to stand underneath the 500-ton tower as it is suspended in the air? Photograph by Rob Benchley, courtesy of the Sconset Trust.



This close up image shows the tower on steel beams with rollers and ready for the move to its new location. Photograph by Rob Benchley, courtesy of the Sconset Trust.