



# THE Lightkeeper

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

Vol. 4, No. 1, March, 1997

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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, September to June, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax.

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## Welcome Aboard!

The following new members have joined NSLPS since October, 1996: Mary Primrose, Five Islands Lighthouse Preservation Society, Edna Titus, Irving Titus, Joyce Mitchell, Liz Grigg, Toni Reidl, Michael Mackenzie

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mark this on your calendar:

April 23, 1997, 7:00 pm

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax

Display on Lighthouses and Slide Show

Demonstration of Website and Database

Reports and Election of Officers

Refreshments

## MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 1997 ARE NOW DUE!

The form can be clipped  
from the back of the Lightkeeper.

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## Executive News

Members will have noticed that they did not receive a Lightkeeper during December. At that time the NSLPS was in the midst of a dilemma over a serious difference of opinion between members of the executive as to the society's future role. Discussion and negotiation have resolved the difficulties. Recent meetings have been centred around fundamental discussions of the mission of NSLPS. We are now drafting an Action Plan for 1997, focussing on service to members and to community groups. This will be tabled at the AGM on April 23.

Because of the missed December Issue, this issue of the Lightkeeper has been doubled in size. Another item for the AGM is the cost of the newsletter (\$1.25 - 6 pp to \$1.75 - 8pp), in relation to the basic \$10.00 membership. The cost of four 8 page newsletters will consume almost the whole fee, allowing little for other activities.

There have been some changes in the Executive. Names, phone numbers and E-mail addresses are listed

below.

NSLPS Executive - as of Feb. 26, 1997: Graham McBride - President & Acting Treasurer; Ron Thomas, Vice President; Bill Mont, 2nd Vice President, Dan Conlin; Secretary, Lightkeeper Co-Editor, Barry MacLeod; Membership, Kathy Brown, Lightkeeper Editor, & Website.

**Coast Guard Ad Hoc Committee for New Uses of Lighthouses:** NSLPS has been invited to join. Dan Conlin is the current representative.

**Website:** The site has a new address:

<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/2507>. The site is being expanded. We hope we can show it to you at the AGM, April 23.

**Database:** Continues to be developed by Tim Hall.

You'll be able to look at it when you came to the AGM April 23.

**Deadline, June Lightkeeper:** Information and articles must reach the Editor by Wed. May 21.

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## Lighthouse Updates

### Burntcoat Head Lighthouse Replica

Charlie McCulloch

Over the past 3 years the site has been cleared and beautified and the replica of the lighthouse constructed. Last summer 3000 visitors enjoyed the informative panel display about the lighthouse and the geology of the Bay of Fundy; the picnic tables and hiking trails; and the chance to see the highest tides in the world. Canada Day on the Beautiful Bay is the prime event of the summer with tree planting, games, supper, dance and variety show. Future plans include more work on the entrance and plantings, finishing of two rooms in the lighthouse, steps to the landing for watching the tides and a park brochure.

### Cape D'Or Lighthouse

Carson Spicer

In 1995, a lunchroom and guest house were opened in two renovated lightkeeper's dwellings at this site, one of the few in Nova Scotia which retains its complete array of buildings. The number of visitors is growing: 5000 in 1995; 7000 in 1996. In 1996 several weddings were held on the site, with favourable comments. Future plans are to improve the buildings and access road, and to expand the

## **Updates cont'd**

size of the parking lot.

### **Fort Point and Western Head**

Norm Amirault

Fort Point Lighthouse will be opened this summer as a museum about the lights of Queen's County. The Tourism Development Association is hoping to acquire and manage Western Head as well, but this depends on the results of the Coast Guard new uses initiative.

### **Port Bickerton Lighthouse**

Helen Kaiser

The Port Bickerton & Area Planning Association consists of a group of interested residents of Port Bickerton and surrounding area who wish to develop our lighthouse site into a Beach Park. This lighthouse property and the surrounding scenery has to be seen to be appreciated. It is breathtakingly beautiful and during development it is essential to maintain the pristine environment.

