

THE PRESERVATION OF PRE-WORLD WAR TWO  
COAST GUARD ARCHITECTURE IN OREGON

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Interdisciplinary Studies Program:  
Historic Preservation  
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Science

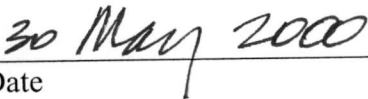
June 2000



“The Preservation of Pre-World War Two Coast Guard Architecture in Oregon,” a thesis prepared by David A. Pinyerd in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program: Historic Preservation. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:



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David A. Pinyerd for the degree of Master of Science  
in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program: Historic Preservation  
to be taken June 2000

Title: THE PRESERVATION OF PRE-WORLD WAR TWO COAST GUARD  
ARCHITECTURE IN OREGON

Approved: Donald Peting  
Donald Peting, Chair

The core mission of the United States Life-Saving Service, later to become the United States Coast Guard, has always been to rescue the victims of shipwreck. To serve this mission, coastal rescue stations were built by the government to house men and equipment engaged in rescue operations. The first station in Oregon was built at Cape Arago in 1878. By the beginning of World War II, the government had built fifteen distinct stations at eight different ports along the Oregon Coast.

The evaluation and preservation of these stations along the Oregon Coast has been negligible. This thesis explores the development of each individual station in Oregon. The preservation of each station is then examined by discussing restoration, maintenance, adaptive reuse, and interpretative possibilities for each one.

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(1999): 9-11.

Pinyerd, David. "Preservation of the Pete French Round Barn." *CRM* 18, no. 5  
(1995): 30-32.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express sincere gratitude to my committee chair, Donald Peting, for his continued guidance and dedication throughout this project. I would also like to thank committee members Ralph Shanks and Henry Kunowski for their valuable suggestions, encouragement, and support.

Many people proved essential in gathering information concerning the stations. I am particularly grateful to Wick York, Kimberly Mann, Robert Browning, Scott Price, Colin MacKenzie, Steve Wyatt, Gene Davis, David Pearson, Ray McAlester, Judy Knox, David Miller, John Ferrell, Gary Newkirk, and Lynda Shapiro. A collective thank you goes to all of the Coast Guard personnel whose patience with my multitude of questions was immense.

Special thanks goes to Leslie Heald, Bernadette Niederer, Sally Wright, and Marianne Hurley for their indispensable research assistance and editing during the creation of this thesis.

DEDICATION

To my Mom and Dad for their ever present love and support.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the history of the U.S. Coast Guard in Oregon and examines the structures they designed prior to World War II. Their mission to protect the lives and property of seafarers was integral in the development of the communities along the Oregon Coast. The identification, evaluation, protection, and interpretation of these structures is vital to our understanding of the impact the Coast Guard has had on the maritime development of Oregon.

Starting out as the U.S. Life-Saving Service in 1871, the forerunner to the Coast Guard arrived in Oregon in 1878. From the humble beginnings of a one-man station near Coos Bay, the Life-Saving Service expanded to protect six of the major waterways along Oregon's Coast. In 1915, the Life-Saving Service joined the Revenue Cutter Service to become the U.S. Coast Guard and added two more stations prior to WWII. Today, the Coast Guard operates seven lifeboat stations on the Oregon Coast (Figure 1).

The scope of this project is to investigate the issues and options for the preservation of the remaining elements of pre-World War II Coast Guard (including the Life-Saving Service) architecture in Oregon. Starting with a review of the history of the Coast Guard in general, a historical overview is given for each station built prior to World War II. Finally, each existing structure is examined for possible strategies in preservation and interpretation.

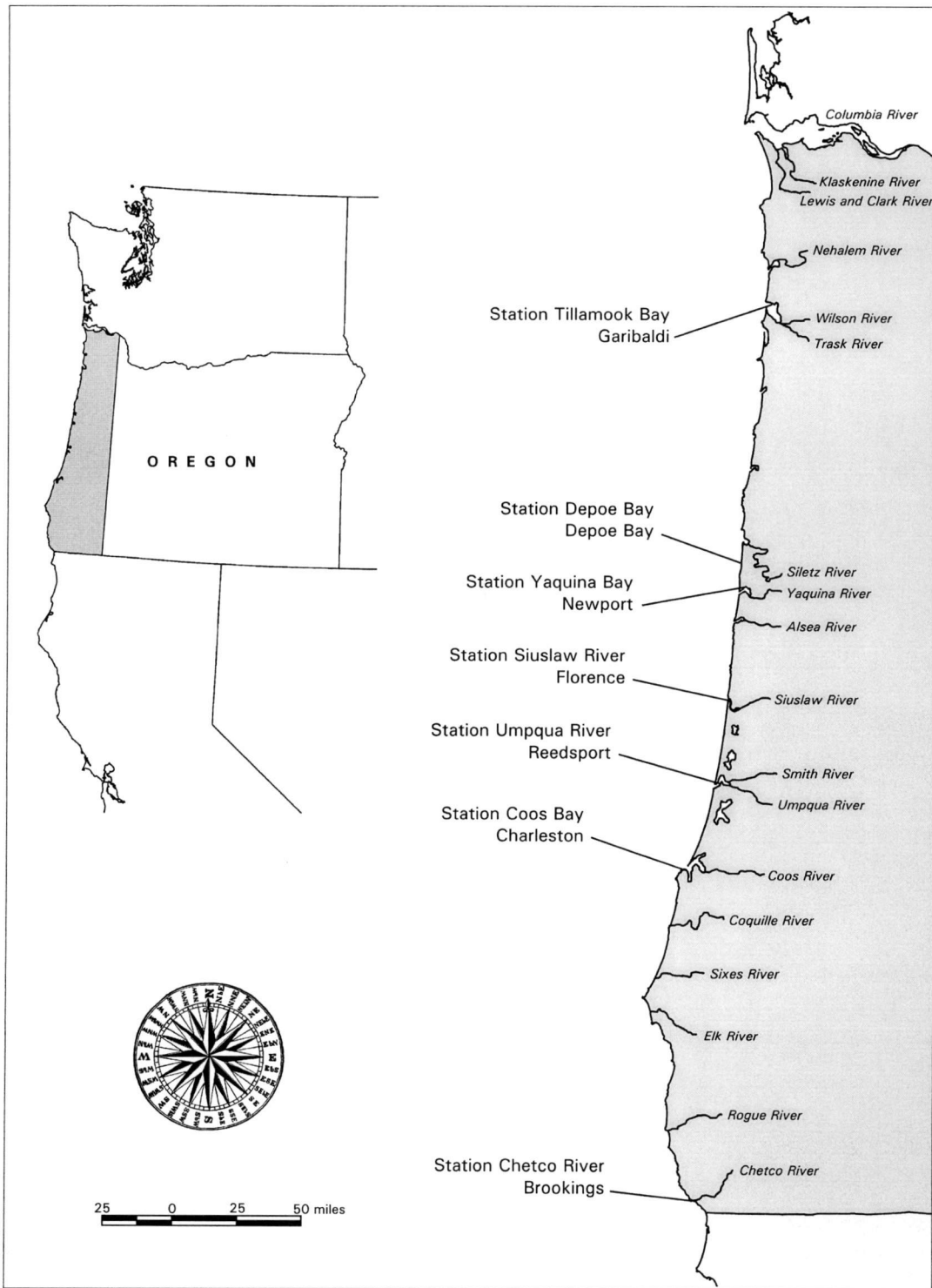


Figure 1. Current Coast Guard Lifeboat Stations on the Oregon Coast with Location.

The Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard built 13 stations along the Oregon Coast prior to 7 December 1941 (Figure 2). Two more stations were built after WWII began using pre-WWII plans. These stations were placed at the following major waterways to protect shipping: Columbia River, Tillamook Bay, Yaquina Bay, Siuslaw River, Umpqua River, Coos Bay, Coquille River, and Port Orford. All but two of the pre-World War II buildings at the thirteen stations have been deactivated by the Coast Guard. Fortunately, other parties are using the deactivated buildings at these locations: Point Adams, Tillamook Bay, Yaquina Bay, Umpqua River, Coos Bay, Coquille River, and Port Orford. Unfortunately, only three locations have any structures left from the Life-Saving Service era: Point Adams, Tillamook Bay, and Yaquina Bay.

About half (i.e., 24 out of 50) of the primary buildings built before WWII have survived to the year 2000 (Figure 3). These “primary” buildings are defined as station houses, keeper’s dwellings, boathouses, equipment buildings, and lookouts. Very few ancillary structures, such as antennas, fencing, water towers, and boardwalks, survive at any of the stations. Selected buildings at five of the thirteen stations have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places: Tillamook Bay, Yaquina Bay, Umpqua River, Coquille River, and Port Orford.

The Oregon stations were built using standard Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard plans. However, local contractors built the buildings, and there are variations from the standard found at each station. The following is an introduction to each of the station locations in chronological order.



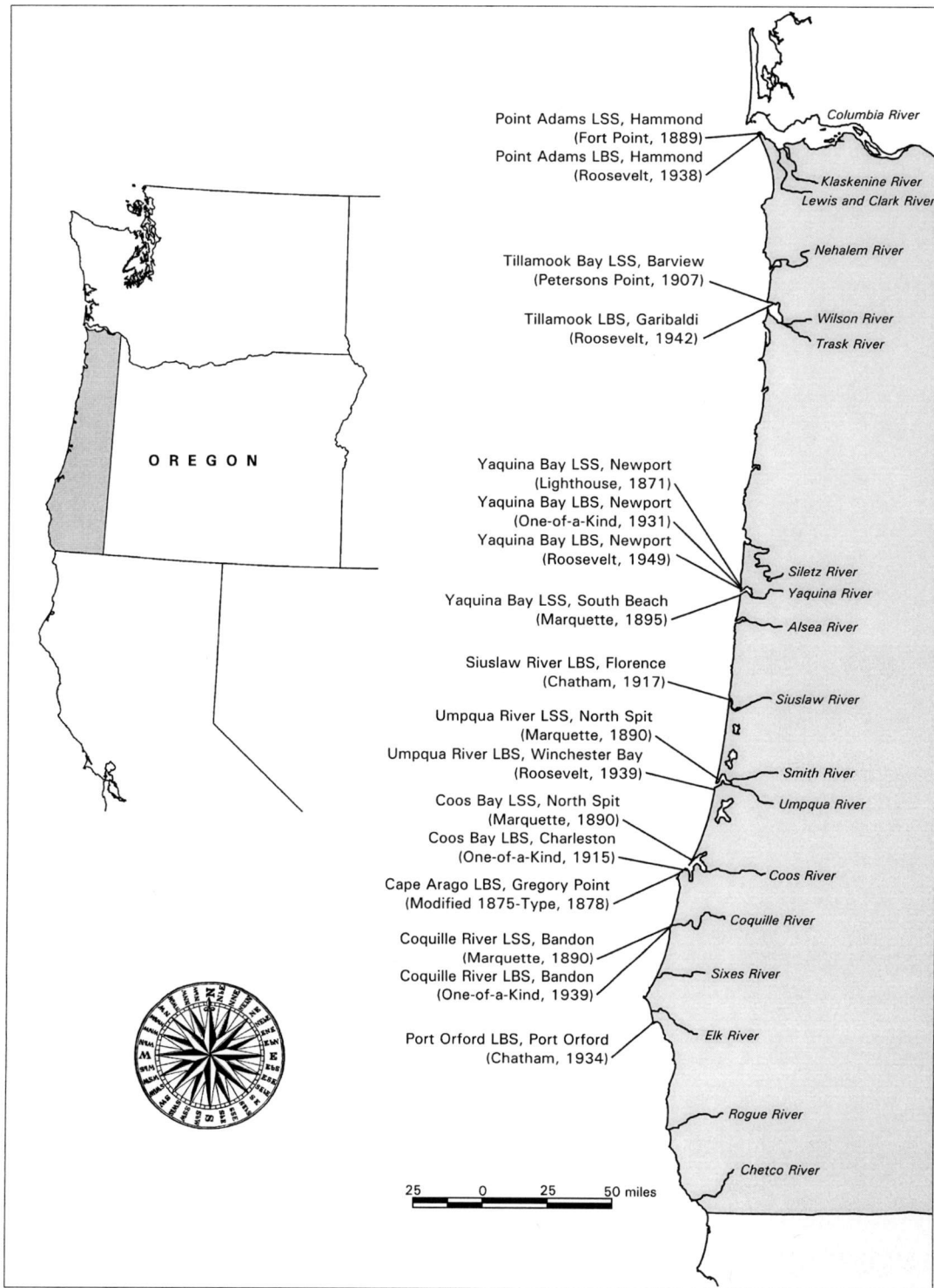


Figure 2. Pre-1950 Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard Stations on the Oregon Coast with Station Type and Year Construction Started.

