



# THE Lightkeeper

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

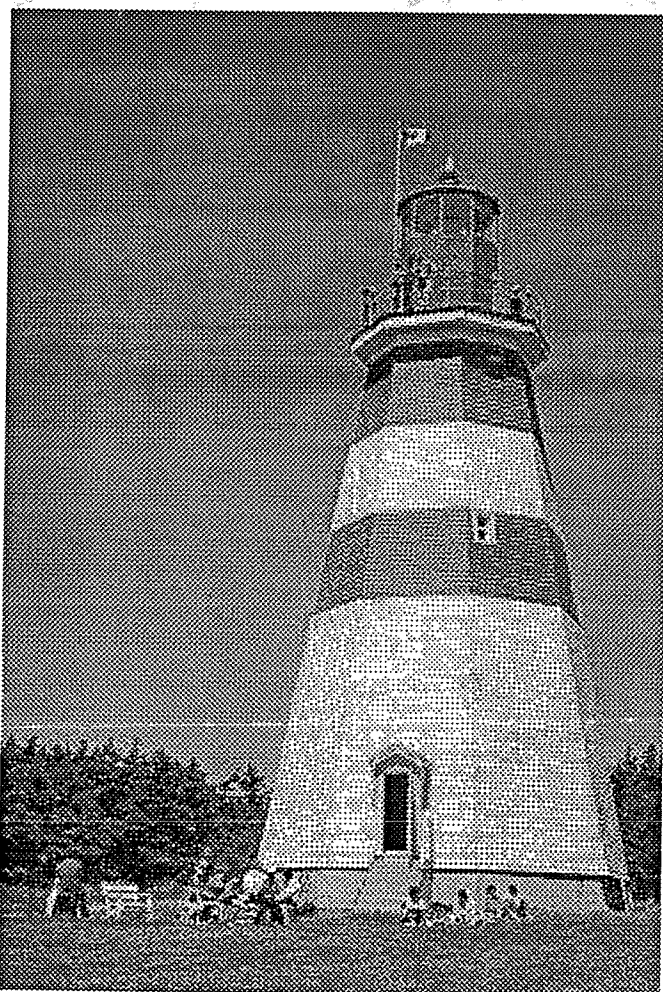
Vol. 5, No.2, June, 1998

The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: to promote and support preservation and awareness of Nova Scotian lighthouses; to assist community groups in leasing or taking ownership of lighthouse sites; to provide access to written research and photographic documentation and to initiate oral history research; and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

**MEETINGS:** 7:00 pm Fourth Wednesday of the month, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax.

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.EDnet.ns.ca/educ/heritage/nsllps>

**PATRONS:** Rip Irwin, Dexter and Susan Penfield **AFFILIATES:** Age of Sail Heritage Centre, Cape Sable Historical Society, Five Islands Lighthouse Society, Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society, Mabou Harbour Authority, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Municipality of Queens Tourism & Development, Nova Scotia Lighthouse Interpretive Centre, South Shore Tourism Association, Spencers Island Community Association, Walton Lighthouse Committee, Yarmouth County Tourist Association



Seal Island Lighthouse, 1990.

Photo © Chris Mills

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## WELCOME ABOARD!

The following new members have joined NSLPS since March, 1998: Martin & Elizabeth Bushell, Jean Knowles, Christiane Poulin & Family, Stephen Penny, Todd White & Family, Christine Rock, Gerald Ferguson, Marlene MacKinnon & Ian Cosgrove, Loraine Beattie, James Delaney & Family, Don Burry, Dale Venoit, Maureen & Finley Penney

## LIGHTHOUSE TRIPS

### Chebucto Head

June 20: 10 - 12 noon

Bring a bag lunch if you wish.

Join Jim Guptill the last keeper at the Head for tours of the tower and the facility as far as the engine room and Vessel Traffic Radar. Take a short hike down to the site of the old fog alarm for a talk by Don Gallagher whose father was the keeper years

**Cost:** Donation to NSLPS

### Lighthouses of the 'Tusket Islands

July 18, rain date July 19

A unique opportunity to view the natural beauty of the Tusket Islands onboard the lovely "Miss Eden". You will view several lighthouses, and have lunch ashore on one of the islands. The lights we will see may include (weather dependent): Cape Forchu, Green Island, Candlebox Island and Pease Island.

**Departure:** 10:00 am from Government Wharf, Pinkney's Point, Yarmouth County

**Cost:** \$15 for members, \$20 for non members

**What to Bring:** Lifejacket, lawn chair, warm jacket, cold lunch

**Registration:** Prior to July 4. This trip will be limited to the first 25 persons. Contact Tim Hall at 461-2495 (after 5 PM) or email [halltj@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:halltj@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

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## Georges Island

**Sunday August 16: 9:00 am - 1:30 PM**

Boat leaves from the Cable Wharf

Tour the lighthouse, old keeper's dwelling and mysterious underground fortifications with Dale Veinot, who grew up on the island as daughter of longtime keeper Victor Matthews. Bring a bag lunch.