An Interpretive Centre for all of the lighthouses in Nova Scotia will be the focal point. Research on the lighthouses in Guysborough County was carried out last summer and a CD Rom was produced. There are currently two peopleing the history of other lighthouses in NS.

This project is a five year plan and this year, the road to the property is being upgraded to improve accessibility, the lighthouse, which was built in 1930 is being restored. This building will house the Interpretive Centre which will be officially opened this summer.

### **Seal Island Lighthouse Museum**

Sid and Betty June Smith

In 1979, after a modern beacon was installed in the Seal Island Lighthouse, the original light and lantern were moved to Barrington through the efforts of the citizens of southwest Nova Scotia. The Cape Sable Historical Society raised funds to build a replica of the top third of the light. The Seal Island Light Museum opened to the public on July 1, 1985.

The Museum is run by the Cape Sable Historical Society, Barrington, and is open to the public from June 15 to September 30. It's a wonderful place to get up close to a Fresnel lens and to learn about the lighthouses and light keepers of Southeast Nova Scotia. Attendance was excellent in 1996. The highlight of the season was a wedding on the deck of the tower, pleasing the wedding party, the community and lucky visitors. Repairs were made to the lantern and to damage from leaks in the wooden tower. A priority for this season is repairs to the lantern dome and opening a canteen nearby.

### **Spencers Island Lighthouse**

Stanley Spicer

This lighthouse opened in 1991 as a small museum. Two years later it closed for major renovations. In 1995 it was approved as a municipal heritage structure, and it was opened to the public again that summer. An average of 1000 visitors, during July and August, see pictures of the sailing vessels that were built in the local shipyard, and artifacts. Plans are to continue, and to gather more artifacts.

## **Walton Lighthouse**

Reginald Clark

This lighthouse on the Fundy coast has been restored and has been open to the public for several sumemrs. Last year 3,460 people signed the guest book, an indication of the popularity of this site. Many others just visited and took a picture. The area has been beautified with gardens and this year the sideof the lighthosue which faces the Bay of Fundy will be repaired and painted.

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## **Heritage Evaluation of Sambro Light**

*Kathy Brown*

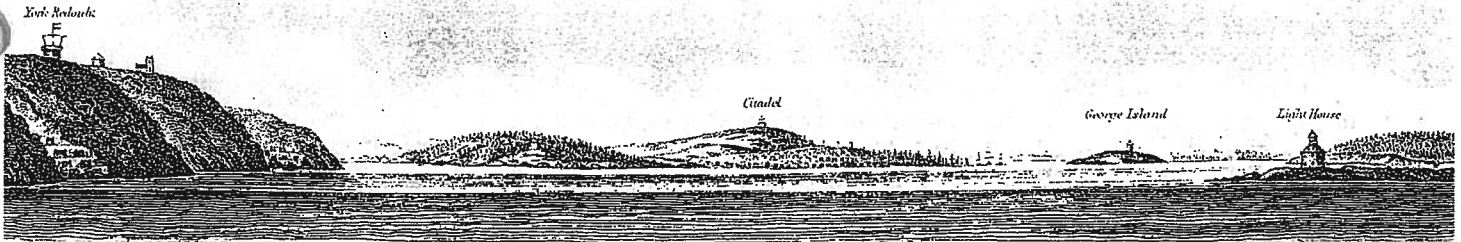
In August of 1996, the Sambro Island Light tower and the Gas House were evaluated by the Canadian Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office. This confirmed the lighthouse as a National Historic Site and both it and the Gas House as Clasified Heritage Buildings. The light tower received 99 points out of a possible 100 and is now at the top of the list of historic Canadian lighthouses. The single point was lost because no-one knows who designed the tower. The only reference noted in the Evaluation Record is from the Journal of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 1758, that a committee was required to complete plans for the lighthouse and also for a workhouse.