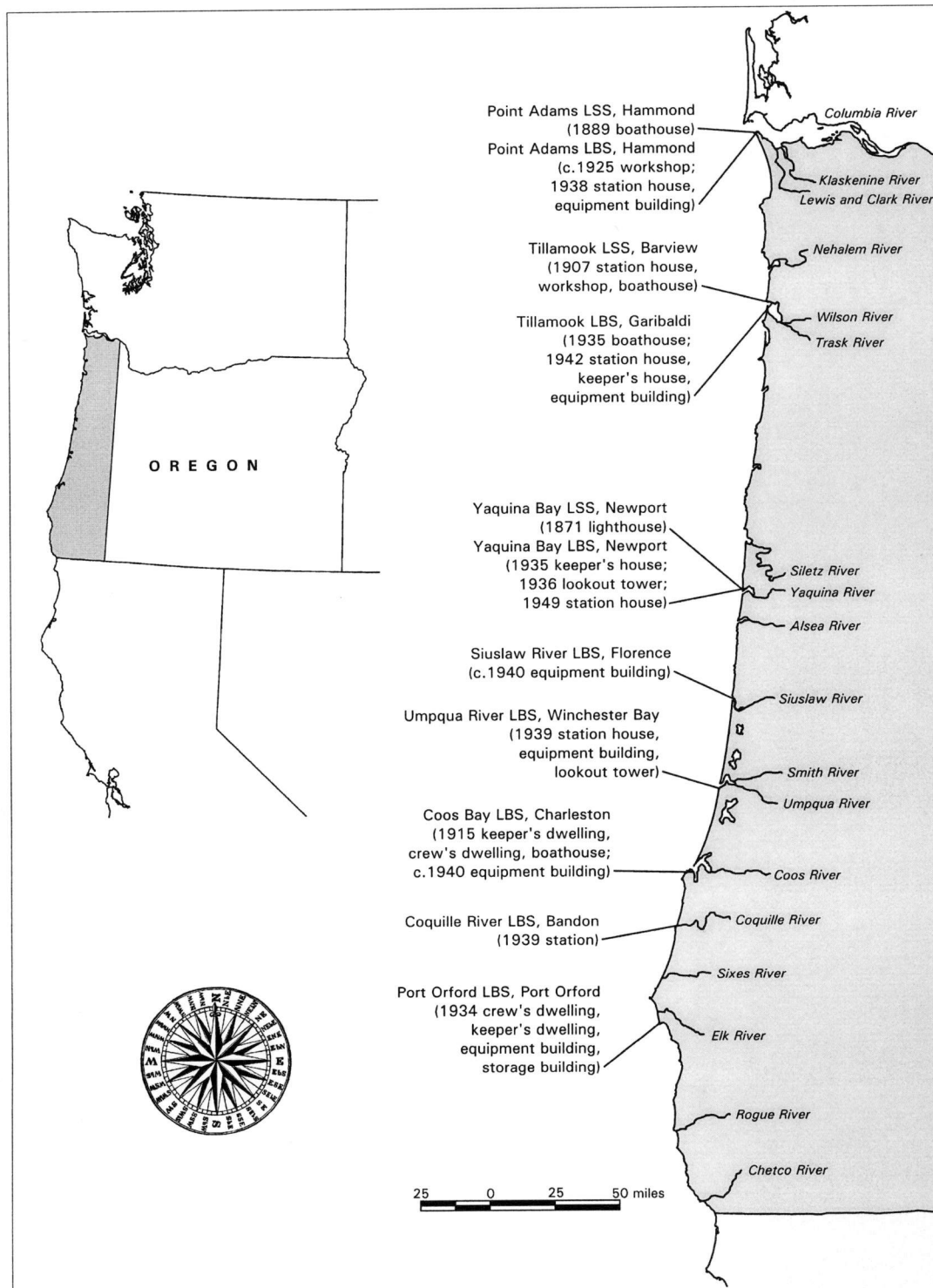


Figure 3. Principal Buildings Still Standing at the Pre-1950 Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard Stations on the Oregon Coast.

*Coos Bay* — Coos Bay was an early, active shipping port, thus it received the first life-saving station on the Oregon Coast at Cape Arago in 1878. The station had only a keeper, and when a life-saving crew was finally assigned in 1890, a new station was built at North Spit. In 1915, a replacement station was built at Charleston on the south side of the mouth of Coos Bay. Neither the Cape Arago station nor the North Spit station survive; however, the keeper's dwelling, crew's dwelling, and boathouse at Charleston today make up the campus of the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology.

*Point Adams* — Located in the small community of Hammond, all that remains of the Point Adams Life-Saving Station (1889) is its Fort Point-type boathouse. In 1939, the original life-saving station was replaced with a Roosevelt-type Coast Guard station. All of the Coast Guard elements other than the boathouse still stand. The National Marine Fisheries Service now owns and uses the station complex.

*Coquille River* — The extremely hazardous bar at the mouth of the Coquille River necessitated the construction of the Coquille River Life-Saving Station in 1890. Nearly the entire town burned in 1936, including the life-saving station. The Coast Guard built a large, one-of-a-kind facility in 1939. The station still stands today retaining its original integrity. The building is owned by the Port of Bandon.

*Umpqua River* — The Umpqua River entrance received a station during a build-up along the Oregon Coast in 1890. The station was built in the standard Marquette-style used at four of Oregon's six life-saving stations. A new station was built in 1939 next to the Umpqua River Lighthouse. Three principal buildings still stand with

the station house operated as a local history museum by Douglas County. The boathouse no longer survives; however, a 36' motor lifeboat is on display at the station.

*Yaquina Bay* — The Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station was built just south of the entrance to Newport's Yaquina Bay. It was abandoned in 1906 for the vacant Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (1871). In 1931, a waterfront station was built in Newport; however, it burned in a spectacular fire in 1944. A new station was not built until 1949; it still stands today and is used by the Coast Guard. The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is a State Park property and is operated as a museum.

*Tillamook Bay* — It was not until 1908 that Tillamook Bay received a life-saving station. The station at Barview was superceded by a new station further inside the bay at Garibaldi in 1942. While in a deteriorated state, all of the elements of the original life-saving station (i.e., station house, boathouse, and workshop) still stand. The buildings at the Coast Guard station at Garibaldi also survive and still serve the active station.

*Siuslaw River* — The Coast Guard built one of its first Coast Guard stations in Oregon on the Siuslaw River in 1917. The station was in the Chatham style, a forerunner to the standard Roosevelt-type station of the 1930s and 1940s. None of the buildings from the 1917 station have survived.

*Port Orford* — Port Orford, Oregon's southernmost station, was the last pre-World War II station built. It was constructed high on a rocky headland in 1934. Its crew's dwelling, keeper's dwelling, equipment building, and storage building all survive as a State Park; however, its boathouse was burned down by an arsonist in the 1970s.

Certain terms are integral to the understanding of the research within this thesis as well as to the preservation profession in general. These terms include preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Collectively, these terms are known as “treatments” for historic buildings. They are defined by the Department of the Interior and published as the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*:

*Preservation* is defined as the act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or structure, and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site. It may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials.

