On January 6, 1934, the 630-ton Nantucket/LV-117—anchored in complete isolation at Nantucket Shoals Station during heavy fog—was sideswiped by the 24,200-ton United States Lines luxury liner Washington, at that time the largest U.S.-built ocean liner. Fortunately, LV-117 escaped a fatal blow, receiving only minor damage to her steel hull plates. A few months later, her luck ran out. On May 14, the 52,000-ton White Star Line Olympic was making 16 knots through patchy fog when she sighted the Nantucket Lightship lying across its course, less than two ship’s lengths ahead. Unable to avoid a collision, the massive liner plowed into the lightship, slicing the vessel in half and sending the lightship to its watery grave. Four of the lightship’s 11-man crew were killed instantly, and three more died of injuries or exposure after their rescue by Olympic’s crew. The culprit was fog, a common occurrence on Nantucket Shoals, dominating the area more than two-thirds of the year.

Two years later, the most famous lightship of all—Nantucket Lightship/LV-112—was built and stationed on Nantucket Shoals.

An Isolated and Treacherous Lightship Station

As a light vessel (LV) in the U.S. Coast Guard’s fleet, the job of a Nantucket lightship was to guide ships through the channel beyond Nantucket, past the treacherous shoals. Regardless of conditions, the lightship was to stay permanently anchored over 45 miles southeast of Nantucket, approximately 100 miles off the mainland—the farthest station from the coast and subject to the North Atlantic’s heaviest seas and most unpredictable weather. Its high-powered mast lights were the main focal point for all transoceanic shipping navigating to and from the United States and Europe—known as the “Grand Circle Route,” “Times Square,” and “the crossroads of Atlantic shipping.” Because of this critical location, Nantucket station was considered the most exposed and remote lightship station on the East Coast and arguably in the world.

The dangerous shoals and inclement weather led to more than 700 shipwrecks in the surrounding waters of Nantucket, causing the area to be dubbed a “graveyard of the Atlantic.” Notable sinkings included the Republic, Andrea Doria, the freighter Canonbury, Cross Rip Lightship, the tug Lackawanna and the Liberian oil tanker Argo Merchant, which ran aground on Nantucket Shoals and spewed oil into the Atlantic just 29 nautical miles southeast of U.S. shores. In fact, the Mayflower may not have landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 if it were not for Nantucket Shoals and adjoining Pollack Rip shoals area. The Mayflower’s original destination was the mouth of the Hudson River, but as it headed south towards the Hudson, the tides changed, the wind died and the depth of the water plummeted. The Mayflower had sailed into a dangerous area of ever-changing sand bars and shoals, the graveyard of many a shipwreck known as Pollack Rip, basically hell’s gateway to the Nantucket Shoals. The Mayflower risked becoming shipwrecked on the shoals, so Captain Christopher Jones wisely decided to head north, toward New England.

Built to be Unsinkable

As reparation for the sinking of the 135-foot LV-117, the British government paid the United States $500,000, of which Pusey & Jones at Wilmington, Delaware, was awarded $300,956 to construct a replacement lightship in 1936. With a length of 148 feet and a displacement of 1,050 tons, Nantucket Lightship/LV-112 was designed as the largest U.S. lightship ever built. Because of recurring severe weather conditions and the high level of shipping traffic exposing Nantucket Lightship to an extremely dangerous environment subject to collisions, LV-112 was designed and constructed with a double hull and heavy reinforced riveted 1-3/8-inch armor plating on her hull with a high degree of watertight
compartmentalization (43 watertight compartments) to prevent repetition of the tragedy that befell LV-117.

LV-112 was the last U.S. steam-powered lightship. She had a 600-hp compound reciprocating engine and two oil-fired Babcock-Wilcox water tube boilers that powered the eight-foot diameter propeller and gave her a maximum speed of 12 knots. LV-112’s light beacons were two 500mm electric lens lanterns, installed at each of the two mastheads. The ship’s fog signal was a deep bull-throated two-tone air diaphone with a range of 14 miles, synchronized with the radio beacon. LV-112 as was also equipped with a ship-to-shore radio beacon and short-range radio beacon. A submarine oscillator was installed, later declared obsolete and removed. In case the ship lost power, a large hand-operated warning bell was mounted on the foredeck to signal oncoming ships. LV-112 was also equipped to convert seawater to potable drinking water.

