

# A Guiding Beacon: New London's 'Pequot' Lighthouse

BY SUSAN TAMULEVICH

NEW LONDON, CONN. — The oldest and tallest lighthouse on Long Island Sound, the New London Harbor "Pequot" Lighthouse is rooted on a craggy ledge where the Thames River meets the sound. The classic white octagon of granite, brownstone block, cast iron and brick has guided mariners safely to the historic harbor since the American Revolution when Benedict Arnold targeted and burned New London down in 1781 after landing his troops on the beach near the lighthouse.

As early as the late 1730s, New London's first beacon was established at Harris Point on the west bank of the "Harbour's Mouth." The land was purchased in 1759 and the original lighthouse was built in 1760 during the reigns of kings George II and III. Lighthouse construction cost 715 British pounds, roughly \$285,000 in 2010 dollars, with 70 percent paid with private financing via a lottery and another 30 percent paid with Connecticut colony tax revenues.

New London Harbor Light was the fourth of the original 12 colonial lights that the young United States government managed under its newly established Lighthouse Board on August 7, 1789. George Washington signed a contract authorizing the expenditure of \$360 quarterly to supply New London Harbor Light's six lamps with spermaceti whale oil in 1791, when he enacted the Act for the Establishment and support of Lighthouse, Beacons, Buoys and Public Piers.

By 1799, the tower had developed a ten-foot crack that ran down from the top and the government decided to rebuild the lighthouse. Abisha Woodward of New London completed construction of the new lighthouse in 1801, along with an oil house and cistern building for a total cost of \$15,547. The handsome 89-foot octagonal tower, made of granite with a brownstone facade and lined with brick, was originally left unpainted. The tower was painted white some time in the mid-Nineteenth Century.

In 1855, a fourth-order Fresnel lens to illuminate 315 degrees was installed; it remains in use to this day. New dwellings for keepers were provided in 1863 when the tower's cast iron circular stair and lantern were added. Its

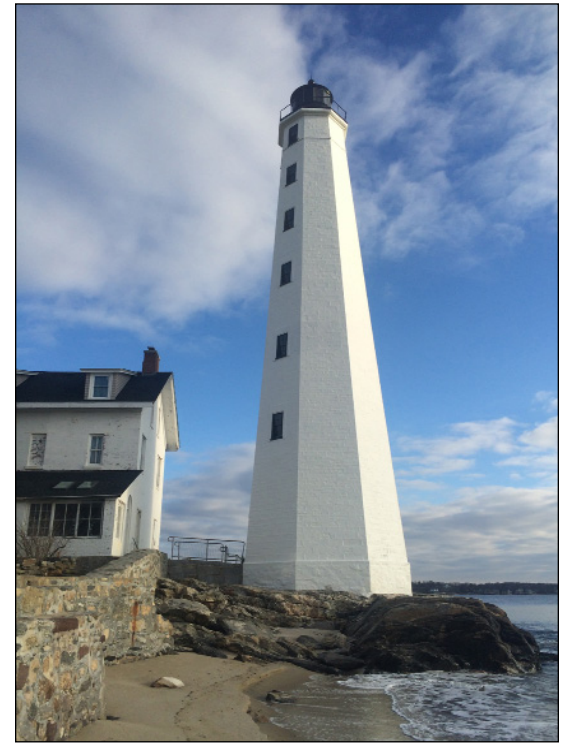


Photograph, circa 1935, private collection. The photo was taken after the lighthouse was automated and the keeper's house sold to a private party. It can be dated by the fact that the connection between the keeper's house and the lighthouse has been removed.

light and horn were removed off-shore in 1909.

In 2013, Harbor Light appeared on the US Postal Service "Lighthouses of New England" series stamp representing all of Connecticut. Still a federal property with its light maintained by the Coast Guard, ownership of Harbor lighthouse was conveyed to the New London Maritime Society in 2010. The society adopted Race Rock lighthouse in 2013 and will receive a third lighthouse, New London Ledge, on August 6. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the National Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000. In the history of the act, no other single organization has been awarded ownership of three lighthouses.

Believing the members of the public are the true owners of the lighthouse, the society is working to ensure access to the Harbor lighthouse, which is facing legal challenges by neighbors over access rights. The society has launched a



New London's Harbor "Pequot" lighthouse, present day.

fundraising campaign to restore the historic dock here to exercise its riparian rights (and those of the Coast Guard). It will also have a long haul ahead to establish a path by land.

The "Pledge a Plank" campaign to restore a historic dock with 250 planks, with a \$100 donation sponsoring a single plank that can be engraved with an inscription, has launched.