The International Association of Lighthouse Authorities has (IALA) nominated 100 lights throughout the world for historic preservation. Canada nominated 8 into this group, including Sambro which given its status as oldest Canadian working light would be at the head of the list. This recommendation was announced at Coast Guard meetings about the future of the lights which were held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, in December.

Unfortunately, the current state of the light tower is extremely poor. Great chunks of the concrete platform which supports the lantern have fallen away. The shingle cladding which protects the mortar from the effects of the salt spray and winter freezing and thawing is rotten. We hope that the evaluation of the tower and the recommendation to the IALA will mean that heritage funds will be made available for restoration.

The Gas House was listed by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office because of its importance to the Sambro Community. Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society appreciates very much the hard work of those who have worked on the Island and on the Gas House under the direction of Rip Irwin, and would like to thank them for their contribution: Building the Gas House Roof: Ivan Blades, Mike Emrick, Tony Gillis, Fotis Lambros, Keith McGuiness, Allan Savidant, Tom Taylor. Cleaning up the Site: Brian Donovan, Tony Gillis, Graham McBride, Tom Taylor, Ron Thomas, Mike Tilley.

The evaluation of Sambro Lighthouse and the resulting heritage protection was obtained chiefly through the unceasing efforts of Rip Irwin, Past President of NSLPS. We want to thank him for all his hard work and congratulate him on the results.



Ives Point just open of Maugher Beach Light leads on to the Light House Bank bearing North distant two miles.

## Lighthouses of McNabs Island

Dan Conlin

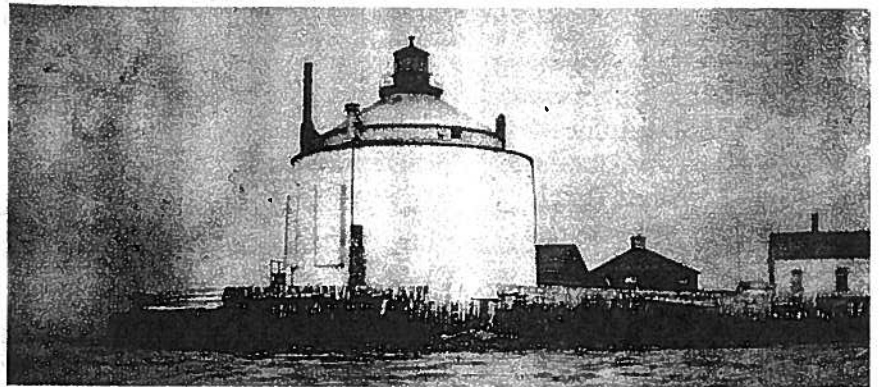
For over a century and a half the view seaward from Halifax has been marked by the long arm of Maughers Beach reaching out from McNab's Island and punctuated by a lighthouse. Every ship calling on Halifax has passed within a musket shot of it's tower, called by one observer, "our own Statue of Liberty".

The beach was named after Joshua Maugher (pronounced "Major"), a rum distiller and powerful merchant from early Halifax who used the beach to dry fish. It is also popularly known as "Hangman's Beach" after its use by the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic wars to hang the bodies of executed mutineers as a warning to ships entering the harbour.

In 1814, the British army began a stout round granite Martello tower at the end of the beach to house a small cannon battery to defend the harbour entrance. The tower took fourteen years to complete, but as early as 1815, lights were shown at the site when naval ships were expected. The provincial legislature decided a permanent light was needed to help ships into the inner harbour in 1826, and voted 1500 pounds for a lighthouse. To save money, the Lieutenant Governor persuaded the military to permit the placement of a lantern room on top of the martello tower, instead of building a separate lighthouse. The Ordnance Board agreed, as long as the light didn't obstruct the cannons in what came to be called Sherbrooke Tower. "Whether the two functions were compatible was never tested, fortunately perhaps," noted a sceptical Parks Canada historian.

