



THE Lightkeeper

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

Vol. 4, No. 3, September, 1997

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.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/2507>

Patron: Rip Irwin

WELCOME ABOARD!

The following new members have joined NSLPS since June, 1997: Tina Bergstrom, Roger Boisclair, Harold J. Clark, Thom Drew, Helen Kaiser, Charles N. Jackson, Janet McGinty, Valerie & Kevin Myra, Barbara Grimster, Fred Burgess, Ronald E. Brann, Cynthia A. Becce, Mr. & Mrs. J.E. Simpson, Tony & Chai Chu Thompson, Peter & Leola MacCulloch & family.

LIGHTHOUSE TRIPS

Maughers Beach Light

Sunday, Oct. 19

Climb inside the often seen but seldom visited Halifax landmark for a guided tour by Dan Conlin and Tim Hall. Spend the rest of the day exploring the island's forts and nature trail. Offered in cooperation with the Friend's of McNabs Island Society and the Halifax Field Naturalists.

Depart at 10:00 am from the Cable Wharf, Halifax, return at 4:00 pm

NSLPS members \$6.50, Non-members \$8.50

Bring your membership card.

Chebucto Head

Saturday, Nov. 1

A tour by a former keeper of the lighthouse atop the cliffs at the harbour entrance, plus a tour of the keeper's house and the old foghorn site. To get to the light, drive out the Herring Cove Road and take the turn marked Duncan's Cove.

10:30 - Lighthouse Tour by donation to NSLPS

1:30 - Duncan Cove Hike with the Halifax Field Naturalists

WINTER PROGRAMMES

Isle Haute: The Mysterious Meeting Place

Dan Conlin

Wednesday, Oct. 22, 7 pm

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax

Isle Haute floats silently in the Bay of Fundy off Cape Chignecto, an island of "lighthouse and pirate Legend." Dan will tell us about its history and legends and about the recent multidisciplinary science expedition of the Nova Scotia Museum to the island. Refreshments will be served after the programme. Note: This evening only, the NSLPS business meeting begins at 6.00 pm sharp.

IN 1998 WATCH FOR:

Sable Island. Wed, Feb. 25, 1998, 7:30 pm

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

Lynn Marie Richard, the Sable Island expert at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

Keeping the Lights. March

Sid and Betty June Smith. Betty June grew up at the Bon Portage Island Lighthouse. As a couple they kept the light at Cape Sable.

Build a Lighthouse Penny Bank. A Saturday morning workshop for children.

Tours. To Seal Island, lights of Halifax Harbour, Sambro (Repairs permitting!), and more!

SAMBRO LIGHTHOUSE TO BE REPAIRED!

Dan Conlin

Thanks to lobbying by NSLPS, Sambro, Canada's oldest and most historic lighthouse, will be getting major repairs next summer. Fisheries and Oceans Minister David Anderson has committed himself in a letter to at least \$125,000 worth of work on Sambro with some preliminary work this fall and completion by the end of next summer. Although it is North America's oldest operating lighthouse, Sambro has suffered from the cutbacks of recent years recent year. Large chunks of concrete are falling away from the lantern deck the paint is peeling and the shingles are rotten.

Larry Wilson, Director of Marine Programs at the

Coast Guard said a repair plan for Sambro, drawn up over two years ago, was twice cancelled because of money constraints. However Federal Heritage Status achieved for Sambro last year and continued lobbying by NSLPS brought pressure for a ministerial commitment. This year NSLPS exchanged letters and discussions with several Coast Guard officials, two federal cabinet ministers and the area MP. Sambro will be inspected this fall to update the repair plan, which may now exceed the old \$125,000 estimate. Tenders will go out in April with work to be done from June to August.

EXECUTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

The executive met throughout the summer. Much time was spent on contacting politicians and the Coast Guard about the state of the Sambro Lighthouse, and organizing tours and programmes.

Dan Conlin did a presentation on the Sambro Lighthouse at Sambro/Ketch Harbour Elementary School which went well. He and Tim Hall did activities on Museum Day at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, including building miniature pepperpot lights.

We're Growing!

