

PRESERVATION NOTES

NEWSLETTER Vol. LVIII Fall 2024

GUIDING LIGHTS: SAVING LONG ISLAND'S LIGHTHOUSES



View of Montauk Point Lighthouse showing restoration and shorewall improvements. Photo by Tara Cubie.

The rocky ledge runs far into the sea, And on its outer point, some miles away, The Lighthouse lifts its massive masonry, A pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day. ~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Long Island is home to more than 25 lighthouses, many of which still stand and, in some cases, remain operational. These lighthouses, built primarily during the 19th century, were critical for maritime navigation as trade increased around Long Island due to its proximity to New York City and its location along coastal trade routes. The region's hazardous waters characterized by sandbars, strong tides, and shifting shoals—made these guiding lights necessary to prevent shipwrecks and ensure safe passage. Each lighthouse represents an important chapter in Long Island's maritime heritage.

The first lighthouse beacon in NewYork was lit at Montauk Lighthouse in November 1796, beginning an era of lighthouse construction that would extend across Long Island. Over 25 additional lighthouses were built from Orient Point to Coney Island, Brooklyn. These structures exhibit a range of architectural styles that reflect the evolution of lighthouse design. For instance, the octagonal granite and sandstone Montauk Lighthouse (1796) contrasts with the screw-pile design of Bug Light in Orient Harbor (1870, rebuilt 1990). Similarly, the cylindrical brick tower at Fire Island (1858) differs from the Beaux-Arts style of Huntington Harbor (1912)(See photographs next page).These variations reflect the changing functional and aesthetic demands of lighthouse construction over time.

Lighthouses are natural coastal landmarks, tying communities to the surrounding waters. Today, 15 lighthouses on Long Island are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, underscoring their historical significance.

In 1996, the National Park Service published the Historic Lighthouse Pres-

ervation Handbook, which provided guidance on maintaining these structures. The handbook emphasized the need for routine maintenance and detailed cost es-



Historic Lighthouse Preservation Handbook 1997



Cover of Historic Lighthouse Preservation Handbook. Courtesy of National Park Service.



Bug Light before Concrete Foundation added. Photo by Bob Allen, Courtesy East End Seaport Museum.



Fire Island Lighthouse. Courtesy of Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society.



Huntington Harbor Light. C. 1914. Courtesy of US Coast Guard.

timates for rehabilitation projects. Lighthouses, while designed to withstand harsh conditions, require ongoing care. Historically, lighthouse keepers performed daily maintenance and monitored the structures. In modern unmanned lighthouses, this critical maintenance role has been lost, leaving many lighthouses vulnerable to deterioration.

While lighthouses were once technological marvels, modern navigation systems like radar, sonar, and GPS have largely rendered them obsolete. Additionally, rising sea levels and coastal erosion, fueled by climate change, pose new challenges to preserving these structures.

The National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act (NHLPA) of 2000 amended the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, allowing the U.S. Coast Guard to transfer ownership of lighthouses to various organizations, including nonprofits, through the General Services Administration (GSA). Previously, ownership was restricted to government entities. The NHLPA has facilitated the preservation of many Long Island lighthouses by enabling local governments and nonprofits to take responsibility for their upkeep. However, preservation remains a financial challenge, particularly for lighthouses that are located offshore and do not accommodate visitors. Fundraising for these remote locations is difficult, relying heavily on grants and private donations.

The cases of Stepping Stone, Montauk, and Old Field Point lighthouses illustrate the varied challenges of lighthouse preservation on Long Island. While some, like Montauk, have benefited from substantial restoration projects and tourism, others, like Stepping Stone, face ongoing challenges due to deferred maintenance and financial constraints.

Preserving Long Island's lighthouses requires coordinated efforts between local communities, historical societies, and preservation organizations. These collaborations are crucial for ensuring the future of these landmarks, which serve as both historical artifacts and symbols of the region's maritime past.

With continued focus on restoration and preservation, Long Island's lighthouses can remain enduring reminders of our cultural heritage.

Montauk Point Lighthouse



Montauk Point Lighthouse. Photo by Tara Cubie.

Montauk Point Lighthouse, Long Island's oldest, was authorized by President George Washington in 1792 and completed in 1796. Positioned at the eastern tip of Long Island, it guided mariners through the treacherous waters where the Atlantic Ocean meets Long Island Sound.

