



The idea for a lighthouse at Cape Enrage is first mentioned in the Legislative Journal Annual Reports of 1838. Those reports mention a longstanding discussion regarding a lighthouse at Cape Enrage but the indecision whether to place it at Cape Enrage or Apple River, across the Bay of Fundy from Cape Enrage, caused a long delay. The Commissioners of Lighthouses released a study on the issue in 1839. The report addressed many issues including the cost of oil at each location, the hazards present, the availability of a suitable harbour and even the fact that Nova Scotia shore had fewer lighthouses.

Thirty three local residents and sea captains signed a petition to have the lighthouse placed at Cape Enrage. One of the sea captains was Captain James Calhoun. The fact that Cape Enrage jutted out into the Bay of Fundy nearly half way to Nova Scotia made it prone to shipwreck many sailors. The water is very deep on the seaward (northeast) side of Cape Enrage and sailors tended to travel close to Cape Enrage in the winter to avoid ice which was common along the south shore against Nova Scotia. In addition, the busiest trade route was past Cape Enrage rather than past Apple River. The petition was presented to the Commissioner and to the Legislature in 1838. Two years later, the first lighthouse was built at Cape Enrage and in 1849, a lighthouse was also built at Apple River (Cape Capstan). Other lighthouses were constructed on the New Brunswick shores of the Bay of Fundy at Grindstone, Anderson Hollow, Woody Point, Fort Folly Point, Hillsborough Pier and Outhouse Point.

The 1840 lighthouse at Cape Enrage originally was a hexagon (6 reflectors) and the lamp was run on whale or porpoise oil. In 1865, the fuel was changed to regular oil (kerosene). When the new lighthouse was built in 1870, the old lighthouse was temporarily used as a keepers dwelling. The new light is 160 feet above mean high water and is at latitude 45° 36' 00" N, longitude 64° 46' 40". The new lighthouse came into operation on October 4, 1870 although some accounts state the date was November 16 of that year. The cost of the new tower was \$466.00 and the total cost for the project was \$1758.00. The new light was a 4th order dioptic visible for 15 miles (24 km). At an expenditure of about \$300, the old tower was converted to a keepers dwelling and the old lighting apparatus was dismantled and taken to Saint John. The Commissioner later reported that the site was impossible to keep tidy due to the construction state of the lantern and deck of the building.

In the common tradition along the Bay of Fundy coast, only one keeper was appointed to care for the Cape Enrage lighthouse. Offshore lights often had a keeper plus a second keeper or assistant. Some stations had an additional keeper for the fog horn, but Cape Enrage had only the one keeper in the beginning. The keeper was paid £85 for the 1854 year.

The "Tidal Wave Storm" of November 30, 1871 severely damaged the new light station. The keeper, George Tingley, called it the worst storm in 30 years; all the fencing around the station was blown away,

Cape Enrage Interpretive Centre Inc.

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the boathouse was washed away and the boat and wharf were heavily damaged. Glass was broken in all the windows including two large panes in the lighthouse tower. The keeper could not go outside the dwelling during the storm, but the damages were quickly repaired later. This same gale damaged lighthouses at Quaco, Gannet, Machais Seal Island and Swallowtail.

The gale damaged the keepers dwelling to the point that the Commissioner stated a new dwelling should be built. A new dwelling was built and served until 1952 when the current dwelling was built.

In 1876, W.S. Starratt was the keeper and engineer of the light station and his son was assistant keeper. In 1877, lightning struck the current lighthouse. According to the Commissioner of Lights Report, the bolt of lightning struck near the south side of the light just below the lantern floor and proceeded down one side of the building shattering the braces and posts in that side nearly to the floor. It then passed through one of the door jams and passed into the ground beneath the doorstep. On reaching the main floor, the bolt seems to have divided and the second branch passed out the side and struck the ground where it left a big hole. The damage was repaired and luckily, the lantern and dioptic light were not harmed.

Mr. Starratt was granted a raise in 1879 which was to cover his cost of hiring an assistant engineer for the fog whistle. That same year, Mr. Starratt had to repair the whistle boiler at a cost of \$76.95. The boiler was second-hand, having come from Partridge Island station. Mr. Starratt also built a picket fence around the station to give it a neat and orderly appearance. Mr. Starratt was apparently an intelligent man with a smart family, according to the Commissioner who expressed regret that they were so isolated and could not participate in social and religious experiences.

Following is a sample of the expenditure of Cape Enrage light station for 1865.

Salary of Keeper

£40

Cost of Gas, Oil, Wicks and Annual Stores

£243.34

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Extras for Supplies and Repairs £81.55

Total Expense for 1865

£724.89

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EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CAPE ENRAGE

1840 Light station constructed. Lamp oil, wicks £113

1850 Shingling of house, painting and glazing, with materials and freight £60 5s

1851 Lamps repaired, reflectors reused New lamps from London England

1853 The rock (vitet) which the lighthouse stands upon is breaking apart every spring frfrom frost; fears the light may topple over. Lighthouse should be moved back.

1856 New steps at the landing to the eastward side of the Cape. Road improvements to the Cape. Lighthouse painted. New magazine for powder built.

1859 Glazing and painting the lantern, £973

1870 Slight repairs to the station. New lighthouse tower erected at a cost of £466

1872 Storm severly damages station; boat house carried away, lighthouse broken.

1873 New steam fog alarm under construction.

1875 Repairs to rails around the tower lantern. Repainted the building.

1877 Lighthouse struck by lightning.

1878 Delivery of the Dominion Ensign flag.

1879 Repairs to lamps and fence.

1886 Repairing lamp.

1887 Repair of boilers and fog alarm. New 19 ft boat supplied by A. F. Dibble for £61.

1891 New shed to cover water tanks for \$147.

1892 New coal shed erected by Daniel Tingley for \$147.

1894 New smokestack erected. Fifty tons of coal delivered. Repairs to the slate roof and other mason work done by Frank Meliday \$97.73

1895 Water tank and engine house repaired for the fog alarm.

1898 New abutment was built, 25 ft by 12 ft. New boathouse also built, 20 ft by 10 ft. New derrick crane. \$240 total in repairs.

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1899 Engine room whitewashed, boiler fixed. One side of stable roof shingled. Lighthouse and lantern painted.

1900 New lamp; pump repaired.

1903 Boiler re-tubed for fog alarm. 200 ft new fencing.

1908 Repairs to station totaled \$190.

1909 Repairs to station.

1919 Installation of new diaphone plant. Repairs to road leading to fog alarm.

1926 Bell Buoy placed on reef in front of light.

1952 New keepers house built.

1990 Station automated. Keepers house slated to be torn down.

1992 Dennison Tate first started discussing restoring Cape Enrage.

1993 Students from Harrison Trimble High School with Dennison K. Tate started restoration of keepers house.

1994 Restoration continues.

1995 Keepers house transferred from the Canadian Coast Guard to Province of New Brunswick along with 4+ acres of land.

1996 Cape Enrage Adventures Incorporated and Cape Enrage Interpretive Centre Incorporated formed. Chignecto House constructed. Stairway to lighthouse begun. Upper parking area, new well and new septic system built. Deck built on Cape House.

1997 Stairway to lighthouse completed and stairway to upper parking area built.

1999 Whistle House Gift Shop built.

2000 Rappel deck constructed. New picket fencing built.

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