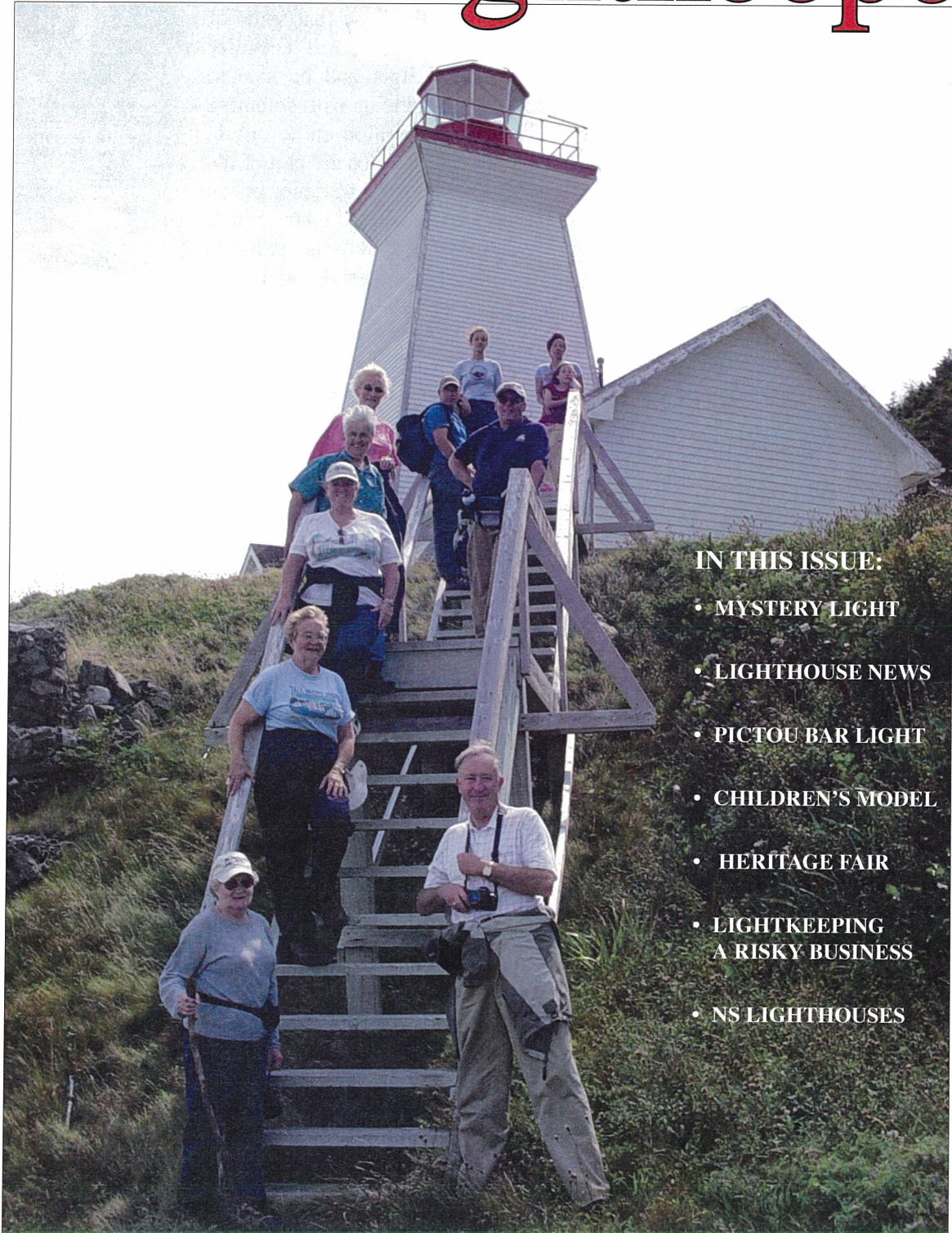


The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society
Vol. 13, No. 4, Dec. 2006 / Jan. 2007

The Lightkeeper™



IN THIS ISSUE:

- MYSTERY LIGHT
- LIGHTHOUSE NEWS
- PICTOU BAR LIGHT
- CHILDREN'S MODEL
- HERITAGE FAIR
- LIGHTKEEPING
A RISKY BUSINESS
- NS LIGHTHOUSES

Hardy Cape North trip participants after a long ramble down to the lighthouse. All that remained was a lung-igniting, heart-pounding slog back up the 1400' hill. *Chris Mills*



The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: to promote and to support the preservation and awareness of Nova Scotia

lighthouses; to assist community groups in leasing or taking ownership of lighthouse sites; to provide access to written research and photographic documentation, to initiate oral history research and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

WEBSITE: <http://www.nslps.com>

LIGHTKEEPER EDITORIAL STAFF: Nancy Eisener, Shawn Connors, Ashley Lohnes. Advisor: Chris Mills

PATRONS: Richard Hamilton, Edith Northfield

SUSTAINING MEMBERS: Dan Conlin, Denyse Contrasty, Joyce Cook, Barbara Joan Davis, Sally DeWolf, John Freeman, Peter Goforth, Ian S. Griffin, Dorothy MacLeod, Antonia (Toni) Riedl, Janet Leigh Schaffner, Brenda Shannon, Muriel Smiley, Jeffrey Smith, Mark Stewart, Michael Tilley, Nancy Walker

AFFILIATES: Burntcoat Head Park, Central Nova Tourist Association, Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society, Cunard Steamship Society, Henry Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, Gilbert Cove and District Historical Society, Greville Bay Shipbuilding Museum Society, Islands Historical Society, LinArt Designs, Louisbourg Lighthouse Society, Medway Area Communities Association, Region of Queens Municipality

NSLPS EXECUTIVE 2006/07

President/Lighthouse Protection Act Committee -

Barry MacDonald 827-2027

e-mail: threefathom@eastlink.ca

Past President - Tony Thompson 477-7366

e-mail: tony@mscs.dal.ca

First Vice President - Graham McBride

Second Vice President - Chris Mills 868-2313

e-mail: ketch1@eastlink.ca

Treasurer - Lew Perry

Secretary - Joanne McCormick

Director, Membership - Annelise Chapman

Programmes/Mail person - Lew Perry

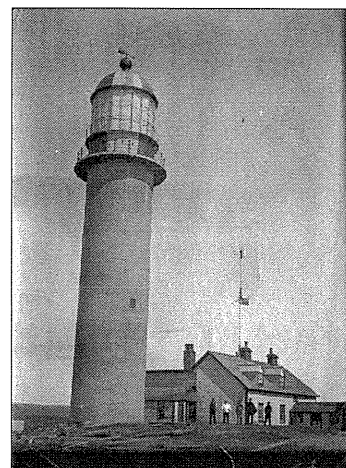
Trips/Programmes - Jeanne Thomas

Director, Member-at-Large - Tom Roberts

Director, Member-at-Large - Denyse Contrasty

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS LIGHT?