The light at Maughers Beach was used in 1851 by Abraham Gesner to test out the new fuel he had invented, kerosene, to replace whale oil. Although lighthouse officials were sceptical, the careful recording of the efficiency of kerosene by Maughers Beach keeper David George helped establish the fuel for standard use.

A complex of buildings gradually spread over the end of Maughers Beach including a fog alarm (built in 1906), a



Above: An early photo of the Maughers Beach Light before the lantern was raised 10 feet in 1906. *Public Archives of Nova Scotia, DOT Lighthouse Collection No. 38.*  
Below: The light station at its peak crowded a large number of buildings into a small space. *Public Archives of Nova Scotia DOT Lighthouse Collection No. 35.*



duplex house for the team of keepers (built in 1913) and various sheds, boathouses and wharves. It was a precarious location at times. Facing the open Atlantic, the beach took the brunt of storms, acting as a breakwater for Halifax Harbour. McNabs Island residents such as Colin Cleveland recalled watching nervously from the main part of the island when waves broke over the roof of the keeper's house "and on one memorable occasion, the Maughers Beach outhouse came floating by!"

Even the seven-foot-thick granite walls of the Martello tower yielded in a brutal winter storm in 1931 which ripped much of the outer wall out of the south side of the tower. The tower was rebuilt, as were the ever-increasing wooden pilings and breakwaters which grew to contain the erosion of the beach which threatened to leave the light on an island of its own. Some granite boulders were added to the breakwater in 1957 and a massive rebuilding with boulders was completed in 1987.

The barriers made the light more secure in later years but despite the seeming nearness to Halifax, coast guard correspondence considered the light an isolated post due to its exposure and difficult access in winter. Thus two keepers were retained for mutual support right up to automation. Without water, phone or electricity until the 1970s, they relied on rainwater collected in basement cisterns and periodic radio contact.

The present concrete lighthouse was built in 1941 but it took until 1945 to demolish the heavy granite walls of the old martello tower (and as late as 1948, substantial portions of the ruined walls remained.)

The fog alarm building was demolished in 1975 and the foghorn was moved to the lighthouse where it remained until 1993 when silenced after sounding with various horns for 104 years. The Coast Guard hoped to automate the light as early as 1973 and that year keeper Hector Lowe was told he would only be needed for six months. However, he was still there ten years later as problems monitoring the automatic equipment required the assistance of a keeper until 1983. Nova Scotia's Lands and Forest Department considered keeping the duplex house for an interpretative centre, but it decay and vandals reduced it to an eyesore and fire hazard, so it was demolished and burned when the breakwater was rebuilt in 1987. Foundations of the keeper's house and fog alarm building remain between the lighthouse and the helicopter pad now used for maintenance and inspection visits.

Maughers Beach has seen its share of shipwrecks. As early as 1789, the Royal Gazette mentions a wreck going to pieces on the beach. For years the Maughers Beach light keepers displayed the signboard of the Norwegian bark

Tordem Skjold, wrecked in 1872. She lost control tacking into the harbour passing too close to the lighthouse which took the wind out of its sails, but the crew managed to scramble safely ashore. In 1940, the British warship HMS Revenge ran down and sank HMCS Ypres, one of the small "gate vessels" that tended the anti-submarine nets running from Maughers Beach across to York Redoubt. Fortunately no lives were lost.

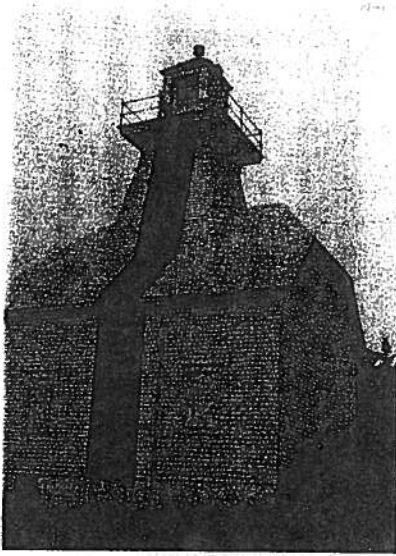
Aside from the very visible Maughers Beach Light, McNabs Island had another light, built in 1903 on a hill on the north-west corner of the island. With a 132 foot elevation, it had a longer range than the Maughers Beach light, being visible for up to 17 miles at sea. Officially known as the "McNab's Island Lighthouse", the tower was built into the centre of the keeper's house. Unlike the more isolated Maughers Beach keepers who had to board their children for school in Dartmouth, the McNabs Light children attended a small school