Preserving shared community historic icons, maintaining the public's right to access these landmarks, and working to support the US Coast Guard — which still maintains the lighthouse lanterns to keep our mariners safe — is something we feel we must do. But we cannot do it without you.

For additional information, [www.nlmartimesociety.org](http://www.nlmartimesociety.org) or 860-447-8700.

## Couture, Antique Clothing Sale Will Help Fund Civil War Banner

SOUTHOLD, N.Y. — The Southold Historical Society will host a couture and antique clothing sale July 23–25, from 1 to 4 pm daily, at the Cosden-Price Gallery in the Reichert Family Center.

The Collections Committee of the Southold Historical Society discussed the possibility of rais-

ing funds through the sale of designer and antique clothing, as there is such an interest in vintage articles. Some of the items offered will be period and designer coats, dresses, handbags, hats and shoes.

Funds raised will be earmarked for preservation of the Civil War banner the society acquired last

year. The banner was originally created for the Mattituck "Wide Awake" Club. The "Wide Awakes" were a paramilitary campaign organization affiliated with the American Republican Party during the United States Presidential election of 1860. Local newspapers report that on the day before the election of 1860, the

"Wide Awake" groups of the North Fork marched in a torchlight parade through Southold in support of Abraham Lincoln's election. The Mattituck Club is mentioned as marching in that parade.

While the banner survived mostly intact over the years, it does require preservation work to

ensure its long term survival. Chris Wruck, collections committee member, said, "It is surprising how expensive conservation of valuable textiles is, but the banner is so rare and important that it merits to be fully preserved."

The Reichert Family Center is at 54127 Main Road. For information, 631-765-5500.

## Jane Yacovone Photographs A Disappearing Way Of Life

NORTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. — The BankRI North Kingstown Gallery presents "Paths Unravel: Photographs

by Jane Yacovone," through September 2.

For almost 30 years, photographer and retired visual arts

educator Jane Yacovone traveled the same road from her home in Foster to her job at Milford High School in Massa-

chusetts. The drive took about an hour, and she enjoyed both the scenery and time spent decompressing from the challenges of the day.

Her real travels began, however, when school was not in session. Instead of an hour drive north, she flew hundreds of hours to intriguing and exotic locations around the globe, immersing herself in other cultures. Yacovone has visited four continents — Asia, Europe, North America, South America — more than 20 countries and more cities and towns than she can remember. Throughout her travels, a camera is a constant companion.

Yacovone focuses on the sto-

ries each culture has to offer. The photographs of open air markets, glass jars of gasoline, prayer wishes hanging outside a convenience store and a pink chicken all speak to how diverse cultures evolve and adapt. They offer a glimpse into ways of life that are slowly disappearing. Yacovone's intent is to document and celebrate the individual traits of distinct cultures before they vanish.

The BankRI Galleries are curated by Paula Martiesian, a Providence-based artist and arts advocate.

The branch is at 1140 Ten Rod Road. For further information, [www.bankri.com](http://www.bankri.com) or 401-456-5015, extension 1330.

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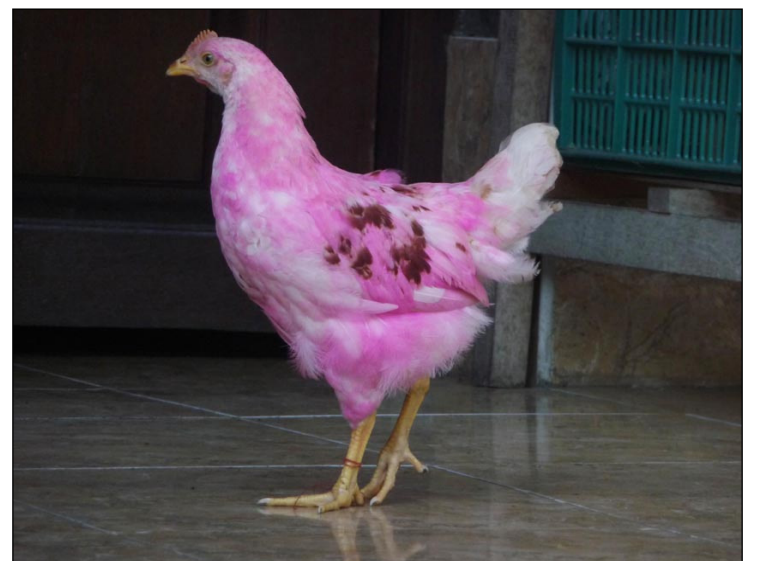
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"Bali Chicken," photograph by Jane Yacovone.