

***Treasured Beacon:
The Edgartown Harbor Light***

Online Exhibit

Supplemental Materials:

Martha's Vineyard Museum Library
VREF1114.002, Edgartown Harbor Light, Demolition & Replacement
Vineyard Gazette articles, 1838

MV MUSEUM

INC. 1923

Town Protests Loss of the Harbor Light

Storm of Disapproval Greet Unexpected News Government Plans to Replace Edgartown Landmark

The razing of the present Edgartown Harbor Light, together with the keeper's house, and the substitution of a skeleton steel tower eight feet lower than the present light, are proposed by the U. S. Lighthouse Service. The fog signal will be discontinued, and the light will be made an unattended station, linked to the shore by a submarine cable. Although provisions are made for preservation of the footpath to the light for the present, Edgartown residents believe that this structure will be bound to go in a few years.

These plans became known on the Island Wednesday when instructions came in regard to the bids for the proposed changes. Sealed bids are to be received and opened at 2 p. m. on July 22. It is anticipated that work will begin forty-five days after the award of the contract, and will be completed sixty days later.

An urgent protest was planned in Edgartown, efforts to prevent the changes being made even more vigorous because of the short time permitted before award of the contract. Contractors began to visit the light at once, with a view to preparing bids.

Will Be Completely Inadequate

On the grounds that the present tower has never been high enough, and a lower tower will be completely inadequate; and that an unattended station with no fog signal will constitute a serious peril, fishermen, yachtsmen and others prepared to fight to the last to preserve the present light. Many who joined in the protest said they believed that the change would be a serious blow to Edgartown, and that it would make the harbor entrance dangerous at many times.

Pointing out that the light and the bridge had been fixtures of the town and the waterfront for generations, others said that these institutions had historic value. Nothing could be done to them, it was protested vehemently, without irreparable harm to the town, exceeding in dollars and cents many times the saving the government may make by having an automatic station. The specifications provide that the contractor shall "completely tear down and remove the dwelling and tower, down to the stone pier upon which it now stands, construct a concrete slab on this base, and erect thereon a fabricated steel tower, electrically wired and connected ashore to commercial current by submarine cable".

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Town Protests Loss of the Harbor Light

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The tower will be delivered here knocked down, and the contractor is to erect it with field bolts. It will be of galvanized steel, a standard unit such as is in use in many places. The catwalk, the specifications point out, is subject to use as a private boat landing, and is not to be removed, changed, or subject to hazard during the progress of the work. However, it is pointed out at Edgartown that the government will no longer have a motive for maintaining this walk, and that it cannot be expected to last long.

The submarine cable is to be laid two feet under the bottom of the harbor. The present water pipe to the light is to be discontinued.

Tower Eight Feet Lower

According to the specifications the new tower will be eight feet square at the bottom and forty feet high, as against the present forty-eight foot tower. There will be nothing but a stone pier, finished with concrete, surmounted by galvanized steel framework, and the light at the top.

Capt. Claude Wagner of the schooner Liberty said, "We need the light-house and the bell. How can anyone with a large vessel come in this harbor in thick weather without a signal of some kind? A lower light will conflict with the street lights. In fact it is hard now to distinguish the Harbor Light from street lights. How can your summer children out sailing, when fog comes in, get back into the harbor without some signal?"

Midge Bettencourt, ferryman, Manuel Swartz, Capt. Tom Walker Pease and First Mate Oscar all expressed vigorous opposition to the change. The absence of a fog signal, they believed, would be sure to prove particularly serious.

Ex-Commodore Alexander M. Orr of the Edgartown Yacht Club said, "After the efforts of two years on the part

3 Days Left to Sign Lighthouse Petition

So Far All Have Signified Desire
to Save Harbor Light—Com-
missioner of Lighthouses
States His Stand

Following the suggestion of Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of this district of the lighthouse service, that opinion be polled as to the future of the Edgartown Harbor Light, an expression of local opinion has been in progress during the past three days. Captain Eaton limited the matter, so far as his recommendations might be concerned, to two alternatives: the preservation of the existing light, with retention of a keeper, exactly as at present; or the razing of the present building and erection of a skeleton tower as originally planned by the government.

Papers on which a declaration in favor of either of these courses can be made are at the selectmen's office, Edgartown, and at the Edgartown Yacht Club. Up to last night a considerable number of persons had gone on record in each place, all in favor of retention of the existing light.

Those who have not yet recorded themselves still have today, tomorrow and Sunday to do so. All who wish to prevent razing of the light should so declare, and those favoring the destruction of the present building and substitution of a steel skeleton tower will likewise find an opportunity to express themselves.

Despite the fact that the sentiment is being taken between these two alternatives, at the suggestion of Captain Eaton, it is still hoped that the present light may be kept and any desirable improvements made without much change in it.

Apparent Contradiction

Although the government has made statement that the lighthouse bridge would be maintained under any circumstances, H. D. King, commissioner of lighthouses, said in a letter to Congressman Gifford this week that the purpose of the Lighthouse Bureau is "to simultaneously improve the effectiveness of aids to navigation and to reduce the maintenance costs connected with the large building and long wharf which appear to be quite unnecessary under present day conditions."

Edgartown interests have been as much concerned over the future of the bridge as over the future of the light itself. The bridge is not only a much prized feature of the waterfront but a structure considered necessary to prevent the wash of sand into the harbor.

In a letter to Mrs. T. M. R. Meikle-

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3 Days Left to Sign Lighthouse Petitions

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ham, president of the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club. Mr. King said, "I may be pardoned at this point for interjecting the personal note, that my paternal grandmother was a Mayhew of Martha's Vineyard, and that I personally am not without sentimental regret at the passage from our New England seascapes of the fleets of sailing craft that formerly added their notes of both beauty and romance to these scenes, but which have almost entirely vanished."

Speaking of the Edgartown Harbor Light Mr. King said in this letter, "It must be rather definitely maintained that neither from the navigational nor the economic standpoint is there any warrant for the further expenditure of Lighthouse Service funds in the maintenance of the types of structures which were necessary in a former age."

According to Captain Eaton, however, he anticipates that maintenance costs would be increased by the razing of the old building and erection of a new tower.

The plans of the government are being held in abeyance for a few days to allow time for the registering of local sentiment at Edgartown.

Gazette, Aug 2, 1938
 (reprinting NY Herald Tribune)

VINEYARD

Editorial Comment

Harbor Light

An embattled Vineyard is moving heaven, earth and its congressmen to save the old Edgartown Harbor Light from the vandal hands of time and change. The Lighthouse Service, which has altered, discontinued and sold off so many old lights in recent years, had already advertised for bids to raze the tower and keeper's dwelling "down to the stone pier and erect thereon a fabricated steel tower" with an automatic light and no fog signal before Edgartown awoke to the contemplated sacrilege. The change was protested as a menace to navigation; unfortunately, the government admitted the point and agreed to make its steel contraption higher and add an automatic fog signal. Then the truth came out; it was sentiment, not navigation, which really mattered, and now the Vineyard and the government are in consultation, the latter offering to spare the old structure if the former will pay for its picturesque upkeep.

Every one must hope that the Vineyard will win. No one has ever used one of those old harbor lights—taking his departure by its sturdy tower, picking it up at dusk on the homeward voyage or recognizing its winking beam across the levels of the night—without endowing it with a friendly personality. No one has ever lived within range of a tall lighthouse who can see its eye put out or its graceful stones brought down without a sense of private loss. But the lighthouses, with their lonely keepers—symbols for so long of hope, steadfastness and devotion—are going. Radio, submarine bells, lightships, pile lights, automatic equipment, improved buoys, all kinds of more modern, more efficient and more economical aids to the mathematical mariners of today are ending their usefulness. The light tower, unflinching and unshaken in storm and in distress, is crumbling to invention. One can accept the need of the new contraptions without weakening one particle of the sentiment that clings to the old monuments and would preserve them as such.—New York Herald Tribune.

Up to the Government 7/22/38

When the government builds a postoffice or any other structure, it takes some account of the place where the building is to be situated. The design is harmonized with the surroundings and the tradition of the site. Why should not this rule apply to the construction of a lighthouse? Why should the same standardized units be held equally appropriate for a seaside New England resort town and an industrial district crowded with docks and sooty chimneys?

To ask such a question is to give the answer. Of course what is acceptable for one setting is not acceptable for the other. It may be said, fairly, that a lighthouse is a thoroughly realistic thing intended for practical purposes only. But it is also a monument, and on the waterfront of a town like Edgartown it stands at the front door to make or break the harbor scene. An obligation rests upon the federal government to respect the history and the present day sightliness of such a harbor.

When the government says to a community, "If you desire something better looking and more appropriate than a galvanized steel skeleton, you will have to pay the difference in cost," it is lacking both in fairness and candor. If the words are taken at their face value, the implication is one of polite blackmail,—“we are going to do something to mar your waterfront, and if you want to stop us, get out your pocketbook.”