In this year's issues of *The Lightkeeper* we will be providing a picture of an 'unknown light' in the hope that some of our readers will recognize the light and be able to provide us with definitive information on its origin. The photos are part of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic Lighthouse collection and the museum is partnering with the NSLPS on this project to identify these photos. If



Unidentified light. *Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.*

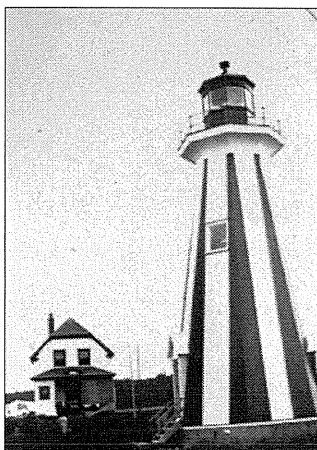
you have ideas or information on this light please contact Ashley Lohnes at portcove@hotmail.com. Ashley will ensure this information is passed on to the museum and shared in the next edition of *The Lightkeeper*.

October Mystery Light Identified

Congratulations to Jim & Virginia Slechta, Lew Perry and Fergie MacKay who correctly identified the October Mystery Light as the Pictou Bar light from 1935. Fergie also noticed the photo was printed in reverse.

We also received the following message from our American friends.

"My wife and I suspect the lighthouse is an old photo of Pictou Bar before the fire. We have been members of NSLPS for several years and look forward to every issue. It is amazing how much the publication has improved over the years. We are members of several other organizations such as NSLPS, but we rate the NSLPS LIGHTKEEPER as by far the top of the heap. Keep up your outstanding contribution to all of us "wickies"



Pictou Bar Light. *Maritime Museum of the Atlantic*

Jim & Virginia Slechta
Stevensville Maryland".

LIGHTHOUSE NEWS

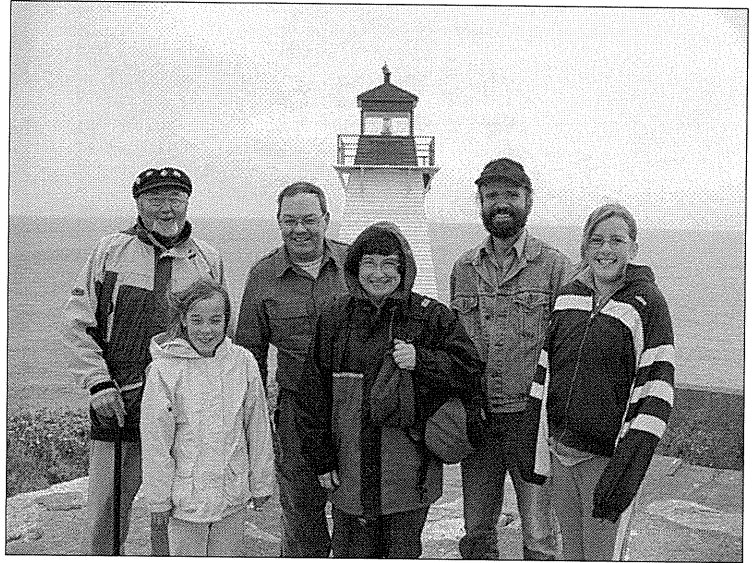
Photo update of the status of lighthouses visited by Chris Mills, summer of 2006.



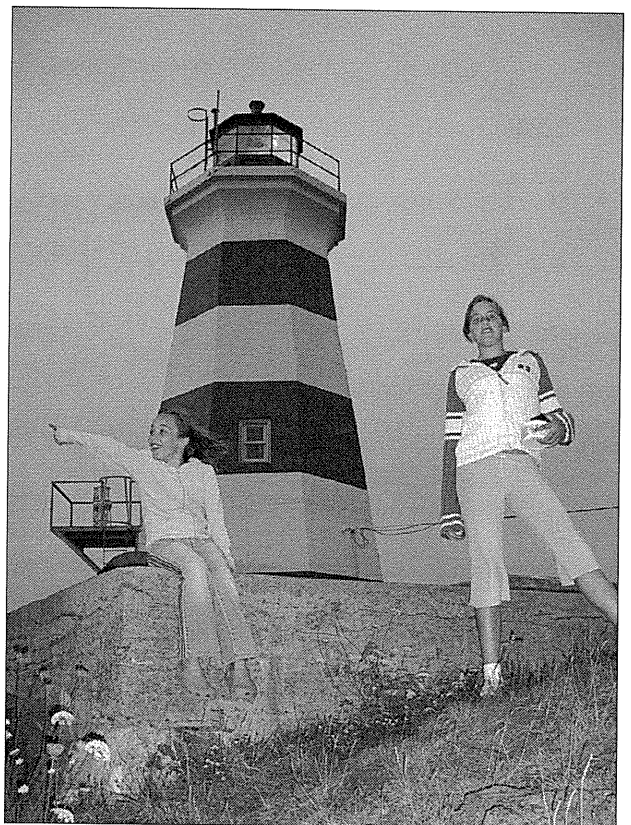
The lightless Bear River lighthouse as been boarded up after suffering the ravages of disuse and vandals.
Chris Mills