Guiding Famous Ships and Transoceanic Commerce

For 39 years, Nantucket Lightship/ LV-112 guided transoceanic commerce to and from U.S. East Coast ports, through some of the most treacherous shipping lanes in the world. She was the first symbol of America encountered by thousands of immigrants. Many famous vessels such as the United States, the Queen Mary, Normandie and other merchant and naval vessels depended on Nantucket Lightship to guide them safely to their destinations.

Established in 1854, the Nantucket Shoals lightship station was originally known as the Nantucket New South Shoal Station, before the name was changed in 1896. The exact position of the lightship, whose purpose was to mark the southern extremity of the shoals that extend south and east from Nantucket Island, varied through the years to provide a greater safety margin from the shoals or to better serve shipping lanes.

Over the years, 15 lightships served at Nantucket Shoals. Three of these ships, LV-112, WLV-612, and WLV-613, still have NANTUCKET, their final station, painted in large white letters on red hulls. Nantucket / LV-112 is the only Nantucket Lightship that is a non-profit museum open to the general public; WLV-612 and WVL-613 are privately owned. In fact, LV-112 is the only lightship museum in New England and a designated National Historic Landmark. Of the fewer than 17 U.S. lightships that remain, the three Nantucket lightships are the only ones to share the same station marking. This isn’t too surprising, as the Nantucket Shoals Station had been the only remaining lightship station in the country and last U.S. lightship station to be discontinued, when it was replaced by an un-manned large navigational buoy in 1983. The U.S. Lightship Service was discontinued in 1985.

Service in World War II

LV-112 served at Nantucket Shoals from 1936 until 1942, when she was withdrawn from Nantucket Shoals station,
renamed USS Nantucket. Her light beacons, bell and fog signal were removed, she was painted battleship gray and converted to an armed Examination Patrol Vessel off Portland, Maine, for service during World War II. The Nantucket was armed with two 20-mm water-cooled machine guns on her foredeck and a 3-inch gun mounted on a specially built and raised platform on the fantail. In addition, she was equipped with newly developed detection radar that proved to be an asset after the war as a lightship. In 1945 the USS Nantucket saved crewmembers of the USS Eagle-56, sunk off Portland by the German U-Boat, U-853. The submarine was later sunk off Point Judith, Rhode Island, after sinking another vessel.

After the war, LV-112 returned to her former station in 1945 and served there for the next 30 years, serving from 1958 to 1960 as a relief lightship. During this two-year period, LV-112 relieved stations throughout the Coast Guard First District including Portland, Boston, Pollack Rip, Cross Rip/Buzzards Bay and Brenton Reef stations. The Coast Guard First District, headquartered in Boston, was always LV-112’s homeport. Commencing in April 1960, a major modification, modernization and refit were carried out at the Coast Guard Yard at Curtis Bay near Baltimore. LV-112’s steam engine was removed and she was repowered with a 900-hp Cooper-Bessemer diesel main engine that was previously used in a Navy minesweeper. The new power conversion included replacing the tall smoke stack with a lower profile version.

LV-112’s original mechanical systems, which included the steering and anchor windlass, remained. Systems that were steam-powered were converted to compressed air. The light beacons on both masts also were updated. She was fitted with a duplex 500mm lens lantern on the foremost, and the mainmast (aft) was equipped with a high-intensity light consisting of 24 locomotive headlights mounted in groups of six on each face of a four-sided revolving lamp housing that produced up to 500,000 candlepower with a range of 23 miles. However, it was reported that on a clear evening at sea, LV-112’s light beacon could be seen as far as 50 miles. All systems requiring compressed air are now supplied by three separate GM 2-71 diesels. The ship includes two mushroom anchors (5,000 lbs. and 7,000 lbs.) and is equipped with Di-Lock forged-steel anchor chain, 1-3/8 inches thick.

**Life on Nantucket Lightship**

A sailor’s life on Nantucket Shoals Station was bittersweet. Many would say “mostly bitter.” Being isolated on a relatively small ship anchored in 190 feet of water with no sight of land, surrounded by an unpredictable and temperamental ocean, was nerve-wracking and scary, to say the least. In fact, some sailors would refer to duty on Nantucket Lightship as like being in exile or sentenced to solitary confinement in prison.

Most lightships included a crew of approximately 12 sailors. Nantucket Lightship / LV-112 was designed and built to accommodate 21 sailors. However, its crews were mostly around 17 including 14 enlisted sailors and three officers. Most lightship sailors served four to six weeks on station and would go on leave ashore for two weeks at a time. The weather also
determined shore leave schedules. A tour of duty was anywhere from three to 18 months (average was 12 to 18 months). However, one LV-112 crewmember, Bob Gubitosi, who was a ship’s cook, served virtually his entire time in the Coast Guard on LV-112 from 1957 to 1961. Bob’s reputation for home-cooked meals prepared for his fellow shipmates on board LV-112 was legendary. When his normal tour of duty on LV-112 would have been completed, he repeatedly requested transfers. But his requests were always denied. Needless to say, the crew ate very well on LV-112.