On the other hand, the words may be taken as uttered with tongue in cheek,—“to get rid of your objections we will offer you a chance to do something at your own expense which we feel pretty sure you won't want to do, but anyway you will have stop bothering us.”

We believe that the maintenance of the character and sightliness of the Edgartown harbor, so far as the lighthouse structure is concerned, is a duty of the government itself.

A White Tower 8/6/38

The outcome of the prolonged controversy in regard to the Edgartown Harbor Light is more of a victory for the Island than may appear. The government is to erect a real lighthouse, and the white painted tower will stand in place of the old structure. It will no doubt prove to be the architectural accent for the Edgartown harbor front which everyone has feared would be lost.

As to the disappearance of the old building and the loss of a keeper, we have only sadness and regret. All the old lighthouses have been institutions, and when one of them goes the life of the community is impoverished. It is unfortunate that this sort of thing takes place at a time when the social health of the nation needs strengthening rather than weakening of small communities, and decentralization rather than increased centralization and mechanization. The difficulty is that this matter is broader than the administration of any single government department.

It is rather remarkable that Edgartown should have succeeded in obtaining the present solution even after a final and adverse decision had been announced. Congressman Charles L. Gifford particularly, and others as well who have interested themselves in the matter, are to be thanked.

We hope that the new white tower and its red light will have a history as rich and interesting as that of the structure which relentless modernity condemns to destruction.

Vote Stands 301 to 0 In Favor of Keeping Present Harbor Light

The referendum petitions concerning the future of the Edgartown Harbor Light were forwarded to Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of this district of the Lighthouse Service, yesterday by Winthrop B. Norton, chairman of the Edgartown board of selectmen. The referendum stood 301 in favor of maintaining the present Harbor Light against none for the alternative proposal of razing the present light and putting up a skeleton tower.

The referendum was carried out by means of petitions offering a choice between these two proposals. The petitions were available in duplicate, at the selectmen's office and at the Edgartown Yacht Club from Tuesday until Monday morning. Every opportunity was given to fishermen, yachtsmen and others for discussion of the matter, and for registering a choice.

The unanimous result in favor of keeping the present light will, it is hoped, lead the Lighthouse Service to acquiesce in the decision. Captain Eaton a week ago said that if Edgartown wanted the present light, he would recommend that it be retained.

Signers of the petition asking preservation of the light included fishermen, yachtsmen, property owners, and representatives of virtually all interests in Edgartown.

Strange Contradictions

It is difficult to understand the conflicting statements and the conflicting attitudes of the Bureau of Lighthouses concerning the Edgartown Harbor Light. The district superintendent had said frankly, or at least clearly, that the matter was not one of economy.

"It isn't a case where we can save any money," he said in effect. "So far as I am concerned you can have either of two things, either the present light exactly as it is, or the new skeleton tower with a little more height and a little more candlepower. Just let me know which."

Local interests recorded themselves 301 to 0 in favor of the present Light. And now comes the commissioner of lighthouses to say that the matter is one of economy, and that the present Light must go. Moreover, the bridge or walk will go, too, as soon as the present structure falls out of repair.

It appears that there has never been any serious consideration of the desire to preserve the present Light, in spite of appearances. Perhaps there is still time to obtain this consideration, and to find out just what the facts are. But it will take quick action, and all messages will have to go to Washington by wire.

Revoke Promise to Save Harbor Light

Commissioner States Referendum
Will Be Ignored, House Must
Go and Bridge Won't
Be Maintained

It looks as if the Edgartown Harbor Light would be destroyed. In a letter to the Vineyard Gazette yesterday, Harold D. King, commissioner of lighthouses at Washington, said that his decision was to raze the present building and proceed to put up a skeleton steel tower. This decision was reached despite the recent referendum in which local interests had asked by a poll of 301 to 0 that the present Harbor Light be retained. Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of the second district of the Lighthouse Service, had suggested this referendum and had said unconditionally that the present structure would be left alone if this poll showed that was what Edgartown interests wanted.

Commissioner King, in his letter, makes several statements flatly contradicting those of the district superintendent. Most vital of all, the commissioner discloses for the first time that the lighthouse bridge will not be maintained in future, since a boat can be used to tend the light. Captain Eaton had twice given assurance that the government would continue to maintain the historic bridge.

Denied Motive Was Economy

Captain Eaton informed Winthrop B. Norton and Henry B. Hough recently that the matter was not one of economy. He ran over several items of expense, expressing a belief that the proposed arrangement would cost as much as or more than the present building for maintenance. He insisted that the whole question was one of improving the light from a navigational standpoint. Commissioner King, nevertheless, says in his letter that the change is to be based on a lowering of maintenance costs.

Telegrams of remonstrance addressed to the commissioner were filed at once by Winthrop B. Norton, chairman of the board of selectmen, and the Vineyard Gazette. The commissioner was informed directly that the action of the department was regarded as a breach of faith, particularly since Captain Eaton had limited the appeal of local interests to two alternatives, and had prevented the submitting of other proposals. All efforts to reach a solution by relieving the government of maintenance costs of

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Revoke Promise to Save Harbor Light

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the present building were precluded by Captain Eaton's statement that economy was not involved.

Telegrams have also been sent by interested citizens and groups of citizens to Congressman Charles L. Gifford, whose efforts have been influential in obtaining consideration of the matter this far, and to Senator Walsh and Senator Lodge.

The one concession in Commissioner King's letter is a half way promise to consider substituting a better type of structure for the skeleton steel tower at some future time, when and if funds are available.

The letter in full is as follows:

This office has received and carefully considered your further letter of July 30th, relative to the project at Edgartown Harbor Light Station. The poll taken by yourself and Mr. Norton indicating the views of various local residents as between the alternate of carrying out the improvements as planned and leaving the situation as it now is with the keeper in charge of the light, has also been received. Since it now appears that full information has been made available as to the views of the various persons interested, this Service is in a position to reach a decision in the matter.

Call Structure Unattractive

Opposition to the proposed dismantling of the present structure at the end of the breakwater has been voiced on various grounds, first that of sentimental attachment to this old structure, so long identified with the harbor, which could be well understood if the structure on this breakwater were of a type such as could be considered an esthetic asset. It will, no doubt, be readily admitted, however, that the structure is in itself unattractive.

A further reason advanced for opposing the change was certain feared deficiencies in aids to navigation which would result. It is believed that these fears have been shown to be without foundation as the light now proposed will be of higher candlepower and of fully adequate focal height, and certain other changes proposed in connection with the project would aid rather than detract from the general effectiveness of aids to navigation in the locality. The first committee which conferred with the Superintendent at Chelsea seemed to be convinced on this point.

[1-2 lines missing here]

Moreover there is a material saving in the attendance required in the case of electrically operated aids controlled from a shore point. The saving is conservatively estimated by the Superintendent at \$1100 per annum, or sufficient to pay for the cost of the improvement in the course of five years. Also your understanding as to the necessity of maintaining the walkway in connection with the electrically operated aids is incorrect, since such visits as are necessary in that connection can be readily made by small boat. It is understood, however, that the walkway is in such condition that it probably would stand with nominal repairs for some years during which its use in visiting the aid on occasion would, of course, be a convenience.

House Is Not Modern

While it is the practice of this Service to keep its structures in good condition so far as possible within the limit of funds available, and it is understandable that the present structure might be considered by some standards to be in good condition, it is a fact that it is some 110 years old; that it is not modern, being unequipped with plumbing facilities, without electric lights and subject to fire hazards. Its continued maintenance by the Service would necessarily in accordance with the trend of the time, involve expenditure for modernization and improvements, which under the circumstances are not felt to be warranted.

There was some suggestion in the first discussions of this matter with representatives of the community that the citizens themselves might wish to bear the expense of continuing the maintenance of the structure to avoid its being dismantled, but the subsequent communications have contained no assurances on that point.

While it has no direct bearing on this particular matter, it should perhaps be stated for a better understanding of the position of the Light-house Service that the number of aids to navigation which are maintained is continually being increased to meet demands on the part of navigators which the Service considers reasonable and just. Many of these demands come from operators of small craft, such as are now probably the principal users of the aids in Edgartown Harbor. Altogether more than 28,000 aids to navigation are maintained at the present time as compared to some 18,000 ten years ago. To meet these demands without unwarranted increases in the appropriations required for operating the Service, it is necessary that the Light-house Service introduce economies of operation wherever it is practicable to do so and at the same time maintain the desired standard of effectiveness in the aids from the mariners' standpoint. This has led to many situations somewhat similar to that existing at Edgartown, where the maintenance of old structures necessary to retain in connection with an attended station

could be readily eliminated by the change of aids to automatic, in nearly all cases with resulting benefit to the mariner through the more efficient aids which it has been possible to substitute. This process of improvement and economy has been continuous over many years as funds have become available from time to time for the capital investment required in effecting the improvements, which investment has been returned many times in the form of operating economies. The attitude of the public in general in such cases has been quite sympathetic to the accomplishment of real economies in this manner, where same could be realized without detriment to navigation, and I am pleased to note from your letter that the local interests at Edgartown are similarly not indifferent to this practical aspect of the matter. The reasons motivating the proposed changes in this instance have been gone into somewhat at length in the hope that a better understanding of all that is involved will serve to remove any apprehensions existing relative to this particular project, and for the reasons herein stated, this Service has reached the conclusion that it would not be justified in continuing the existing status when both improvement and economy is readily possible and the funds are at hand for executing the project.