The “new” Money Point lighthouse at Cape North, built in 1980. *Chris Mills*



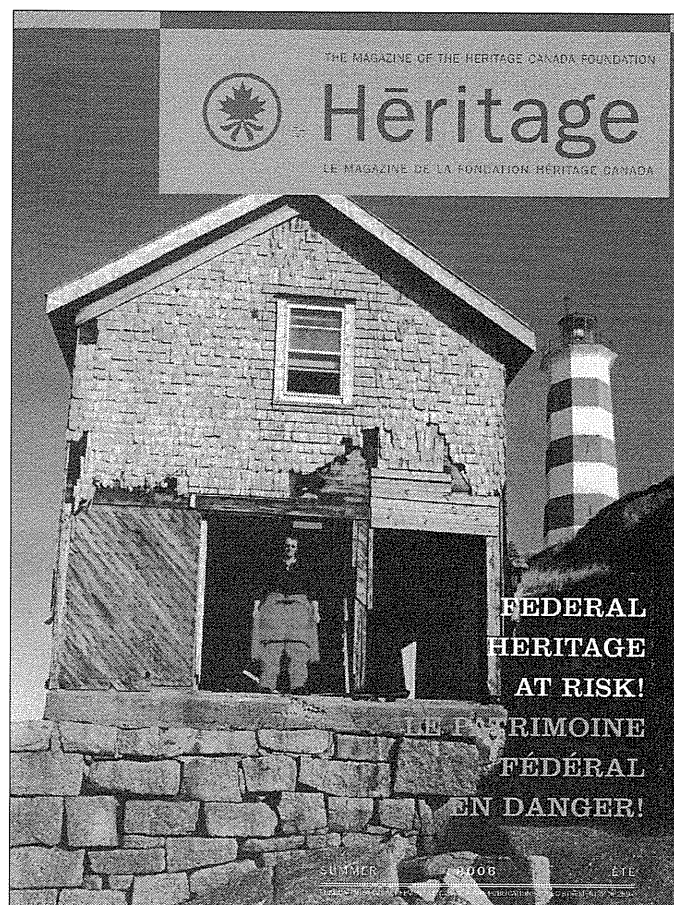
NSLPS trip participants Ian Griffin, Maris Mills, John McCallum, Denyse Contrasty and Ashley Gray at Boar's Head in September 2006. Barry Buckman of the Tiverton and Central Grove Heritage Association (second from right) opened the gate and led the tour up the hill to the lighthouse. *Chris Mills*



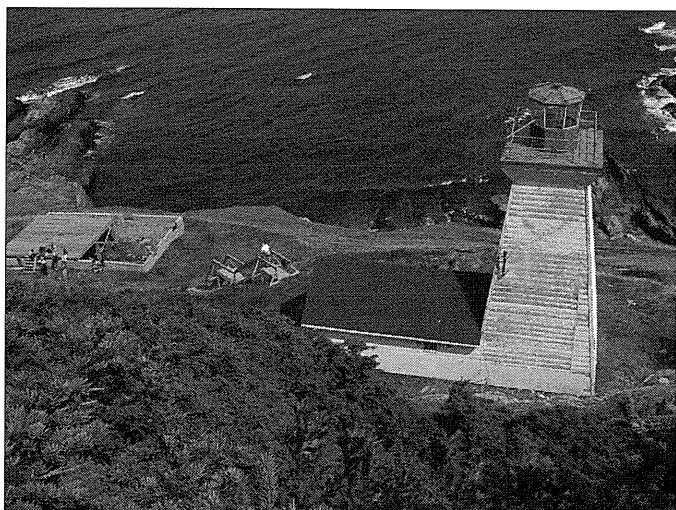
Maris Mills and Ashley Gray visit the newly painted Brier Island lighthouse in September, 2006. *Chris Mills*



Prim Point shows signs of neglect -- note crumbling concrete on the lantern deck. *Chris Mills*



Sambro Island and its decaying "Gas House" made the cover of Heritage Canada Foundation's *Heritage* magazine in the summer of 2006. *Chris Mills*



Cape North lighthouse with the foundation of one of the keepers houses at left. *Chris Mills*



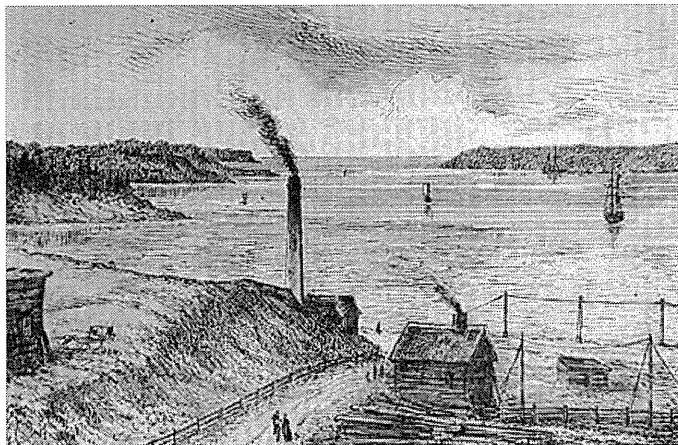
New lighthouse at Fort Point, LaHave. *Chris Mills*

The History of the Pictou Bar Light

Fergie MacKay

In the early 1800s Pictou was the commercial centre for northern Nova Scotia. The waterfront facilities had wharves, warehouses and businesses to handle various inbound and outbound cargoes. The local timber trade was gaining in importance, mining of coal in the upper reaches of the East River was being developed and the local fishing industry was thriving. All this local activity created many small industries such as shipbuilding and other service-like businesses.

The area in the early 1800's had very few good roads and the local waterways were the avenues for shipping goods to and from various markets. Shipping was big business in those days. Ships and boats plied the local rivers, harbours, and some even crossed the Atlantic to European destinations.