PANS DOT Lighthouse Collection. No. 48



The old tower is demolished as the new tower rises Oct. 3, 1942. Note the anti-submarine nets. National Archives of Canada, PA 105951, Courtesy Allan Ruffman.



McNabs Island Light. Photo Courtesy  
Bill Mont & Friends of McNabs Island

### Maughers Beach Light Keepers

1830-1836 J. Bolser  
1840-1846 D. McGlenn  
1846-1873 David George  
1873-1896 E. Horn  
1896-1903 J. Doody  
1903-1915 W. Iceton  
1915- 1936 T. Conrod  
1936-1940 J. A. MacDonald  
1940-1942 R. W. Hull  
1942-1945 J.J. Bell  
1945-1947 J. A. MacDonald

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## McNabs Island Lighthouse Trip

*Dan Conlin*

On October 20 the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society offered lighthouse tours as part of the Friends of McNabs Island "Fall Colours" trip to the island. Reaching McNabs on the Haligonian III, a group of about 40 people hiked to the site of the McNabs Lighthouse on the Northwest interior of the island during the morning. The gaping basement of the now sadly demolished light offered a good venue to discuss the challenges facing lighthouses and their fate if not preserved.

In the afternoon, over a hundred people were led on a hike out to the Maughers Beach light. Through the kindness of the Coast Guard, access inside this working light was provided and many braved the steep steps for a fine view of the harbour beside the slowly rotating beacon. A sail training ship, the brigantine Fair Jeanne from Kingston, made picturesque exit under sail passing the light just as we arrived.

on-the island in the 1930s, later commuting to study in Shearwater by naval duty boat. During the tenure of Colin Cleveland and his family in the 1930s, a minister and choir would visit the lighthouse several times a year, the minister exclaiming after the long climb up the steps, "Now I have seen the light!"

The last keepers left in 1959 when electricity replaced oil. The lighthouse was torn down in 1976. The basement is still visible off Military Road near the Lynch House. The light was replaced by a pair of small red lights on skeleton towers. Ships line up these "range lights" to help direct their approach into Halifax.

### Maughers Beach Cont'd

1948-1951 G.R. Hartley  
1951-1958 J.J. Bell  
1958-1959 J.D. LaLonde  
1959-A.J. Stevens  
1959-1960 Ernest.F. Rampton  
1970-L.G. Mitchell, M.B. Turner  
1970-1983 Hector G. Lowe  
1983-Made Unwatched

### McNabs Island Light Keepers

1903-1905 J. Doody  
1905-1932 M. Lynch  
1932-1957 Colin. W. Cleveland  
1957-B.J. Lumsden  
1957-1959 W. Eddy  
1959-Made Unwatched

Sources: *Discover McNabs Island* by the Friends of Menabs Island, Dept. of Marine Annual Reports, Dartmouth Coast Guard Records, Public Archives of Nova Scotia clippings and *The Sea Road to Halifax* by Hugh Pullen.

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## Marine Aids Modernization Program

*Excerpts from the January 31 edition of "Notices to Mariners" the Coast Guard's monthly announcements about navigation aids. This is background information for the Alternative Uses for Lighthouse initiative of the Coast Guard.*

Marine navigational technology is changing. And client needs are changing. As a result, more and more mariners are using technologies such as the Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) and the Electronic Chart Display Information System (ECDIS).