**NSLPS Members \$10. Non-members \$15.**

**Registration required.** Call Dan Conlin 424-6442. Call early because this trip fills up quickly.

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## Seal Island

**Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 12 & 13**

**Weather dates Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 19 & 20**

This trip includes a 2 hour trip on a Cape Island boat to the remote island 18 miles offshore from Cape Sable Island. Explore the rocky coastline, shipwrecks and sandy beaches, have a tour of Nova Scotia's oldest timber lighthouse and stay overnight in the fishermen's bunkhouse. (See page 5.)

**NSLPS Members \$60. Non-members \$70.**

**Registration required.** Call Kathy Brown 479-3115 from 10:00 am June 27. Leave the time of your call if you get the answering machine. Call early because places on this trip are limited.

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## Sambro Island

NSLPS sponsored trips will start after repairs are completed. In the meantime, call Tony Gillis, Ketch Harbour, 868-1212, to arrange trips to view progress of the work.

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## Halifax Harbour

Mike Tilley, 465-4563, runs the ferry to McNabs Island and does harbour tours. The NSLPS McNabs Island tour takes place in October.

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## LIGHTHOUSES TO VISIT

*Tim Hall and Kathy Brown*

### **Mabou Lighthouse Route 19, Cape Breton**

The Mabou Harbour Authority has obtained a lease on this historic 1884, former rear range light. They are presently engaged in research, looking for photographs and other artifacts to compliment the light tower. On June 28, the grand opening and fund-raiser will be held. The planned festivities include a lobster, crab boil and corn boil, war canoe races and a "rubber boot" Olympics. If you are planning a trip to Cape Breton this summer, make a point to stop by and wish them well. The tower will be open daily throughout the summer, commencing June 28.

### **Port Bickerton Route 7 & 211, Eastern Shore**

Located on the rocky Eastern Shore in Guysborough County, this site is an example of the growing interest in Nova Scotia's lighthouses. A Lighthouse Interpretive Centre is situated in the former lightkeeper's dwelling here.

Photo displays and information about many of the lighthouses in Nova Scotia complement other local attractions.

### **Burntcoat Head Route 215, Cobequid Bay**

This is another lighthouse in a picnic park with a trail down to the beach (Watch out for the high tides!) This is a replica of the original light, one of those which was a keepers house with the light tower atop the roof. There is a panel display of the lighthouse history and geology of the area. Unattended, but open in July and August.

### **Walton Lighthouse Route 215, Minas Basin**

On the shores of Walton Harbour, in Hants County, sits a picturesque and historic lighthouse. Built in 1873, this lighthouse is the last original light in Hants County. It is a popular site that includes a wonderful view of Cape Blomidon and the Minas Basin. Open to the public from late May until October 15, this site also includes a short walking trail to a scenic look-off. The tower is unattended, but photographs and a brief history are on display to the public. This is a wonderful place to stop and photograph the beauty and history of the Hants Shore.

### **Five Islands Lighthouse Route 2, Minas Basin**

Located in Colchester County, on the north shore of the Minas Basin, this lighthouse, a fine example of a traditional Nova Scotia style wooden lighthouse, is under the care of the Five Islands Lighthouse Preservation Society. It has been moved to a safer location in the Sand Point Campground. The tower has been restored and interpretive signage and photographs installed. This lighthouse is part of the Fundy Shore EcoTour.

### **Port Greville Lighthouse Route 2, near Parrsboro**

The Port Greville Lighthouse is almost home! (See March *Lightkeeper* for the story about the return of the light from the Coast Guard College in Sydney, NS.) As I write, the cement pad for the foundation is being poured. The crane is going up to Sydney in the next few days. By the time you read this the lighthouse will be back in Port Greville, its home community. It will be at the Age of Sail Museum and available for viewing from about June 1. It will be opened up just as soon as it is painted! So, don't miss visiting Nova Scotia's most traveled lighthouse. See the fine museum and enjoy the tea room and gift shop as well.

### **Spencers Island Route 2 near Cape D'Or**

This light is nearby Port Greville and worth dropping by to see if it is open because there is a museum about shipbuilding in the area inside. There's a nice beach nearby and it's on the route between the Cape Chignecto nature reserve and Port Greville.

### **Cape D'Or Lighthouse Route 2, Minas Channel**

This is the only place in Nova Scotia where you can stay in the former lightkeeper's house. Cape D'Or is "down the road" from Spencer's island and Port Greville. It's a spectacular site high on the cliffs at the entrance to the Minas Channel, scoured by tide rips. You can stay there

from May 15 until Oct. 15. Call Harold Nuttall, (902) 392-2933 (home) or (902) 664-2108 (on the Cape) for more information.

**Gilbert Point Route 1, near Weymouth**

There is a tea room in this pretty little light on St. Mary's Bay.