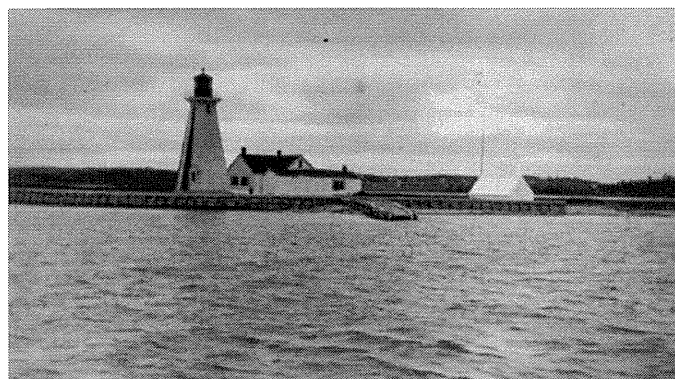


Sketch of Pictou Harbour circa 1800. *Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management*

All of this activity was making Pictou Harbour an extremely busy place. With the increase in vessels using the harbour it was becoming necessary to have charts and buoys to mark the waterways.

Traveling on the water was always dangerous. Sailors and vessels could not always wait for sunshine and fair weather. Sailing was a twenty-four hour a day job and that meant navigating in all kinds of weather. Some days it was a "sailors delight" and then there would be days of gale force winds, driving snow, heavy rain, thick fog, freezing rain, heat, haze, thunder and lightning. Sailing was dangerous and the many ship wrecks along our coast are evidence of the dangers of the sea.

Pictou had a great harbour, yet it had a very narrow entrance with an intricate arrangement of sand bars. On a clear day with a high tide, even an experienced captain had to be careful entering the harbour. With inclement weather it was next to impossible to safely navigate the



Pictou Bar lightstation as it was in 1904. Note the wooden crib work, wharf and boat house. *Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management*

narrow passage way.

The harbour needed a light station to safely guide sea-going traffic. This matter was brought before the Nova Scotia House of Assembly and on the 16th of March 1833 the House reported: "A survey has been made, by order of his Honour the President, for an eligible site for a light-house at the entrance of Pictou Harbour and an estimate of the expense amounting to £510 laid before your committee."

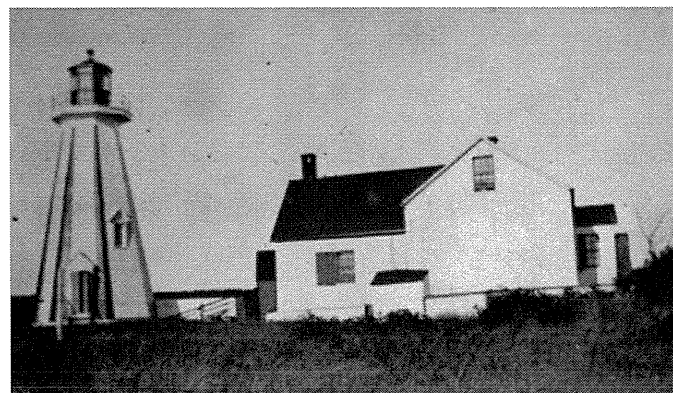
Things moved quickly and on 4 April 1833 a resolution was quickly passed voting £510 for a plan and estimate of the light-house.

On 25 May 1833 Robert McKay of Pictou was appointed Commissioner and responsible to erect a light-house on the south beach at the entrance of the Harbour of Pictou.

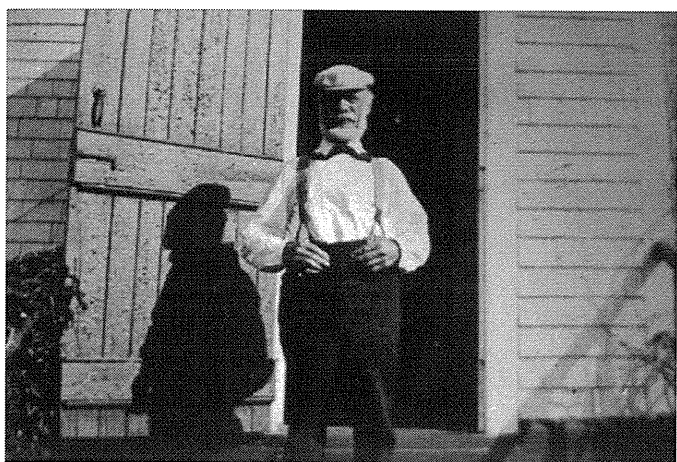
The lighthouse was designed by William Bain and was an octagonal shape of eight equal sides, 54 feet in height and the diameter of the building from the outside to outside was to be twenty-eight feet.

Commissioner Robert McKay awarded the light house contract to Peter J. Cormick of Pictou and the contract for the light keepers' home was awarded to James McLellan.

On December 26, 1833 Commissioner McKay



Keepers house in 1904. Note the wooden shutters on the house. *Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management*



Captain William Munro, lightkeeper 1893 -1912. *Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management*

informed his authorities that "I have the satisfaction to inform you that the Pictou Lighthouse is completed and ready for lighting as soon as the navigation of the Gulf is approved."

In the *Colonial Patriot* for January 24, 1834 there is a full description of the Pictou Harbour light: 'It is situated on the south beach at the entrance of the harbour - is a fixed light, fifty-four feet in height - will be lighted from the first of March until the last day of January, after which period the Gulf is totally obstructed with ice.'

The first person to serve as light keeper was David Lowden I. It is interesting to note that the Lowden family was instrumental in supplying light keepers for the first fifty years. The only exception was for a brief period from 1865 until 1868 when Angus McDonald served as keeper of the "Light."

The location of the lighthouse made the whole property very vulnerable to storms that could lash the entire property. The famous August Gale of August 24, 1873 caused great destruction to the Pictou lightstation. The sessional paper covering the year 1873 reports damage to the site this way: "Pictou Harbour light suffered severely. The breakwater of the east side was all



The Lowden Family, with lightkeeper David Lowden III on the right. *David Barnard*

carried away, the dwelling house moved from its foundation and much injured and the outbuildings swept away. The sea made a breach in the lighthouse beach, upsetting the tanks, and destroying about 100 gallons of oil. Immediate steps were taken to place the premises in repair."

The *Eastern Chronicle* for 7 January 1882 reported another storm that played havoc with the lighthouse property: "A storm Saturday December 26 did a good deal of damage to the breakwater at the Pictou Lighthouse. About 250 feet were broken in and carried away. One block of about forty-feet was lifted bodily and carried near the light. Capt Ross (lighthouse keeper) reports that the storm was about the worst he has experienced at the light. He thinks it reached its worst at midnight."

