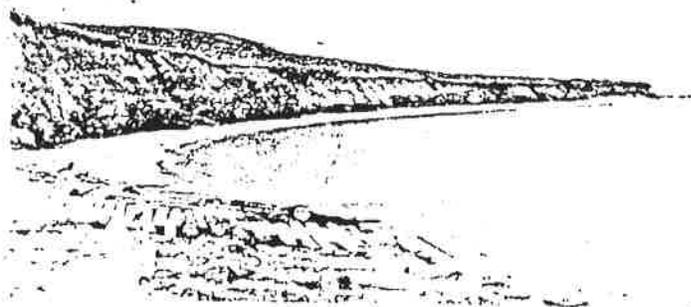


C.A.M.I.  
FOR CONSULTATION

**LIGHTHOUSES**  
**ON THE**  
**MAGDALEN ISLANDS**

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ON THE  
MAGDALEN ISLANDS

The following information was compiled by Rachelle Clark on the Challenge '94/'95 project with a special thanks to Olive Josey for her interest and helpful information.



## BIRD ROCK

This rock lies 20 kilometres northwest of Grosse Isle, 16.5 miles from East Point and 64 kilometres from the Magdalen Islands. It is a three acre block of sand stone that rises one hundred feet out of the sea. The smaller rock has been washed away by erosion and are no more than little reefs. Bird Rock was named for all the sea birds that nested there. These islands are thickly filled with birds. The three main migrating birds being the margaux, murre and great auks.

In 1870, the Dominion Government was in the process of erecting a lighthouse on Bird Rock. This being a strenuous task where materials had to be brought up upon a small unsheltered beach, then lifted up the sheer cliffs. The job was completed and the establishment opened on September 20, 1870. The building being 30 feet high was equipped with a fixed white light that could be seen for over 21 miles. As a fog signal, a cannon would be fired every half-hour when needed. It was necessary that a keeper man the lighthouse year round. It was an arduous task, for life on the rocks was almost hermit-like.

The first keeper resigned within eighteen months. The second keeper experienced the isolation for a year and was then removed in a state of "mental disequilibrium."

Late in 1873, the task fell to Patrick Whalen, who lived on the rock with his wife, family and an assistant, John Pigeon. Whalen stuck it out for seven years and on April 8, 1880, Bird Rock was surrounded by a pack of ice on which there were many groups of seal. Whalen often supplemented his salary by selling seal oil and skins. The three men ventured out expecting to hunt, leaving Mrs. Whalen alone on the rock. The weather unexpectedly turned against them. The assistant managed to return to the lighthouse with only frozen feet, but unfortunately Whalen and his son died on the pack of ice. John Pigeon and Mrs. Whalen kept the light until help came a month later.

The next light keeper, Charles Chiasson, arrived in July 1880. On August 23, 1881, Charles was demonstrating the use of the cannon to some friends, when accidentally forgetting to close the lid on the powder barrel. A spark landed in the barrel; Charles and his son were killed instantly in the blast.

The next light keeper was Jean Turbide, who held his post for fifteen years. In 1891 the signal cannon exploded and carried away one of his hands. He suffered for two days and was carried off by a fishing vessel. After medical attention he returned to his post and in 1896, he was injured in a fall and resigned.

Arsene Turbide followed. He spent the winter of 1896-97 on the rock with his wife, son, and an assistant, Damien Cormier. On March 7, 1897, the three men went seal hunting on the ice floes. It was a beautiful day when they set out, but, as in 1880, a storm struck without warning and the three went adrift on a large ice-pan. Cormier and the younger Turbide died on the first night. Arsene Turbide spent three days on the ice with no food and only seal blood to drink. The ice flow was washed up on the North shore of Cape Breton island. Turbide lived for more than fifteen days before dying.

Pierre arrived to take the job as light keeper and held his post until 1905. One of his assistants was injured by another cannon explosion in June 1897. The lithal gun was replaced by a regular fog whistle in 1907.

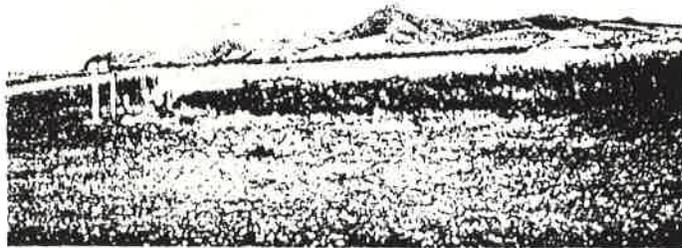
In 1910, Telesphore Turbid, his son, and assistant keeper Damien Deveaux, went on the ice flows after seal, leaving Mrs. Deveaux alone on the island. The wind increased, and they floated towards the south. The lighthouse keepers soon froze to death but young Turbide reached Cape Breton. He died within an hour after being rescued. Annie Deveaux was rescued after being a prisoner at Bird Rock for four long weeks.

Tragedy, however, continued for in March, 1911, Wilfred Bourque, the new keeper, died mysteriously on the ice at the foot of the great rock.

## ENTRY ISLAND

Entry Island is located approximately five miles east of Amherst and nine miles south of Grindstone. It is two and a half miles long and a half a mile wide. The western half has meadows, pasture lands, and fragrant grasses, ending abruptly in red cliffs fifty to one hundred feet high. The eastern part is mountainous, with the highest summit being five hundred feet above sea level.