Raging storms could last for days, with waves breaking over the bow. As the bow rose up from under its enormous weight, tons of water would wash down the deck and off the stern. Then the bow would be buried under the next wave, and the procedure would repeat itself over and over again. On the first day, everyone would continue to eat, and the cook would place a dampened tablecloth on the mess deck table to keep plates and food from sliding off. As the storm continued, fewer crewmen would be taking their meals; they would switch to apple and saltines. If the storm was violent enough and lasted long enough, almost nobody was exempt from being seasick. Eventually, the seas would calm, winds would blow themselves out, and once more the crew would be treated to another incredibly beautiful sunset. It was also not uncommon for some crewmembers to wear a coffee can with a string attached to it around their neck during moments of seasickness.

During foggy days—frequent for most of the year—the ship’s ear-piercing, deep-throated foghorn would be activated as a warning for shipping. Ear-protection equipment was virtually nonexistent and would force the crew to remain below deck. When vessels came within half a mile, the general alarm was sounded, and everyone donned life jackets and went out on deck so they would at least have a “swimmer’s chance” of surviving a collision.

When off duty, crew members would fish, socialize, exercise their arts and crafts talents, read, write letters, listen to the shortwave radio, watch 16mm first run...
movies, etc. Shark fishing was a favorite and risky activity. Blue sharks were common and plentiful. It was not uncommon to catch up to 15 sharks in one day that averaged six feet in length. They were usually thrown back in the water alive. During the Cold War days, it was fairly common to spot Russian trawlers nearby. In fact, Russian and LV-112 crewmembers occasionally had encounters and traded items such as cigarettes, fish, trinkets, and the like.

**Accounts of Duty from LV-112 Crewmembers**

**Normal Duty on LV-112 and Most other Isolated Stations**

The ship’s stores would need to be replenished more often, generally at least every two weeks. At this point, mail was also delivered from the mainland and crewmembers could send their mail.

**Twenty-one** former LV-112 crew members now live in different parts of the country and shared memories of their time aboard. The late Bernie Webber, who served on LV-112 from 1958 to 60, was awarded the Coast Guard Gold Life Saving Medal for his involvement in the tanker Pendleton disaster that occurred off Cape Cod’s Monomoy Island, featured in the book *The Finest Hours*. Unfortunately, Webber passed away unexpectedly in 2008. He was very helpful and involved with the LV-112 rescue and preservation.

**“Having spent” some 45 years on the water, it’s difficult to think in terms of most pleasurable or terrifying,“** he recalled. “However, on LV-112 my most pleasurable was the day when Captain Robert J.W. Collins received a message while we were on Nantucket Station that we were being relieved and brought in to become a Relief Lightship. The only terror I felt was when on Nantucket Station in rough foggy weather a radar target would be observed headed directly towards the lightship. As it got close, you could hear its engines, and soon out of the fog—so close you could spit on it—would come one of the great liners sailing the seas.”

**“I went aboard LV-112 on a foggy day in 1957,“** remembered Bob Gubitosi. “I was 17 years old and saw this big red ship with Nantucket painted on it anchored in the calm sea belching out the most ear-piercing foghorn I have ever heard. I realized that my life was about to change. I was the ship’s new cook and had to feed 15 men aboard this ship, and I just came from Commissarymen School at Groton, Connecticut, where they taught me to feed about a thousand. I could not get a transfer and had four different skippers during my tour.”

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*LV-112 as she looked prior to being damaged by Hurricane Edna on September 14, 1954.*
“There were many storms and hurricanes,” Gubitosi continued. “One scary night, we broke our anchor chain and did not know it. We wound up off the coast of New Jersey the next day with our radio beacon still going. I remember going on the bridge that night and watching the ship through the porthole, going up walls of water that looked like five- to ten-story buildings, then taking a nose dive straight down. The most pleasurable times were when the mail came, the few calm summer days without the fog horn, the fishing, watching the aurora borealis and the sea life.”

