



**The Nova Scotia Lighthouse
Preservation Society
Volume 31 Number 2
Fall/Winter 2024-25**

www.nslps.com



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The Lightkeeper

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Cover Photo

Margaretsville Lighthouse July 2024

Credit: Debbie Wrigley

Membership News!

We're excited to announce that
community groups supporting their local
lighthouses will now have their affiliate
fees waived.

Contact ask.us@nslps.com
for more information.

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 the 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.

Welcome New Members

Owen Brine

Paul Dreyer

Barbara Dufferin-Bates

Taylor Heisler

Patrick Hussey

Angela Laurin

Colin O'Flynn



The current membership year runs from April 1 2024 to March 31 2025 and membership fees must be paid by November 1 2024. The year you last paid is printed on the newsletter mailing label. For any membership inquiries, please email member.info@nslps.com.

*** Membership fees and donations can now be paid by automatic e-transfer to:

member.info@nslps.com

Please put a reason in the Message field.

For example: 2024 fees, donation.

Life at Louisbourg Lighthouse in 1946

Article and Photos by Larry LeDrew

We lived at the Lighthouse for 3 years when my dad took the job as assistant lightkeeper to Wilfred Covey. We lived in a [side-by-side] duplex with the Coveys. We had no power and relied on kerosene lamps and a chemical toilet. We did have a phone so that we could report shipping problems. The lightkeepers took shifts tending the light that had to be wound up by hand every 4 hours. It was a dangerous climb up the steel ladders, but my mother often did the job too. I was carried up a few times very carefully.

It was lonely for me. My sister was too young to play with and Covey's daughter was too old and mentally challenged. They had one of those lathe swing seats and used to rock it all day long and I would often hop on for the ride.

My dad had been a machinist for Cann's Marine Repairs during the war but now work was scarce. We lived poorly like many Cape Bretoners and had snares out for rabbits and such.

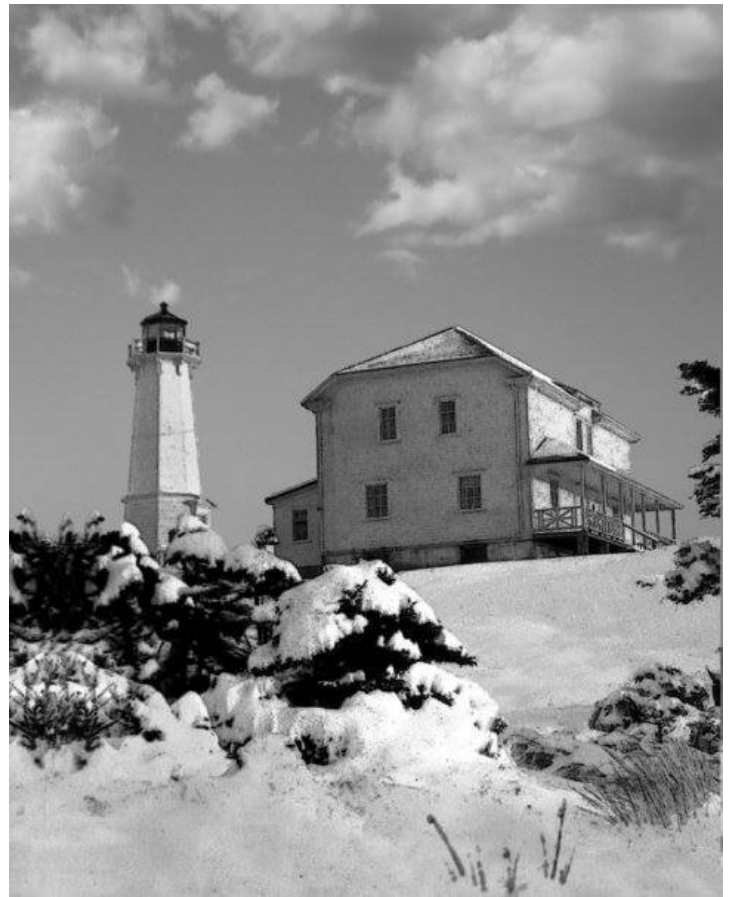
It wasn't easy to get to the lighthouse in those days as it was not much more than a wagon track. My dad used the abandoned rail line to walk back and forth to town. We would occasionally get a tourist that would drive out the difficult path. There was a sign in front of the ruins of the old lighthouse that everybody liked to photograph.