In August 2023, a two-year, \$44 million shoreline fortification project was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, using a mix of federal and state funds. This effort stabilized the surrounding coastline with 120,000 tons of rock. Concurrently, the Montauk Historical Society completed a \$1.8 million restoration of the lighthouse itself, funded through grants and private donations. In December 2023, the Fresnel lens, manufactured in France in 1902, was reinstalled as part of a test project with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Montauk Lighthouse continues to attract approximately 100,000 visitors annually, benefiting from its status as a popular tourist destination.



1902 Fresnel Light. Courtesy Montauk Historical Society.

2024 National Register Nomination Old Field Point Light



Old Field Point Light. Photograph from National Register Nomination, Completed July 27, 2023.

Old Field Point Light in Setauket was added to the National Register of Historic Places, becoming the only Long Island structure to achieve this recognition in 2024 (at the time of publication).

The Old Field Point Lighthouse, near Port Jefferson Harbor, was originally constructed in 1824 to guide maritime traffic along Long Island Sound. The first lighthouse, featuring a 30-foot octagonal stone tower and a keeper's house, was replaced in 1869 by a larger Victorian-Gothic Revival structure. This new lighthouse, built with massive granite walls and a 28-foot octagonal tower, stood as a beacon for ships entering the harbor. Though deactivated in 1933, the light was reinstalled in



Old Field Point Light, view from above. Photograph from National Register Nomination, Completed July 27, 2023.

1991 under Coast Guard supervision, and the lighthouse remains a key landmark today.

Ownership of the lighthouse shifted in 1935 when the federal government conveyed the property to the Village of Old Field for public park use. During World War II, the lighthouse was temporarily requisitioned for national defense but returned to the Village afterward. The Village has since overseen the preservation of the lighthouse, commissioning studies and establishing a Lighthouse Foundation to raise funds for its upkeep and renovation.

The lighthouse faces several serious preservation challenges, as outlined in a 2022 Condition Assessment Report by Modern Ruins. Coastal erosion threatens the site, while water infiltration has caused significant structural damage, including rotting floor joists, deteriorating mortar, and unstable foundation walls. Improper drainage and invasive vegetation further compromise the building's integrity. Efforts to address these issues, including shoreline stabilization and drainage redirection, are ongoing, with fundraising efforts needed to support long-term restoration and preservation.

Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones Lighthouse was added to our Endangered Places List in December 2023. Located in Long Island Sound, the lighthouse has served as a navigational aid since its commissioning in 1876. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

In 2006, ownership of the lighthouse was transferred to the Town of Hempstead under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act. However, despite a partnership formed in 2014 with the Great Neck Historical Society, the lighthouse suffers from deferred maintenance. A 2022 assessment estimated that stabilization would cost nearly \$969,000. Its offshore location complicates visitation, which has hindered fundraising efforts.

Stepping Stones Lighthouse is a twin to the Hudson-Athens Lighthouse (1874), which was listed on the National Register and named one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in 2024.



Stepping Stones Llghthouse (Top) Photo Courtesy Great Neck Historical Society. Hudson Athens Llghthouse (Below) Courtesy. Hudson River Llghthouse Coalition.



LITTLE EDEN IN AMERICA: REEXAMINING HOWARD SHERWOOD



This photograph depicts an elderly Sherwood at his Setauket home, the Jayne House. Courtesy Preservation Long Island.

In 1957, Howard C. Sherwood, founder of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (today Preservation Long Island), passed away at the age of 86. On his death, he donated to the society his 18th century home in Setauket, known today as the Sherwood-Jayne Farm, offering the public a glimpse into the colonial revival craze of the 20th century. In addition to his home-turned-house-museum, Sherwood also donated a personal collection of his diaries, letters, and photographs. But



Once believed to be a family portrait, this photograph actually depicts Howard (right), his brother Dick Sherwood (center), and Howard's close friend Archibald R. Tisdale (left). Courtesy Preservation Long Island.

up until now, this archive had never been studied in its entirety. We knew very little of Sherwood the man beyond his image as an avid antiquer.

With support from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, I, as a Gardiner Young Scholar, was able to transcribe all of Sherwood's handwritten diaries into type and compile a comprehensive timeline of his life. I also identified men we once thought were Sherwood's brothers posed in family-style photographs as actually his close male friends. Most importantly, I started to see a man, flesh and blood and complicated resurface from his papers. Piecing together the intimate relationships he kept with other men, Sherwood emerges as a queer man living in an increasingly intolerant America; in turn, the Jayne House can be interpreted as an even more complex site, more than just a preservation project looking back at the aesthetic of early America but a sanctuary for 20th century queer men searching for community in their own time.