**Cape Forchu Route 3, near Yarmouth**

The "Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society", are expecting another banner season at the expanded Cape Forchu facility. After the huge success of last summer, where nearly 10,000 visitors signed the guest book, the early signs are for an even busier 1998. In beautiful keeper's dwelling you will find the Welcoming Centre and an expanded museum where all of the rooms have been furnished with photographs and artifacts. On the site there is a gift shop, canteen, hiking trails and picnic areas. A new display featuring the "Ferries to New England", is an ideal backdrop to view the present day ferries, including the "CAT". When you are traveling the South Shore, make sure you "Come and See Us!"

**Seal Island Lighthouse Museum Route 3, Barrington**

This museum is a replica of the top half of the Seal Island lighthouse which is on an offshore island. (Featured in this issue.) The museum is crowned by the original iron tower from the lighthouse with the original Fresnel lens as well. You can climb up and get a close look after you view the memorabilia and display about the lighthouses of the area on the main floor. Open daily from June 1 to Labour Day from 9:30 to 5:30 pm and on Sundays from 1:30 - 5:30

**Fort Point Lighthouse Park, Route 3, Liverpool**

Fort Point Lighthouse Park in Liverpool is open for the season. The lighthouse is staffed by period-dressed guides who are very knowledgeable of the lighthouse, privateering and local history. Be sure to visit the interpretive centre inside the lighthouse and enjoy a picnic in the tree-lined ocean front park. Scavenger hunts are available for the young, and young at heart. Local artists will be on-site creating and displaying their work. During the Privateer Days festival (June 25-28) a re-enactment wedding will be held adjacent to the lighthouse - everyone is welcome to attend. Dress in 1870's attire if you wish! For information, call the lighthouse at (902) 354-5260 or Queens County Tourism & Development at (902) 354-5741.

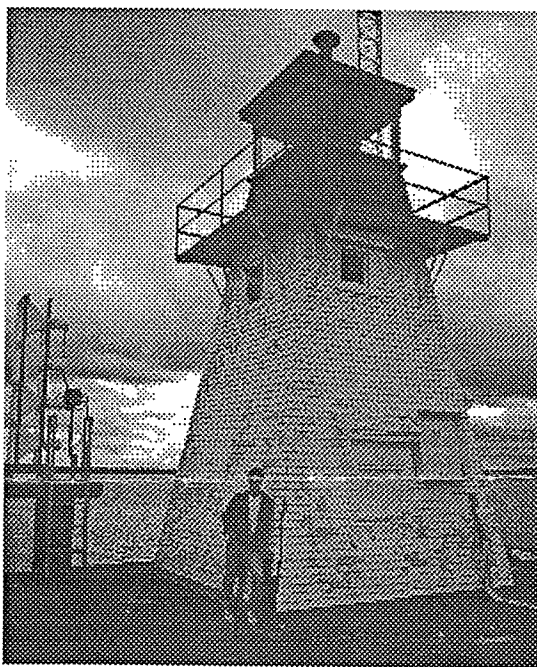
*A Locator Map with the sites of 160 Nova Scotian Lighthouses, keyed to accessibility, is available from the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax \$13.99 plus tax, or by post, \$20.00, including tax and handling.*

**A lighthouse photo collector would like to buy, trade or share: Harry Hough, 4302 D Lake Underhill Rd., Orlando, Florida 32803. 407-894-6604**

## LIGHTHOUSE ALTERNATE USE AT A CROSSROADS

*Dan Conlin*

The Coast Guard's efforts to foster community alternate use for their Maritime region lighthouses have taken a worrisome turn. As many NSLPS readers will know, the Coast Guard has worked for two years to make it possible for community groups to buy, lease or license lighthouse property. However community representatives at an April 16 meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee on Lighthouse Alternate Use were told that the process has encountered serious roadblocks. It was hoped that the inauguration of the Alternate Use Program would be part of the dramatic April announcement halting destaffing of BC lighthouses. However, it was left out, depriving the process of important public support from the minister. At the same time Treasury Board remains rigid on disposal procedures for lights, insisting on full market value. This has angered community groups such as Yarmouth, since Nova Scotia communities now have to pay for the privilege of maintaining lights on the East Coast, whereas on the West Coast, the Coast Guard is retaining keepers to do this work.



In 1987 the peeling paint on Battery Point Light near Lunenburg was evidence of the results of destaffing and neglect. Photo © Chris Mills.

Two other recent developments are hindering community use of light stations. The Coast Guard is interpreting a recent BC court decision as requiring them to seek permission from aboriginal organizations in the region before licensing, leasing or selling any federal property. There is also renewed concern about environment assessment on lighthouse sites, which so far

were seen as mostly free of hazards but lead-based paint may turn out to be an issue.