*Restoration* is defined as the act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

*Rehabilitation* is defined as the act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

*Reconstruction* is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.<sup>1</sup>

All four of these preservation techniques can be applied to the Oregon Coast stations. All of the structures need preservation if they are to survive. Fortunately, the Coast Guard has always maintained the structures through a strict maintenance policy. It is up to today’s stewards to continue that tradition. For those stations deemed to be vital

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<sup>1</sup>W. Brown Morton III, et al, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1992).

in telling the story of the Coast Guard, all are in need of restoration. Of the stations decommissioned by the Coast Guard, rehabilitation is appropriate as long as the buildings retain their significant historical features. Where money and desire are sufficient, non-speculative reconstructions of station structures can take place to help interpret the history of the Coast Guard. Preservation treatments for each station are proposed in the concluding chapter. It is the attempt of this thesis to provide the reader with an understanding of the Oregon Coast stations and to encourage the sensitive treatment of the historic structures.

The goal of this thesis is not to create a preservation plan or National Register Nomination for each station, but rather to examine the evolution of each station, discuss their present condition, and formulate suggestions for their future. Preservation concepts are given at the end of their respective chapters with an overall conclusion in the final chapter. It is the hope of this author that this document can facilitate activity toward the preservation of these valuable structures.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY

The United States Coast Guard was formed in 1915 by merging two government maritime agencies: the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service and the U.S. Life-Saving Service. The Revenue Cutter Service was formed in 1790 as an oceangoing police to enforce America's tariff laws. The Life-Saving Service was organized in 1871 to protect the lives and property of citizens along the nation's coastline. In 1939, the U.S. Lighthouse Service was blended into the U.S. Coast Guard. With the merger of these three government services, the Coast Guard's role as protector of the mariner was complete, a tradition that continues today.

#### United States Revenue Cutter Service

The origins of the U.S. Coast Guard can be traced back to 22 April 1790 when Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury, requested ten boats to enforce the Tariff Act of 1789. The Act's intent was to protect American goods and to raise money for the new, cash-strapped country. The boats were needed to stop the smuggling of merchandise into the United States. The Continental Navy had been dissolved in 1785 so an entirely new group was created within the U.S. Treasury: the United States Revenue Marine.

On 16 December 1831, Secretary of the Treasury John McLane ordered the Revenue Marine's cutters to ". . . render assistance to vessels in distress and to save life and property at sea by patrolling areas near their stations during the winter."<sup>2</sup> In 1837, Congress authorized the use of government ships to cruise the East Coast in severe weather and give aid to distressed vessels. This was augmented six years later when the Revenue Marines were instructed to assist in the preservation of property found onboard wrecked ships and to save cargoes for their owners. Thus, the primary function of maritime law enforcement was supplemented by that of providing maritime safety.

In the Act of 2 March 1798, Congress ordered the Revenue Marine to cooperate with the newly formed U.S. Navy ". . . whenever the President shall so direct."<sup>3</sup> This was done to augment the Navy with the Revenue Marine's cutters against French privateers. Since then, the Revenue Marine, and later the Coast Guard, has fought alongside the U.S. Navy in every one of America's wars at sea.

By 1894, the Revenue Marine had taken on a new moniker: the Revenue Cutter Service.<sup>4</sup> In 1912, following the sinking of the *Titanic*, an International Ice Patrol in the North Atlantic was established to help prevent further disaster. This was yet another responsibility for the Revenue Cutter Service. Simultaneously, a government reform movement was at work behind the scenes. The Revenue Cutter Service was viewed as

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<sup>2</sup>Malcolm F. Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1957), 4.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>4</sup>T. Michael O'Brien, *Guardians of the Eighth Sea: A History of the U.S. Coast Guard on the Great Lakes* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1979), 3.



archaic and in need of an overhaul. It was felt that its mission was becoming redundant and its bureaucracy too large. To pacify all political groups, the Revenue Cutter Service was merged with the Life-Saving Service in 1915, ending its 125 years of independence.

### United States Life-Saving Service

The United States Life-Saving Service was born out of public sentiment rather than law enforcement. Like fire departments, the Life-Saving Service was spawned out of the national need for public safety. The roots of the U.S. Life-Saving Service can be traced back to 1785 and the founding of the Massachusetts Humane Society (Figure 4). It was found that many shipwreck victims died of exposure after reaching shore, so the Massachusetts Humane Society built small “houses of refuge” to provide shelter. Lifeboats started to be added to the houses in 1807 to allow volunteers to aid in offshore rescue attempts.

The Massachusetts Humane Society was modeled on Britain’s Royal Humane Society, a volunteer group whose main objective was to aid shipwreck survivors. The Royal Humane Society in turn found its model in China’s Chinkiang Association for the Saving of Life (1708), the first life-saving institution in the world. The Chinese developed both privately funded rescue services and government-funded services prior to any other nation. Both America and Britain relied on the volunteer method, but in the late 1840s, America began to turn toward governmental funding.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ralph Shanks, Wick York, and Lisa Woo Shanks, ed., *The U.S. Life-Saving Service: Heroes, Rescues and Architecture of the Early Coast Guard* (Petaluma, CA: Costano Books, 1996), 1.



Figure 4. Early Photograph of a Volunteer Crew of the Massachusetts Humane Society. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service Photography: Surfboats File).

In 1848, Congress bowed to public pressure for the federal government to assist in the life-saving business. Through Representative William Newell of New Jersey, Congress appropriated \$10,000 for the construction of eight boathouses along the New Jersey shore. These unmanned and unkept stations were run by volunteers and are considered the first life-saving stations. In 1849, 22 more stations were built along the coasts of New Jersey and Long Island. They quickly proved their value in saved lives and property. During the 1849-50 season, 354 persons were rescued by the equipment at these stations.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Frederick Stonehouse, *Wreck Ashore: The United States Life-Saving Service on the Great Lakes* (Duluth, MI: Lake Superior Port Cities, 1994), 9.

On 16 April 1854, the emigrant ship *Powhatten* wrecked only five miles from a life-saving station at Beach Haven, New Jersey, yet more than 200 perished.<sup>7</sup> Congress again responded with more money, designating a superintendent for the Long Island and New Jersey coasts, and a man at each station. Stations up until that time had been “unkept,” and equipment and boats frequently disappeared. Once the federal government had built the buildings and equipped them, they passed into the ownership of the local community. The government provided no funds for maintenance. With the appointment of paid “keepers” for each station after the passage of the Act of 14 December 1854, theft was stemmed. Unfortunately, the positions of superintendent and keeper often became political appointments.

The infant system languished during the Civil War. In 1869, paid crews were finally added to the system, but only during winter months and only at alternate stations. However, this small improvement was not enough. During the winter of 1870-71, a series of wrecks on the Great Lakes and East Coast illustrated the system’s shortage of adequate personnel and equipment. The *1876 Annual Reports of the Operations of the Life-Saving Service* (hereafter cited as *Annual Reports*) admitted that, “The loss of life [in 1870-71] was largely due to the lack of proper attention to duty on the part of the employees of the Service and the inefficient conditions of the boats and apparatus.”<sup>8</sup> The public and press called for reform, and Congress again responded and appropriated a

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<sup>7</sup>Dennis L. Noble, *That Others Might Live: The U.S. Life-Saving Service, 1878-1915* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 22.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *Annual Reports of the Operations of the Life-Saving Service 1876* (Washington: GPO, 1876-1914), 48.

generous \$200,000 to provide proper equipment and experienced, paid surfmen to live at the stations. At the same time, the Secretary of the Treasury, George Boutwell began cleaning house. It seems the Revenue Marine was also rife with political appointees. He brought in a ten-year veteran of the Treasury Department, Sumner Increase Kimball, to head the Revenue Marine Bureau, which also oversaw the federal life-saving stations. His selection in February 1871 marked the end of the volunteer era of life-saving.

