

The Scenic Route to Peggy's Cove

A Visit to Peggy's Cove and Nearby Coastal Villages and Vistas

Village of Peggy's Cove

The Village of Peggy's Cove, lying beside its namesake cove, lies 43 km (26 mi.) southwest of downtown Halifax. It is one of many small fishing communities along the shores of Chebucto Peninsula. The village was founded in 1811 when six families of German descent were issued a land grant of more than 320 hectares (app. 1000 acres). Fishing was the mainstay of their lives, but they also farmed where the soil was fertile, and pastured some cattle. In the early 1900s the population peaked at about 300, when the community supported a schoolhouse, church, general store, and lobster cannery. The cove and the village may have taken their name from a very young girl, the sole survivor of a shipwreck, who was too young to know her name. The family that adopted her called her Peggy, likely in honour of nearby St. Margaret's Bay.

Peggy's Cove is now primarily a tourist attraction, with a population of about 50 people. Some residents still fish lobster, but tourism is king. The 2,000 acres (8.1 km²) surrounding Peggy's Cove, a visually stunning region of barrens, bogs, ponds, and rocky coastline, was declared a preservation area in 1962, to preserve its rugged beauty. Development in the preservation area is prohibited. The bedrock of the area is 415-million-year-old Devonian granite, more recently scraped and eroded by glacial ice around 20,000 years ago. The granite boulders scattered about the Peggy's Cove barrens, called glacial erratics, were deposited by the receding glacier.

The Peggy's Point Lighthouse, perhaps the most photographed lighthouse in Canada, marks the eastern entrance to St. Margaret's Bay. The current light, which replaced the earlier one in 1914, is made of concrete and reinforced steel, and retains the octagonal shape of earlier wooden light towers. It stands almost 15 metres (50 ft) high.

The lighthouse was automated in 1958, and contains (pending repairs) a post office in the lower level during the summer months, where each piece of mail receives a special cancellation mark in the shape of the lighthouse.



The nearby Swissair Flight 111 Memorial is one of two built to commemorate the tragic crash of the airliner into St. Margaret's Bay on September 2, 1998, with the loss of all 229 passengers and crew.

