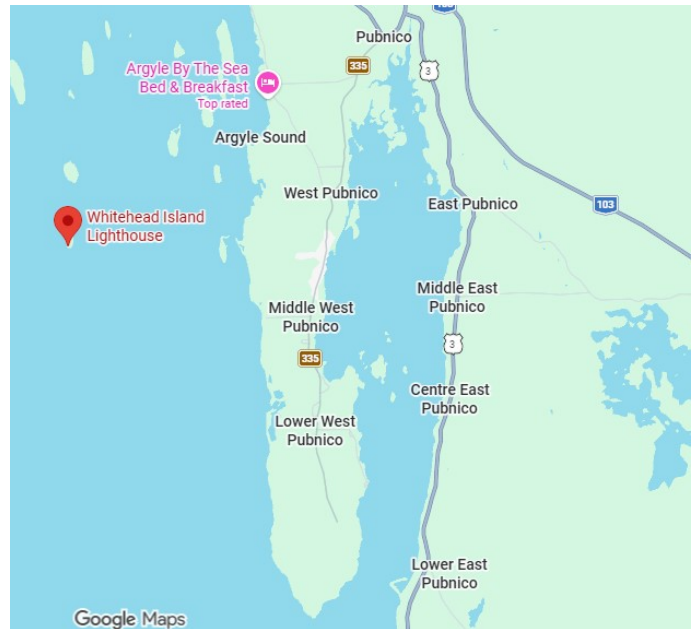




Whitehead Island Lighthouse pre-2017
Credit: Lighthouse Friends – Alix d’Entremont



Location of Whitehead Island
Credit: Google Map

A white wooden square tapered lighthouse with an attached lightkeeper’s house was built in 1874 on Whitehead Island west of the Pubnicos in Yarmouth County. While the island may have looked white from a distance, the French-speaking locals called it “Ile Rouge” (Red Island) as the lighthouse shone a red light in its early years.

No matter the name, the lighthouse leaked badly and there was little fresh water on the island. So in 1875 the island became a test site to see if shingles were more waterproof than clapboard siding and if a brick cistern in the basement that filled with rainwater pouring off the roof made up for the lack of water. They were and it became common practice to build new lighthouses that included both these features.

In the 1950s the lightkeeper’s 15-year old son was home alone when the lighthouse was hit by lightning. It set the gallery deck on fire and the lighthouse burned to the ground. The next year a tall square concrete tower was built with a separate lightkeeper’s house. It was this house that was towed on a barge to a new home in 1986 when the lighthouse was automated. Its journey over the water was so unusual that students were let out of schools to watch it float by!

In 2017 the fog horn building was removed from the base of lighthouse and two red bands painted around the lighthouse tower to tell it apart from other lighthouses in the area.



Whitehead Island Lighthouse 1892
Credit: Library and Archives Canada



Whitehead Island Lighthouse 2017
Credit: Lighthouse Friends – Christine Cardaci