Considered Entirely Unsited

Consideration could be given, as has been suggested, to the accomplishment of the improvements in aids and at the same time retaining the present structure, which in that case would be unoccupied as a residence, all normal controls being exercised from shore, and this has been done in some similar cases where the structure was of a type better suited to maintenance as an unattended aid and where funds were not available for erecting a new structure. In most such cases the continuance of the original structure has been only temporary until such time as a structure suitable for unattended operation could be erected. The structure at Edgartown is considered to be entirely unsited to unattended maintenance and if so maintained would not only be a source of added yearly expense for upkeep, but would be open to depreciations usually experienced where such structures are retained near settled communities under these conditions. To continue the maintenance of same could be only temporary in any case and would prevent the full realization of economies possible from the complete execution of the project as planned. Accordingly this Service has concluded that it is decidedly preferable to remove the existing structure at the present time and to replace it with the structural steel tower proposed.

As previously stated, this Service is sympathetic with the expressed desires of local residents in such cases that the principal structure marking the entrance to the harbor be such as

to constitute an asset to the general appearance of the harbor and surroundings so far as practicable, and since a structural steel tower of the type proposed in this instance can be readily and cheaply moved from place to place, would be pleased to give consideration at some later date to the substitution for it of a structure which will be of a somewhat more attractive nature from the architectural standpoint, and at the same time reasonably economical in first cost and suited to non-attended maintenance. It sometimes occurs that through changes in aids necessitated by various improvements, such structures become surplus, and it is possible that in this way a more attractive structure might become available for use at this point, which possibility will receive consideration. The time limit which has been placed for the obligation of funds allotted from the Public-Works Administration, and the limitation of funds available under the project, have made it necessary to utilize the standard design of tower already available in this instance, rather than the development of a special design which might have been desirable.

This office appreciates the interest manifested in these aids and the cooperation of yourself and others in obtaining and presenting so fully the views of local interests, to which this office has endeavored to give the fullest consideration consistent with the other considerations herein noted.

H. D. King,
Commissioner

ENGINEER COMING

Lighthouse Service Representative to Confer

Chief Engineer Tinkham of the U. S. Lighthouse Service is expected at Edgartown this morning for further study of the Edgartown Harbor Light project. Mr. Tinkham's visit comes as a result of representations made to H. D. King, commissioner of lighthouses, following his decision made known early this week to proceed with razing of the hundred year old light building.

Commissioner King wired interested individuals in Edgartown on Wednesday that he had directed Mr. Tinkham to proceed to Edgartown for further investigation.

There were no other developments in the lighthouse situation. Telegrams of protest were sent to Washington by Winthrop B. Norton, chairman of the Edgartown board of selectmen, the Vineyard Gazette and others. Congressman Charles L. Gifford, who has been keeping in close touch with the matter and endeavoring to aid Island interests, was again in communication with Washington.

Sketch of Proposed New Light Received

Watercolor Shows How Edgartown Harbor Should Look With New Tower—New Bids Asked

A watercolor sketch of the proposed new Edgartown Harbor Light was received yesterday by Winthrop B. Norton, chairman of the Edgartown board of selectmen, from Harold D. King, commissioner of lighthouses, Washington. The sketch shows the appearance of the new structure as it will look when the tower is placed on the stone foundation where the old lighthouse now is.

The picture follows the agreement reached at Edgartown recently, with a tower resembling the East Chop Light, painted white, and mounted on a masonry base atop the existing stone foundation.

Bidders on the first set of specifications, providing for a skeleton steel tower, have been notified that new bids will be called for. It is understood that the low figure on the first plan was K. T. Galley & Co. of Edgartown, this firm bidding about \$700. The next bid was that of Frank L. Norton & Son, about a thousand dollars, and other bids ranged up to \$3,900.

There continues to be considerable discussion of the future of the lighthouse bridge. Many residents and summer residents have expressed a fear lest the bridge be closed to the general public, even though some way may be found of obtaining its preservation. In order to assure the rights of the public, many have expressed the wish that the town itself take title.

Compromise Verdict About Lighthouse

Harbor Building Doomed—But
Lighthouse Similar to East
Chop's Will Be Substituted
for Skeleton Tower

A real lighthouse, not a skeleton tower of galvanized steel, will replace the historic Edgartown Harbor Light this fall. The passing of the present structure will take place as scheduled, but a new tower will be erected, similar to that at East Chop. It will be painted white, and the light itself will be red and of greatly increased candlepower.

Agreement upon this plan was reached at a conference between Ralph R. Tinkham, chief engineer of the U. S. Lighthouse Service, Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of the second district of the Lighthouse Service, and a group of Edgartown representatives. The meeting took place at the selectmen's rooms on Friday afternoon.

The commissioner of lighthouses, Harold D. King, had previously announced that the present structure at Edgartown would be razed, and a skeleton tower put in its place. This decision followed prolonged agitation to obtain preservation of the old Edgartown Harbor Light, or a better type of tower in its place. Despite the fact that a final decision had been announced, Mr. King was impressed by the continued protests from Edgartown. He directed the chief engineer to proceed from Washington to the Island for the express purpose of further study to see how the views of the local interests could be met.

Present at the Meeting

Present at the meeting with Mr. Tinkham and Captain Eaton were Winthrop B. Norton, chairman of the Edgartown board of selectmen, Robert W. Watson, A. Loring Swasey, ex-Commodore Alexander M. Orr, Andrew C. Littlefield, Marshall Shepard, Benjamin W. Lumsden, George Cochran, and Henry B. Hough.

The entire situation was reviewed by Mr. Tinkham, who said that there was no wish by the government to rush the matter through without considering the views of Edgartown residents. The plan for changing the lighthouse, he said, had been made some years ago. It came up now through the allotment of PWA funds, and the presidential mandate that

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Compromise Verdict About Lighthouse

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the allotment be applied specifically before Aug. 15.

In view of the historical and sentimental associations and the strong feeling at Edgartown in favor of preservation of the old lighthouse, Mr. Tinkham said that Commissioner King was willing to defer the razing of the structure for a year. Meantime the proposed skeleton tower would be erected beside the present building, at the place where the bell tower now is. During the year of grace, the town would have an opportunity to acquire the old lighthouse if it so desired. Mr. Tinkham said that it was probable that the lighthouse could be transferred to the town by act of Congress without cost.

The Edgartown spokesmen, however, urged the desirability of retaining the present Harbor Light unchanged in any respect. To all arguments that this be done, Mr. Tinkham replied that the Lighthouse Service regarded it as essential that the change to an automatic light be carried out. In answer to questions, he said that there were two reasons, economy and efficiency. The change to an automatic light will, he said, save around \$1,200 a year.

Mr. Tinkham left no doubt that the decision to install an automatic light could not be altered. In reply to questions, also, he and Captain Eaton said that there was no possibility of adopting any plan of using the present lighthouse and placing the new light inside. The obstacles to this course were named as the structural unsuitability of the present building, the fact that the government would have nothing to do with the maintenance of the present building, and the fact that the government would consider any expenditure for the necessary adaptation of the present structure as a waste of funds.

of the town and the yacht club, and the resulting decision of Congress and the War Department to improve the harbor by the dredging of the shoals for the purpose of proper accommodation of the constantly increasing fleet which comes here, it seems illogical that the Department of Commerce should propose to take steps which will result in making navigation into the harbor more difficult at night and under conditions of fog. Even if it should be proposed to substitute a bell buoy for the lighthouse signal, as this buoy will be in the prevailing winds off a lee shore, it frequently might not be as effective as the automatic bell on the present light structure."

F. Vernon Foster, speaking as a member of the Edgartown Yacht Club and a member of the summer colony prominent in boating and yachting circles, said, "The yachtsmen need the lighthouse. Yachting is certainly an industry and an important one, and nothing should be done which will tend to make yachting here less safe. Edgartown is destined to be one of the great yachting centers of this coast. Moreover, the present light is a part of Edgartown. The historic value is important."

Would Lessen Man's Chances

Capt. Antone K. Silva said, "To lower the height of the light will be to lessen a man's chances to get a bearing when he comes in. It means he must get that much closer in order to make out the channel. That isn't forelaying against someone coming in at night. The light tower should be higher rather than lower."

