

Port of Grand Narrows



grandnarrowswaterfront.com

The community of Grand Narrows is named to describe narrowing of the Bras d'Or Lake, known as the Barra Strait. It is in the centre of Cape Breton, Unama'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

Grand Narrows (Mi'kmaq) – Te'witk “where the water flows out”
 Grand Narrows (Scottish Gaelic) – “An Caolas Mor”

Did you know?

The Barra Strait is 1.22 km (0.76 miles) wide and 50 metres (160 ft.) deep (between Hector's Point and Derby Point).

The name Barra Strait was named after the Sound of Barra, on the Isle of Barra, in Scottish Hebrides where most of the settlers in this area came from in the early 1800s.

Hector MacNeil from the Isle of Barra was one of the first to settle here in 1804, followed soon after by others. A school was built in 1839 and a postal office established in 1851.

In 1887 the Port of Grand Narrows had a post office, customs office, three general stores, two restaurants, two canneries, a blacksmith and forge, and several boat-building yards. More business and prosperity for the village and surrounding areas came with the building of the Grand Narrows Hotel in 1887 and the arrival of the Intercolonial Railway in 1890.

By this time the Port of Grand Narrows was a thriving port of call for numerous lake steamers carrying passengers and freight to many parts of Cape Breton. Its central location, in the middle of the Lakes, gave it a distinct advantage over other ports. Until modern roads were built in the 20th century coastal freighters and steamships would make the rounds to various lakeside communities, frequently making connection with passenger trains at Grand Narrows and Iona.

A passenger and vehicle ferry service began operating in 1847 to provided a means of crossing the Barra Strait until the Barra Strait highway bridge was built in 1993.



View of Grand Narrows and many buildings and businesses from the rail bridge.



Grand Narrows Train Station and Saloon.



View of Grand Narrows and Iona from farmland.



Steamship docked in Grand Narrows with the hotel in foreground. Images provided courtesy of the Boston Institute, Cape Breton University.

BRAS D'OR LAKES AND COASTAL CRUISES

Leave Sydney every Monday at 7 a.m. for BADBUCK, St. PETER'S and MELGRAVE, connecting with night train for all points west of CANNO STRAIT. Steamer continues the trip to CHESTNAP.

Leave CHESTNAP every Wednesday morning for MELGRAVE, connecting with day express, passengers transferring from train to steamer for sail through the Lakes to Sydney.



Malgrave to Sydney, \$3.50



Leave Sydney at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for BARRON and WYVOCOMACH, returning on Wednesday, Friday and Monday. The week-end trip gives Sunday at either BARRON or WYVOCOMACH.

FARES
 Sydney - Baddeck, \$4.50; return, \$8.50
 Sydney - Wyvocomach, \$2.50; return, \$4.50

Advertisement for lake transportation.



A steamship docked at the Grand Narrows wharf.