



The Society Scroll

Newsletter of
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“Telling The Stories Of Ocean County”

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Barnegat Lighthouse

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by Ocean County Principals' Council, 1940

At the northern tip of Long Beach Island stands the famous Barnegat Light. Because of the dangerous shoals at this part of the Jersey coast, it has been called “The Graveyard of the Atlantic”. This historic old landmark has sent its flash of light to many sailors that have sailed up and down the Atlantic Coast.

The first lighthouse was built in 1834. This was a smaller tower and had a less powerful light than the present one. The sea weakened the foundation of the structure and in 1856 it toppled into the sea.

The government immediately made plans to replace it with a more pretentious tower and in 1857 the construction of the new lighthouse was begun. The site selected for the new light was about one mile inland from the original one. One of the engineers in charge of building the lighthouse was Gen. George G. Meade, the hero of Gettysburg, who was then a young lieutenant in the U.S. Army. The new tower was carefully planned and well built to withstand the sea. The light was so powerful that it could be seen about twenty miles at sea.

The sea came so near to the lighthouse that it was considered unsafe and in 1927 a lightship was anchored off Barnegat to do the work of the lighthouse. The light in the lighthouse still operates, but is less powerful than the original one.

The State of New Jersey bought the lighthouse from the Federal Government and is taking steps to preserve this famous old landmark.

In 1870, two hotels, the Oceanic and the Sunset, were built near the lighthouse and in 1889 a home for the keeper was erected. The Oceanic and the keeper's house have been washed into the sea and in 1932 the Sunset was burned.

Each year visitors from all over the world visit the famous Barnegat Light of which Long Beach is justly proud.



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