Capt. St. Clair Brown, who as a member of the Edgartown Fishermen's Association was active in obtaining the harbor dredging, expressed great concern over the proposed change in the light. He said that lowering the height of the tower would cause the light to be confused with the electric lights in the town. A bell buoy, he said, would be an inadequate substitute, since in a southeast wind or a calm it would not be heard.

C. Stuart Avery, speaking as a business man of Edgartown, said that the change would be exceedingly detrimental to the town as a whole. He cited the importance of the harbor in the development of the town, and said he did not doubt that the changes would impede the use of the harbor.

At the Edgartown Yacht Club it was pointed out that the big schooner yacht Manana, sailed this summer by the Brainerds, went to Nantucket recently and was shut in by thick fog on her return. She found her way into the harbor by relying on the fog bell at the Harbor Light.

As another recent instance of the importance of the fog bell, the experience of Ralph D. Osborne in his eighteen footer was cited. Mr. Osborne was sailing on one of the days when the fog shut down, and depended on the bell to get into the harbor.

Percy D. West, Edgartown fisherman, said he considered the maintenance of the fog signal of the greatest importance to those using the harbor. He said the lowering of the light tower would also be a grave matter, adding that the light should be higher rather than lower.

Andrew C. Littlefield who, as manager of the Harbor View Hotel, represents the recreational industry of Ed-

gartown [declared that Coast Guard's]

proposed change would destroy one of the picturesque features of the harbor, and would prove a great detriment to the view all along the waterfront. It would be injurious to us. Moreover what would be put in the place of the present light would not be as good as what we now have. There would be a great loss to the town."

Charles A. Welch of Chappaquiddick, whose craft have used the harbor continually for a period of years said, "They might as well have no light at all as have one shorter than the present one."

Dr. Henry A. Whitmarsh, a summer resident of Starbuck's Neck, and a yachtsman, said, "I should miss the light very much, and should regret an

[attempt to remove or alter it.]

Both Possibilities Closed

These two possibilities, either desired by the Edgartown interests in preference to any other plans, were definitely closed.

There was extensive discussion of the alternative of leaving the present building and of putting the steel tower alongside, but the combination of the two aroused no enthusiasm. It was pointed out that the old building would have ceased to be a lighthouse, and the combination might be something of a hodgepodge. It was questioned whether even with this course the historic and sentimental associations of the old light would not have been substantially lost.

It was a suggestion by Captain Eaton which paved the way for agreement. He said that there was available a lighthouse tower similar to that at East Chop which could be moved to Edgartown. This tower would not be so high by six or eight feet as the present structure, but because of the increased candlepower the light would be visible at a greater distance.

The provision of a real lighthouse tower rather than a skeleton, and assurances that it would be painted white and placed to the best advantage possible with regard to the appearance of the harborfront, appealed to the group as the best solution of the problem. This is the plan which will, therefore, be carried out.

In the matter of the lighthouse bridge, it was made clear that the government will not longer maintain this walk. However, the bridge is now in good repair and can probably be kept up without large maintenance costs. The Lighthouse Service will cut off the outer end, severing all connection with the lighthouse, and leaving the bridge as a long pier.

It will now rest with the owners of piers which jut from the bridge to join in some plan of maintenance. It was suggested at Friday's meeting that the title to the bridge might be taken over by some existing organization in the town, perhaps by the Edgartown Associates. The federal government holds a deed to the property, and it will be necessary for this deed to be passed to some other holder. If a transfer of ownership can be arranged, the annual costs of maintenance may be met by the pier owners through rentals or assessments.

Captain Eaton gave it as his opinion that the bridge will last ten years. But with maintenance, those who have inspected the structure believe that it can be kept up indefinitely for a small yearly expenditure.



Gazette's coverage of damage to the Edgartown Light in the aftermath of the 1938 Hurricane
Vineyard Gazette, September 23, 1938, p. 5

The storm inflicted considerable damage on the lighthouse itself. The outer corner of the stone base of the structure, on the harbor side, was badly undermined, some of the big rock being displaced. When the waterfront awoke yesterday the shed at the side of the lighthouse was hanging over this undermined corner.

Captain Vidler, all packed and prepared to move from Edgartown to his new station at Nauset, had stored the packing cases with his household goods in this shed. When the foundation began to go out from under it in the storm, he had to move out all the cases single handed, handling by himself boxes which two or three men had placed in the shed. If it had not been for the removal of this weight, the shed would have gone over the side.

The lighthouse bridge, formerly almost a straight line, now has one bend in it. One of the boats striking the bridge put in a curve.

The water at the light was up to the threshold of the door, the platform being awash. Mrs. Vidler spent the night at the Lovell house. Bob Vidler spent the night aboard the Roamer, helping her to ride out the storm.

Among the requests broadcast by radio Wednesday night was one from Barbara Vidler in Boston asking her father to get in touch with her. The Island was cut off from all communication, and alarmist reports were in circulation about conditions here.

Bids Are Submitted for Demolishing Harbor Light

Bids were submitted Tuesday for the demolition of the Edgartown Harbor Light and the erection of the new tower which is to take its place. The tower is to be brought here from Ipswich.

This is the first step toward carrying out the revised plans for the Light, following the controversy of last summer. At that time the lighthouse service agreed to change its project of erecting a skeleton tower, and to put up a real lighthouse instead.

Capt. Fred Vidler, keeper at Edgartown, has been packed and ready to move for many weeks. He is to be transferred to Nauset.

Contract Is Awarded to Raze Lighthouse

The contract for razing the present Edgartown Harbor Light and erecting in its place a tower which will be unattended, has been awarded to K. T. Galley & Co. of Edgartown. Notice of the award was sent to this firm this week by Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of the lighthouse service for this district. Approval of the award at Washington is necessary before work begins.

The new tower is to be brought here from Ipswich. It is understood that the work of taking down the structure for removal here should have been started last week. Agreement on this type of lighthouse for Edgartown followed an extended controversy last summer, and widespread opposition to the plan of a skeleton steel tower.

K. T. Galley & Co. also has the contract for work at the Gay Head Light. This consists largely of porch and roof repairs. An earlier project for installing plumbing in the keeper's house was dropped. Mr. Galley said yesterday that work at Gay Head would begin at once.

What will become of the historic lighthouse building at Edgartown is still a question. Mr. Galley said that he has no definite plan as yet for its disposition. Under the terms of the contract the building will belong to the firm which takes it away. Most visitors to the light have commented on the sturdy construction of the house, used as a dwelling by the light keepers, and surmounted by the lantern.

It would be feasible to preserve the house by reerecting it on some site ashore, and this might satisfy some of the sentimental interest which has been expressed in saving the building. Otherwise it will be demolished and its timbers pass into some future construction on the Island.

Knell Is Sounded

Keeper Withdrawn, Edgartown Harbor Light Awaits Demolition

The knell of the Edgartown Light was sounded on Monday, with the departure for their new station of Capt. and Mrs. Fred S. Vidler, who, with their household belongings, boarded the Lighthouse Tender Arbutus, pulling out the next morning. During the short stay of sentence for the lighthouse, until the work of demolition of this harbor landmark which the Gazette and many other advocates sought so hard to save last summer, begins, it will be in charge of Victor Danburg.

Captain and Mrs. Vidler received short notice, or it might be better to say, no notice at all of the date they were to be transferred. When Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of this district of the Lighthouse Service, was in the harbor the week before in the Anemone, he said that no definite date had yet been set for their departure. But the Arbutus arrived and with it the word that the Vidlers were on the way. As they had been packed and ready for many weeks, after the decision in the losing fight to save the light had been announced last summer, the moving job was not so difficult as it might have been otherwise.

Vidlers Now at Nauset

With their son Robert, Captain and Mrs. Vidler are now established at their new station, the Nauset Beach Light Station in North Eastham, not far from Orleans, where they hope their Vineyard friends will look in on them. They had been in Edgartown since Aug. 30, 1935, coming here from Melrose. Captain Vidler was connected with the Chelsea Depot for a year before his assignment here. For twenty years before that he was employed in the Department of Agriculture.

Miss Barbara Vidler, who has been in Boston recently, due to the uncertainty in the plans for their transfer, will join her family on the Cape. The family have been popular in Edgartown. Mrs. Vidler, who was associated with Mrs. Hoxie's Shop for the past two summers, was prominent in affairs of the Federated Church. Barbara was graduated from Edgartown High last year. She was drum major of the Edgartown Boys' Club Drum and Bugle Corps, and her exhibitions of plain and fancy baton twirling were popular features of many entertainments.

Lighthouse Demolition Will Begin on Monday

Kenneth T. Galley of K. T. Galley & Co. received authorization Wednesday to proceed with the work at the Edgartown Harbor Light. He said that operations would start Monday. The lighthouse service will place a lighted buoy temporarily, while the old light is being taken down, but this may not be done for some time. The present light will not be disturbed until the wrecking operations are well along.