Rich Racicot was a crew member from 1964 to 1966 and also remembers storms. “During one nor’easter, I remember the skipper and I were on the bridge watching the anemometer. It was marked 0 to 100, but gusts were pushing the needle into the space above 100 and against the pin on the dial,” he said. “We joked about it for a while and then it dropped to zero and moments later we heard a crash. Seems that the anemometer blew off the yardarm, must have bounced once somewhere on the deck then disappeared over the side. We never found it.”

Peter Brunk

“The worst thing that happened was going through a bad storm the first week of March 1971,” recalled Peter Brunk, commanding officer from 1970 to 1971. “My father died on March 7, and they couldn’t get me off the ship for over a week. We left Boston on the 6th and storm warnings were up. When we got to station, the Relief Lightship didn’t leave for almost a week, so we had two lightships on Nantucket Station. The wind blew at over 100mph for a week. Another interesting event happened in April or May 1970. We believe an American submarine hit the ship with what we think was a dummy torpedo. We were on the corner of the New London sub-operating area, and they were around us a lot.”

Surviving Hurricane Edna

Serving longer than any other lightship on Nantucket Shoals station, 39 years, LV-112 endured many storms and hurricanes that plagued the Atlantic. Regardless of the weather conditions, it was mandatory for all U.S. lightships and their crews to remain on station. Nantucket Lightship was no exception. The most horrific hurricane that LV-112 endured was Edna, which packed 110-mph wind and 70-foot seas. That day, she was in radio contact with Woods Hole, Massachusetts, when at 4 p.m. a terse message went out: “Nantucket Lightship S.O.S. – listing bad,” was received. The lightship was in danger of sinking.

LV-112 was reported to have been hit by a 70-foot wave. Her life rafts were washed away and three lifeboats smashed to pieces. The monstrous seas crashed over the ship and poured into the smoke.

LV-112 served as Relief Lightship from 1958 to 1960 on Boston, Pollack Rip, Cross Rip, Buzzards Bay and Brenton Reef light stations. – Photo courtesy of Bernie Webber.
stack, extinguishing the fires in the engine’s boilers. Her famous lights went out, and the foghorn was silenced. **LV-112**’s two helm stations, one in the pilothouse and the other on the flying bridge, were destroyed. The oncoming seawater penetrated and short-circuited the electrical systems, causing fires to break out throughout the ship. Seawater surged over the ship’s bow and broke through the 3/4-inch glass wire-reinforced port-holes on the pilothouse and ripped off the wheel. The heavy ship dangerously pitched and rolled broadside into the wild seas pounding over her shaking hull, listing 63 degrees at times.

**LV-112 Drifted** 15 miles off station. The anchor chain had parted and separated several hull plates on the bow, creating a hole that was allowing seawater to rush in. Crew members in neck-deep water fought the fury of the oncoming seas to finally plug the hole in the hull with mattresses and miscellaneous waste. When the crew finally restarted the ship’s steam engine, they could not steer the vessel at all. They discovered that **LV-112**’s rudder had been torn off.

At this point, the crew thought all was lost and the ship was going down. Crew members fought the relentless pounding of the oncoming seas on the ship’s foredeck, risking being swept out to sea, and released the spare 5,000-pound mushroom anchor, which held the bow into the seas, preventing further destruction. With the anchor down and fires controlled, the crew managed to bring the ship around into the sea, permitting **LV-112** to stand her station again. The next day **LV-112** was relieved and towed to Boston for repairs.

**Most offshore lightships** made regular weather reports every six hours to the National Weather Service (NOAA) via Coast Guard radio stations. These included wind direction and speed, barometric pressure, humidity, cloud cover, sea...
temperature and wave heights. In addition, selected lightships made and reported oceanographic observations. These varied between locations but usually included seawater samples and subsurface temperature measurements. On the East Coast these were coordinated by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution on Cape Cod.

Because of its offshore oceanic location the Nantucket Lightship participated in frequent marine science programs. These included net tows for biological sampling and bathythermograph casts. The bathythermograph, or BT as it was called, is an instrument, which when lowered into the sea, produces a plot of temperature versus depth. Developed during World War II the BT was used to adjust ships’ sonars against submarines; and conversely, by submarines, in evading attacks. Peacetime research applications are global warming, fisheries, and ocean currents. The Nantucket Lightship made BT observations to measure night and day and seasonal changes and the results were transmitted to the National Oceanographic Data Center via the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Life after Decommissioning

**Nantucket Lightship / LV-112 has been** the most orphaned of all lightships. After the LV-112’s decommissioning in 1975, Atlantic City, New Jersey, purchased the ship at a government surplus auction, but when Nantucket Island residents learned “their” lightship was going to leave the state, they sprang into action. They agreed to deliver a second surplus lightship to New Jersey, in exchange for title to LV-112.