Growing up in the Victorian era (c.1870–1900), Sherwood's early papers depict a world that was relatively accepting of a man seeking intimacy with other men. Middle and upper class men and women led largely parallel lives, meaning many of the social spaces young Howard navigated were all-male worlds.1 According to

Caroll Smith-Rosenberg and later Kevin Murphy, within these homosocial spaces, Victorians accepted "a wide latitude of emotions and sexual feelings" because "they neither understood nor organized their sexual practices along a hetero-homosexual axis."² In the absence of women, intimacy between men was tolerated as a momentary attraction-one's sexual preference at a given instant not indicative of a core characteristic of their identity. Occupying all-male spaces at Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard University, young Sherwood was able to express interest in intimate relationships with other men. His papers include *cartes de visite* showing him and friends posed intimately in women's garb with handwritten notes of affection to each other on the backs.³ Sherwood even describes accounts of a friend Romney nursing him to health and summers spent bathing and sketching with friends Tracy and Archie on the beach.4 Michael Bronski confirms "historians have uncoveredin letters and diaries- extensive, complex networks of friendships in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" between people of the same sex, correspondences that "in a sense... were love letters. Love does not always mean sex."5 Sherwood fostered these kinds of "romantic friendships" with other men quite early in life. These intimate relationships between men were not necessarily sexual but were built on intense emotional bonds that were not yet stigmatized

1. George Chauncey, Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940 (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 117.

2. Kevin D. Murphy, "Secure from All Intrusion: Heterotopia, Queer Space, and the Turn-of-the-Twentieth Century American Resort," Winterthur Portfolio 43, no. 2/3 (2009): 191, https:// doi.org/10.1086/603545.

3. The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, Copies of Howard Sherwood records from Harvard University Archives, Correspondence 1981, 2006, 2019, MS001.1.1.5, Box 3, Folder 3, Preservation Long Island.

4 .Howard C. Sherwood, Diary of Principal Events Vol. I, 1870-1941, (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1, Box 4, Folders 6, Preservation Long Island), 26.

5. Michael Bronski, A Queer History of the United States For Young People (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019), 40.



In this carte-de-visite from Sherwood's collection, Sherwood is pictured left in women's theatrical garb alongisde a man, also in feminine dress, posing with him intimately. Courtesy Preservation Long Island.

as "queer." While other boys interacted in plutonic relationships we would recognize today, focused on competing in clubs or sports, Victorians' tolerability for a range of sexual and gender expression within same-sex spaces allowed Sherwood to express his interests in ways that would soon become less tolerated.

Graduating from Harvard law in 1896, right during the transition from the Victorian Age (c.1870-1900) to the Modern Era (c.1900-1920s), Sherwood's lifestyle, which was tolerated as a young adult, would now result in his categorization as a "queer" man. As the homosocial spaces of old started to be integrated with men and women and new pleasure grounds, like movie theaters and dance halls, opened for middle and upper-class Americans to "go out," men and women could increasingly express their desire for each other in public.6 Soon, this meant the abnormality of not externalizing one's heterosexual desire. Sexual behavior was becoming a defining characteristic of what made someone a person. According to George Chauncey, "normal" men started to differentiate themselves from "queers" by renouncing "any sentiments or behavior that might be marked as homosexual."7 But as the romantic friendships of Victorian times were widely rejected by "normal men," Sherwood, working as an estate lawyer in Manhattan, continued to express the 6. Chauncey, Gay New York, 117.

same interests as his boyhood self drawn to "feminine" expression and intimacy withother men though now in a world that increasingly defined him by his romantic preferences. Now a man in his thirties, Sherwood remained living as a bachelor with his boyhood friends in apartments in the city, now a man in his thirties. On several occasions, Sherwood wrote into a Harvard alumni column addressing his "still unmarried" status, presumably as his lifestyle was becoming increasingly suspicious for a man his age.8 Just as these kinds of close friendships were rejected by heterosexual men, Sherwood started writing about more than just his friendships with bachelors. In his diaries, he expressed his physical attraction for them as well.9Whether or not he acted on these feelings, Sherwood was increasingly fitting the newly invented category of "homosexuality" by the 1930s- an emergent identity that was progressively threatened by the growing heterosexual world invented right alongside it. Although there was a vast queer subculture in the city, Chauncey describes how queer spaces were starting to be heavily criminalized in Manhattan. Popular bathhouses and bars were raided by police, and for an elite man like Sherwood, if he wanted to visit such spaces, he risked more than just jail time. In a climate where one's romantic inclinations defined his character, Sherwood risked reputation.¹⁰

Amidst this shift, Sherwood's decision to live at the Jayne House for parts of the year can be interpreted as a social strategy, a way for a queer man to form a family structure different from the heteronormative marriage model expected at the time. Kevin Murphy argues that as "turn-of-thecentury American resorts became more socially stratified, historicist projects provided a refuge for men and women who

8. The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, Copies of Howard Sherwood records from Harvard University Archives, Correspondence 1981, 2006, 2019, MS001.1.1.5, Box 3, Folder 3, Preservation Long Island.