What Kimball did was take a disorganized volunteer system, infuse it with men and money, and organize it into an internationally-acclaimed, federal organization that guarded all of America's coastlines. This did not happen overnight, however. Kimball's first order of business was to take a current inventory and assessment of the stations. He sent Revenue Marine Captain John Faunce to examine all of the stations and compile a report. Faunce found keepers, crews, stations, and equipment all to be in poor condition. He uncovered the fact that the politics of keepers and surfmen often had more to do with their position than life-saving ability. Faunce revealed that "... every portable article had been stolen from many stations and the money Congress had appropriated had been practically wasted."<sup>9</sup> Even with such a system, Kimball stated that the volunteer service had rescued 4,163 lives and saved \$716,000 worth of property.<sup>10</sup>

Kimball started building new stations and extended protection to Cape Cod and Rhode Island. He sought to site stations no more than five miles apart so that patrols would more likely detect wrecks. New keepers were hired, and new rules were made for

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<sup>9</sup>J.W. Dalton, *The Life Savers of Cape Cod* (Privately printed, 1902; Chatham, MA: Chatham Press, 1967; Orleans, MA: Parnassus Imprints, 1991), 28.

<sup>10</sup>Noble, *That Others Might Live*, 30.

the selection of crewmen. Instructions were provided for the proper use and care of the station and its equipment. Regular inspections were started to make sure crews and stations were in good condition. Beach patrols by surfmen were instituted.

Structuring the Life-Saving Service was a major priority of Kimball's. The Service operated within the Treasury Department since its duty was closely related to commerce. The head of the Service was the General Superintendent, whose appointment was made by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The General Superintendent was Sumner Kimball, who retained the post for the entire span of the organized Life-Saving Service, from 1871 until 1915. Serving him was the Assistant General Superintendent, in addition to a "corps of clerks," a civil engineer, a topographer and hydrographer, and a draftsman. They were all based in Washington, D.C. There was also a Board of Life-Saving Appliances, composed of experts within the Life-Saving Service, to help investigate life-saving improvements and inventions.<sup>11</sup>

Directly below the General Superintendent was the Inspector. He was headquartered in New York City because much of the life-saving apparatus was made there. He was in charge of inspecting the stations and had an Assistant Inspector. There was also an Assistant Inspector in each district. They were in charge of auditing each station in their district every month and investigating shipwrecks where there was loss of life. All of the inspectors were detailed from the Revenue Marine Service, demonstrating the close ties between the Life-Saving and Revenue Marine Services.

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<sup>11</sup>Sumner I. Kimball, *Organization and Methods of the United States Life-Saving Service* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1912), 11.

Kimball divvied up the nation into districts, growing eventually to fourteen districts, and then consolidating to today's nine districts. The entire Pacific Coast was the 12th District, renumbered the 13th District on 6 June 1900, and then trimmed during the Coast Guard era so that Oregon and Washington alone became the 13th District. Each district typically had a Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. They were in charge of disbursing pay and ordering supplies. The District Superintendents also acted as inspectors of customs when ships wrecked within their districts.

Kimball promulgated instructions down to the keepers for the running of the life-saving stations. The instructions described what was expected of keeper and crew. The keeper was in charge and had the final say at "his" station. Kimball held the keepers in the highest regard. "The position held by this officer will be recognized at once as one of the most important in the Service," wrote Kimball.<sup>12</sup> The keepers were usually nominated by the District Superintendent. "The indispensable qualifications for appointment are that he shall be of good character and habits, not less than 21 nor more than 45 years of age; have sufficient education to be able to transact the station business; be able-bodied, physically sound, and a master of boat craft and surfing."<sup>13</sup> However, once in the position, age was not a determinant and only physical condition was considered. Keeper Joshua James "fell dead at his post" after stepping from a surfboat at the age of 74.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Kimball, 13.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1902 Annual Reports*, 14.

The keepers were nominated by the District Superintendent since the District Superintendent was intimately familiar with and personally responsible for his district. Every effort was made to select a local keeper, as it was felt that, "In the vicinity of nearly all the stations there are numbers of fishermen and wreckers who have followed their callings from boyhood and become expert in the handling of boats in broken water."<sup>15</sup> Typically, a keeper was chosen from the ranks of the surfmen (Figure 5).

The keepers ran their stations like a ship. They exercised absolute control over their crew as their "captain." In fact, the title "keeper" was rarely used by the crew or local citizens, who preferred to use the title "captain."<sup>16</sup> The keepers were entrusted with the "care and custody" of the station property and were required to reside at the station. They were charged with leading the crew and to ". . . share their perils on all occasions of rescue, taking always the steering oar when the boats are used, and directing all operations with the apparatus."<sup>17</sup>

Keepers were required to keep daily logs, with weekly transcripts sent to the District Superintendent. Wreck reports were required as soon as possible after a shipwreck. "Any false statement made in the books or reports subjects him to instant dismissal."<sup>18</sup> The daily log books for the Oregon stations are today stored at the National

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<sup>15</sup>Kimball, 13.

<sup>16</sup>Noble, *That Others Might Live*, 60.