**After Delivering** the lightship to New Jersey, the men flew home to Nantucket and in early December of 1975, sailed LV-112, under the command of Captain Robertson P. Dinsmore (USCG RET) from Boston to the island, where the Nantucket Historical Association operated it as a museum. Captain Dinsmore is an active LV-112 volunteer and financial contributor. After roughly a decade at the island, the lightship gradually fell into disrepair and was sold in 1985 to Nantucket Lightship Preservation, Inc., a New York nonprofit group.

**Under this organization,** the lightship traveled to various ports on educational tours before eventually finding a semi-permanent home as a floating museum in Portland, Maine. In 1989 the National Park Service designed LV-112 as a National Historic Landmark, stating, “This vessel possesses national significance in commemorating the history of the United States of America.”

**In March 1990, LV-112 vessel’s ownership was transferred a group called Lightship Nantucket, Inc. (LNI).** After three years of ownership, LNI was unable to obtain adequate funding and could no longer afford to maintain the famous lightship. In 1993, the Intrepid Air-Sea-Space Museum in New York City acquired LV 112, but four years later a retired Marine Corps major general, hired to help the museum turn a profit, donated the costly-to-maintain lightship to the H.M.S. Rose...
causing damage. There were no apparent worthy prospects for LV-112 other than the occasional scrappers interested in the ship for scrap value.

Preparing LV-112’s Homecoming

The National Lighthouse Museum offered to sell the lightship for $1 to a qualified support group, but finding an organization with the backing to restore and maintain the historic vessel was not easy. The author learned about LV-112’s plight through a Boston Globe newspaper article in August 2008 and led the effort to establish the United States Lightship Museum (USLM) in May 2009. The timing couldn’t have been worse for embarking on such a daunting challenge. Yet despite the ailing economy, the USLM raised funds to assume ownership of the lightship and return LV-112 to her original homeport of Boston. On October 20, 2009, Jerry Roberts, a board member of the National Lighthouse Museum, and the author, head of the USLM, signed transfer papers.
The group had raised roughly $150,000 with a combination of cash and in-kind donations and started the arduous logistical planning process to prepare the ship for transport back to Boston. Marine insurance for the ship was obtained, and a trip-and-tow marine survey had to be conducted by an accredited marine surveyor. In addition, LV-112 had a ten-degree list and was filled with rainwater contaminated with oil up to her deck plates in the engine rooms. The weather decks and interior of the ship were littered with miscellaneous junk and rubbish. There was no power on the ship and to complicate matters, she was berthed more than 300 feet from any vehicle access and had limited boarding facilities. If not for a small group of dedicated and passionate Oyster Bay area volunteers, who in fact kept an eye on the ship and kept her afloat, she might not have survived.

Virtually every weekend from November 2009 through May 2010, members of the USLM group drove from Massachusetts and New Hampshire to Oyster Bay to prepare LV-112 for her return home. Before the marine survey could be done, bilges had to be pumped and the ship trimmed. We contracted an environmental clean-up company with a tank truck to pump out the contaminated bilge water. Six thousand gallons were transferred and pumped out. The next step was to install the entire ship with temporary lighting and clean out the extraneous trash. We hired Charles Deroko from Brooklyn, New York, a seasoned and accredited marine surveyor experienced with surveying historic vessels. In preparation for the survey, every fuel, water and ballast tank had to be opened for inspection. The survey concluded that various sections of LV-112 ranged from poor to excellent condition but that she was believed to be seaworthy enough for the 34-hour tow to Boston. LV-112’s forward ballast tanks and forward floor frames appeared to be the most compromised by salt-water corrosion. Numerous safety issues and tow requirements had to be resolved before LV-112 would pass a final inspection for the tow, required by our insurance and the tow company’s insurance company. In January, a dozen volunteers from the Coast Guard Lightship Sailors Association traveled to Oyster Bay from all over the U.S. for a weekend to help with our tow preparation efforts. It was one of the coldest days of the winter and there was very little heat on the ship.
All the watertight hatches, doors and exterior portholes had to be tested, sealed and secured. The propeller shaft as well as the ship’s rudder had to be locked and secured from movement while the ship is in tow. All the watertight bulkheads and seawater valves had to be closed and secured. LV-112 had not been dry-docked and had her hull inspected below the waterline since 1991. Needless to say, we were all very anxious about the long tow to Boston. Constellation Maritime, a Foss Maritime Company, was contracted by the USLM to tow the ship to Boston. On May 8, 2010, the 74-foot tugboat Lynx arrived at Oyster Bay and rigged LV-112 for her journey back home. Foul weather prevented the tow from getting underway, since LV-112 was restricted from being towed in winds 20 knots or greater. Finally, on May 10 Nantucket/LV-112 departed. The tow went smoothly until it exited the Cape Cod Canal and entered Massachusetts Bay. Contrary to the marine weather forecast, the wind was creating three- to seven-foot seas. It was a rough and sloppy trip all the way to Boston Harbor for the tug’s crew and the three LV-112 volunteers—the author, Captain Dinsmore and William Perk—who were also on the tug (a riding crew was not permitted on the lightship). At this point, virtually everyone on the tug wished they were riding on LV-112 since she appeared to be riding the rough seas very nicely! LV-112 arrived in Boston on May 11, 2010 and was welcomed by former crew members, National Park Service personnel from the Charlestown Navy Yard, the Boston news media and the general public. The historic LV-112 had not been back to Boston since the U.S. Coast Guard decommissioned her in 1975.