The Coast Guard is adjusting its aids to navigation to reflect the expanded use and availability of this new technology. National standards for the provision of aids to navigation will be revised as a result of the new technologies. As a result, many visual and aural aids will become unnecessary and will be reduced, eliminated or transferred to other authorities. Some fog horns and shore lights will be removed or scaled down. Some buoys will be discontinued in commercial shipping channels and coastal waters. Lighted buoys will be converted to unlighted buoys in a few pleasure craft channels.

## Modernization cont'd

The Coast Guard will also introduce new cost-saving technologies for its remaining conventional aids including five-year maintenance-free buoys, and downsized and solar powered aids at some lightstations. These changes will result in significant efficiencies. The removal of fuel tanks and diesel generators will also help ensure a cleaner environment.

In recognition of the heritage value that many communities place on lightstations, the Coast Guard is implementing an Alternative Use Program to promote the beneficial re-use of properties that are no longer required for Coast Guard operations and support their transfer to provincial, municipal or other authorities for future use.

Before decisions are finalized, the Coast Guard will consult with user groups on changes in their areas.

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## Lighthouse Alternative Use Update

*Excerpts from a bulletin published by the Coast Guard January 17, 1995, outlining the results of the public consultation held on December 3 - 5, 1996, about new uses for lighthouses.*

On December 3-5, 1996, the Canadian Coast Guard, Maritimes Region, chaired a public consultation on "Lighthouse Alternative Use". We did this in an attempt to ensure continued preservation of these sites for cultural, historical and tourism purposes at a time when program funding is decreasing and advances in navigation technology will make some lighthouses redundant.

### **Eleven Key Points Raised In December:**

Workshops at the December public consultative session provided the Coast Guard with the following direction:

1. "No need for another level of bureaucracy". There was unanimous agreement that the Coast Guard should continue to steer this process and not follow the "Maine Lights" Model in the USA.
2. The issue of disposal of government properties at "fair market" value in accordance with the "Real Property Act" is an impediment and needs to be addressed as it pertains to lighthouse properties.
3. All unanimously agreed that lighthouses need to be treated "differently" than real property due to the cultural and historical value of these sites.
4. Whatever proposals are considered for "Alternative Use", public access must be guaranteed.
5. Full community involvement is required at all levels of discussions.
6. When reviewing proposals, the historical/heritage, cultural, and tourism value must receive priority recognition.
7. There is a need to ensure protection of the natural environment (migratory birds, nesting areas, etc.).
8. Some urgency exists in moving quickly with this issue due to Coast Guard budgetary cuts, and the level of interest currently generated by the public.
9. Coast Guard should immediately address the issue of

declaring properties "surplus". The group felt that pending a final position from Government on "Alternative Use", a moratorium should be placed on disposals.

10. There was some support for a "selection committee" approach, using established criteria in order to determine which group or individual would be the best suited to administer a lighthouse property.

11. Coast Guard would need to clearly identify the parcel of land which would form part of the "lighthouse property" put up for "Alternative Use". The concern was to ensure sufficient lands would be provided in order to develop the property - not simply the building lot.

### **Next Steps:**

At the closing ceremony, Coast Guard tabled a "Next Steps" document which listed the following future action steps and their due dates:

- Circulate Minutes (Jan 30/97)
- Develop 2 or 3 options for "Alternative Use" which incorporate the Work Group's ideas. (Jan 30/97)
- Submit these options to Coast Guard Headquarters, other government departments, etc. for comments and testing against the current flexibility under the "Real Property Act". (Jan 30/97)
- Completion of review process and identification of possible realistic options. (Mar 31/97)
- Public meeting to reach consensus/agreement on a Regional "Lighthouse Alternative Use" model. (Jul/Aug/97)

### **What have we done to date?**

- Ongoing discussions with Coast Guard Facilities management staff who are providing policy interpretation and legal advice.
- The creation of an ad-hoc working group to assist Coast Guard in development of "option papers".
- A draft report on "Lighthouse Alternative Use" was produced based on round table discussions as well as a review of ideas formulated at the December session. This report will be further refined over the next couple of weeks and forwarded to our Headquarters, Department of Justice as well as Property Specialist for review and comment. (Jan. 30/97 - deadline for submission).
- A committee will prepare for the September "public" session in Prince Edward Island (Note: The July/August date mentioned in December would be difficult due to the level of tourism on Prince Edward Island during July and August).
- We have started to compile an agenda for the September session which includes: Presentation of a Regional Policy on "Lighthouse Alternative Use"; identify Members of a Regional Advisory Council on "Lighthouse Alternative Use" (RACLAU); tour of a site on Prince Edward Island.

