1st Pictou Island East 1901

Pictou Island West 1907
Credit: Library and Archives Canada

Pictou Island South 1906

Pictou Island is a 45-minute boat ride from Caribou Nova Scotia and once boasted a population of 40 households, a church, school, community hall, post office and three lighthouses. The first lighthouse was built in 1853 at the east end of the island and was a white pepper-shaker style tower. The second lighthouse was a tall wooden octagonal tower erected in 1905 at the west end of the island. The third lighthouse was another pepper-shaker style tower that acted as a harbour light near the government wharf in 1907 and is still shining.

In 1930 the first lighthouse was replaced with a lightkeeper's dwelling with a lantern on top of its roof. The house's rectangular shape made it unique as others with that style had a square footprint.

In the 1960s it was decided to replace the lighthouses at both ends of the island with metal skeletal aids to navigation as automation was now the game plan. No doubt it was thought that no one would want these lighthouses as the lovely octagonal tower was burned down and the rectangular dwelling with a rooftop lantern "removed?".

If only this decision had been taken in 1990s when lighthouse preservation started, we might have seen three lighthouses on Pictou Island today.

2nd Pictou Island East 1930
Credit: Canadian Coast Guard

Location of Pictou Island Lighthouses
Credit: NSLPS