Restoration Process

Today, LV-112 is berthed at the Boston Harbor Shipyard & Marina (BHS&M) in East Boston, and is a featured landmark on the historic “Boston Harborwalk” trail. The BHS&M is the former Bethlehem Atlantic Works Shipyard, which was very active during World War II. The shipyard includes a dry dock facility where in 1968 LV-112 was in for repairs and maintenance, approximately 100 yards from where she currently is berthed. The former Bethlehem facility is still used for yacht construction, ship and boat repair. However the dry dock is no longer in use. Nantucket Lightship/LV-112 is currently undergoing restoration anticipated to take three years to complete. The USLM’s goal is to restore the ship’s structure and mechanical systems so she can operate under her own power again on a limited basis. LV-112 was operational through 1998. Her engines last ran approximately six years ago and have been mothballed since. The highest priority is to stabilize the hull from further salt-water corrosion. However, restoration of the ship’s electrical systems and inspecting and surveying the ship’s plumbing and heating systems has begun.

The restoration process will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 will include placing her in dry dock to clean the hull, conduct a more comprehensive marine survey of her hull below the waterline that will include an audio-gauge survey of her hull, conduct necessary repairs and prepare the hull for new paint and install new zinc anodes. This work will be done at the Fitzgerald Shipyard in Chelsea in Boston. Phase 1 will also include restoring the entire exterior of LV-112. Phase 2 will include restoring all the ship’s engines and mechanical systems. So far approximately 75 percent of the ship’s lighting, her on-board alarm systems, public-address system and voice activated/sound powered telephones have been restored. We have several retired dedicated volunteers, who are retired Naval shipyard marine electricians and communication experts, who are helping to restore LV-112’s shipboard electrical and mechanical systems. In fact, one of our volunteers currently works for NAVSEA Systems.

We also are fortunate to have help from the volunteer group working on the Fletcher Class Destroyer Cassin Young at the Charlestown Navy Yard. There has been no lack of volunteers coming forward to help with LV-112. Our volunteer group also consists of former LV-112 crewmembers and other former lightship sailors. Much of the up-front work involves cleaning out all the extraneous junk that accumulated over the years. A large part of our work also involves taking inventory of all the ship’s contents, which include extra parts, log books and LV-112 blueprints. It is amazing how much historic documentation and brand-new extra parts, stored for repair work, has been left on the ship.

Help Save LV-112

We estimate the total restoration costs for LV-112 to be approximately $1 million. In addition, we are fortunate to tap into professional volunteer services. We estimate that it will require a $10-million endowment to maintain and care for LV-112 in perpetuity. Nantucket Lightship LV-112 is a time capsule and important National Historic Landmark that represents a significant segment of our nation’s service, culture, commerce, ingenuity and state-of-the-art craftsmanship. LV-112 is still at high risk, and funds must continue to be raised to help her survive. All funding to date has been from the generosity of private and corporate donors. Information on the preservation is available by logging onto www.NantucketLightshipLV-112.org.

About the Author

Robert Mannino, JR., of South Hampton, New Hampshire, is president of the United States Lightship Museum and is spearheading the effort to save Nantucket Lightship/LV-112. He is a marketing communications and public relations consultant, specializing in development programs for nonprofit organizations including maritime museums, historical societies and shipbuilding preservation projects. His experience also includes chairing municipal historical commissions.
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