9. Trip with Jennie and Frank- Mallow Castle, Ireland, London, Paris, Holland, Italy and Switz[erland] (1 of 3) 1932 September - November (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1.3.9, Box, Folder 19, Preservation Long Island).

10. Chauncey, 172.

avoided participating in the courting rituals".11 Perhaps Sherwood's own historicist project at the Jayne House served a more personal purpose than just an elaborate antiquing endeavor. Immediately after purchasing the Jayne House in 1908, Sherwood and his male friends, many from his boyhood days, would stay at the house together for months in what they called "bachelor halls," periods of time when they effectively lived together for parts of the year.¹² For decades, these friends, like Archie and Tracy, left notes in Sherwood's guest registers, reporting on swimming, tending to the farm, and renovating the home together, employing language reminiscent of newlyweds refurbishing their first homes.13 In addition to 11. Murphy, "Secure from All Intrusion," 185.

12. Howard C. Sherwood, Diary of Principal Events Vol. II 1941-1949, (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, Box 4, Folders 11-14, Preservation Long Island), 60, 74, 79, 82. Cruise Grace Line to California by way of canal (3 of 3) 1934 April – May (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1.3.14, Box 2, Folder 24, Preservation Long Island). Guest Register 1908-1937," (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1.45, Box 4, Folder 20, Preservation Long Island).

13. Guest Register 1908-1937," (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1.45, Box 4, Folder 20, Preservation Long Island).



This portrait depicts a young Howard Sherwood and Archibald R. Tisdale, childhood friends from the time they met at Phillips Exeter Academy until Archie's passing in 1938. Courtesy Preservation Long Island.



In this photograph, Sherwood is pictured left and his friend since Phillips Exeter Academy, Archibald R. Tisdale, is pictured on the right, holding onto his dog Governor Thrump. Archie and Gov. Thrump visited Howard at Setauket more than any other guest and for the longest durations at a time in periods Sherwood refers to as "bacherlor halls" in his diaries. Courtesy Preservation Long Island.

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Credo: It has become apparent that those of us who are interested in conservation and preservation need to be alerted to the destruction of the irreplaceable values and environments that comprise our heritage and to the actions proposed to avert such threats. These notes are designed to raise awareness.

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these friends, Sherwood hired two male groundskeepers, Charlie Bickford and Alfonso Finamore, who, throughout his diaries, Sherwood describes as "the family," suggesting that life at the Jayne House schewed predominant heterosexual marriage norms.14 His chosen family also consisted of the sheep and dogs he, his friends, and groundskeepers raised together. Sherwood and friends reported fond memories of days in Setauket tending to their "babies" in the pasture.15 Howard Sherwood appears to have been forging a new kind of nuclear family within his historic home, an alternative lifestyle or, what Michel Foucault and Kevin Murphy call, "heterotopia," where common cultural models, in this case a heterosexual marriage, "are simultaneously represented, contested, and

14. Setauket Winter Log, 1935-1942, (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1.4.9, Box 5, Folder 1, Preservation Long Island), Diary of Principal Events Vol. II 1941-1949, 203.

15. Howard C. Sherwood, Setauket Winter Log. Sheep Register, Howard C. Sherwood, Sheep Register 1932-1944, (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1.4.10, Box 5, Folder 2, Preservation Long Island), and one of his travel diaries, Cruise Grace Line to California by way of canal (3 of 3) 1934 April - May, (The Howard C. Sherwood Papers, MS001.1.3.14, Box 2, Folder 24, Preservation Long Island). inverted" by participants.¹⁶ In the isolation of the Jayne House, Sherwood renovated an historic home while effectively renovating the American marriage model to match his personal interests. Regardless of whether he and these men were physically romantic, Sherwood was able to maintain a close bond with men within the bounds of his historic property, a place offering refuge from the eyes of city-goers at the turn of the century.