For sixty-nine years the lighthouse withstood many storms and was a beacon for thousands of mariners. On the 26 May 1903 the old light was unable to cope with



George MacFarlane, son of Harry MacFarlane - Lightkeeper 1922-1945, holding a jug to carry oil to the light. *Photo from MacFarlane family collection.*

an innocent fire that started in the rear by beach grass! At the time there was a fairly stiff breeze blowing. When the fire was first detected the blaze was beyond control and in a short time the light was engulfed.

In the absence of the lighthouse a temporary 48 foot high mast was erected on the site. Two Anchor lens lanterns were attached to the masthead, providing a fixed white light up the harbour and seaward.

Work on the new lighthouse got underway during the summer of 1903. The foundation was in place by early October. In spite of unfavourable weather the superintendent Mr. E.F. Munn of Westville and foreman Mr. Colin R. MacDonald were able to erect a new lighthouse ahead of schedule.

The new building was erected on the site of the first lighthouse. It was built with solid planks and was 48 feet high from the base to the ventilator on the lantern. The light was octagonal in shape and surmounted

by an octagonal iron lantern. The wood shingled tower was painted in alternate red and white vertical stripes and the lantern was painted red.

The light from the lantern was a fixed white light 51 feet above high water mark and visible for 12 miles out to sea. Another fixed red catoptric light was shone from a window below the iron lantern facing in a seaward direction. This red light was 23 feet about the high water mark and visible for six miles.

The second lighthouse, like the first one, was well constructed and endured many storms over the years.

From time to time minor alterations and general repairs were made to the light house. However, in 1993 the Canadian Coast Guard carried out some major repairs to the structure. The Coast Guard people were convinced that their restoration project was the first one carried out since the lighthouse was built. During this work period the foundation was reinforced, some older walls were removed and new walls were erected.

The lighthouse was once again in "tip top shape" and able to withstand the severe storms from the Northumberland Strait

But the weather was not the real enemy - it was fire. The first lighthouse fell victim to fire and so did the second tower.

For the most part Monday July 5th, 2004 was a clear summer day in Pictou County. For the people in



Isabell Watts (left) and Sarah Matilda (Watts) Smith (right) visit the light in 1904. *Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management*

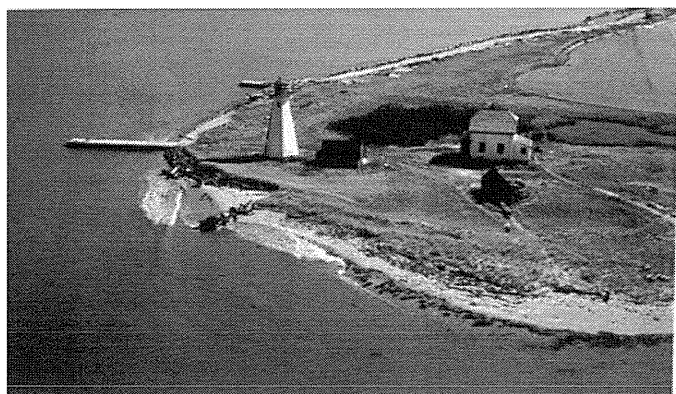
Pictou and Pictou Landing, the calm and tranquility of the day was shattered by a telephone call at 552 pm to the Pictou Landing Reserve Fire Department. The call from the Stellarton Police dispatch stated that "the Pictou Bar Lighthouse was on fire."

Soon, fire trucks from Pictou Landing and Little Harbour arrived at the Pictou Landing First Nations Reserve. The fireman decided to transport portable pumps and suitable hoses to the fire scene in four wheel drive half-ton trucks. When the fireman arrived at the lighthouse they soon realized that the old wood frame lighthouse was a blazing inferno and all efforts of the firemen were in vain. In less than one hour from the time the fire was spotted the old lighthouse was just a smoldering mass of embers and twisted metal on the lighthouse beach.

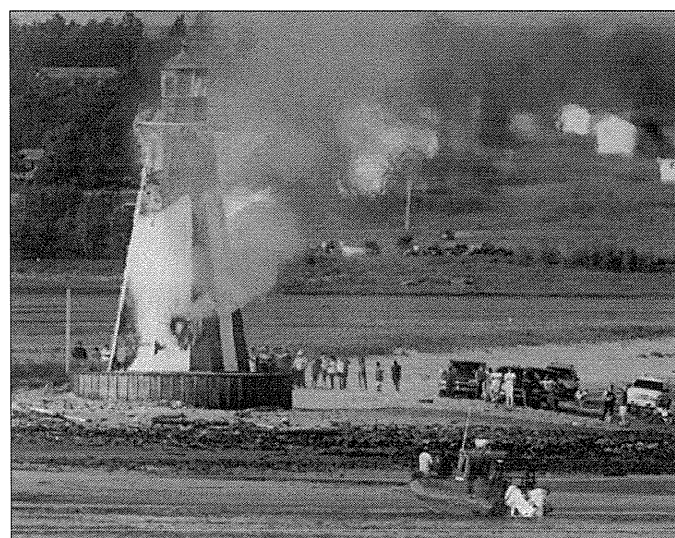
It was the end of an era. Since 1834 there had always been a lighthouse at the tip of the beach. It was a community landmark, a beacon for sailors and a namesake for the 1.5 km sandy beach. The current Pictou Bar

light is now a square skeleton tower which is 7.05 meters high. It was established in September 2004.

It is not the same without the old lighthouse!