<sup>17</sup>Kimball, 14.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

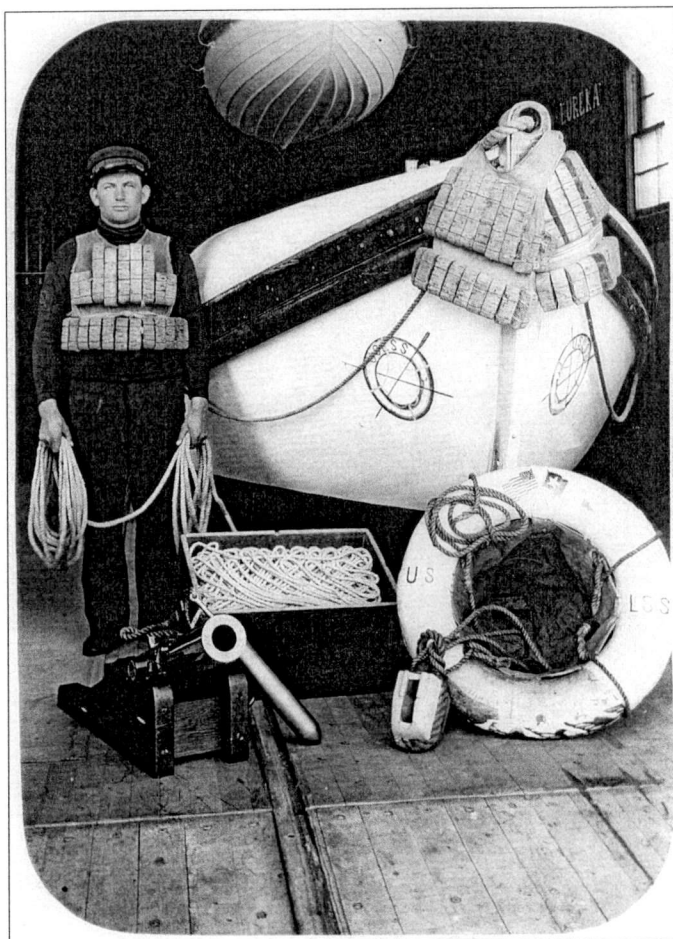


Figure 5. Clarence W. Boice at Coquille River Life-Saving Station Eventually Rose to Keeper at Coos Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Bandon Historical Society.



Archives Regional Center in Seattle and provide a wealth of information about the routine life at the stations.

Stations on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts were manned from September through April. Stations on the Great Lakes were open during the shipping season, usually from 15 April through 15 December. Only on the Pacific Coast were stations manned year-round.<sup>19</sup> It was found that shipwrecks on the West Coast occurred “. . . more frequently from local causes than from stress of weather, and are about as liable to happen at one season as to another.”<sup>20</sup>

The size of the crew was determined by the number of oars required to pull the largest boat at the station. Since lifeboats with eight oars were typical in Oregon, stations had a crew of eight (Figure 6). On the Atlantic, crews as small as six were needed to row the surfboats. The crew was chosen personally by the keeper from local members of the populace. This demonstrates the autonomy and responsibility given to the keepers by Kimball. Kimball wrote of the “. . . necessity for mutual confidence between a leader and his followers in hazardous enterprises involving their own lives and the lives of others.”<sup>21</sup> Early in the history of the Life-Saving Service, it was found that this policy created a situation where crew members were often selected based on political, social, and family lines. However, in 1882, Congress straightened out this situation and made “fitness” the sole requirement and extended the selection process to include a review by

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<sup>19</sup>The one exception was the floating station on the Ohio River at Louisville, Kentucky. It was also staffed year-round.

<sup>20</sup>Kimball, 15.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

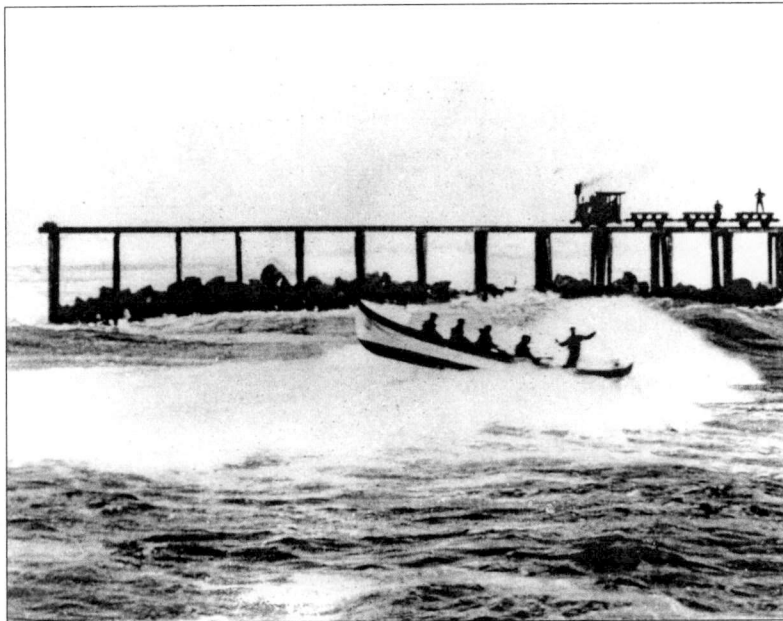


Figure 6. Dobbins Lifeboat During Training at Coquille River Bar. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Surfboats File).

the District Superintendents and Inspectors. There was still a loophole for family members to serve together, in that it was written that they could not serve together, “except where adherence to the rule would be detrimental to the Service.”<sup>22</sup> Family served together more frequently on the Atlantic Coast. The extreme example was the Midgett family, who at Gull Shoal Life-Saving Station, North Carolina, had five family members serving together.<sup>23</sup>

Influenced by statistics and Kimball’s advocacy, Congress gave Kimball another \$100,000 in 1873. In the same year, the U.S. Army Storm Signal Service began running

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Noble, *That Others Might Live*, 61-62.

telegraph lines between the New Jersey stations. Kimball got Congress to pass the Act of 20 June 1874 to require owners of all ships to report wrecks. This statistical and locational data helped to justify and site new stations.<sup>24</sup>

From 1871 to 1878, Kimball developed the Service and laid a foundation that lasted well into the Coast Guard era. The Act of 18 June 1878 established the U.S. Life-Saving Service as a separate entity from the Revenue Marine and made the Life-Saving Service its own agency within the Treasury Department. President Hayes appointed Kimball to the head position as General Superintendent of the new agency.

There were three types of stations being built by the Life-Saving Service: houses of refuge, life-saving stations, and lifeboat stations. The houses of refuge were built only along Florida's east coast by the Service. The houses of refuge were outmoded elsewhere but still functional in the warmer south. They were manned by a keeper and his family.

Life-saving stations were the standard of the Life-Saving Service. They were manned by a crew and led by a keeper. Here the keeper, his family, and the crew would live, during the storm season on the East Coast and year-round on the West Coast. When a shipwreck occurred, survivors would often be sheltered at the station and given succor (i.e., aid, food, and shelter) until they were well enough to leave. The stations were fully equipped with rescue devices and two surfboats. On the West Coast, stations were equipped with a surfboat and a lifeboat.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 28-31.

Lifeboat stations had a less distinct definition. In the early days of the Life-Saving Service, the term lifeboat station was used for stations manned by a keeper only and relying on volunteers for crew. The Cape Arago Life-Saving Station at Coos Bay, Oregon, was referred to as a lifeboat station in its early years.<sup>25</sup> However, the term quickly fell out of use as all stations became manned with paid crews by 1890. If it was left at that, the term would be fairly clear; however, the term was revived by the Coast Guard in 1915 when they began designating the old life-saving stations and new stations, “motor lifeboat stations” or simply, “lifeboat stations.” Therefore, after 1915, there is a universal resurgence of the term “lifeboat station” which is still used today.