"What disappears faster than a garden without a gardener?" asks Mark Doty, a modern-day antiquer who saved historic New England homes alongside his partner Wally Roberts in the 1980s.¹⁷What Doty is arguing is if we don't study the people who saved historic houses, "the gardeners," the true stories the houses disappear a little more each year. Recently, societies like Historic New England have started sharing the stories of queer communities formed at historic places like Henry Sleeper's Beauport in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Their most recent exhibition and publication, The Importance of Being Furnished: Four Bachelors at Home, explores the lives Ogden Codman Jr., Charles Hammond Gibson, Charles Leonard Pendleton in addition to Henry Sleeper, all bachelors who championed historicist projects and created alternative family structures.18Sherwood actually knew some of these kinds of men, visiting their homes during tours of American historic properties. By exploring Sherwood's queer identity in the papers he donated, we too celebrate him. We tell a more complete story of the Jayne House. We add Howard Sherwood's name to a growing list of similar men and women who dedicated their lives to saving slices of American history, now to our enjoyment, and who worked creatively to find companionship in little edens across America. -By Lauren Gotard

16. Murphy, 189.

17. Will Fellows, A Passion to Preserve: Gay Men as Keepers of Culture (Madison: The Un versity of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 44.

18. The Importance of Being Furnished opens on June 21, 2024," Historic New England, published February 1, 2024, https://www.historicnewengland.org/the-importance-of-being-furnishedopens-on-june-21-2024/.

COLTRANE HOME UPDATE



Coltrane Home in Dix Hills. Photograph Courtesy The Friends of the Coltrane Home

The Friends of the Coltrane Home in Dix Hills, d/b/a the John & Alice Coltrane Home has made steady progress in its goal to restore the home of two great African American artists since the Home was placed on Preservation Long Island's Endangered Places List in 2011. That same year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation also deemed the site endangered.

The National Trust later named the Home a National Treasure and provided welcome technical support in advancing the project. With funding from a New York State Environmental Protection Fund grant and a million dollar grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the renovation of the Home has begun. The first phase of the project was to repair and reinforce the structure of the Home. Termites had compromised some of the Home's floor joists and the structure needed to be reinforced to meet the increased floor loads required to convert the Home from a residence to a museum. This has recently been completed.

The next phase of the project addresses the Home's brick facade, which is failing in several areas. Engineers at Thornton Tomasetti, a world class engineering firm based in Manhattan, determined that the sheathing under the bricks also needs to be replaced. Plans call for careful removal and cleaning of the bricks, replacing the deteriorated sheathing and resetting the original bricks. That work is scheduled to start this month. The original single pane windows will also be replaced with exact replicas made with double pane glass. The John & Alice Coltrane Home has worked closely with Huntington architect Nick Loizides and the State Historic Preservation Office to assure that the replacement windows will match the originals as closely as possible while also providing the environmental controls required to protect the valuable artifacts and documents to be displayed in the Home. SHPO consented to the window replacement because the Home's importance stems from the creative work inside the Home, not its architecture.

A schematic design plan for interior renovations and preliminary exhibit design concepts has also been completed. While the Home will be returned to its appearance when the Coltranes lived there from 1964 to 1972, providing ADA access into and through the building is a challenge that the schematic design has successfully addressed.

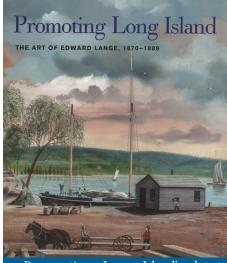
The John & Alice Coltrane Home has also worked with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects to prepare a concept for a meandering meditation garden in the Town park on which the Home sits. The group has also worked with AEA Consulting to formulate a business plan to assure the organization's financial sustainability in the years to come.

Even though the exterior work will be completed in the next few months, the interior work to return the Home to its 1960s appearance, while at the same time providing for state-of-the-art museum exhibits, will take substantial additional funding and time. Nonetheless, the hope is to be able to start welcoming visitors to the Home in time for the centennial of John Coltrane's birth in 2026.-By Robert Hughes



John and Alice Coltrane at the Van Gelder Studio in Englewood Cliffs, NJ. A Love Supreme was recorded at Van Gelder Studio in December 1964, but John Coltrane wrote the song at his home in Dix Hills. Image by Chuck Stewart.

New Book Release!



Preservation Long Island's latest book, "Promoting Long Island: The Art of Edward Lange, 1870–1889" is here! Edited by Chief Curator and Director of Collections, Lauren Brincat, and former Art of Edward Lange Curatorial Fellow, Peter Fedoryk, it's a beautiful publication featuring over 100 full-color images and five original essays that explore the artist's life and work and Long Island during the late nineteenth century.

Generously funded by the Gerry Charitable Trust and the Decorative Arts Trust, the publication is the culmination of Preservation Long Island's The Art of Edward Lange Project, which began in 2021 with the creation of a digital catalog mapping Lange's artworks across Long Island.

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