### **Is the Coast Guard selling Lighthouses?**

No. The Coast Guard does not plan to get into the real estate business. Our current approach is to retain ownership and enter into five year agreements with

administrators of these properties in accordance with our Regional Policy (under development).

### ***Should I move quickly to submit a proposal to Coast Guard?***

Many proposals have been received to date. However, if the approach we've embarked upon is considered an accepted process and becomes incorporated into a Regional Policy, we will request that all existing proposals be re-submitted to ensure they comply with the criteria we have set out in the policy. For that reason, I suggest you wait until this criteria is known before proceeding further with your plans.

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### **Cape Forchu Opening**

Just as we were finishing the newsletter, we learned that the official opening of the Cape Forchu Lighthouse Site at Yarmouth will be on **Saturday May 24, 1997**. There will be special events and entertainment sponsored by a partnership of the Friends of the Yarmouth Lights and the Yarmouth County Tourist Association. You can visit the Keeper's House and there is a gift shop and canteen. The lighthouse, still a working light, will not be open, but the great view of the Bay of Fundy makes up for that.

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### **More About Painting a Lighthouse:**

*From Chris Mills*

Chris Mills, has been a lightkeeper in Nova Scotia and is now a keeper at Dryad Island Lighthouse, B.C. He provided information about painting lighthouses which was published in the September 1996 Lightkeeper. In October he sent the following extra information to the Editor:

“... with regards to lighthouse paint. If I'd known the information was going to be published I would have been a little more specific - some lights were/are painted using scaffolding, or carts raised (by) electric motors or block and tackle. Latex paint is often used on concrete towers. Although CG ships crews do paint some lighthouses, the CG also hired (while I was on Seal) students to help out with the painting, under the supervision of one of the regular CG workers. The same fellows who worked on Seal also painted Cape Forchu by bosun's chair. That would have been in '90 or '91. I believe that in later years light keepers were not required to paint any tower over 25 or 30 feet in height. We were not told flat out that we could *not* paint towers, but CG seemed to prefer that work crews did the taller structures. As far as painting lighthouses goes, in my eight years on 10 lights, I have only ever painted the tower at Ivory (A whopping 17 foot skeleton tower [in B.C. Ed.]) and the base of the Seal Island tower.

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### **Know Your Lights: Sound-Alike Lighthouses**

*As if to confuse the unwary researcher, quite a number of Nova Scotia lights have nearly identical names. Here are a few of them. More to come!*

Fort Point Light - Liverpool Harbour  
Fort Point Light - Lahave River

Black Rock Light - Kings County (near Hall's Harbour)  
Black Rock Point Light - entrance to Great Bras d'Or, Cape Breton

Cape Forchu Light, Yarmouth  
Fourchu Head Light, near Louisbourg, Cape Breton.

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### **Lighthouse Research Notes: Collecting Oral History**

*Dan Conlin*

More than just yarnspinning, oral history is an organized way of recording human experience stored away in memory. The human side of lightkeeping, the dramatic and humorous experiences, are usually left out of the written record. It does help to do some written research first so you know what to expect and to ask about. Ideally, interviews should be taped and transcribed so nothing is missed and the information can be shared, although this is not always possible. The following questions and tips are a good starting point, but should be customised with every interview. Oral history is now a recognised form of history. If interested, you might want to check out these guides: *Voices: A Guide to Oral History*, Derek Reimer (Public Archives of B C, 1984) *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Paul R. Thompson (Oxford University Press, 1988)