While all these delays mount up, a greatly diminished maintenance budget for lighthouses leaves many literally rotting away in spite of community interest in maintaining many of them. From the Coast Guard's point of view, other routes may have to be taken. One option is that of a Lighthouse Preservation Act, which would result in a change to federal property regulations putting a heritage value to lighthouses beyond the current Treasury Board policy which sees them as valuable waterfront real estate to be sold to the highest bidder. The other route would be the Maine Lights model where a large number of lights are transferred to an agency which acts as property manager and lines up community groups instead of the Coast Guard.

NSLPS members strongly favour the first approach and at our Annual General Meeting on April 22, a committee was formed, with NSLPS past president Dan Conlin, former keeper Chris Mills and Port Bickerton's David Curry, to seek allies in lobbying for a Lighthouse Preservation Act. Meetings of the committee begin in June.

We are not happy with the second option. Handing lights to an agency that does not as yet even exist, amounts to privatization, putting the burden on unknown players and adding a new layer of bureaucracy. This option would intensify the perception that the East Coast is being treated differently and unfairly in comparison to the West.

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## LIGHTHOUSE RESEARCH TIPS

*Dan Conlin*

### Where to Find

### Historic Photographs of Lighthouses

Historic images of lighthouses are crucial to assisting restoration or conservation of a lighthouse site. The usual route to find them is through former keepers, local residents, collectors and area historical societies. There are some large public collections of lighthouse photographs that can provide a easily accessible images.

The Public Archives of Nova Scotia (recently re-named Nova Scotia Archives and Record Management) has a large, and mostly unpublished collection of lighthouse photographs from the 1890s to the 1930s. It is called the Department of Transport Lighthouse collection and has hundred of photos taken by lighthouse inspectors and engineers. They often show keepers and seldom recorded details such as fog alarms and boathouses. Another valuable source is the Clara Dennis Collection. She was a travel writer who visited and photographed dozens of lighthouses in the 1930s. A small number of lighthouse photographs can also be found in the Notman Collection, a famous Halifax photograph studio.

The Nova Scotia Museum also has a considerable

number of lighthouse photographs, many of them taken by the photographer Wetmore in the 1950s. The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic also has a selection of lighthouse photographs in its various collections.

Lighthouse buffs traveling to Ottawa might wish to explore the large, but almost completely uncatalogued, collection of Lighthouse photographs at the National Archives in Ottawa, mainly in the Public Works Department photo albums.

If you find any large public collections of lighthouse photographs, be sure to let NSLPS know about it.

All three of the following institutions are run by the Province of Nova Scotia. Photocopies are about 30 cents a page and photographic prints cost from \$10 to \$20. How to find them:

**1) Nova Scotia Archives and Record Management:**

6016 University Avenue (at Robie) Halifax, B3H 1W4, 424-6060. Open 8:30 to 4:30 Monday to Friday.

**2) Nova Scotia Museum:**

1747 Summer Street (at Bell Road), Halifax, B3H 3A6. Library - call to make appointment 424-7198 .

**3) Maritime Museum of the Atlantic:**

1675 Lower Water Street (at Prince), Halifax, B3J 1S3. Call to make appointment to view photographs in library 424-7490.

NSLPS has prepared a 20 page index of known lighthouse photographs at these three locations. Call, write or e-mail us if you want to check for images of your favourite light. You can also get a copy of the list by sending \$5.00 for copying and postage.

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Other NSLPS research aids:

A Guide to Sessional Papers \$2.00

A Guide to Lighthouse Oral History \$2.00

Both \$of the above 3.00

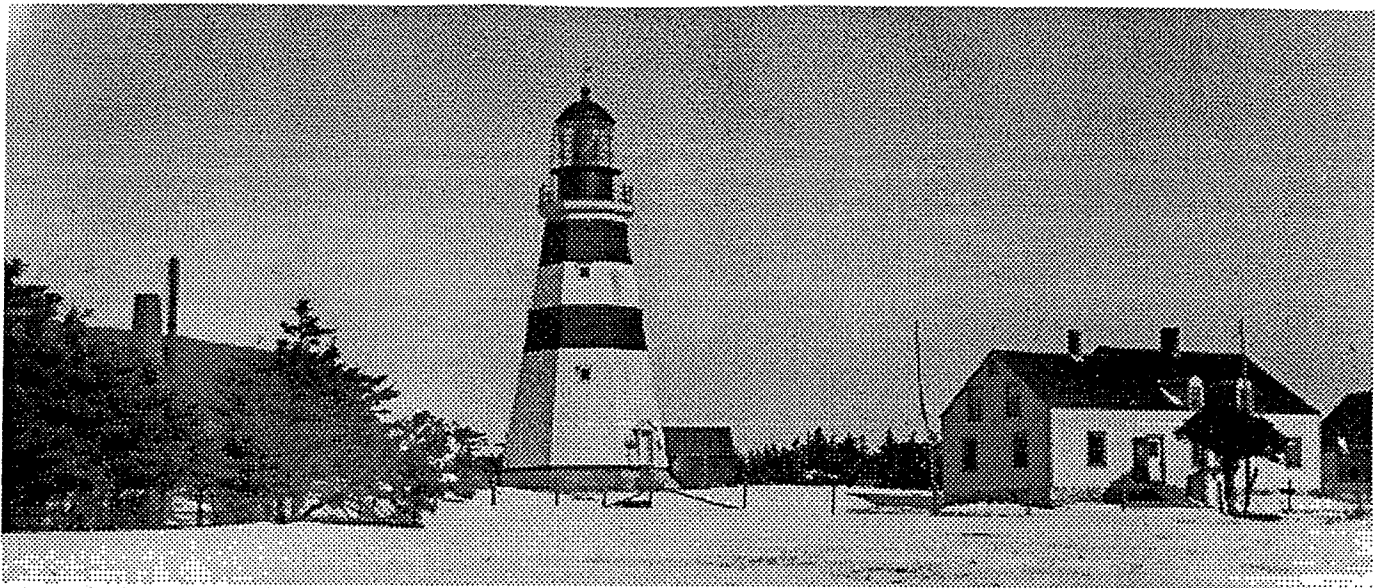
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## SAMBRO REPAIRS UPDATE

