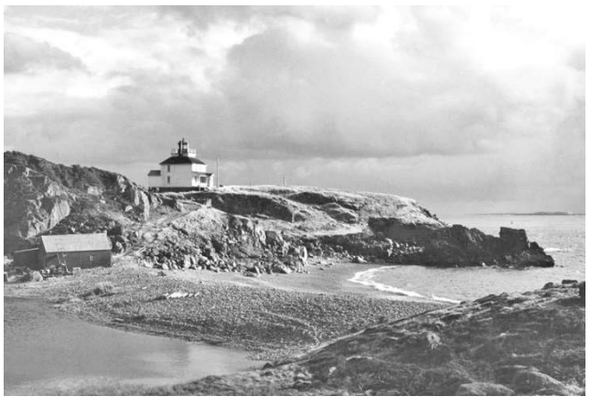


West Scaterie Island boat ramp
Credit: Nova Scotia Archives



Main a Dieu sheltered cove
Credit: Nova Scotia Archives

Most lightkeepers on Nova Scotia islands or isolated areas of its coast had a station boat that was drawn out up a slipway by manpower or a winch and stored in a boat shed. With luck there was a sheltered cove nearby the lighthouse. However it was not unusual to hear of a violent storm destroying the shed, slipway or boat and at times all three!

A boat permitted the lightkeeper to get to the mainland to buy groceries, get or send mail, deliver children to school, or to fetch relatives coming for a stay at the lighthouse. It might have been used to go fishing to feed the family or even to rescue mariners in distress.

When lightkeepers, Wentie and Maggie Boutilier, arrived at Croucher 's Island on St Margaret's Bay in 1922, they found the station boat to be old and leaking. Wentie wanted a safer boat for his family and he designed one that would be easy to pull up the slipway. A local boat builder quoted fifty dollars to build it.

However the Department of Transport did not agree and instead had one built at a cost of forty dollars using what they no doubt believed to be superior official blueprints. In typical government style, its delivery was delayed from fall to spring and Wentie had to borrow a boat from a fisherman to get around. Finally when the new station boat arrived by supply ship, it was heavy and hard for one person to handle.

This boat was said to be poorly built as it was impractical and Wentie got a motorboat in the spring of 1925 probably at his own expense. Yet shortly afterwards on a beautiful morning Maggie loaded her three children into the government rowboat and pulled the oars for three miles to go visit family on the mainland. There she told an astonished brother-on-law not to worry, that Wentie would bring them home in the motorboat and tow the rowboat behind it which he did.




Red dot is Croucher's Island
Credit: Google Maps



Croucher's Island Lighthouse looked like this one on Strawberry Island ON Credit: Lighthouse Friends