### ***Interviewing Light Keepers***

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How did you come to be connected with the \_\_\_\_\_ light? Any background with lighthouses in your family?
3. What were your duties at the light?
4. What was it like working there?
5. Did your own family help with the light duties?
6. Suppose I arrived for a visit when you were a keeper, can you describe what I would see?
7. What were some of the more memorable events at the light?
8. What did you like best about working there?
9. What did you like least about working there?
10. Can you tell me about any storms that stick out in your memory?
11. Can you tell me about any close calls of vessels in distress that may have happened over the years?
12. Are there any humorous stories connected with the

**Reserach Notes cont'd**

light that you can share?

- 13. Did the light change much over the years?

**Oral History cont'd**

Did equipment change?

Did the buildings change?

- 14. What years did you work at the station?
- 15. What was it like dealing with the lighthouse bureaucracy?
- 16. What kind of visitors did you have?
- 17. Are there any legends or stories associated with that location?
- 18. When you go to the light now are their features that are familiar to you that others might not recognise?
  - Foundations?
  - Old equipment?
- 19. Do you miss it at all?
- 20. Do you know of any good photos of the light?
- 21. Are there any pieces of equipment that you know survive?
- 22. Is there anything I haven't asked that you think I should know about the light?
- 23. Is there anyone else I should talk to?
- 24. Can I get back to you if any other questions come up?

**A few interview tips:**

- \* Start with very general questions. The more freedom you give people to talk, the more they will bring up information without you even having to ask.
- \* Leave the specific detail questions for later on in the interview. An interview bogs down when people agonise over names and dates.
- \* Never interrupt. Not only is it respectful to listen and wait, but it often lets people introduce great information that you might never have thought to ask.
- \* If interesting points are raised but not fully explained, note them down and ask a follow-up question after the keeper finishes.
- \* Very simple follow-up questions are best: "Why was that?" and "What happened then?"
- \* Avoid "yes or no" questions as they usually produce abrupt "yes or no" answers.

- \* Avoid "double-barrelled" questions like "Can you tell me if you ever had a fire and if you ever had a major equipment breakdown?" Usually you'll only get one answered and the subject forgets or avoids the other.
- \* Keep your questions short and free from your own information and opinions.
- \* Avoid leading questions that put words in the interviewees mouth. For example: "You must have seen some dreadful shipwrecks and been in some heroic rescues." - This rather insults the keeper's modesty and will probably get a negative answer, even if they did have some fascinating experiences.

**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.**

**Publications:**

by Stanley Spicer, NSLPS member and well known marine historian.

**Captain from Fundy.** The life and times of George Spicer of Spencers Island who sailed square rigged windjammers. He crossed the Atlantic 107 times and commanded five sailing vessels over his 52 year career. \$7.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

**The Saga of the Mary Celeste, Ill Fated Mystery Ship.** The Mary Celeste, built at Spencers Island Nova Scotia, was discovered at sea in 1872, all sails set and everything in order. \$6.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

**The Work Crew:**

7 x 10 1/2 print by Maurice Bernard showing Tony Gillis' boat *Nova Lee*, some of the NSLPS work crew, the Gas House, and Sambro Light. Double-matted, ready to frame **\$29.00, including pack and post.**

**Lightkeeper:**

Back issues From January, 1995, \$2.00 per copy

Lightkeeper is published quarterly by THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY, c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, B3J 1S3 Tel. (902) 424-6442, FAX (902) 424-0612. Send news and items for publication to Kathy Brown, Editor, *The Lightkeseper*, 24 Armshore Drive, Halifax, NS, B3N 1M5.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1998**

**NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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

Give details on how you can help \_\_\_\_\_

**Single - \$10.00 Family - \$20.00 Institution/Group - \$30.00 Patron - \$100.00**

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Make cheques payable to Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

New  Renewal

Mail to: THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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