"This is the site of the first fireproof lighthouse in North America. Erected 1734. Destroyed by fire 1758." It did not mention it was destroyed by cannon fire.

My dad had raised his uncle, Al Bussey of Big Lorraine. On calm Sundays during the summer, Roy Bussey or Ernest would row in a dory over to the lighthouse and take us back for Sunday dinner in Big Lorraine.

We went to town for Xmas to my grandfather's house on Commercial Street, Louisburg. We had lived there before we went to the lighthouse. My mother had run it as a boarding house, but when the war ended everybody was laid off. The old house was huge, but it smelled like home. The kitchen was the centerpiece. All the heat came from the big kitchen wood stove and heated the upstairs with an iron grating in the ceiling. Mother had a little Xmas tree, a small spruce decorated with cut out stars balls of construction paper, and a string of popcorn. Our stockings were stuffed with an orange, monkey nuts (peanuts in the shell), and a few hard candies on Christmas morning. Gail and I got a few small toys. There was a commotion at the back door with Grandpa cursing out Uncle Kippy who deposited a burlap sack full of lobsters in the sink. Kippy

(Continued on page 4)



Louisbourg Lighthouse in winter

(Continued from page 3) had poached the lobsters and walked off the dock with them right in front of a Mountie (Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer).

So, I spent a day playing with some of my town cousins. We were back to the lighthouse the next day, but we were all excited when Dad brought a windup Victrola record player back to the Lighthouse. We had three 78 albums which contained 4 records each, 16 songs in all. The windup Victrola was a constant joy we played every day. I added to the entertainment with my dance of the yellow curtain to a Strauss waltz.

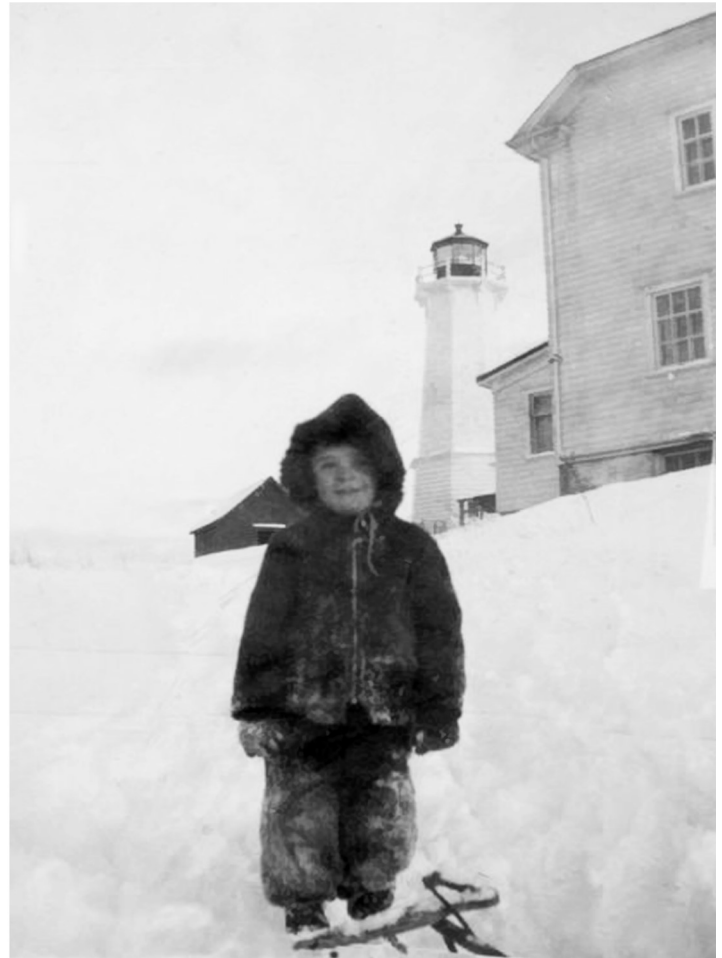
Mostly, I was left to my own devices. What is amazing is that I also had a sled and a toboggan. As I look at the lighthouse now, I wonder where I used them as most of the hills run down to the cliffs.

