



Sea Girt Lighthouse: The Community Beacon (Landmarks)

Bill Dunn

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The Jersey Shore lighthouse that stands in Sea Girt has been a guiding beacon for seafarers since the end of the nineteenth century. A revolutionary lens, designed by Frenchman Augustin-Jean Fresnel, captured the flickering flame of a burning wick and projected a unique flash that could be seen for fifteen miles. The genius of Fresnel's design, on full display at the lighthouse, impresses as much now as it did in the days of sail. Many colorful characters were put in command here, including a Civil War soldier, a pioneering woman, an inventor and, for one day, the twenty-year-old daughter of a keeper. Sea Girt Lighthouse played an important role in defending the coast during World War II, when U.S. Coast Guard troops stood watch in the tower and patrolled the beaches. After its decommissioning, the lighthouse served for over two decades as the town library and recreation center, but by 1981, it was at risk of being closed and sold. That's when a group of community members--the Sea Girt Lighthouse Citizens Committee--successfully fought to save and preserve the shore landmark. Today, the lighthouse is the community beacon, alive with activity and attracting visitors who flock from around the country and the world to experience its history.

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