With community interest in lighthouses increasing rapidly NSLPS is being asked to do more and more. Current executive members carry a heavy load. We need help with very specific jobs:

Organizing tours
Research

Correspondence (sporadic)

Services to Community Groups

Working on our Website. Web Address:

<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/2507>.

If you can help, or can think of something else you can do, call Dan Conlin at 492-9939.

RACLAU - A NEW ACRONYM!

Kathy Brown

The Coast Guard's ad hoc working group on alternative use for lighthouses has been dissolved and renamed as the Regional Advisory Council on Lighthouse Alternative Use - RACLAU. Members are from all three Maritime provinces. Dan Conlin is a member, representing both NSLPS and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. The chairperson is Pam Harrison, Guysborough Regional Development Authority.

One of RACLAU's major activities has been to assist the Canadian Coast Guard, Maritimes Region, in a submission to the Minister of Fisheries about financial arrangements for the alternative use of lighthouses. If this submission receives Ministerial approval, it will then be passed to the Treasury Board for their approval.

The Coast Guard is asking for flexibility in arranging direct sales to groups, lease to buy options for non-profit organizations, and flexibility in establishing the fair market value of lighthouse



L to R:
Pat Acheson
and Linda
Christiansen
take a close
look at the lens
during
the recent
NLSLPS trip to
the Georges
Island
Lighthouse in
Halifax
Harbour. *Photo
courtesy Dan
Conlin.*

properties. The submission recognizes the heritage value of lighthouses to their communities to the region as a whole. Approval of this process will save lighthouse from the current requirement for disposal to the highest bidder when no longer needed by the Coast Guard. This approach establishes that other factors besides market value are important. Congratulations to RACLAU and the Coast Guard on this initiative.

BEACON CONFERENCE, September 11 and 12, PEI

The second Alternative Use Conference

Kathy Brown

RACLAU and the Coast Guard combined in organizing an intense and useful meeting of dozens of community groups eager to preserve and develop lighthouse sites. Dan Conlin, Kathy Brown and Rip Irwin attended on behalf of NSLPS. You will find reports from this conference in this issue and the next, as well. When the detailed report is available we'll let you know how to get a copy. There was too much information for us to print it all!

Coast Guard Goals

The aim is to provide a safe level of service, taking into account the change to electronic navigation and their budget restraints. They realize that fishermen and recreational boaters still need the lights, but the majority of lighthouses will be downgraded to minor status. This means that the lights will be reduced in intensity and visible for no more than ten miles to seaward. A few lights will become surplus. This process could take 10 years.

Even though a light remains operational, the Coast Guard is seeking new uses so that communities and other groups will have the advantage of access and the government will have assistance with the upkeep. Contact NLSPS for information.

Lighthouse Inventory

To help in this transition, Tom Harley of Coast Guard Saint John, developed a database which includes a site map, photos, property value, surplus acreage, property ownership, basic minimum operating costs and much more. This information is available on a light-by-light basis by request to groups interested in assessing a site for possible development.

Lighthouse Success Stories

Things are happening all over! We learned about 6 successes - two for each province. Here is a list and a synopsis of the Nova Scotian examples. We know, of course, that these are just two of the many great projects here. Merely the loom of our lights, so to speak! If anyone wants info about the rest of the

Success Stories, or anything else, for that matter, contact Kathy Brown, she has copious notes!

West Point, PEI.

Museum, and B&B in the lighthouse, a restaurant in a replica of the attached lightkeeper's residence and a craft shop in an adjacent building.

East Point, PEI.

Tours into the light tower and craft shop in fog alarm building.

Port Bickerton, NS.

David Curry, Gwen Robar, Helen Kaiser

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Interpretive Centre, and a craft shop in the lightkeeper's residence.

At one time a PCB incinerator was proposed for this site! The community had the idea of a park there and a concept plan was developed. The Port Bickerton Planning Association oversees the project. Just one year ago the site consisted of the relatively recent concrete lighthouse and derelict buildings. Now the keeper's house has been restored and a replica of the original light tower added atop the roof. Funding is both Federal and Provincial accompanied by many volunteer hours to restore the residence and set up the Centre and a craft shop. 2,100 visitors since the grand opening on June 28,

Fund Raising

Activities included a roast beef dinner with Stanley Spicer as the speaker, pantry sales, a New Years Eve party and raffles on quilts. In addition the Planning Association lead the River Days Parade with a lighthouse float which raised community consciousness. They have cooperated in some projects with Sherbrooke Village the nearby site of the Nova Scotia Museum. All this raised \$6,500 in a community of 400 people.