Mr. Galley said that no definite plan has been completed for the future of the lighthouse dwelling, although he hopes that it will be possible to reconstruct the house somewhere ashore.

Lighthouse Impression

Visitor Gives Attractive Portrait of Old Structure and Its Residents

The smiling faces of the old couple, wheezing by in the ancient Ford, seemed to say: "Yes, we like to travel slowly, too. You don't miss anything that way."

Cycling along the narrow strip of land heading south from Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard, I had the road practically to myself this late September day. The houses, standing in a row and facing the sea wall, had all been shuttered and boarded up.

The summer bustle had subsided. The fading of the crickets, the swash of the surf, the screams of the gulls were the only sounds to interrupt the silence along this deserted road. I stopped periodically to fill my pockets with seashells. Except for the absence of sloop, this flat seascape in white, buff, green and blue resembled Romney Marsh on the English Channel; although there was an unexplored beauty here, which the fragrant sea breezes and brilliant sunshine enhanced. Sky imitated ocean—the solitary white cloud in the west was an identical twin to the whitecaps below. Hung between sea and sky was a white steamer bound for Nantucket, hemstitching the horizon with its smokestacks.

In Edgartown the last roses were giving way to the autumnal blooms—a parade of mallow, buddleia and clusters of hydrangea. The narrow streets were threaded with shoppers, the harbor with tanned and important-looking men in yachting caps. On the trawlers, anchored along the wharf, fishermen were clearing the decks. Large, shaggy nets hung drying from the masts, and the sight of pulpits and harpoons made me recollect that this town had been one of the largest whaling ports in the 1830's. Today fishermen bring in swordfish instead.

Flanked by Fine Houses

I pedaled along the streets flanked by fine old white houses until I reached the lighthouse, a modest little cottage with a squat tower, which stood at the end of a long, narrow runway. The keeper, in rubber waders, was cruffing up things. He and his wife were being transferred to North Eastham on the Cape; the lighthouse was to be torn down and the tower from Ipswich moved in its place. The new light would be a red one.

"What's the matter with the present light?" I asked.

"Too feeble," replied the keeper. "It's visible for twelve miles, to be sure, but it's too close in shore; Fishermen and yachtsmen coming in at night can't tell it apart from the town lights. Luckily the harbor's safe enough for a blind man to land in." He jerked a knobby thumb up the stairs. "I'll show you the light, if you like."

But first he demonstrated the efficacy of the fog-signal bell. However feeble the light might be, there was certainly nothing the matter with that fog-signal. Almost blasted me off my feet when he struck it.

"Weighs a thousand pounds. When it's set, it strikes every fifteen seconds," he declared.

I followed him up narrow corkscrew steps into the tower, where the sash curtains were drawn. The much maligned light, which I was told drank up a quart of kerosene every night, looked innocuous enough with its little gas mantle—like the old fashioned parlor lamp. But the optical lens which encased it was a magnificent object to behold. French glass, the keeper said. He nodded as I suggested that the curtains were kept drawn because, since the lens acted as a magnifying glass, the sun might set fire to the lighthouse.

When he informed me that he was the eighth lighthouse keeper in Edgartown since 1872, I asked him who was going to be the ninth.

"An automatic switch," he said. "Both the light and the fog-horn will be worked from shore." He looked rather pensive; for he came from England where man power is still highly regarded.

"I suppose you are sorry to leave," I said.

Hate to Desert Neighbors

"I am. We dislike particularly to leave our neighbors alone over there on Chappaquiddick Island." He pointed to another lighthouse, standing on a bit of land the size of a pocket handkerchief. "That used to be a part of Chappaquiddick; but now it's been cut off, as you see. Everything has to be brought there by boat. When we go, the keeper and his wife will be sort of lonely. They depended on us for company. In the old days, that's where all the whaling captains came from. But now there are only two families living on Chappaquiddick. You see, it costs a dollar each time to cross over to Edgartown by ferry." As I edged myself carefully down

the winding stairs, I thanked him for his courtesy. He invited me to come and see his menagerie before I left.

In the living room, among boxes and trunks, was a makeshift aquarium in which a pair of baby turtles were blinking. I was going to make a pun about mock turtle soup when I saw that the container was an old soup tureen, and then noticed what an exquisite shape and shade of blue it was. Yes, he told me, an heirloom, three hundred years old. He had brought it over from England. He was a little disappointed at my diminishing interest in the turtles after that.

Again I started to leave.

"I'll bet you never saw a more handsome pair of cats than these," he said, coaxing me into the next room. On top of a steamer trunk, beside a canary in a cage, was a pair of gorgeous marmalade cats, dozing peacefully. "Puff and Muff, twin brothers. They never touch that bird," he added proudly.

The canary was twittering and hopping about in a most tantalizing way, but Puff and Muff merely opened one eye apiece, winked lazily, and returned to their slumbers.

"How did you do it?" I marveled.

"Pinched their ears, when they were kittens, each time they made a leap for the cage. Now they only get as far as lifting a paw, and they remember. And when they lift that paw, they're just applauding that canary. They like to see the bird enjoy itself."

"I don't suppose the gulls out there enjoy any such protective society as that?"

Special Shell-Cracking Spot

No, the gulls had no such patronage. They had to take their own chances. When Puff and Muff go out searching for such titbits as the seabirds have overlooked, those gulls fill the air with raucous scoldings, although always at a respectful distance. They have their own private spot to crack their shells, at a point along the runway that is built up on both sides so the shells won't roll back into the water. And they always allow just enough leeway for the wind before dropping their quarry.

"Those gulls are a menace," said the lighthouse keeper, "littering up the road with broken shells. They've punctured many an automobile tire."

I asked him about the unopened shells along the road. Did the gulls wait for the cars to come along and crack them? He grinned as he turned

to answer his wife. She was calling him to lunch. She apologized for not inviting me to a bowl of scallop stew.

"What with being all packed up," she said, "and expecting that tender to come along any minute now, we're doing only light housekeeping."

(Clariissa Lorenz in the Christian Science Monitor.)

Repair Hurricane Damage to Foundation of Light

The foundation of the Edgartown Light, or what once was the site of the light and will be again when the new tower arrives, is being repaired by Turner and Breivoegel of Falmouth. Arriving last weekend they will be busy about a week, with a combination crane and shovel, restoring the great stones which the hurricane washed away, and the loss of which seriously weakened the foundation. The work of Kenneth T. Galley and Co., who had the contract to raze the old lighthouse and place the new one, now being refurbished at Chelsea, has been held up pending the repairs to the foundation.

Harbor Light Receives Coat of White Paint

The new Edgartown Harbor Light received its coat of white paint yesterday, and in the late afternoon was being generally admired. The tower stood out against the blue water and seemed to be the source of considerable pride and satisfaction, even in the bosoms of those who fought to the last for the preservation of the former lighthouse.

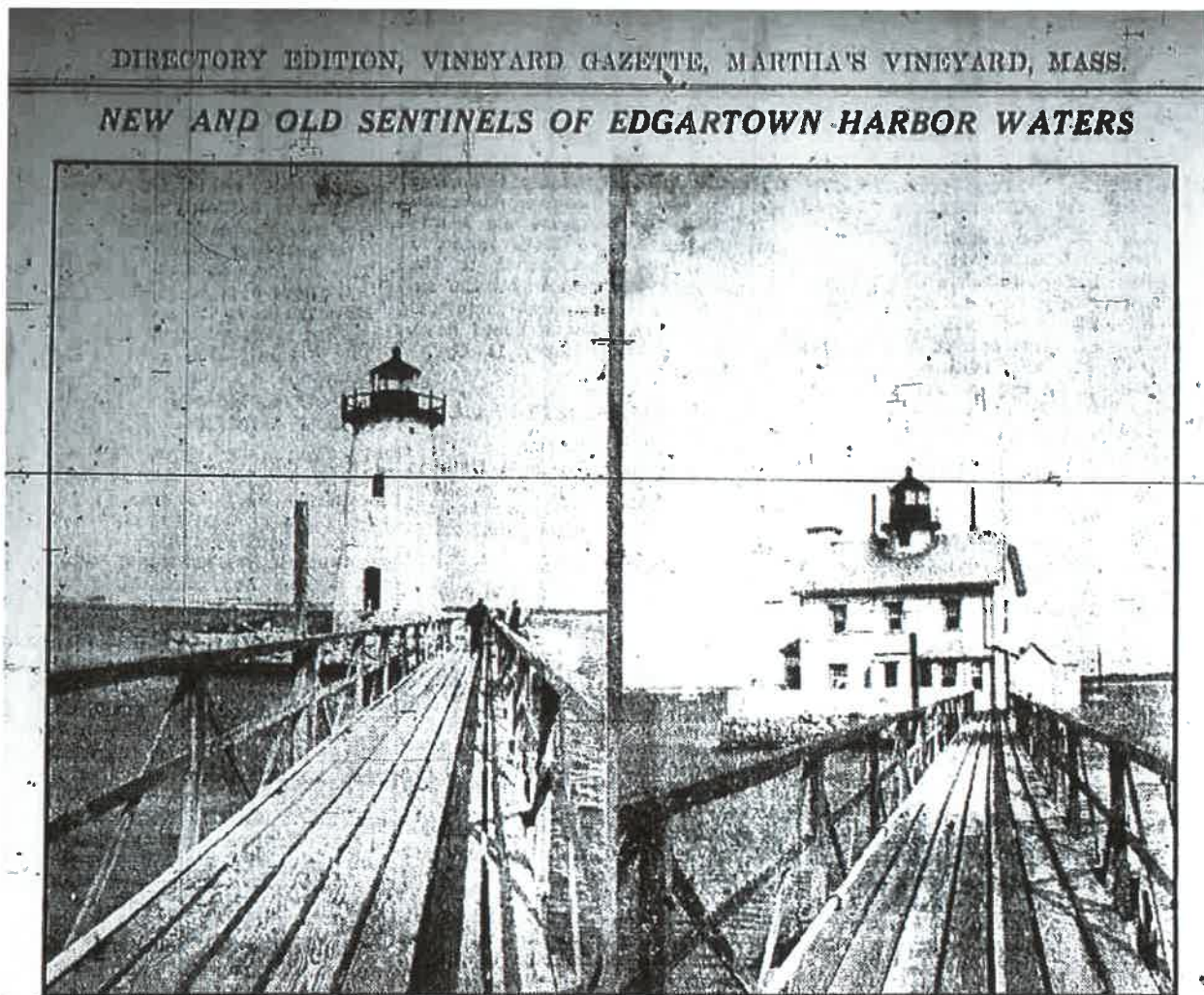
Axel Høglund was the subcontractor in charge of the painting.

