

THE COLD SPRING HARBOR LIGHT
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Standing sentinel off the shore of Lloyd Neck is the venerable Cold Spring Harbor Light. Although not as well known as the lighthouses that guard the eastern estuaries of Lloyd Harbor, the Cold Spring Harbor light watches over the Village's western flank. With most of its former grandeur gone, this light is still an important marker of the waters that surround us.

Cold Spring Harbor was a very active port throughout the 19th century. Ironically, when it was at its busiest, there was no beacon to guide vessels. At the mouth of Cold Spring Harbor was a dangerous mud shoal, which extended about 1,500 feet east from Centre Island. Ships had to hug the shore of Lloyd Neck, following the deep channel there.

At the beginning of that century, the Jones industries in the village of Cold Spring made the small town an industrial powerhouse. Woolen mills, grist mills and saw mills—all water powered—relied on the harbor for trade, as the highways and railroads were not sufficient venues for transport.

When the Jones family began their whaling business in the 1830's, the harbor would become increasingly important. The whale oil industry and the businesses that supported it kept the harbor active until the discovery of petroleum in 1859, ending the need for that fuel. Up until this point, ships arrived from year's long voyages, with their processed oil on board. According to a *New York Times* article from 1890, when the whaling ships reached the mouth of the harbor at Lloyd Neck, a cannon was fired to signal the arrival.

By the early 1860's the port of Cold Spring experienced a depression. Its mighty whaling rigs were moored off shore to be stripped and burned. The mills were no longer productive, as foreign markets had undercut wool prices, and their manufacturing methods in general had become increasingly obsolete. Only the brick making factories on the east shore at West Neck (Lloyd Harbor) remained viable. The Jones and Crossman yards would continue to manufacture bricks, and transport them out of Cold Spring Harbor by barge sloops. This would all come to an end by the turn of the 20th century.

In the decade after the Civil War, the waters of Cold Spring Harbor would again become busy. This time it was due to the establishment of resort hotels and

picnic grounds. Many of the sites were situated on the shores of present day Lloyd Harbor Village. The region was famous for three great resort hotels, Laurelton Hall, Forest Lawn and the Glenada with its casino. The Glenada Hotel sat regally at the foot of Snake Hill. Its casino, now the clubhouse for the Cold Spring Harbor Beach Club, was the recreation center for the hotel complex. In addition to these grand lodges, there were numerous picnic and fair grounds along the shore, most notably Columbia Grove on Lloyd Neck's Causeway.

The proliferation of recreational places on the shores of Cold Spring Harbor kept the navigable waters extremely vital in the warmer months. Steam powered side winders brought not only wealthy hotel patrons to Cold Spring Harbor, but less affluent "day trippers" and church groups. For the balance of the 19th century, until the era of the Gold Coast estates, the resorts and the boat traffic they created was phenomenal. Still, all of this maritime activity flowed in and out of the harbor without the guidance of a beacon.

Finally, in 1889, it was decided that a lighthouse would be constructed on the eastern edge of the shoal. The tower was a wooden pyramid structure, resting on a cast iron caisson filled with concrete. This tower was 40.5 feet above mean high water, and had a fourth order fresnel lamp powered by kerosene. A fog bell struck every thirty seconds in inclement weather. All of this was maintained by a resident keeper, whose only access to shore was by row boat.

Theodore Roosevelt was known to visit the lighthouse keeper, and he would often row out with his children. His home at Sagamore Hill was just across the harbor at Cove Neck. The Roosevelts were frequent visitors to Lloyd's Neck, often picnicking on its shores or feasting on clam pie at Sammis' tavern at the Big Oak.

In 1918, the lighthouse was severely damaged during a winter storm. An iceberg, a square mile wide and over foot thick, struck the house, making it shake and crack. This ice flow crash cost \$12,000 in damages.

In 1948, the Cold Spring Harbor Light was automated, and came under the aegis of the Eaton's Neck station. The final and most drastic change would come when the Coast Guard removed the lighthouse from its cast iron base in 1965. The caisson was topped by a steel skeleton light tower. The construction of this unattractive and utilitarian replacement was lamented by many. It still stands today.

Fortunately, the wooden lighthouse top was saved. Wooderson and Mary Glenn, who lived across from the light house on Centre Island, bought the decommissioned lighthouse from the Coast Guard for one dollar. Mrs. Glenn, known as Lady Glenn to her friends, often described the arduous task of barging the lighthouse to their beach front property.

She had fond memories of the house, and said that one of the keepers had a piano, and in the evenings soft music would often waft across the harbor. The Glens moved the lighthouse on shore in front of their house, where it served as a guest house. It is the only lighthouse on Long Island to have been moved from its original location.

Today, except for the occasional fuel oil tankers that make deliveries, the Cold Spring Harbor estuary serves as a prime recreation and scenic asset. Yacht clubs, boating clubs and numerous parks line its waterways, its waters peppered with clamming and oyster boats. The light still watches over this well used, but unusually bucolic harbor.