We had some major excitement when during a massive storm; a fishing boat hit one of the rocky islands trying to get into Louisbourg Harbour. My mother saw it and phoned into town to get help. Some other fishermen came out and saved the men, but the boat was at the mercy of the wind and waves. The next morning the phone rang at first light, and they wanted to know if Mother would look for any wreckage to salvage that the fishermen would have to watch for. I followed my mother to the rocky shore.

There were still a lot of surges and a great sea running with about 5-foot (1.5 m) waves though the wind had died some. Mother scanned the water with binoculars. Then we saw a big piece of 2 x 6 board from the boat. It was about 5 feet (1.5 m) long and riding the waves towards the shore with the ship's alarm clock just sitting on it until it hit a rock and tumbled into the water. We saw nothing else of the boat.

Mostly there was not much to do I was too young to admire the beautiful vistas and the parade of ships from around the world that came in for coal despite the many foggy days. I often went with my father to the foghorn shed and turned on one of the two huge diesel engines to run the foghorn compressor.

My uncle Bert, my dad's twin brother, was discharged from the Army and joined us. There was not much to do the following year and my Dad and Uncle made a little play village for me around Kennelley's pond. It was much smaller and further inland then. They built me boats and little fishing shacks and docks and a lighthouse and a boardwalk around it. They had a complete workshop in the foghorn building. Unfortunately, it was found out by kids from town and they were taking things. So Dad and Bert dug a small pond near our house and moved everything there.

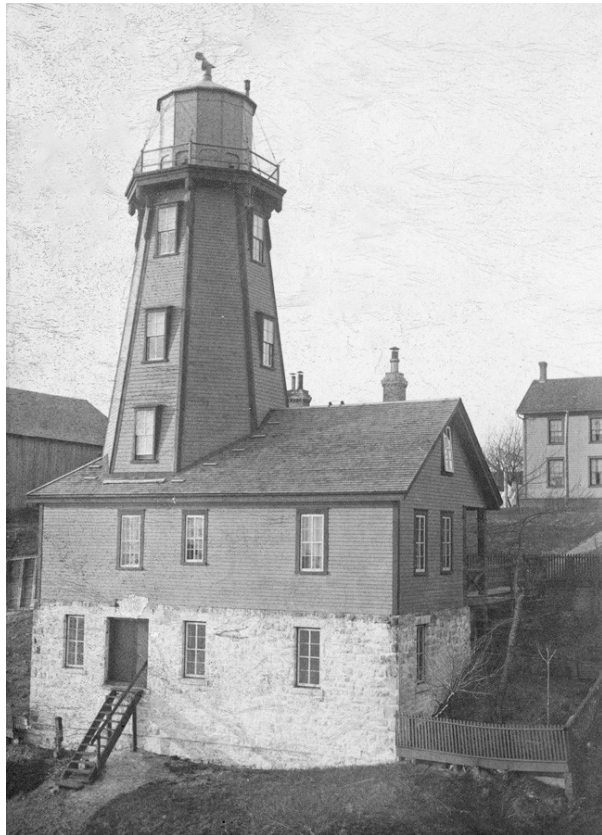


The author as a boy with his sled

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Dad quit the job in 1947 and all of them moved to a step-sister of mother in Uxbridge, Ontario for a fresh start. As I have returned to Cape Breton, I am so happy to see the lighthouse restored. It a beautiful classic lighthouse and it has the best vista in Nova Scotia.