CLOSED ALL DAY
The Vineyard Gazette office will be closed all day Tuesday, Memorial Day.

New Lighthouse Here, But Still in Pieces

Edgartown's new lighthouse, to replace the lamented harbor light scrapped by the government in spite of concerted protest by residents and summer residents, arrived last Thursday, aboard the lighthouse tender Lotus. It will be some days before the tower will take its place in the harbor scene, however, for the structure arrived in sections, and its erection must await the completion of the pouring and setting of the foundation, work which was under way when the tender steamed in without previous notice. The Lotus also brought the submarine cable and all other necessary equipment for the light.

Kenneth T. Galley, whose firm had the contract to tear down the old light house and erect the new tower, expects to begin work on it some time next week, after the foundation has had a chance to set.



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NEW AND OLD SENTINELS OF EDGARTOWN HARBOR WATERS

9 June 1939



out from it and even invade the car in their eagerness to get them.

Summarizing this analysis and attempting to be as fair as possible, I find that in ordinary practice:

Of the lobsters bought, approximately 10% die in the collecting process; 10% die from punching and liberation in unsuitable water; 40% ultimately die from inability to shed resulting from punching; and there is a possible 40% survive.

At the left the graceful white tower which formerly stood at Ipswich and which has replaced the old lighthouse and keeper's dwelling, torn down last fall after the government decreed that progress, in the way of an automatic light, must be accepted. The first plan, to replace the old house with a skeleton steel tower, was given up in deference to the wishes of the town.

Miss Luce's Wedding May 27 in Tallahassee

Saturday morning, May 27, at 11 o'clock, the wedding of Miss Eleanor Robinson Luce and Ralph E. Mott took place in the chapel of the Episcopal Student House, Ruge Hall, at the Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee, Fla. Rev. Mr. Alfriend performed the ceremony.

Automatic operation of the light is provided by an astronomical time switch to turn it on in the evening and out in the morning at the correct hours throughout the year.

The lantern has double lenses and double bulbs, likewise to provide against an emergency. Should one bulb fail, the second bulb automatically switches on.

The lantern has double lenses and double bulbs, likewise to provide against an emergency. Should one bulb fail, the second bulb automatically switches on.

The installation and hooking up of the light was not a simple job, since everything is made fast to the tower inside and there had to be a good deal of tapping of holes. Moreover, an auxiliary lighting plant is installed which will switch on automatically in case of the failure of the commercial lighting service. When the regular service is restored, the auxiliary automatically cuts out again.

The lantern has double lenses and double bulbs, likewise to provide against an emergency. Should one bulb fail, the second bulb automatically switches on.

Lantern in New Light House Is Installed

The new Edgartown Harbor Light was illuminated for the first time last night, brighter and more useful than the old light. An electrician had been at work completing the necessary installation of equipment, and the beacon now shines by electricity where whale oil and later kerosene kept a vigil over the waterfront for generations.

Victor Danberg of Edgartown has been named caretaker of the light. The light itself is automatic, but Mr. Danberg will turn on and off the fog bell as occasion requires.

16 June 1939

**Purest White, It Glistens in Setting Sun, Writer
Once Described the Edgartown Harbor Light**

The Edgartown Harbor Light, which the government purposes to raze and replace with a lower skeleton tower, was authorized by an act of Congress approved May 23, 1828. The sum of \$5,500 was appropriated, and the light was built about a quarter of a mile from the shore at the harbor entrance. For more than a year after the light was built, the only means of communication with the shore was by boat.

The first bridge or walk from the light to the shore cost about \$7,000. A visitor to Edgartown about 1835, Rev. Samuel Adams Devens, described the walk in a passage which has been quoted many times. It shows the importance the bridge had already assumed in the life of the town.

"The length of the village is the common promenade," Mr. Devens wrote. "A favorite resort is the breakwater, erected by the general government at an expense of \$7,000. It is built very strong of plank and timber, and runs an eighth of a mile into the Bay. It is wider than the foot walks of our bridges, and being railed in, much resembles them. At its extremity is a small dwelling and lighthouse, combined. It is of the purest white and glistens beautifully in the clear beams of the setting sun. The view, from this point, of the lively happy village reposing so quietly along the shore, and of the calm blue Bay outspread on either side, is uncommonly pleasing. The termination of an afternoon's ramble generally found me fastened to this attractive spot."

Present Bridge Built in 1847

Some pictures of the original bridge are still preserved. In 1847 the present structure was substituted, following a somewhat different course. The present stone breakwater was placed under the new structure, to prevent the damage by storms and ice, which had led to replacement of the first bridge.

When the new walk was completed, the Gazette reported as follows:

"Our New Bridge: Since the completion of this important work, we have had the pleasure of passing over it, and examining the manner of its construction—yet we do not intend to give any particular description of its design, or show wherein we think it surpasses most bridges of the kind which from time to time have come under our observation; but deem it an act of justice, as public Journalist, to say that it has been built in a meth-

odical and substantial manner throughout, and that the structure is composed of materials of great durability and strength.

"The stone wall on the northeast side particularly attracted our attention, not only as being faithfully built, but so laid as to break the force of the heaviest sea before it passes under or over the bridge, and thereby rendering the work perfectly secure from its fury.

Ira Darrow Was Contractor

"The government were fortunate in securing the services of Ira Darrow, Esq., the enterprising contractor, who always performs his work well, but who, in this instance, was determined to fulfill to the very letter the contract, even though he himself were a sufferer thereby. Accordingly he has spared neither time nor expense to make the bridge all that it should be; and his labors are worthy the emulation of all who would receive the appellation of 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

"In connection with this subject, we are sorry to say that the amount of money appropriated by the government was insufficient to complete the work; and that, consequently, a considerable portion of that part nearest the shore has not been rebuilt or contracted for. An appropriation, it seems to us, should be immediately made, and the work of rebuilding the remainder commenced."

The reconstruction was eventually completed, and the bridge became more and more a place for promenade and pleasure. A generation ago James Gordon Bennett was a frequent summer visitor to Edgartown, and it was one of his favorite diversions to walk the lighthouse bridge and flash a light into the faces of romantic young couples strolling there.

The lighthouse, often slated for modernization, has never been brought up to date. However, it has served well as a guide to all craft using Edgartown harbor, from the whaleships of the past century to the Island steamers, fishermen, yachts and other vessels of more recent years. The light is a kerosene lantern.

Keepers of the light in recent years have been Capt. Joseph A. Barrus, who served eleven years, retiring in 1930; Capt. Henry Lyman Thomas, and Capt. Fred Vidler, the present keeper.

Plan More Powerful Light, Higher Tower

Captain Eaton of Lighthouse Service Divulges Details, But Town Is to Continue Efforts to Preserve Present Building

Flying to Chelsea in Arthur M. Anderson's plane on Saturday, Commodore Walter Barnum of the Edgartown Yacht Club, Rep. Joseph A. Sylvia, and Capt. Antone K. Silva of Edgartown obtained a further explanation of the government's plans for replacement of the Edgartown Harbor Light. The three members of an informal committee visited Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of the second district of the lighthouse service.