Research and Database

In 1996, a student researched lighthouses of Guysborough County. Two other researchers gathered information on the remaining lighthouses of Nova Scotia. They have set up profiles of all 160 lights with information depending on availability. There are pictures of 125 of the lights and all this, coordinated with the *Doers and Dreamers Guide*, is available at the Interpretation Centre. In addition there are story boards about the History of the Lights, Humane Aspects, Weather, Lightships, and Wreckers. Right now the Planning Association is evaluating ways of making this information more widely available.

The project, supported by the Federal and Provincial Governments and the Coast Guard has energized the community and given pride to residents. NSLPS assisted with the research. Great accomplishments by dedicated people in a short time!

Cape Forchu (Yarmouth Light) NS.

Gert Sweeney

Welcome centre, interpretation centre and craft shop in the historic keeper's house, snack bar in the 1980's keeper's bungalow

The Yarmouth County Tourist Association had arranged a five year lease with the Coast Guard and established a tourist information centre at this site several years ago, but they wished to pass the project on to another group. *The Friends of the Yarmouth Light Association*, organized about 1 ½ years ago is gradually taking it over. The group has 500 members with about 60 active in working on the lighthouse site. WOW! The light tower is not currently open.

The Friends have spruced up the site, removing graffiti from the rocks, putting up new signage, and adding benches, picnic tables and garbage receptacles. There is a photographic display in the keeper's house. They've used the "Coast Guard Red" paint to great advantage on signage and the trim on the buildings. Cape Forchu must really show up as a daymark! Members of the society have raised all the funds themselves, \$17,000 in nine months, through sales, dances, suppers, a festival, and raffles. They have a well-signed donation box at the site. Again, a lot accomplished in a short time.

For more about Cape Forchu see *The Lightkeeper*, September, 1966.

Cape Enrage, NB

Adventure Tours, restaurant, canoeing, kayaking run from various buildings including tradition keeper's duplex.

Greens Point Light, NB.

Marine and Coastal Interpretation Centre

Jean-Marie Calbet, Dinner Speaker

After such an exciting day, it was hard to believe that the dinner speech could be the icing on the cake! Jean-Marie is Chairman of the Advisory Panel on the Preservation of Historic Lighthouses of the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities (IALA). This amounts to being the world's official lighthouse enthusiast! He spent nearly a day to get to us from France, his final flight being into the Mill River conference site by helicopter.

IALA oversees navigation systems worldwide. Their historic preservation branch has taken about 6 years to set up. (This news made conference participants proud of how quickly we are getting organized.) Lighthouse preservation is an issue everywhere because electronic navigation is taking

over and the lights are not as necessary. The IALA Panel plans to establish a worldwide database, publish a book on lighthouses worldwide and hold conferences. Jean-Marie was enthusiastic about what is happening here and amazed at the large number of communities interested in lighthouse preservation. Evidently this is not the situation world-wide.

He presented information from some other countries which was illuminating.

Norway - lightkeepers are glad to leave the stations because they are so isolated. 84 selected for preservation, with plans for museums, B&B's and local activities. Preserved lighthouses must be re-staffed! American Express is sponsoring some!

Great Britain - wants to preserve all the lights built before 1900. This is nearly all of them. Before now, they have sold lights but some were not maintained properly. Now they deal with associations such as the National Trust, but they sell without the equipment which can cause difficulties.

Italy - plans to preserve all lights over 50 years old.

Estonia - many old lighthouse, the first built in 1350. Most in poor repair. Norway is helping with a preservation plan.

Japan - lights are very young because of earthquakes. Oldest, built in 1903, has been dismantled and re-built inland in a tourist park! It now has 2 million visitors and was rebuilt with two staircases rather than one, to accommodate passage up and down!