We asked the Coast Guard for the latest news on the much needed repairs to Sambro Lighthouse. Here is the answer from Glen Fry:

"The Technical Services Branch of Coast Guard has scheduled a construction restoration project for the summer of 1998 of a portion of the lighthouse structure at Sambro Lightstation. The scope of this project is for the replacement of the lantern deck plus restoration of the deteriorated exterior woodwork.

The restoration of the deck and exterior structures has been screened by heritage Canada prior to implementation of these works. This work will be publicly advertised from June 9/98 to June 30/98 and the site work is scheduled to take place from July 15/98 to October 15/98."



Seal Island Lightstation, c. 1930, showing the lantern which is now at the Seal island Lighthouse Museum, Barrington, NS, and the original keeper's house. The steam fog alarm building is on the left. You can see the stack of the boiler which still stands on the island. *Photo Courtesy Mary Nickerson.*

## SEAL ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

*Chris Mills*

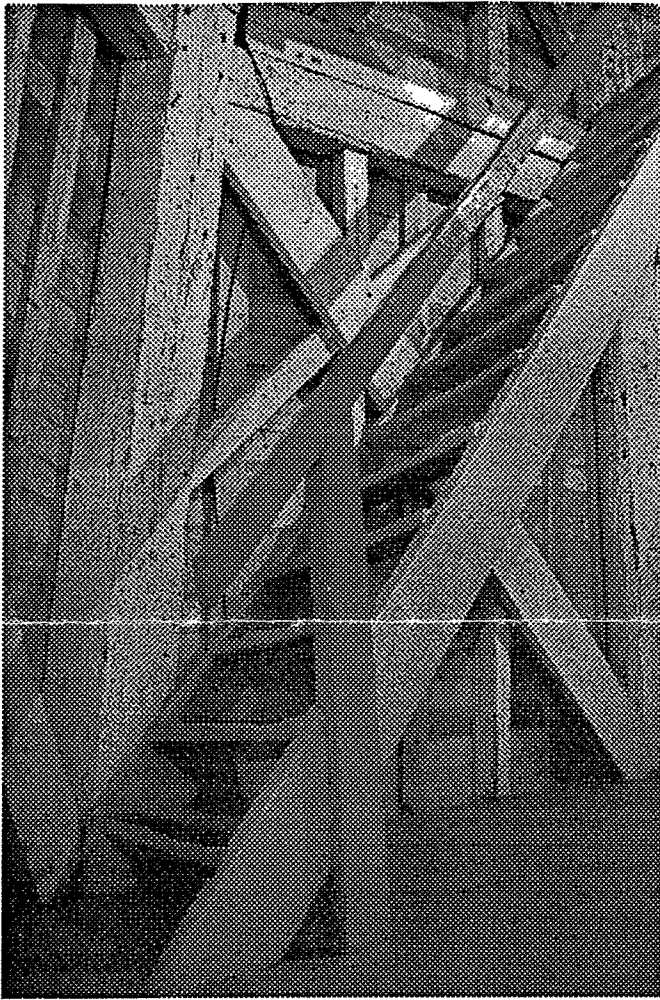
Seal Island lies off the south west tip of Nova Scotia at "the elbow of the Bay of Fundy", where the broad mouth of the bay meets the waters of the open Atlantic. For more than three centuries storms, fog and powerful tides have conspired to wreck scores of ships on the island and its surrounding ledges. At least 160 vessels have come to grief in the area, making Seal Island historically one of Atlantic Canada's most dangerous areas for shipping, along with Sable and St. Paul's Islands. Although no major wrecks have occurred since the 1940s, the waters around Seal Island continue to command the respect and caution of fishermen and mariners.