After returning here, Commodore Barnum said that in the light of the talk with Captain Eaton it was impossible to quarrel with the plans from a navigational standpoint. Captain Eaton divulged for the first time some of the details of the proposed change.

The government, he said, is now prepared to place in the new tower, replacing the present structure, a red light several times more powerful than the present light. The increase in candlepower will be at least three or four times. This light will not be completely unattended. Some Edgartown man will be employed to supervise it and operate a switch at the shore end of the bridge.

52 Feet Above Water

The new light will be approximately fifty-two feet above the water. The tower itself will be 40 feet, a slab under the tower will be about 3 feet thick, the foundation will account for 8 feet, and the light itself about 18 inches.

Although the present fog bell is to be discontinued, a new automatic electric bell will be placed in the new tower, Captain Eaton said. This bell will operate when there is a certain percentage of moisture in the air.

Finally, Captain Eaton insisted, the present bridge will be maintained in future as in the past. He said there was no idea on the part of the government of letting the bridge go. He cited the fact that two or three individuals have perpetual rights in the bridge, and indicated that he believed this would guarantee future maintenance. Reliance was also placed in the

(Please turn to Page Three)

Plan More Powerful Light, Higher Tower

(Continued from Page One)

belief that the bridge would be desirable, if not necessary, in giving access to the new tower.

To guard against failures of the commercial current supply, by which the new light will be served, there will be an auxiliary vapor light. This substitute is supposed to come on when the regular current fails.

As an aid to yachtsmen, Captain Eaton said, the lighthouse service is willing to put a lighted bell buoy in place of the bush buoy from May 1 to Oct. 1. This step would take cognizance of the increased importance of yachting at Edgartown.

The one question remaining unresolved, and upon which no satisfaction could be promised, was that of the destruction of the present dwelling and the type of structure to take its place. The committee found that the possibilities are as follows:

First, if the government proceeds in its own way, the present house and light will be razed, and in their place will be erected a pre-fabricated galvanized steel tower, bolted together.

Would Have to Pay Difference

Second, if local interests are willing to pay the difference in cost, estimated at about \$1500, the government is ready to adopt some type of construction more satisfactory than the galvanized skeleton tower.

Third, under some circumstances it might be possible to persuade the government to install the new light in the present structure, although this is not regarded as entirely satisfactory by the lighthouse service. Should this be done, local interests would be required to assume the difference in annual cost of upkeep.

Fourth, under no circumstances would the government retain the present building and erect a new tower by its side. Captain Eaton said that this arrangement would interfere with the carrying of the sound of the fog bell, and would not be considered.

Fifth, it was assumed from Captain Eaton's comments that if the interests at Edgartown insisted strongly enough, the present light would be left exactly as it is now. But in this case, there would be no improvement in the light. This would be, therefore, a frank choice between scenic and historical desirability, and the practical advantages for navigation.

Commodore Barnum said, and Captain Silva concurred, that Edgartown harbor is now badly lighted. The present Harbor Light does mix in with the Tower Hill lights at certain times, and leaves much to be desired. Thus the committee felt the choice between

scenery and history on one hand, and practical navigation on the other, was not evenly balanced.

Meantime the feeling engendered in Edgartown by announcement of the plan to raze the present Harbor Light did not diminish over the weekend. All year and summer residents alike raised objections to the galvanized skeleton tower, and to the complete destruction of the present building which has stood for many generations. It was indicated that efforts would be continued to work out some compromise reasonably satisfactory to those of all viewpoints.

Congressman Charles L. Gifford notified the Gazette that in response to messages and telegrams he had taken prompt action, communicating vigorously with the Bureau of Lighthouses, Harold D. King, commissioner, asking that the matter be delayed until all interests had a chance to be heard. It was indicated that similar messages had been sent to Washington by many others.

Mrs. Price Post telegraphed to Senator David I. Walsh and Burton F. White Jr. wired the Gazette to register a protest.

Information from Washington

Before the conference with captain Eaton, a number of steps were taken, and some information was obtained from Washington.

Arthur M. Anderson, summer resident of Edgartown, arranged with a Washington attorney to visit the Department of Commerce and obtain the views of the lighthouse service. The information obtained was as follows:

The proposed work at Edgartown is the result of a PWA allotment, and approval of this project. If a steel tower was objectionable, the department said, it would be willing to consider one of three standard types of concrete construction. The town, however, would be asked to bear the difference in cost, and amount running from \$1500 to about \$2300, depending on the type selected. The commissioner of lighthouses, H. D. King, expressed the opinion that in the long run this would be the most satisfactory solution.

If this should not be acceptable to Edgartown interests, the department was willing to consider sympathetically an offer by the town to share the upkeep of the existing building, this cost to be \$1,500 annually, less the keeper's salary and incidentals. If this plan should be accepted by the town, the lighthouse service would preserve the present structures and install a new light in the existing lantern or in a new lantern to be placed on top of the lightkeeper's house.

In any case, it was made clear, the government intends to proceed with the installation of an automatic light at Edgartown.

Mr. King, it was also stated, prefers to raze the existing building and is opposed to erecting any new tower beside the existing structure. So far as is known, this solution had not been suggested here.

A meeting was held at the Edgartown Yacht Club at 10 Saturday morning, Commodore Walter Barnum presiding. Those present were Mr. Anderson, former Commodore Alexander M. Orr, R. W. Watson, Leonard Kebler, Winthrop B. Norton, chairman of the Edgartown selectmen, Rep. Joseph A. Sylvia, and Henry B. Hough.

In the words of all true Vineyarders, what we had last night was a tempest.

CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SAVE HISTORIC HARBOR LIGHT

Agitation to Prevent Its Destruction Is Strong—Government Delays Action

Efforts were being continued throughout this week to prevent destruction of the historic Harbor Light at Edgartown. While various groups and individuals organized their protests, word was received from Congressman Charles L. Gifford that the Bureau of Lighthouses planned to delay its action sufficiently to consider the views of all protestants. The first aim of all those interested in saving the present light structure was to obtain a delay of governmental action to permit of fuller consideration.

Replies were also received in Edgartown in response to messages which had been sent to Senator David I. Walsh and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Senator Walsh wrote to Mrs. Bertha S. Beetle, Edgartown librarian, who had stressed the historical importance of the light as a landmark of the town, that he would be interested in trying to prevent its destruction.

Members of the Dukes County Historical Society and of the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club expressed their interest in saving the light, or in reaching some compromise with the government whereby the present structure would not be razed to make way for a skeleton tower. Members of the Edgartown Yacht Club continued to be interested, notwithstanding the fact that objections to the change from the navigational standpoint had been eliminated in a conference with Capt. George E. Eaton, superintendent of this district of the lighthouse service.

Petitions Widely Circulated

Petitions which had been widely circulated in the town were forwarded this week to H. D. King, commissioner of lighthouses, at Washington.

Rep. Joseph A. Sylvia, who accompanied Commodore Walter Barnum and Capt. A. K. Silva to Chelsea on Saturday for a conference with Captain Eaton, said that he would be glad to see Captain Eaton again when matters had developed to the proper point.

As a result of the petitions and pro-

tests, it was anticipated yesterday that the next step would be a definite opportunity for an exchange of views between the lighthouse bureau and the town interests.

The only offer the government has yet made which would lead to preservation of the present light would require local interests to assume the cost of maintenance of the building under the new arrangement with automatic light and fog signal. The hope of the protestants is that a plan can be worked out to utilize the present structure by adapting it to the new conditions, without requiring local contributions.

Can't Steer Far From This Topic, Try as You Will

"Lousy weather."

"Yes, business is rotten."

"What a wonderful place is the Vineyard."

"I shall come back next season and bring all my relatives."

"I've been coming here every summer for fifty years and never was disappointed."

"Lousy weather, isn't it?"

"Yep, business is rotten."

"The fish are biting everywhere."

"They caught forty big bass last night."

"The Blank hotel is all booked up for August."

"Yep, first time in eight years."

"There's no traffic on the roads."

"My sales to date are away ahead of last year."

"But isn't the weather lousy?"

"Yes, business is certainly punk."

"More cars on the Island than ever before."

"Traffic is the heaviest I have ever seen."

"Don't have time to eat or sleep!"

"I've been coming for twenty-some years, and I could tell the difference as soon as I got on the boat."

"Of course they're not spending; they haven't got it to spend."

"Can't hire a man anywhere to cut my lawn!"

"Sorry I'm late, but you know how it is in summer, everyone calling."

"Boat's late tonight; awful load of freight."