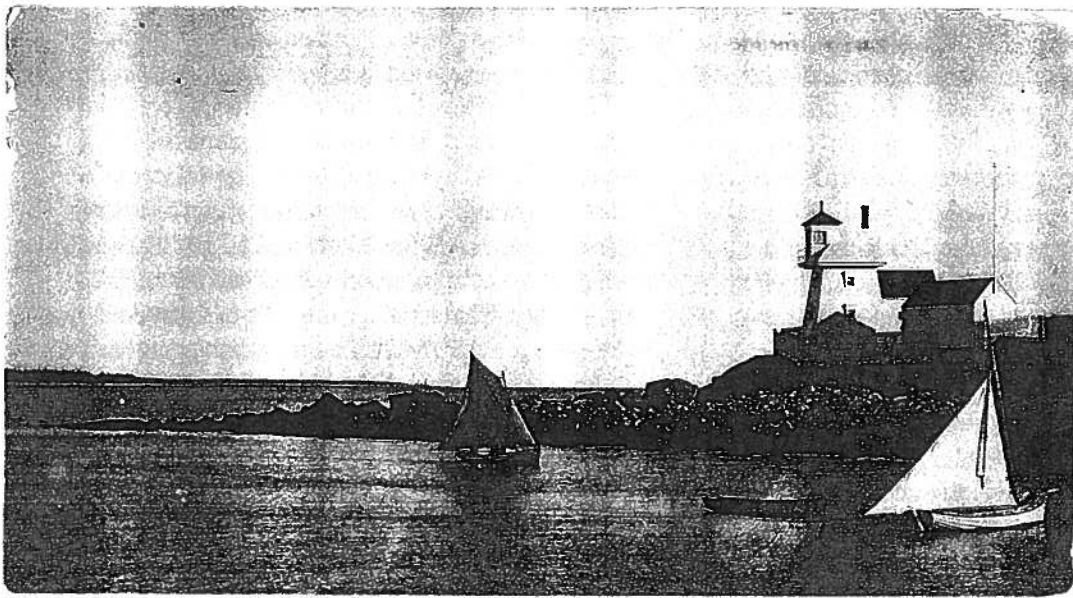
Spain - no specific program. Only very old lights are selected for preservation. I

France - three lighthouses have been selected by the government. Jean-Marie helps with Cordouan Lighthouse, on an island where the river Gironde runs into the Bay of Biscay, built in 1584. A local association started work 17 years ago. One of their headaches and assets is a domed chapel right inside this stone lighthouse!

Jean-Marie summed up the situation as follows:

1. All over the world official services in charge of lighthouses have no money to spend on preservation.
2. All over the world people in charge are crazy over their lighthouses.
3. Alternative use is the only way to raise funds.
4. Don't neglect lighthouses. You will enjoy it and if you are lucky you may make money!

His presentation helped us appreciate the broad support for lighthouse preservation in the Maritimes and realize just how far we have come in a very short time.



An old post card of Fort Point Light with its outbuildings and protective fence. Courtesy Tim Hall.

FORT POINT LIGHTHOUSE

Dan Conlin

Liverpool, Nova Scotia boasts a uniquely shaped light, one of the oldest in Nova Scotia, commanding an historic site close to the middle of town. Named after the fortified gun battery that protected the town from the 1760s to the 1860s, the point saw several actions in the American Revolution. It was also a signal station and an important public gathering place for the town, becoming park in the late 1800s.

Visible from the park is Coffin Island, where the Liverpool area received its first light in 1815 to help mariners locate the entrance to Liverpool Bay. By the 1850s, the booming timber trade brought pressure to make Liverpool's harbour easier and safer to enter by day or night. A petition in 1855 from "merchants, shipmasters and other inhabitants of Queens County" persuaded the Nova Scotia legislature to build a harbour light for Liverpool.

Built of wood, its survival on an exposed point for almost a century and a half is testimony to wise construction and the dedicated maintenance of keepers and their families. Most harbour lights follow the same simple pattern, often called "pepper-pot" lights. However Fort Point, dating from an earlier era has a unique, very colonial looking, gable roof described with geometric language in a 1872 sailing guide as "the frustrum of a pyramid on a square base".

