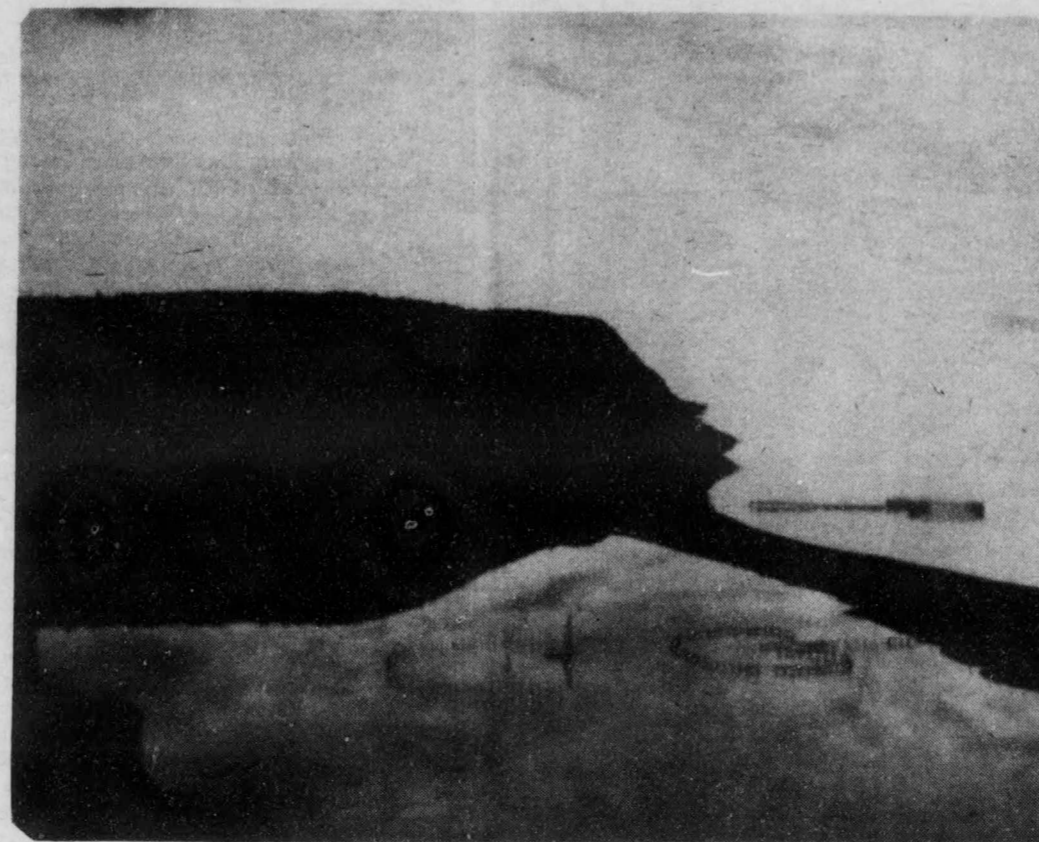


Swallow Tail Lighthouse

photo - doherty



A personal experience Grand Manan

By DENNIS DOHERTY

The mist that blanketed Black's Harbour had burnt off by the time the ferry rounded the rocky bluff that holds stately Swallow Tail Lighthouse, so that the docks of North Head were exposed in the morning sun.

As you step off the boat, your mind slows down, the salt air says "Take it easy; you're on Grand Manan". There is lots of time and many places to see. I must caution you here. You cannot experience Grand Manan by sight-seeing alone. The true beauty of the island exists in combination with its rugged natural state and the genuineness and sincerity of its people.

It was less than a week before Christmas when I first arrived on the island. Lying twenty-five miles off shore, it discourages most of the average tourists from making the trip. That in itself was incentive for me to explore the eighteen miles of shoreline, the intriguing "out islands" and the lifestyle that makes these people unique.

So began a lasting love affair. Maybe it started while sitting on the bluff at South West Head in the darkness, listening to the sea far below, illuminated periodically by the lighthouse beam. It may have been Dark Harbour's fishing shacks, or the hike to the "Hole in the Wall", a natural artwork. The childish excitement at the sitting of my first whale, while day-dreaming at Eel Brook beach was

certainly part of a growing feeling inside that I couldn't quite identify.