Slightly less than three miles long and between a half and one mile wide, the island is eighteen miles west of Cape Sable Island. A modern Cape Island fishing boat can make the trip from Clark's Harbour in two hours, weather permitting. From a distance, the island is unremarkable, a pencil thin smudge on the horizon. Most of the island consists of glacial till, thickly covered with stunted, wind blown spruce trees. At the north end there are steep gravelly bluffs above the shingle beach. A long sandy beach stretches between granite and gravel bluffs on the east side, and between the north and south ends a long barrier beach and a series of grassy dunes define a brackish pond. Within the forest there are quiet glades where moss covered ground and the winding paths trodden by generations of sheep create an atmosphere of mystery and magic. Hot summer days, placid seas and expansive golden sand beaches belie the vicious storms which led to the destruction of many fine sailing ships in the days before the lighthouse was established.

Before anyone lived on Seal Island, shipwrecked mariners lucky enough to have reached its shores alive often died of starvation and exposure during the harsh winter months. By the early years of the nineteenth century a grim spring tradition had evolved, as preachers and residents from Yarmouth and Barrington came to the island to find and bury the dead. There was much concern about the loss of life (on one occasion 21 people were buried in shallow graves in a single day) and in 1823, two families, the Hichens and the Crowells settled on the island in the hopes of assisting the unfortunate souls cast ashore during the winter storms. Richard Hichens himself had been shipwrecked on Cape Sable in 1817 and later married Mary Crowell, who had heard firsthand many stories of the deaths on Seal Island from her father, a Barrington preacher.

After settling on the island, Richard Hichens and Edmund Crowell soon began to petition the provincial government for money to construct a wharf and "for funds for two good boats so that they might better serve shipwrecked sea men." In 1827 a wharf was completed, making it easier for lifeboats to attend to rescues in the area. Later the same year, at the urging of Hichens and Crowell, Nova Scotia governor Sir James Kempt surveyed a location for the erection of a lighthouse 500 metres from the shore near the southern tip of the island. Construction began in 1830; the large wood structure was built of massive squared timbers, 47 feet long, framed and set in a rock and mortar foundation. The lantern floor was reinforced with heavy wood knees, and stout cross members braced the rest of the tower. On the night of





The interior of the Seal Island Light showing the original framing and beams. *Photo © Chris Mills.*

November 28, 1831 the fixed light was lit for the first time. A daughter was born to Richard and Mary that same evening, and so began a family lightkeeping tradition that would last more than a century on Seal Island.

It is said that no mariner perished for want of assistance after the Hichens and Crowells settled on Seal Island. With the establishment of lifesaving services and the building of the lighthouse, there was a significant reduction in the loss of vessels around the island although wrecks continued to occur well into the 20th century. Winifred Hamilton, Edmund Crowell's great granddaughter, lived on the island until her death in 1982 at the age of 93. She remembered well clambering aboard a number of vessels run aground on the island, and her house at the east side village was full of dishes, oil lamps and bottles from ships wrecked over the years. In time ownership of the island was passed to Winifred and then to her daughter Mary Nickerson, who still owns a portion of the southern end.

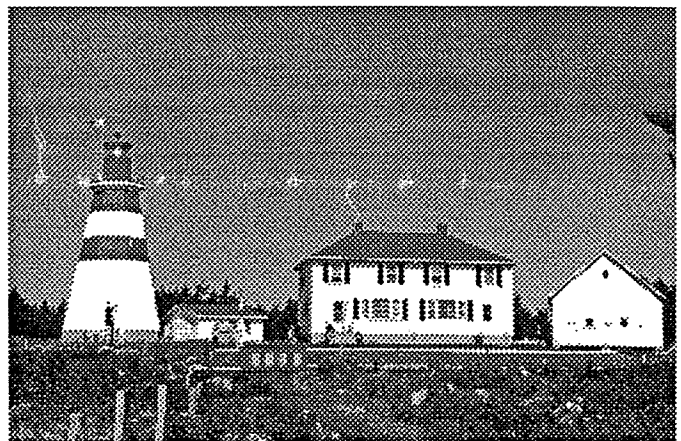
In 1870 a steam fog whistle was established near the lighthouse for use during periods of thick weather. In 1900 a new building was built on the shore and the whistle installed there. A few years later a diaphone was

introduced, remaining in service until it was replaced by electronic horns in 1973. In 1975 the fog alarm building was declared surplus and torn down; Mary Nickerson used some of the wood to build a house in the east side village.

In 1902 the original fixed light was replaced with a second order revolving lens, manufactured by Barbier, Benard & Turenne in Paris.<sup>1</sup> The original lens had used seal oil as a light source, and notes by Winnie Hamilton indicate that the light was changed to a kerosene wick lamp in 1892 and to kerosene vapour in 1902. The light was electrified in 1959. By 1978, the Coast Guard had voiced concerns about the deteriorating state of the iron lantern and it was removed that year.<sup>2</sup> A DCB 36 rotating aeronautical beacon was installed in a new aluminum lantern- this apparatus continues in use today.