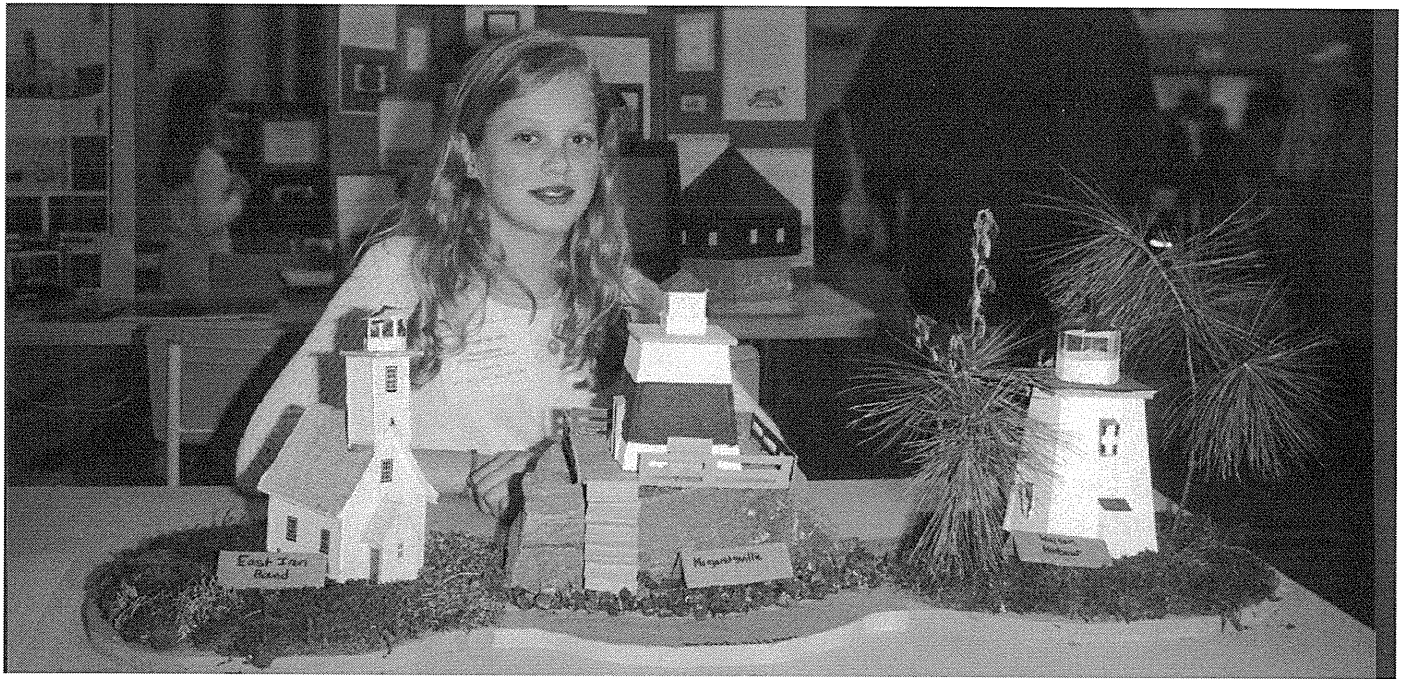
Copy of postcard from the late 50's.



Pictou Bar fire, 2004. *Fergie MacKay*

Models of Lighthouses Entered in Heritage Fair

Shirley McIntyre, Kayla's Salsman's grandmother



Kayla Salsman with her Heritage Fair Lighthouse project in May 2006. *Shirley MacIntyre*

Kayla Salsman became interested in lighthouses through attending several of the children's workshops, where she made models of lighthouses. Last winter she did a project about lighthouses, which she entered in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board's Heritage Fair. She arranged her three model lighthouses on a board with their appropriate surroundings (see picture) and prepared a book with information and pictures. She was a runner-up for her well-researched and nicely presented project. One of the judges had to withdraw because she had grown up on East Ironbound Island and I guess felt that she might be partial.

For each of her model lighthouse Kayla presents a written history and pictures. These include the lighthouses at Walton Harbour, Margaretsville and East Ironbound. The restored Borden Wharf Lighthouse is in Canning, which is near where Kayla lives. Her pictures show this amazing restoration. After this lighthouse was abandoned, it was used to house pigs. Then a historical group decided to restore it and applied for a Kaplan Grant provided by the NSLPS. They were successful and they enlisted the help of the students at the nearby Community College. The restored light now sits below Canning's Main Street, on the bank of the Habitant River.

Kayla also writes about Peggy's Point light and Sambro light. The photos of Sambro Island show a good glimpse of a lighthouse community with the lightkeeper's houses, the light, the foghorn, the gashouse and the little

inlet where the boat lands. These photos were taken by her grandmother, on a lighthouse society trip.

Kayla's book continues, telling how lighthouses developed as a way to communicate with ships and the development of the Fresnel lens. She includes a picture of the Fresnel lens, originally from the Sambro Light, which is now displayed at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. She briefly describes the life of lighthouse keepers. Included also are pictures of the shortest lighthouse in N.S., Aggie's Light on Stoddard Island, and one of the lights from St. Paul Island. The latter is housed at the Coast Guard Base in Dartmouth.

I'll end with a quote from her book. "Lighthouses have become a symbol of Nova Scotia. There are lighthouse tours and there is a Lighthouse Route from Halifax via the south shore to Yarmouth. Many artists have painted pictures of lighthouses. Photographers have taken beautiful pictures. There are many lighthouse crafts you can collect. I enjoyed doing this project. It was a lot of fun. I hope that I can visit some lighthouse over the summer or March Break. I have learned a lot of information on this project and I had no idea that there were so many lighthouses in N.S." Kayla had just turned eleven when she did her project.