An ambitious excursion to the generally uninhabited "back" side of the island revealed a different dimension in its nature. Here lie portions of "untampered with" wilderness that air a very natural beauty. This area should be reserved for those with an appreciation of its unkept ground cover and ancient twisting pines.

Just to sit in the mist on the back bank and imagine the shore far below with its rough rock face, that never smiled softly on ships, makes the journey worthwhile.

The salty air of mystery and enchantment was added to my affair through sea-fishing tales and ghost stories related to me over cups of tea, smothered in the warmth of the dear friends I made on the island.

Shifting storms, shipwrecks, sea gulls and serenity designate Seal Cove as my special place. To be truthful, it was here, on a warm fall night, as I walked along the breakwater and sandy beach, that I realized how much I loved the island. The moonlight met the waves as they hushed to shore by the fishing shacks and houses, silent in the salty air. The peaceful feeling that penetrated me that night remained for weeks after I returned to the mainland.

For those who can appreciate it, Grand Manan has much to offer. You will, by visiting, learn more of the island, but more important, you may learn something of yourself.

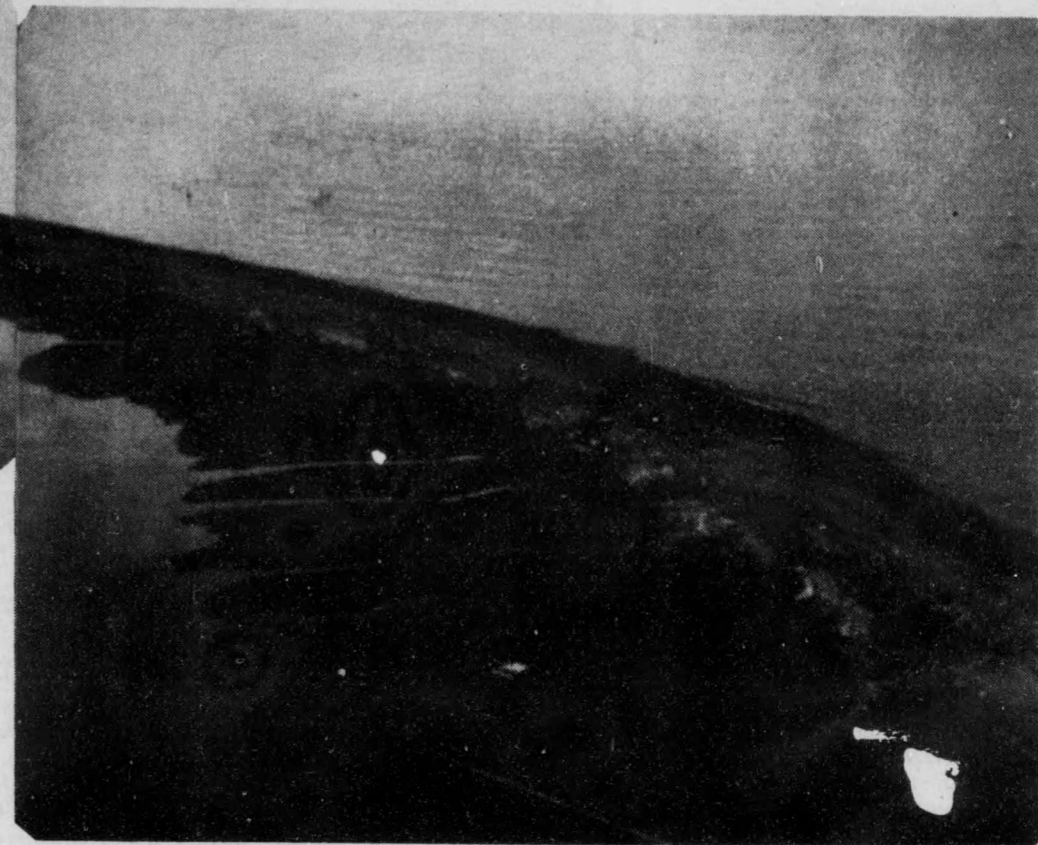


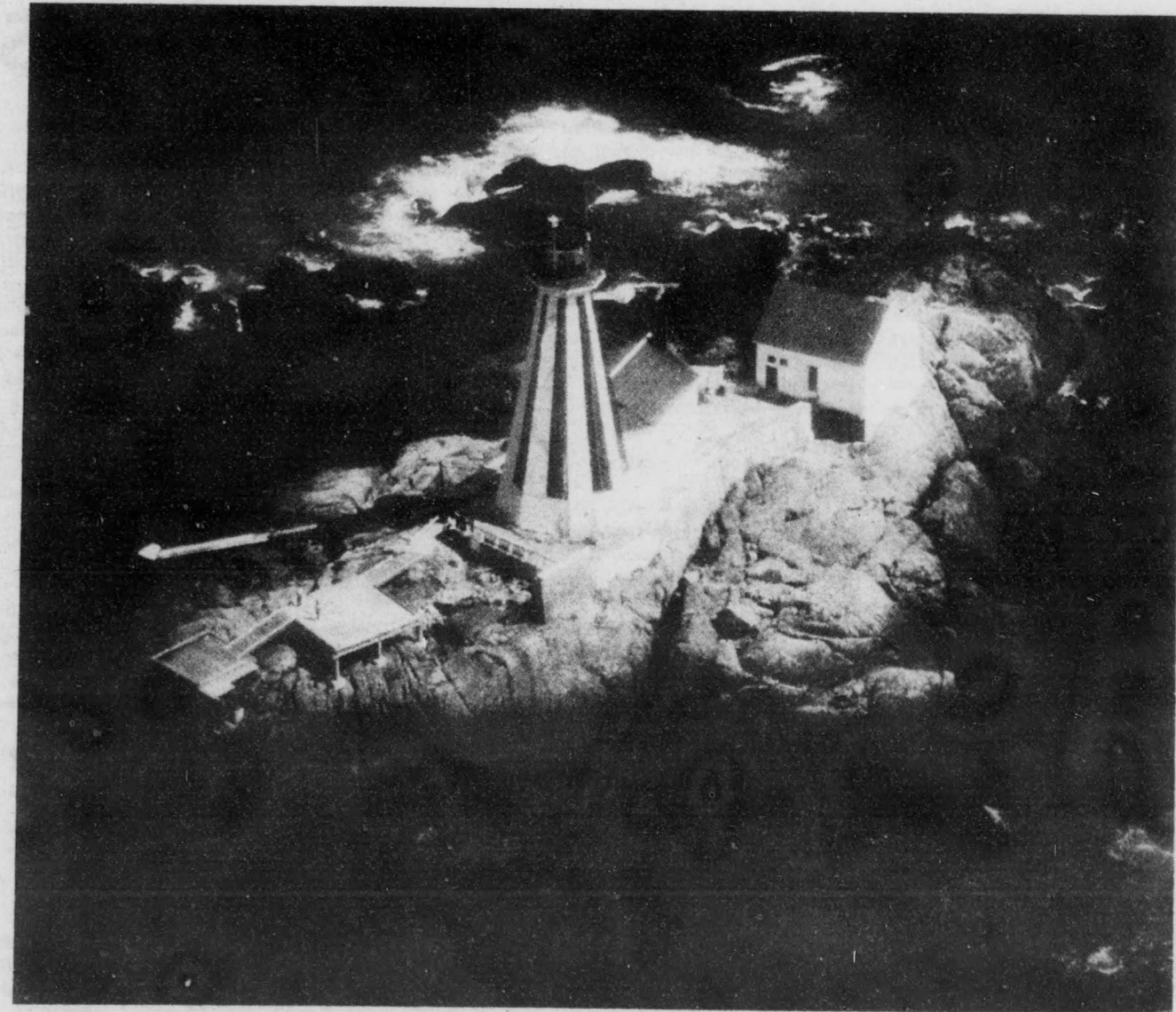
photo - doherty

Dark Harbour - the dulso capital of the Atlantic.



photo - doherty

Mist shrouded land.



courtesy of N.B. Tourism

Gannet Rock Lighthouse - 15 miles from Seal Cove Grand Manan.