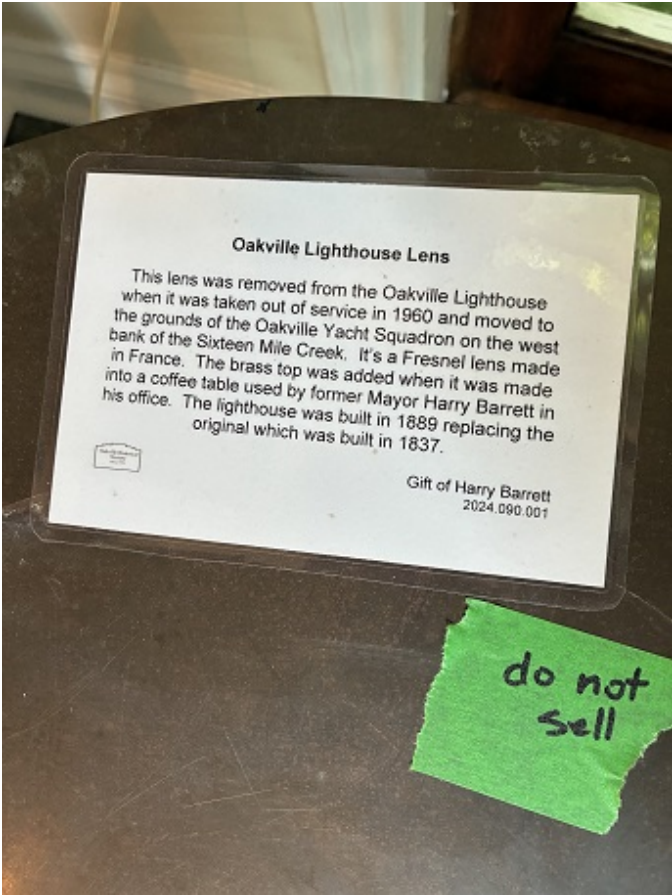




Oakville Fresnel lens
Nearby Port Credit speaks of a 6th order Fresnel lens in their similar sized lighthouse.

Credit: NSLPS - DC July 2025



2nd Life as a coffee table

Imagine using a Fresnel lens as a coffee table! That is exactly what happened in Oakville, ON when their lighthouse was replaced by a modern aid to navigation in 1960. Now sitting in a local museum, the Fresnel lens minus coffee mugs looks remarkably good but no one knew what order (size) it was. The same thing happened in an open house at the Akaroa Lighthouse in New Zealand. The guides didn't even know the lens came in different sizes! So much for "The Invention that Saved a Million Ships", an article by Adrienne Bernhard! The concept of such a lens was proposed in 1748 but it was only in 1822 that the civil engineer, Augustine Fresnel, fabricated the first lens. Many NS lighthouses replaced their simple reflector for this complex lens that shone a brilliant light when the lamp was lit inside it. A first order Fresnel lens is the biggest made and the one removed from Sambro Island Lighthouse in 1967 now sits in the reception area of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.



Gilbert's Cove NS Fresnel lens
Sign says 7th order lens
Credit: NSLPS – DC July 2023



1st order Sambro Island Fresnel Lens
Credit: Maritime Museum of the Atlantic