In the years that followed, when timber ships tied up three deep at Liverpool wharves, the light proved indispensable in making the crowded harbour safe. A review of Nova Scotia lights in 1870 described Fort Point as "of the greatest importance to the trade of the port". It was eventually joined by

a network of buoys and markers in the harbour and even a small light on the bridge in the middle of town.

Unlike many island light stations, isolation was not a problem but privacy and security was. As early as 1860 the lighthouse superintendent recommended "A board fence is wanting around the building to prevent it from being defaced and injured as also for the protection of the females who attend the light" (An interesting recognition of women's unpaid light duties!). Keepers at Fort Point also had to make due with very cramped living quarters. When first built the lantern took up the top floor, supplies and lamp oil took up the ground floor, leaving only a small room on the second floor for the keeper to live in. The first keeper soon moved out to live in town. However later keepers moved back into the light and a kitchen was built onto the side of the light at the turn of the century. During World War Two, quarters became even more cramped as weather forecasters took over the tower room. The last lightkeeper, James McLeod, wrote in 1944, "this room we gave for them (for 1 month only) was not a spare room but the only room we had to use ourselves as living quarters. The results, we (a family of five) have been living in a small kitchen for the past four years."

Designed to help vessels on their "final approach", the Fort Point light had a modest range of 8 miles. Three brass oil lanterns provided the light, magnified by 12 inch round silver-plated reflectors. At first, the lamps burned seal oil but they were switched to kerosene by 1864 and burned oil until 1951 when the light was electrified and automated. The old reflectors were so worn by almost a century

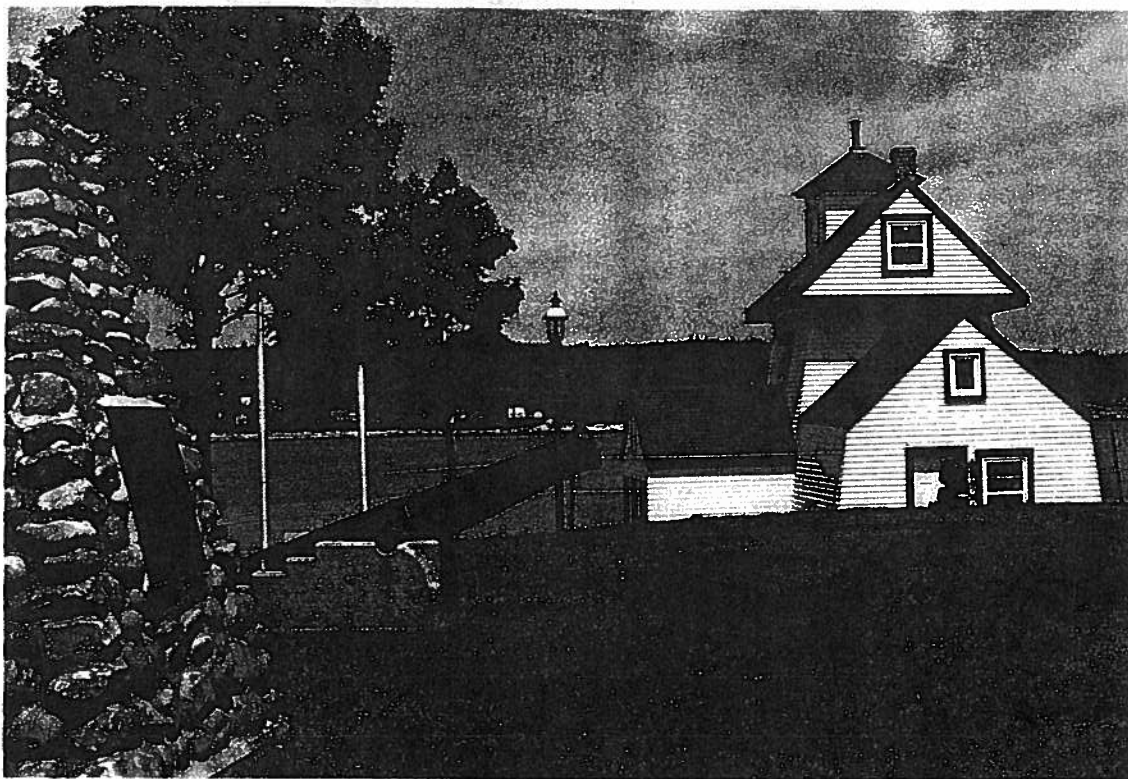
of polishing that no silver remained on the copper reflectors and the light shone with a copper hue. They were replaced by a 6th order Fresnel cut glass lens.