Kincardine Lighthouse painted brown
Credit: Library and Archives Canada

Huron, and finally to the white tower with red-framed windows and a red lantern as seen today.

Why such an impressive lighthouse given the small size of the harbour? Kincardine was once a busy port with a fishing fleet, large deposits of salt underground nearby, and one of several important terminals for local shipments of grain, lumber and furniture products produced by the rich farmland and the rapidly growing, prosperous villages of southwestern Ontario along the shore of Lake Huron. Today a sector light on a metal skeleton tower at the end of the north pier guides sailors to safe harbour while a pair of red lenses revolves

(Continued on page 6)

An Unusual Lighthouse, Kincardine, Ontario

Article and photo by Denyse Contrasty

The Kincardine Lighthouse built into the bank of the Penetangore River where it enters the harbour of Kincardine on Lake Huron has a very unique architecture. It is a very tall (19.2m /63ft), wooden, octagonal tower that appears to rise up through the centre of the two-storey keeper's house from a stone foundation. There is a set of vertical windows on four sides of the tower that look out to the north, east, south and west. Lit in 1881, it not only functioned as a rear range light to a front range light erected at the end of the north pier to guide mariners into the harbour, but also acted as a coastal light so that mariners could determine their location while sailing past the Kincardine area of Lake Huron. Photos show it painted brown originally, then white with a big red stripe going down and around the set of vertical windows facing Lake



Kincardine Lighthouse July 2024

(Continued from page 5) around a 500 watt bulb in the lantern room of the Kincardine Lighthouse that is now operated by the Kincardine Yacht Club on a seasonal basis.

For a nominal admission fee, visitors can enter and climb the lighthouse during July and August in the company of a student guide. Each floor is a mini-museum focusing on the indigenous community, local history and families, and Canadian lighthouses (including a photo of Sambro Island Lighthouse!). Regretfully no one can go into the basement where there must be an amazing stone structure connecting the lighthouse foundation with the lightkeeper's house. Perhaps the Municipality of Bruce County that owns the lighthouse would send our Society a photo?



Lovely Covesea Lighthouse Lantern

Covesea Lighthouse, Scotland

Article and Photos by Cathy McKenzie

Covesea Lighthouse is built on top of a small headland on the south coast of the Moray Firth near Lossiemouth, Scotland. This coastline with its partially submerged rocky outcrops known as "skerries", has always been hazardous for shipping. There are tales of the Celtic hermit, Saint Gerardine, who was said to have walked the headland with a lantern to warn seafarers away from the dangerous Covesea and Halliman Skerries.

Following a storm in the Moray Firth in November 1926 when 16 vessels were sunk, applications were made for two lighthouses, one at Tarbat Ness on the other side of the Firth and the other at Covesea Skerries. The Covesea Lighthouse was designed and built by Alan Stevenson, a member of the famous lighthouse Stevenson's family who over 150 years built most of the lighthouses around Scotland coast. It is 36 m (118 ft) high and it had a range of 24 nautical miles (4.4 km; 27.6 mi) with a light flashing red and white every 20 seconds.

Its original 1845 Fresnel lens was built in the Parisian workshop of François Soleil. The light was rotated by a clockwork mechanism whose weights the lightkeeper winched up to the top every day. The lighthouse still has the hollow void through which those weights passed.

The lighthouse was automated in 1984 and the light extinguished in 2012 following 166 years acting as an aid to navigation. It is now owned by the Covesea Lighthouse Community Company who are preserving this iconic building as a heritage and education centre that is open to all.

This was the first lighthouse in Scotland I have visited thanks to my daughter. We went to Glasgow, Scotland for the World's Pipes and Drums Competition in which my daughter's band placed 2nd in the Grade 3 Band category. Attending the competition gave me a fantastic opportunity to visit a lighthouse in another country. That is one more thing off my bucket list!