Stations were “. . . located at selected points of danger to shipping, and vary somewhat in character, according to their environment and the nature of the service demanded of them. On some portions of the coast they are placed only at long intervals, while upon others they form chains of contiguous posts within communicating distance of each other.”<sup>26</sup> Obviously, due to the disproportionate number of stations on each coast line, the East Coast adopted the method of a contiguous chain and the West Coast stations were placed far apart at “points of danger.” This was not necessarily a circumstance of politics. The East Coast was dotted with harbors and ships tended to hug the shoreline. On the West Coast, harbors were few and far between and ships tended to stay further away from shore and then turn toward shore when a harbor was reached.

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<sup>25</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1879 Annual Reports*, 12.

<sup>26</sup>Kimball, 5.

In 1889, Kimball was of the opinion that, “The Pacific coast is not a dangerous one.”<sup>27</sup> He did allow that, “There are, however, a few extremely dangerous points, mostly situated at the entrances to the important ports.”<sup>28</sup> These were the locations at which life-saving stations were erected in Oregon. Later on, after several tragic wrecks on the Oregon and California Coasts, Kimball reformed his opinion and lobbied hard to get stations erected on the Pacific Coast.<sup>29</sup>

The first station to be built in Oregon was the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station in late 1878, situated to protect the entrance to Coos Bay. It was actually a lifeboat station, in the early use of the term, in that it had a keeper only and no crew. During the late 1880s, Oregon Senator John Mitchell and Oregon Representative Binger Hermann fought in Congress to have life-saving stations built in Oregon. In 1889, a station was added at Point Adams to help guard the Columbia River with its sister station at Cape Disappointment on the Washington side. The big year for life-saving in Oregon was 1891: the Cape Arago Station was abandoned, a new station was erected on the north side of the Coos Bay, receiving a permanent crew in the process, and stations were erected at Coquille River and Umpqua River. Gradually the Life-Saving Service added a station at Yaquina Bay (1895) and then at Tillamook Bay (1907) before the formation of the Coast Guard in 1915.

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<sup>27</sup>Kimball, 7.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ralph Shanks, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 26 May 2000.

Each station was home for keeper and crew, though more so for the keeper. The keeper's family was accommodated within the station. There was, however, no provision for the families of the crew. When the station was located near a town, the surfman could visit his family on his one day off a week, "from sunrise to sunset." In more isolated locations, such as the Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station at South Beach, the crew members erected small dwellings for their family near the station. In Oregon, most stations had a small group of dwellings nearby (Figure 7). Often the small community was dubbed, "Little America."

The station complex itself is fully described in later chapters. Suffice it to say, there were quarters provided for the surfman where he was housed and fed, at least until it was his turn to cook. Some stations pooled their money and hired a cook. A bed and locker was provided for each crewman. Pay was considered fairly low for the era, though a pension was enacted in 1882, albeit a meager one. When uniforms were first required in 1889, the surfmen had to buy their own.<sup>30</sup> It is surprising that anyone would want to be a life-saver considering the high risk of death and disease associated with the profession (Figure 8). The desire to be altruistic was strong in the surfmen.

When wrecks were not being attended to, there was a weekly routine to keep the surfmen fit and well-practiced. Mondays were reserved for drill and practice with the beach apparatus, along with the overhauling of the boats and the rescue equipment. Tuesdays were designated for practice with the boats which involved launching, rowing, and landing either a surfboat or lifeboat. Capsize drill was sometimes included at the

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<sup>30</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1889 Annual Reports*, 66.



Figure 7. Umpqua River Lifeboat Station with Station Buildings at the Bottom and "Little America" at the Top, 1945. Source: University of Oregon Map Library (53VV16PI-M516-PS 26 Sept 45 5M-167).

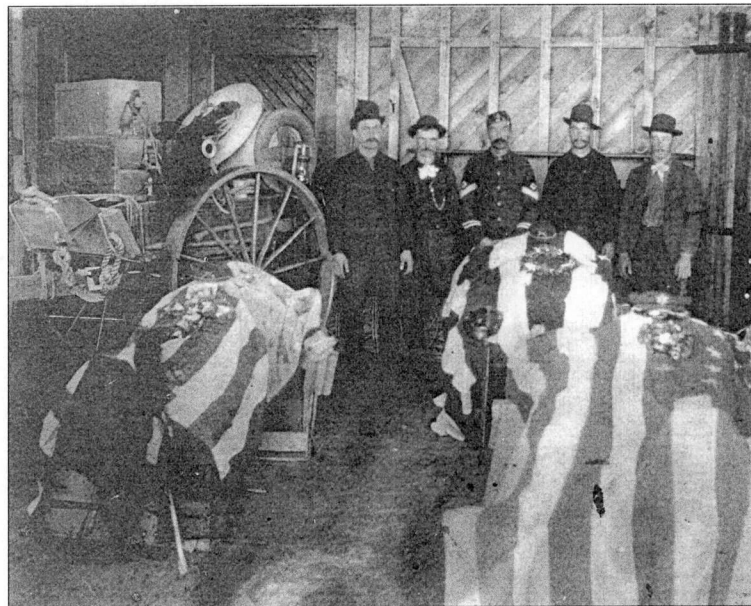


Figure 8. Three Life-Savers Died in a Training Accident on the Coquille River Bar, 1892. Source: Bandon Historical Society (BHS #1476).

discretion of the keeper since it was so hard on the equipment and crew. Wednesdays were signal practice with flags. On Thursdays, there was more drilling with the beach apparatus. Friday was reserved for practice of “restoring the apparently drowned” and training with the medical kit. Saturday was house cleaning day.<sup>31</sup> By repeating the drills endlessly, the use of the equipment became automatic for the surfmen, allowing them to react mechanically in times of actual rescue.

The beach apparatus drill, performed on Mondays and Thursdays, was meant to get the crew so used to erecting a breeches buoy that they could do it in the dark. The breeches buoy was a device by which a person could be moved from ship to shore on an aerial line. All the equipment for the breeches buoy was stored on a beach apparatus cart. This cart would be “hitched” to the crewmen and dragged to the drill field (Figure 9). At the end of the drill field 75 yards away would be a wreck pole, representing a mast on a stranded vessel. The keeper would fire a small cannon called a “Lyle gun” which would send a 17-pound projectile trailing a shot line over the wreck pole (Figure 10). Various mortars, cannons, and rockets had been experimented with over the years, and the Lyle gun was the final solution. It could fire the projectile over a distressed ship with accuracy up to an extreme range of 695 yards.<sup>32</sup>

The life-savers “on shore” would tie a block to the shot line and run a whip line through the block, holding on to both ends of the whip line. The crew on the ship would then pull the shot line with the attached block onto the ship. A tally board would be

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<sup>31</sup>Kimball, 18.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 25.