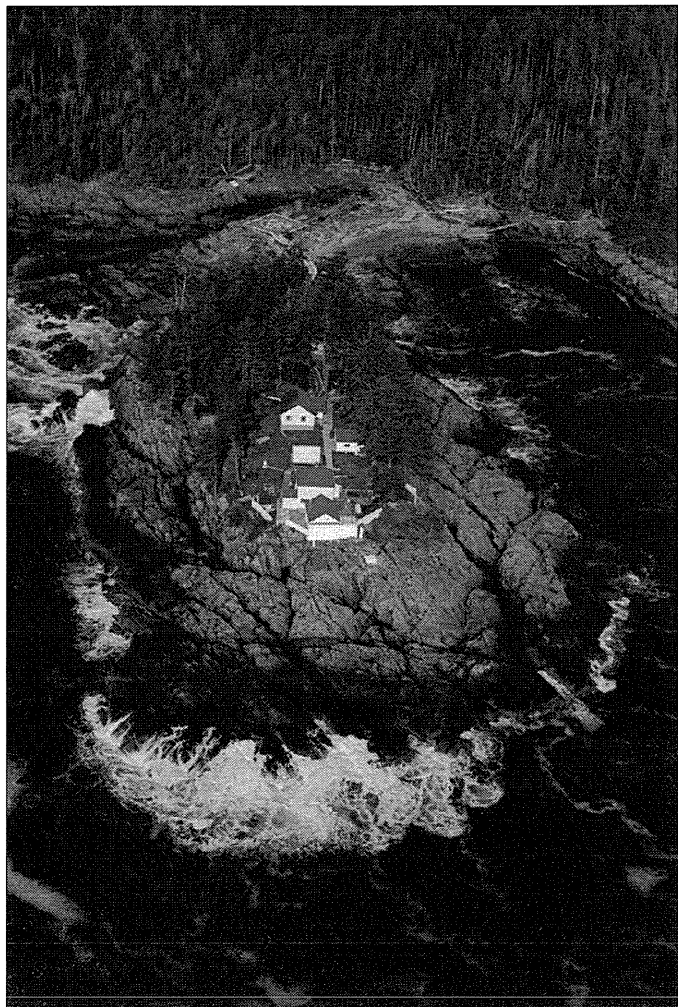
LIGHTKEEPING STILL A RISKY BUSINESS

Chris Mills

British Columbians living in the south western areas of lotus-land may be wondering just when Mother Nature plans to cut them some slack. During December and January a string of snowstorms, near-monsoon rainfalls and hurricane force winds have in turn smothered, drenched, and left up to a million west coasters in the dark. For urban dwellers it's been an annoyance at the very least and downright dangerous at times, but what of British Columbia's lighthouse keepers, perched at the edge of the heaving Pacific?

As they have for almost a century and a half, B.C.'s coastal guardians continue to endure the sea's wrath. Lightkeeper Mike Higgins normally lives and works at Boat Bluff, a sheltered lightstation on the province's famous Inside Passage. It's a place that sees a lot of rain and fog, but no large seas because of its position on a narrow channel. Not so just down the coast at Ivory Island, where Mike was relieving over Christmas.

On December 13th, what Mike describes as a "monster wave went over top of the shop (the former fog



Ivory Island. Chris Mills



This 200 - 250lb. rock was placed on the Ivory Island helipad by the sea. Mike Higgins

horn building) and the Principal dwelling. That wave took out the trees on the west side of the house and knocked a 2,000 gallon water tank into the gully on the east south east side of the house. When the tank went over it took out part of the weather system and both TV and internet satellite."

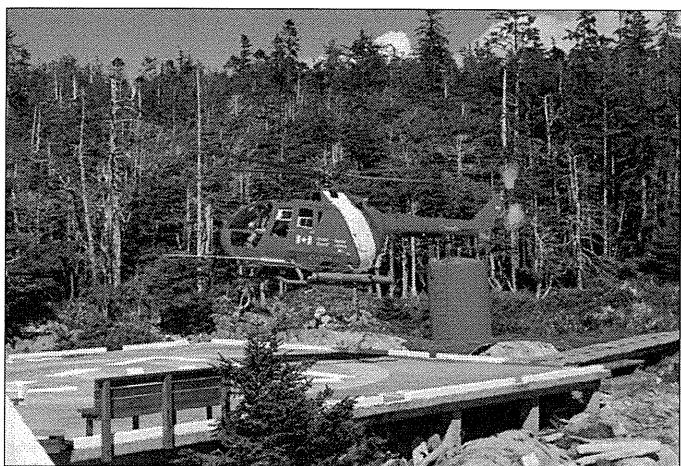
As if that wasn't bad enough, nature had more in store for Ivory Island. On Christmas Day, huge seas hammered the station once again. Mike describes a "big splash," with salt water thundering over the old fog alarm building. "I guess it just kept going up and over the main house," he says. A new aluminum trailer for the station tractor filled with water, but there was no major damage. "I think that really heavy duty concrete wall on the seaward side of the workshop took the brunt and kept it away from the main house," Mike says. "There are three drains



Storm Debris by the Ivory Island Helipad. Mike Higgins

in that concrete wall to let water out of the shop, but in this case it allowed a 1/4 inch or so into the shop and then it drained away.

"Christmas morning the area north and west of the heli-copter pad was completely full of logs and other debris. The biggest surprise was a 200 to 250 lb rock sitting on



Ivory Helipad. *Chris Mills*

the south west corner of the pad about two feet in from the edge. With classic understatement, he adds: "It was pretty exciting, I must say."

30 miles west of Prince Rupert, the two keepers on tiny Triple Island were sitting ducks as massive seas whalloped their concrete dwelling and its attached tower. The sea smashed one of the keepers' bedroom windows with such force that the shattered glass was embedded in the opposite wall. Farther south on Queen Charlotte Sound's Egg Island, Christmas Day was also shaping up to be a bit lively, as a one relief keeper described in an e-mail.

"Egg Island got blown up too." Lightning struck the station's 85-foot skeleton-tower lighthouse, toasting the main light and then surging back through the houses, blowing the VHF radio link with Prince Rupert. It also



Triple Island. *Chris Mills*

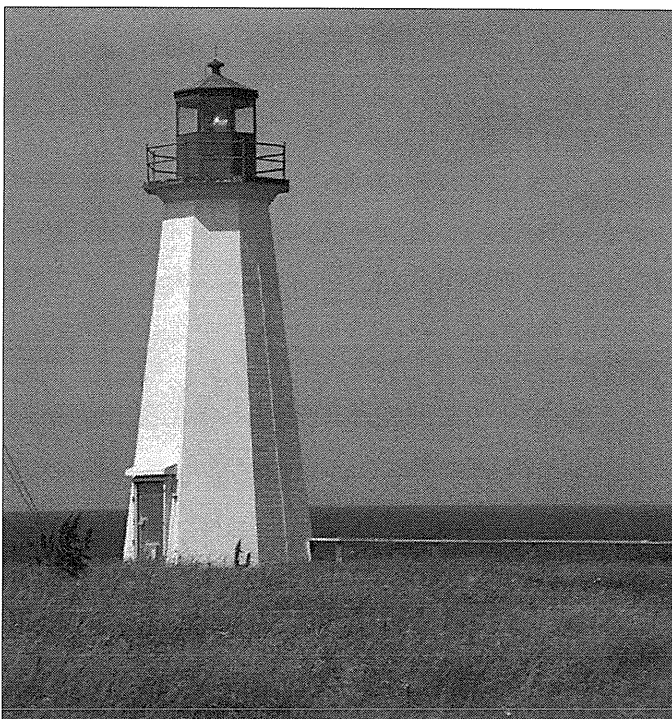
"fried TVs, computers, cell phones," and blew an electrical plug to the other side of the room. And all this just after 6 PM during Christmas dinner!