Point Enragee Lighthouse, Cheticamp Island, Cape Breton

Article and Photos by Richard McGuinness

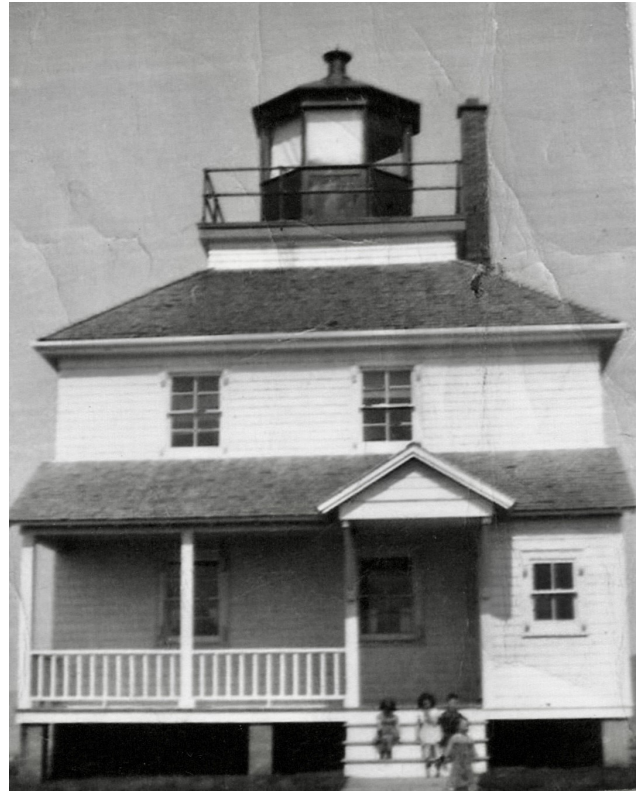
The Lightkeeper from 1948 to 1978 was Wilfred L. Chiasson. This story is written from memories of his daughter, Kathleen Chiasson, in August 2024.

I arrived with my father, Wilfred and mother, Annie Rose, on April 15 1948. I was six months old. My seven siblings: Sylvia, Jimmie, Leonard, Gerald, Lionel, Charles and Jeanine were born during the many years we lived on the island. There is a causeway to the island.

The two-storey house with the light on top was heated with wood. Water came from a pump outside. The bathroom was a pail in the porch. There was no electricity and no phone. The lighthouse was run by kerosene. I was home schooled by my father for two years and then went to the island one-room school.

The house burned on October 21, 1955, which was caused by a woodstove and kerosene in the walls. We were all saved. Then we moved to Augusta Edward's house close to the school. The government installed a pole with a light so Dad would go back and forth to light it and also take care of the fog horn.

Then in 1956 they started to build the new lighthouse and house. The government sent two men who stayed with us. We moved into the new house in April 1957. There was no electricity or phone. Heating was a furnace with coal and oil. The stove was oil and wood with a water reservoir to heat the water. Water from outside came into a tank in the basement which fed the upstairs. The water pressure was low so the bathroom was a pail of water a day until we got electricity in 1965. Then we were able to have a fridge, stove, iron and a telephone.



Enragee Point 1st Lighthouse

Sylvia, Kathleen, Jimmie, Leonard Chiasson



In 1967 the government built two more houses. We moved into one of the new houses and Patsy Lefort moved into the main house in 1968. Bernie Beaton moved into the other new house in April 1968. On November 15, 1978, Mom and Dad retired after 30 years and seven months at the Lighthouse. Dad passed away June 19, 2009; Mom, at 97, still lives happily in Cheticamp today.

Lightkeepers Wilfred and Annie
Rose Chiasson

Lighthouses seen this summer!



Cape George Lighthouse Trail Race – Matthew Burke



Louisbourg Lighthouse – Shauna MacDonald



L'Anse aux Meadows, NL – Golnaz Karimi



Covesea Lighthouse Scotland - Cathy McKenzie



Hampton Lighthouse – Howard Eaton