Fort Point keepers received an extra \$36 a year to operate a hand cranked foghorn from 1901 to 1951. Another service until the 1950s was as a signal station warning vessels of approaching bad weather. Specially shaped drums and cones were hoisted on a signal mast to indicate the weather based on a standard code. The canvas drums were first stored in sheds beside the light and later inside the lighthouse itself

By 1989 modern navigational aids such as radar and depth finders, made smaller harbour lights less useful and Fort Point was shut down early in

that year. Many historic lighthouses faced swift demolition when closed or automated, however the Fort Point light had long since become a Liverpool landmark. As early as 1946 federal plans to demolish the old light were stopped by concerns from the Town of Liverpool which began to help with maintenance in the 1950s and by 1970 acquired the lighthouse and its surrounding land for a park and museum. Thanks to Liverpool's early interest in lighthouse preservation (at a time when countless lighthouses were demolished) Fort Point survives as the fourth oldest remaining light in Nova Scotia (after Sambro, Seal and Havre Boucher).

The Fort Point Lighthouse Museum opened in September 1997.



Fort Point Light newly renovated and about to open as museum 1997. Photo: Dan Conlin

Keepers:

Samuel T. N. Sellon 1856 - 1888 John Edward Misener 1896 - 1936
 A. J. Campbell 1888 - 1896 James Harris McLeod 1936- 1951

Apparatus:

1855 - 1951 Catoptric reflector - 12 inch Oil lamps Seal Oil until 1864, Kerosene after
 1951 - 1970 Dioptric lens - 6th Order Electric - incandescent 200 watt lamp
 1971 - 1989 Cut glass lens - 375 mm Electric - Mercury Vapour 175 watt lamp
 1901 - 1951 Hand foghorn - answers vessel signals, little used after 1940.
 1930s to 1950s Storm signal station near light

Sources: List of Lights: 1864 - 1989, Journals of NS House of Assembly 1854-1868, Parliamentary Sessional Papers 1868-1930, Canadian Coast Guard Dartmouth Records.

SOME OTHER LIGHTHOUSES OF QUEENS COUNTY

Medway Head (1851)

This area is often referred to as "Queens County's Peggy's Cove." The lighthouse can be found on the west side of the entrance to Port Medway harbour via the Long Cove Road, and is a circular tower with two red horizontal bands. The lightstation at one time sat below the present site, and the old foundation can still be found amongst the rocks. When James Wynot and his wife lived at the station they had a large iron bar on their windows which closed to ward off the stormy seas. The present light was erected on the site in 1961. The former keeper's bungalow is across the road and high on the hill above is the building which once served as both dwelling and light. On top is the former lantern room. In years gone by, goods such as oil and personal supplies came to Medway Head via supply ship. The goods would be delivered to the station by rowboat, to a landing between two huge boulders. Destaffed in 1987.



Medway Light (1899) on the breakwater at Port Medway, a typical "pepper pot" light. *Photo courtesy Tim Hall.*

Western Head (1962)

This lighthouse is on the western side of the entrance to Liverpool Bay, off the Mersey Point Road. It is an octagonal concrete tower with an aluminum lantern. Amongst the duties of the keepers at this light in 1962 were the following:

- climbing the 40 foot tower to polish the lens and clean the lantern.
- Keeping the fog alarm free of snow and ice and doing general maintenance on it.
- Monitoring arrivals and departures at the Coast Guard helicopter pad on the site, including pilot's name, time of arrival and departure and intended destination.

- Acting as a tour guide for the many visitors!

Source: Queens County Tourism Department

RESEARCH NOTES

Typical Supplies at a Lightstation in 1870

Dan Conlin

Ever wonder what all that space was used for in old wooden light towers?