Over the years, the number of shipwrecks and related loss of life had declined and by the beginning of the first World War the last lifeboat was hauled ashore for good. The lighthouse remained an important installation for shipping transiting the Bay of Fundy to the eastern seaboard of the US, and for fishermen working the surrounding waters. As late as the 1960s boats travelling to Seal from Clark's Harbour would shut down once in a while to listen for the powerful blast of the diaphone, and then resume course for the island.

By the early 1970s, radar and LORAN systems were becoming common in the smaller boats, and the Canadian Coast Guard began to implement their lightstation automation program. At Seal Island the light and horn were semi-automated, and the duties of the keepers reduced to general maintenance. It was a drastic change from the early days when manually operated equipment



The lightstation before destaffing, showing the duplex keeper's house and on the right the barn which is still standing. *Photo © Chris Mills.*

and watch duties kept the keepers busy 24 hours a day.

The early keepers had been a dedicated lot, as much through necessity as choice. It was a full time job to maintain the light, fog whistle and buildings, as well as raise animals and crops for survival. In 1901, Barrington

Notes in a local paper remarked that "John Crowell [Winifred Hamilton's father], lightkeeper from Seal Island, is taking a much needed vacation, his place being filled by Squire Covert of North East Point." It was to be a long time before Crowell took another holiday. His daughter claimed that between 1902 and 1917 John Crowell did not take one day of holidays, nor did he miss one watch at the lightstation. Crowell served as keeper of the light for a total of 36 years. With his retirement in 1927, the light passed out of Crowell hands, although Winifred's husband was appointed keeper and served until 1939 when ill health forced him to leave the island.

By 1986 the keepers' families had been moved off the island and the station changed to rotational status, with two teams of two keepers working alternate 28 day shifts. In 1989 work crews from the Coast Guard Base in Saint John began constructing a new engine room by the tower and installing remote monitoring equipment; by the summer of 1990 the work was complete. At 7:30 in the morning of the 17th of October, lightkeeper James Nickerson transmitted the station's last weather report to Yarmouth Coast Guard Radio. That afternoon, the light became officially unwatched, bringing an end to 159 years of staffed history. Principal keeper Brian Stoddard had departed the island one day earlier, leaving the husband of Mary Hichens great-grandniece to finish duties at the lighthouse for the last time.

## Epilogue

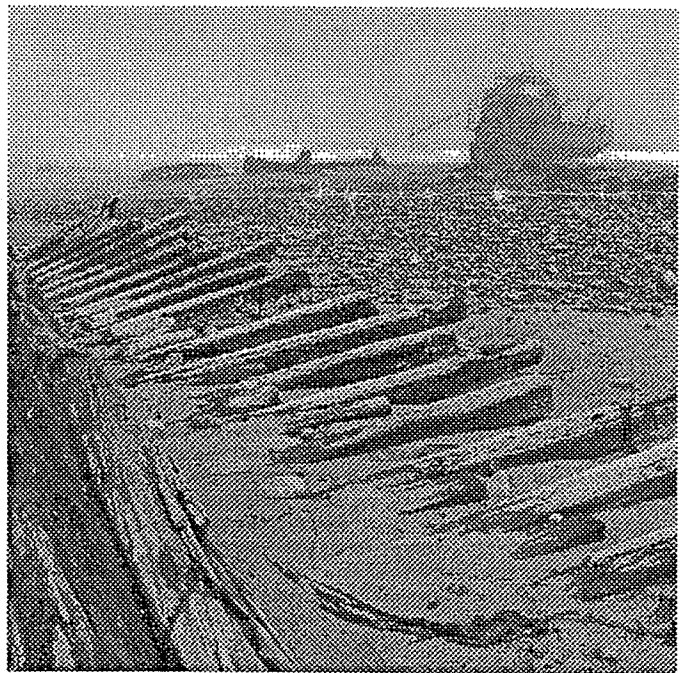
Today Seal Island is in a state of decline. Only a handful of houses and sheds, a church and the automated lighthouse remain on an island that once boasted a permanent population, lobster cannery, post office and even a phone line to the mainland. This decline is nothing new for remote lighthouse and fishing islands off the Atlantic coast- many settlements were abandoned in the early twentieth century when gas boats and mainland amenities drew people away from their island homes. 50 years ago Thomas Raddall wrote about Seal Island in a Saturday Evening Post article: "For six months in the year the weathered grey dwellings beside the two coves are ghost villages without a living soul, and even in the lobster season many of them are tenantless and tottering to ruin." Today, the village on the west side of the island has experienced growth in the form of new sheds and fishermen's houses. Clark's Harbour men still lobster from the island, bunking in the old cookhouse above the government wharf.

The east side village is a ghost town. A few years ago the breakwall protecting the government landing was washed away and last winter storms tore up the slip way. The freighter *Fermont*, run aground one year after the last keeper had left the lighthouse, sits hard on the sand of the east beach. Last winter's storms broke its back and tore the rusted hull into two mammoth, ragged pieces. Below

Winifred Hamilton's homestead, the last lifeboat sits abandoned, a reminder of the days when the island and its keepers were so crucial to the safety of shipping.