The first lighthouse was built on a hill in 1874, the Mariners thought that being too high up it looked like a star. The second lighthouse was built close to the bank. With its new location, each night the light keeper was seen going towards the lighthouse with his lantern. With time and erosion, the light changed its location once again to where it is today on the south west corner of Entry Island.



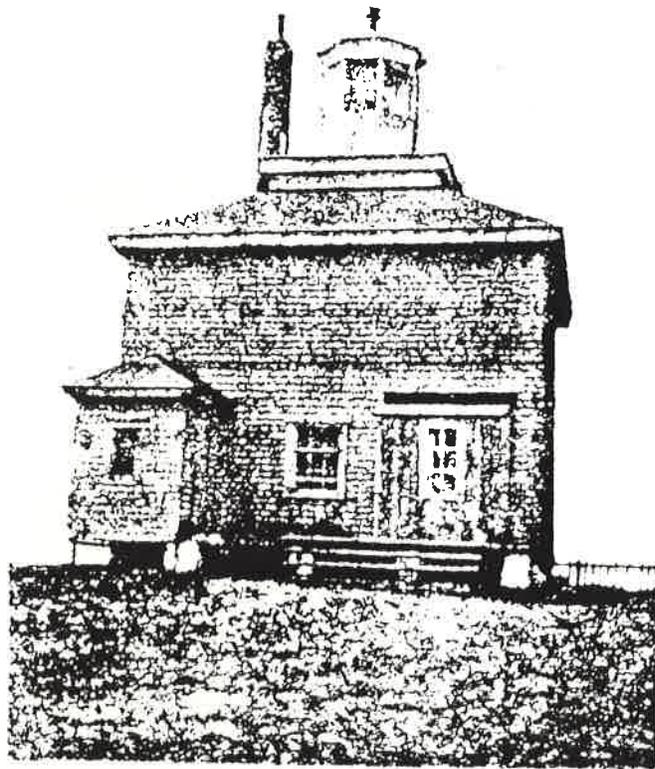
*FOG HORN*



*LIGHTHOUSE*

## ETANG-DU-NORD

Etang-du-Nord is located a few kilometers west of Grindstone. The lighthouse in Etang-du-Nord was built in 1874. After being manned by various light keepers over the years, a new tower was built and the lighthouse was taken down in parts and sold. The tower was built directly behind the old lighthouse.

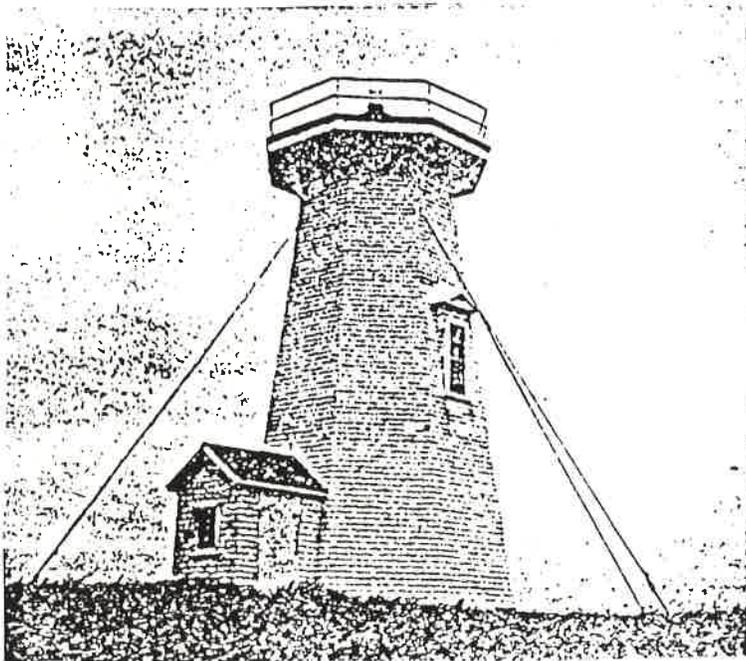


Former lighthouse in Etang-du-Nord 0900

## BRION ISLAND

Brion Island is located 16 kilometers off of Grosse Isle. The Brion Island lighthouse was built in 1904 on the west end of the island.

On December 5, 1927 Edward F. Keating took his family to Brion Island to relieve Edmond Richard as light keeper. He kept the light from 1927 until 1943 and then retired in the spring, just three months short of sixteen years.



Lighthouse on Bryon Island in 1985

## BRION ISLAND (1905)

Edmond Richard

Edward F. Keating : 1927-1943

Ned Richards

Arnold Clarke (last one)  
Laurent Leblanc 1966

## ENTRY ISLAND (1874)

Cassidy

Richard Collins

Daniel K. Mclean : 1931-1958

John Mclean : 1959

## AMHERST ISLAND (1871)

Edmond Boudreault

## BIRD ROCK (1870)

Patrick Whalen : 1873-1880

Charles Chiasson : 1880-1881

Jean Turbide : 1881-1896

Arsene Turbide : 1896-1897

Pierre Bourque : 1897-1905

Telesphore Turbid : 1910

Wilfred Bourque : 1911

Mr. Arseneault

*Evée* Yves Leblanc

{ Toni Eloquin  
{ Laurent Leblanc 1967-1988  
{ Daniel K. Mclean : 1960-1988 (automation)

*permanent one month on  
one month off*

{ Philip Quinn (relief men)  
{ Donat Deveau (~~relief men~~)  
James Mclean (~~relief men~~)

*After this began  
there were no more  
families that lived  
there.*

## ETANG-DU-NORD (1874)

Mr. Arseneau

Philip Turnbull

Fred Turnbull

Norman Mckay