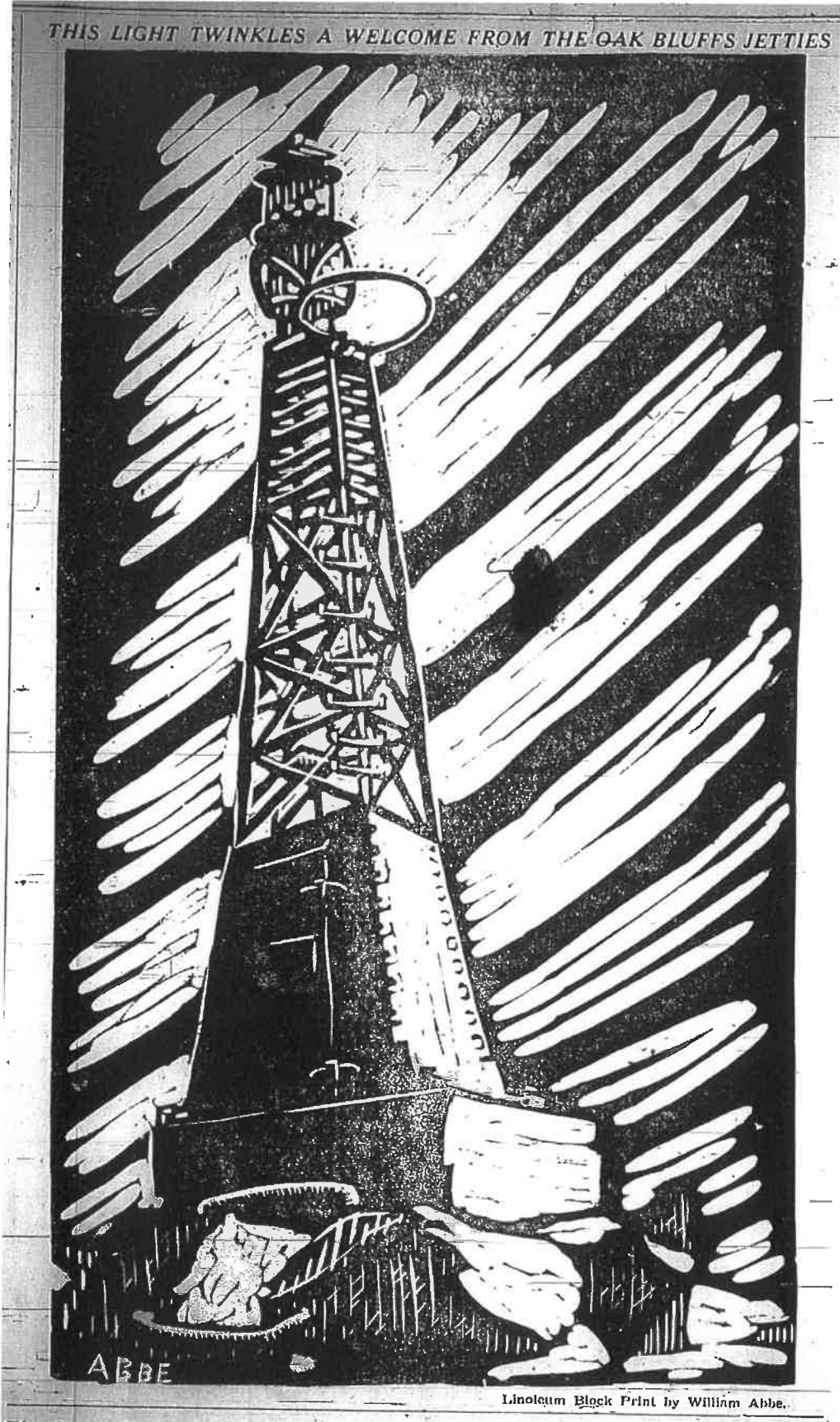
"The garages aren't doing a thing."

"I hope August will be better."

"Couldn't take all the cars Saturday."

"Yes, and business is rotten."

"Weather's lousy."



Agree to Keep Harbor Light - If Desired

Captain Eaton Says Department Will Bow to Edgartown's Preference—Must Petition to Prevent Destruction

The Edgartown Harbor Light will be left exactly as it is, with keeper and all, if the interests here will go on record in favor of that choice, Capt. George E. Eaton said last night. So far as his recommendations go, Captain Eaton declared, there are two alternatives. This is one. The other is the razing of the present light and the carrying out of the government's plan for a new skeleton tower.

The formulation of the Harbor Light issue in this way was the outcome of a conference between Captain Eaton, superintendent of the lighthouse district, and Winthrop B. Norton, chairman of the Edgartown board of selectmen, and Henry B. Hough. The conference was held aboard the lighthouse steamer Lotus at New Bedford.

Captain Eaton said that he wished to obtain a consensus of the local interests at once, since the whole matter should be settled by August 15. Accordingly, plans were made to get a record of local sentiment beginning this morning. Mr. Norton arranged for sheets to be available at the office of the selectmen from 2 to 5 each afternoon this week, starting today, and on Wednesday evening from 5 to 11.

Two Choices Available

All those interested in the lighthouse matter, one way or another, are asked to record themselves in favor of one of the two choices: the present light, with no change whatever; or the destruction of the present light and the new tower as planned by the government. The new tower would be a galvanized steel skeleton, with a light about seven feet higher and more powerful. Should the present light be retained, the keeper will be kept, too. The captain said he was particularly anxious to have the opinion of the real fishermen, as differentiated from the rocking chair variety.

Captain Eaton said last night that the question was not one of economy.

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Agree to Keep Harbor Light If Desired

(Continued from Page One)

He said the maintenance cost of the new station as planned would doubtless be more than the maintenance cost of the present lighthouse, including the salary of the keeper. The proposal for a change, he said, was based solely on improvement of the light for navigational purposes. It came about in this way, he went on. As superintendent of the district he submitted to Washington a list of projects based on a long range outlook, covering desirable improvements anticipated for the future. The project for the changes at Edgartown was included in the list, and it happened that this was one of the items chosen for immediate execution under the current allocation of funds.

This was how and why the matter was presented so suddenly. And since the present allotment of funds is for immediate work, the lighthouse matter must be decided at once.

It had been assumed on the Island that the whole matter was one of saving money, since no complaint as to the present light has been made, so far as can be ascertained, and there has been no earlier suggestion that the light be improved.

Captain Eaton discussed the possibility of adapting the present lighthouse to the plans for improvement. In the course of this discussion he indicated that the present building could be acquired by the town or other local interests, and a plan of improvement of the light carried out. But he said he would be no party to such a plan, and so far as his recommendations went the choice would be as stated before.

Captain Eaton made it clear that he has no use for the present building, which he referred to as a "rot infested box." He said he could not see any scenic or historical value in the structure, and so far as including it in a scheme of improvement, he thought this would be a waste of government money.

Careful with Federal Money

"I believe in spending the government's money as carefully as I would my own," he said.

The historic and scenic qualities of the light are the factors most important in the present protest at Edgartown. Word that the light building was to be razed occasioned a storm of protest from the town generally, and there have been unremitting efforts to obtain a reversal of the decision. The light itself was established a hundred years ago, and the present structures are old. They have been well maintained.

The conference with Captain Eaton at New Bedford was arranged by telephone and radio yesterday, following an exchange of telegrams and other messages with Harold D. King, commissioner of lighthouses at Washington. On receipt of the petition for retention of the old light, widely circulated at Edgartown last week, Commissioner King wired to the Gazette that following the conference between Captain Eaton and Commodore Walter Barnum of the Edgartown Yacht Club, together with Rep. Joseph A. Sylvia and Capt. Antone K. Silva, it was assumed that a mutually satisfactory understanding had been reached. In view of the nonconurrence indicated by the petition, Mr. King suggested another conference with Captain Eaton, and pending such new conference, if it should be arranged immediately, Mr. King said he would defer action on the acceptance of the bids which have been submitted for the change to a skeleton tower for a few days.

The conference was then arranged for last evening.

Meantime, through direct contact with Commissioner King at the Department of Commerce in Washington, Arthur M. Anderson, Edgartown summer resident who has been interested in seeing that the town should get a solution it really wants, had obtained some encouragement to believe that a compromise was possible. From the attitude of the commissioner it seemed likely that if some financial underwriting could be obtained, a combination of the old structure and the navigational improvements might be worked out.

Subject to Commissioner

Captain Eaton said last night, in stating what his own recommendations would be, that these were subject to the ruling of the commissioner. Inasmuch as a plan of compromise seemed to be possible providing the unwillingness of the department to utilize the present building could be overcome, it was still believed last night that such a solution might be reached.

Congressman Charles L. Gifford, continuing in close touch with the sit-

uation, wrote this week, "Certainly every effort should be made to preserve the historic landmark, and in consequence I am again myself writing to the Commissioner of Lighthouses, once more stressing this phase of the matter and expressing my hope that the wishes of the Vineyarders may be met in this respect."

A petition for preservation of the present structure was circulated this week by Mrs. Bertha S. Reelle of Edgartown and widely signed. Other efforts continued along this line.

In discussing the scenic and historic associations, Captain Eaton pointed out that the government had encountered similar considerations in other places. He said opposition to improvements at Gloucester had been carried on for several years, but that when changes were made they were found acceptable and no one would now wish to return to the former conditions.