For seven or eight months of the year, Mary and Jim Nickerson live in a house stone's throw from Mary's mother's homestead. The 1906 church has been refurbished and stands in stark contrast to the decrepit landing and abandoned lobster traps. Nearby, the road to the lighthouse still winds through the scraggly spruce but at the end of the lane the station is deserted. The lighthouse (the oldest operating wooden light in Canada) continues to operate automatically with a small diesel generator powering the light and the fog horn. There is a large aluminum security door on the tower, complete with heavy duty padlock, and a sign warning "No trespassing. Building fitted with intrusion alarm". But there is still a palpable sense of history in the old tower. An incandescent lightbulb on each landing casts a dim light on the huge whitewashed timbers. Names of lightkeepers and visitors, some dating back a century, are scrawled here and there on the beams. Those beams and the braces, the very skeleton of the lighthouse, are the last intact pieces of the past here, and they evoke some of the history of the place.

Of the older station buildings, only the barn built by Ellsworth Hamilton (Winifred's Husband) and the house used by the radio operator, remain. The duplex, built in 1953 to replace the original Hichens/Crowell house, has been torn down and the domestic engine room has been stripped for its lumber. Its roof sits partly on the wood floor of the building and grey paint peels off the old engine beds. The huge, red sliding door has been removed from



The wreck of the *Fermont* in the background, and in the foreground that of the *Lewis Cottingham*, wrecked in 1918, which appears and disappears. Photo © Chris Mills.

the barn and sheep wander in and out of the gaping entrance. Below the foundation of the old house, the 1870 fog whistle boiler still stands, a rusty, bony finger of iron pointing skyward from the firebox.

The Seal Island lightstation was a constant in the history of the island. It was a government presence, a centre of lifesaving and communications and assistance. Only remnants of the station's past live on, in the stories of Mary Nickerson, and in the broad sweep of the light that continues to guide vessels past the "wicked elbow" of the bay.

### Note:

As part of the Canadian Coast Guard's review of aids to navigation, some changes have been proposed for the Seal Island lightstation. The radio beacon, established in 1924, has already been discontinued. Plans are in the works to solarize the station and remove the diesel generating system. The light will be slightly downgraded from 25 to approximately 21 miles range. It is proposed to retain the existing three mile fog horn because of the ledges off the southern end of the island. The station is presently monitored daily (not continuously as in the past) via VHF link by the lightkeepers at the Machias Seal Island Lightstation in New Brunswick

<sup>1</sup> Many accounts indicate that the new light was put into operation in 1902. However, a brass plaque attached to the base of the apparatus at the Museum in Barrington states that the lens was manufactured for the Canadian Government by Barbier, Benard & Turenne in 1906.

<sup>2</sup> The lantern and lens were taken to Barrington and installed at the Seal Island Lighthouse Museum, a replica of the top ½ of the lighthouse which is open to the public.

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## Annual General Meeting

April 29, 1998

About 30 people heard reports of the successes of 1997. In terms of membership, active workers, and finance the Society is in the best shape ever. The Federal Heritage

Listing of the Sambro Tower was announced last year as well as the repairs to the building. We continue work on the Regional Advisory Council for Lighthouse Alternative Use, and we have a new Lighthouse Preservation Legislation Committee to work for official federal protection for lighthouses. We're doing more programs and more trips. After the business meeting we enjoyed a great slide talk by Chris Mills, and a display of the Year of the Oceans 1998, and lighthouse artifacts and books.

1998 Executive

Past-President: Dan Conlin

President: Jim Guptill

1st Vice-President: Jeanne Thomas

2nd Vice President: Gerald Ferguson

Secretary: Valerie Myra

Treasurer and Membership: Tony Thompson

Director Public Relations - Vacant

Director Trips and Programs - Vacant

Database and Records: Tim Hall

Lightkeeper: Kathy Brown

Website: Kathy Brown, Peter MacCulloch

Lighthouse Legislation Committee: Dan Conlin, Chris Mills, David Currie

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## LIGHTSHOP

**Profits go to support your society!**

Order from: Kathy Brown, 24 Armshore Drive, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3N 1M5. Please make cheques payable to the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society.

NSLPS Membership Pins: \$5.00 + \$1.00 shipping.

Pewter Keychain, Sambro Lighthouse: \$11.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

Art Print, The Work Crew on Sambro Island: 7 x 10 ½ print by Maurice Bernard, ready to frame \$29.00, including postage.

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## NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM - 1998

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Family/Group names for extra card(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Can you help us in any way? Please give details.

- \$15.00

Institution/Group - \$30.00 (4 cards)

Patron - \$100.00

Family - \$20.00

Sustaining - \$50.00

Foreign - \$15.00 U.S. Funds, or equivalent.

New ☐

Renewal ☐ Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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