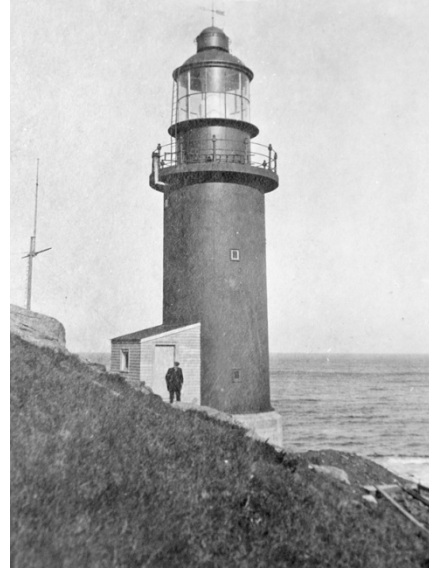


The Travels of Cape Race Lighthouse across sea and land
Facebook Post October 5 2026



Cape Race Lighthouse, NL
Credit: Library and Archives Canada



Cape North Lighthouse, NS 1911
Credit: Library and Archives Canada

Starting in the 1800s Nova Scotia and Newfoundland began building lighthouses around their coastline to keep mariners safe on the seas. Both provinces had vast forests and skilled shipbuilders. Yet Nova Scotia used wood to build their lighthouses while Newfoundland mostly used interlocking iron-plates to erect theirs. Why the difference?

Newfoundland tended to build their lighthouses on top of cliffs that were inaccessible by land. It was easier to order from England a pre-fabricated iron-cast lighthouse that once checked out by engineers could be disassembled for shipping. Upon arrival in Newfoundland, curved sections weighing $\frac{3}{4}$ of a ton each could be hauled up the side of cliffs by a small crew of men and then re-assembled on the spot using about 800 bolts.

In 1856 the Newfoundland Government successfully campaigned for the British Parliament to pay for an iron-cast lighthouse at Cape Race on the southeast tip of the Avalon Peninsula. When Newfoundland later stated that shipping tolls didn't pay for its maintenance, its ownership was transferred in 1886 to the Canadian Government with a lump sum payment of a million dollars!

When the Cape Race Lighthouse was replaced in 1906 with a reinforced concrete tower, the iron-plated lighthouse was disassembled and shipped to Cape North on the northeast tip of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. There it replaced the existing lighthouse in 1911 and shone until 1978 when it was then decided to move the tower to a new location.

That new location was on the grounds of the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa, Ontario. For the third time the 800 bolts were removed and the iron plates sandblasted and painted before being erected for the 4th and hopefully final time.

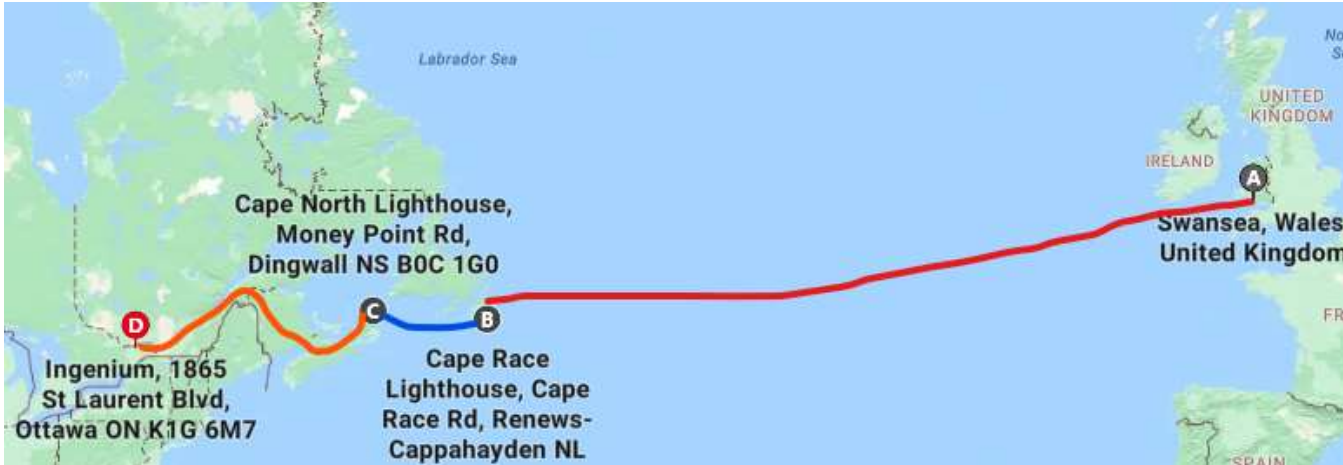


Dismantling Cape North Lighthouse 1980
Credit: Canadian Coast Guard



On the museum grounds in Ottawa, ON
Credit: Canada Science & Technology Museum

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Life travels of the Cape Race Lighthouse
Credit: Bing Maps