So continues the risky life of the lighthouse keeper on the stormy British Columbia coast.

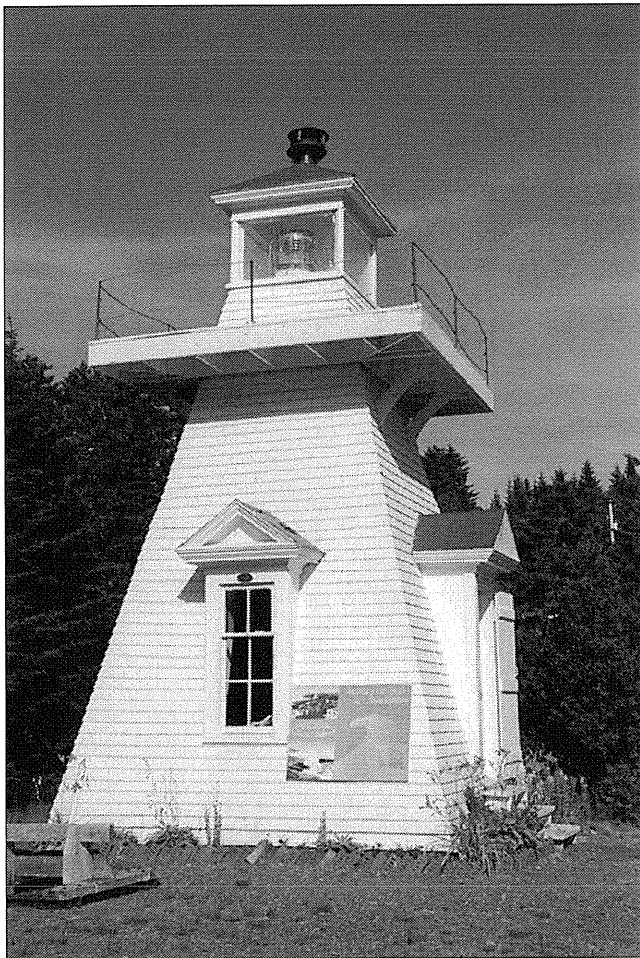
Nova Scotia Lighthouses: Photos from Josette D'Entremont. Summer of 2006.



Bacarro point, Shelburne County. *Josette d'Entremont*



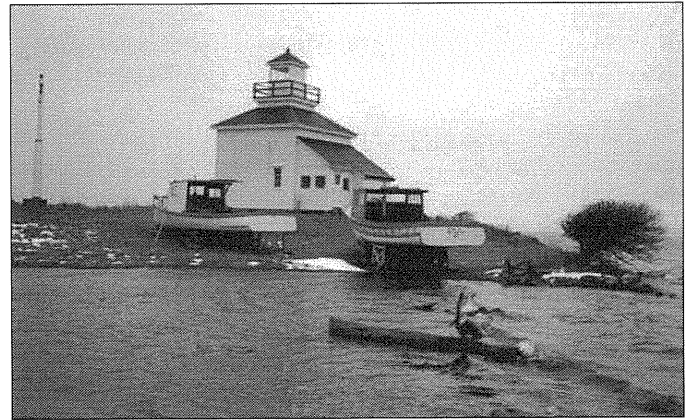
Enragee Point, Cheticamp. *Josette d'Entremont*



Port Greville light at the Age of Sail Museum. *Josette d'Entremont*

A Gilbert's Cove Memory

Spud Roscoe



A good flood at Gilbert's Cove. *Spud Roscoe*

The moon that creates the Bay of Fundy tides got a bit careless with this one on January 1st, 1979. A good thing lightkeeper Willie Jane Melanson was not there. His cow would have moved into the lighthouse with them until he got her barn and his kerosene shed in order. The tower to the left is the light that replaced the lighthouse. The wooden bridge that spans Kinney Brook on Lighthouse Road floated at this time. James Theriault and Scott Kinney stored their lobster boats at the lighthouse during the off season. That is the "JRT" on the left and Scott's "PAUL K II" on the right. Scott's had a 327 Chev car engine and was a good boat. He has her engraved on his tombstone.

Memorial Donations

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society would like to express our appreciation to the following people for their thoughtful donations in memory of our dear friend Dorothy MacLeod:

Philip Vienot, Mount Royal QC
Brenda Shannon, Halifax, NS
Lynn Sanderson, Halifax, NS
Marjory & Blair Anderson. Delta, BC

Alice Sanderson, River Herbert, NS
Tony & Chai-Chu Thompson, Halifax, NS
All donations to the NSLPS are tax deductible.

The Lightkeeper is published by the NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY, c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, B3J 1S3, Editor: Send items for publication to *The Lightkeeper*, c/o Nancy Eisener, 610 Ketch Harbour Road, Portuguese Cove, Nova Scotia, B3V 1K1, or e-mail nancy.eisener@nsc.ca. Deadline for Spring issue: March 15, 2007.

NSLPS MEMBERSHIP FORM: January 1 - December 31, 2007 ☐ New ☐ Renewal: Membership # _____

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

Family/Group names for extra cards: _____

Single - \$20.00 Institutional/Group - \$30.00

Patron - \$100.00

Family - \$25.00 Sustaining - \$50.00

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

Amount enclosed \$ _____ Please make cheques payable to the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

Mail to: THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 1S3



Pictou Bar Light in 1935 - *Maritime Museum of the Atlantic*