In 1871 the Dept. of Marine listed the supplies for a typical small light station using the year's supplies for the light at Annapolis as an example:

Nine lamps, One whitewash brush, One scrubbing brush, One paint and sash brush, Fifteen lbs. cotton waste, Ten yards toweling, Ten yards cotton, Ten yards cotton flannel, Sixty-Six lbs. soap, Two lbs. blacklead, Ten lbs. whiting, Two lbs. reflector powder, Five gallons paint oil, Fifty lbs. white lead, Three gross wicks, One hand brush, One blacklead brush, Three lamp glass brushes, Two pair scissors, Three Chamois skins, Four sponges, Six papers Tripoli, Four pots polishing paste,

Ten lbs. assorted nails, Two buckets, Two brooms, Nine burners, Eight dozen chimnies,

From all the cleaning and polishing supplies in this list it is abundantly clear how much cleaning labour was involved in the days of glass chimneys and oil burning lamps. (This type of lighting lasted until the 1950s in many locations). And this was only for a modest harbour light! However in this same year as this 1870 report the Dept. of Marine was proudly reporting a bold new innovation. Instead of shipping kerosene oil in leaky wooden casks, galvanized iron tanks were being introduced - manufactured by the Starr Manufacturing Company - the famous make of ice skates in Dartmouth.

Source: Dept of Marine Annual Report for 1870 published in the Parliamentary Sessional Papers 1871 (Vol. 3, Paper No. 5)

NOVA SCOTIA'S LIGHTHOUSES - THE FIRST FIFTEEN

| STATION | BUILT | ORIG. STANDS? | DESTROYED | CAUSE |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------|-----------|-------------|
| Louisbourg | 1734 | NO | 1758 | bombardment |
| Sambro | 1758 | YES | | |
| Cape Roseway | 1788 | NO | 1959 | fire |
| Brier Island | 1809 | NO | 1832 | fire |
| Cranberry Islands | 1815 | NO | 1883 | |
| Prim Point (Digby) | 1817 | NO | 1873 | fire |
| Maughers Beach | 1828 | NO | 1945 | torn down |
| Seal Island | 1831 | YES | | |
| Low Point | 1832 | NO | 1938(?) | |
| Brier Island | 1832 | NO | 1944 | fire |
| Pictou Bar | 1834 | NO | 1904 | |
| Cross Island | 1839 | NO | 1960 | fire |
| Scaterie (East End) | 1839 | NO | | |
| South Point (St. Paul Is.) | 1839 | NO | 1916 | fire |
| Cape Forchu (Yarmouth) | 1840 | NO | 1961 | torn down |

LIGHTSHOP

Profits go to support your society!

Great stocking stuffers!

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: Oval pin with blue background and NSLPS Logo in gold and red.

\$5.00 + \$1.00 shipping.

Pewter Keychain, Sambro Lighthouse: Inscribed with "Oldest Working Light in North America" and 1758.

\$11.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

Lightkeeper: from Jan. 1995. \$2.00 per copy.

Publications:

by Stanley Spicer

Captain From Fundy: The Life and Times of George Spicer of Spencers Island. \$7.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

The Saga of the Mary Celeste, Ill Fated Mystery Ship.

\$6.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

The Work Crew:

7 x 10 ½ print by Maurice Bernard showing the Sambro Light. Double-matted, ready to frame **\$29.00, including pack and post.**

NSLPS EXECUTIVE

Past President: Graham Mc Bride

President: Dan Conlin

1st Vice-President: Kathy Brown

2nd Vice President: Bill Mont

Secretary: Barrie MacLeod

Treasurer: Ron Thomas

Lightkeeper: Kathy Brown,

Database: Tim Hall

MEMBERSHIP - Sept. 1997 - Dec 31, 1998:

Single - \$20.00

Sustaining - \$50.00

Family - \$25.00

Patron - \$100.00

Institution/Group - \$35.00

Send name, address, telephone number & type of membership to:

THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION

Society, c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic,

1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, B3J 1S3

Make cheques payable to The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

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Send news and items for publication to

Kathy Brown, Editor, **The Lightkeeper**, 24 Armshore Drive, Halifax, NS, B3N 1M5, or E-Mail krbrown@ns.sympatico.ca

NEXT DEADLINE NOV. 15. News and articles happily accepted!