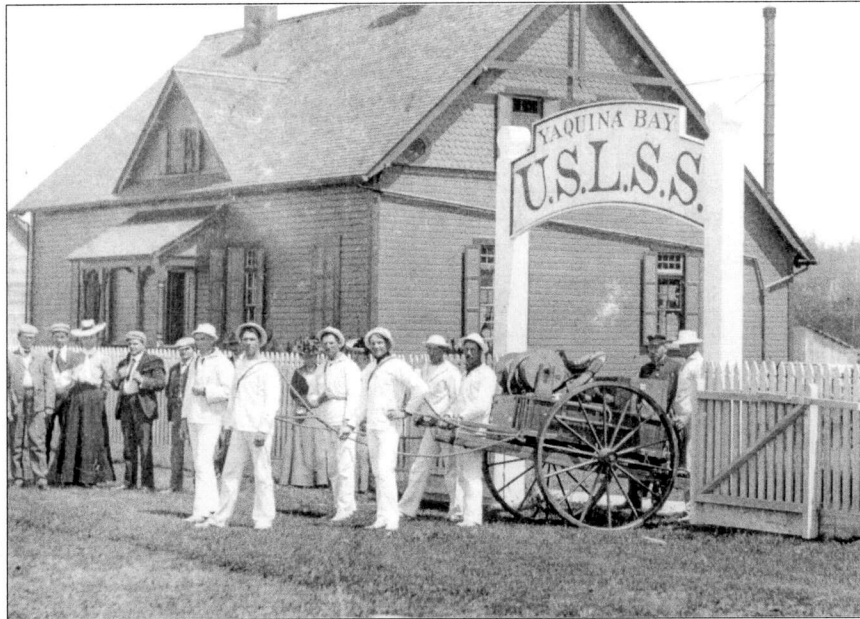


Figure 9. Crewmen Hitched to the Beach Apparatus Cart, Circa 1905. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #1099).



Figure 10. Crewmen Drilling with the Beach Apparatus, Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station, Circa 1910. Source: Author's Collection.

dangling from the block instructing the stranded crew what to do next. Following the instructions, the stranded crewmen would tie the block high on a mast. The life-savers would then attach a large line, or hawser, to the shot line, and the shipwrecked mariners would haul the hawser out to the ship. The wreck survivors would then tie the hawser to the mast above the block. The life-savers would tighten the hawser via a series of pulleys tied to a sand anchor and an X-shaped fulcrum. Once taut, the life-savers would pull a breeches buoy out to the wreck using the whip line. The breeches buoy was basically a life-ring with an attached pair of pants suspended from a pulley. A survivor would get into the breeches buoy and be pulled to “shore” (Figure 11). The crew was required to set up the breeches buoy in less than five minutes, and if they could not, it was assumed that “. . . they have been remiss in drilling or that there are some stupid men among them.”<sup>33</sup> Some crews became so proficient at the drill that they were able to perform the procedure in two minutes and thirty seconds.

On occasion, a lifecar would be substituted for a breeches buoy. A lifecar was basically a metal torpedo with a hatch (Figure 12). When the hawser could not be raised high enough above the water or if a shipwreck victim was injured, a lifecar could be pulled out to the wreck on the same rigging as the breeches buoy. Several people could squeeze into a lifecar, seal the hatch, and then get dragged through the surf to shore. Only a few rescues were performed each year using the lifecar, though it was a piece of equipment issued to every station.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 19.

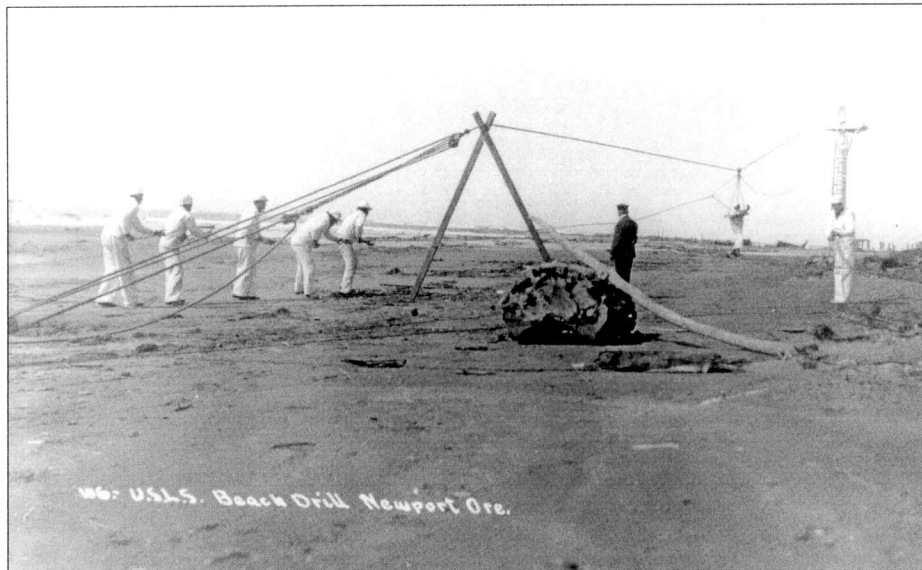


Figure 11. Crewmen Drilling with the Beach Apparatus, Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station, Circa 1910. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #654-A 98317).

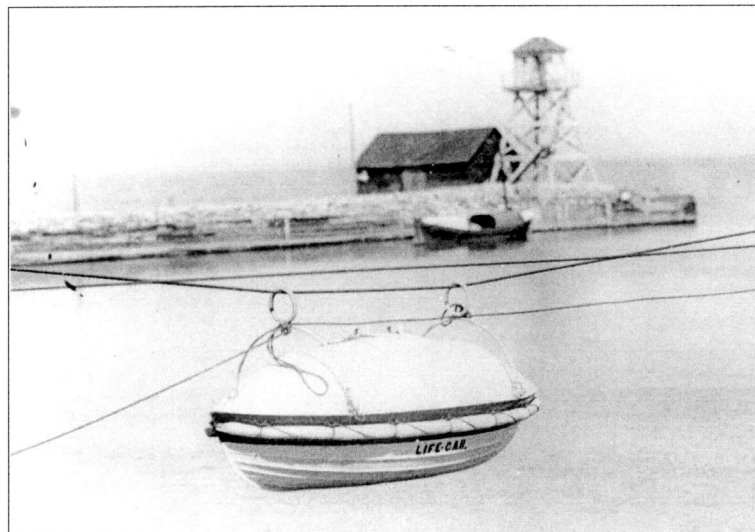


Figure 12. Lifecar Rigged from Ship to Shore. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Surfboats File).

The most common pre-1915 method of rescue was the pulling boat. The oar-powered pulling boats came in two varieties: the light-weight surfboat or the heavy-weight lifeboat. On Tuesdays, the life-savers would participate in boat drills to perfect their handling of the pulling boats.

There were three principal types of surfboats used in Oregon: the Beebe, the Beebe-McLellan, and the Monomoy. They measured 25' to 27' long and weighed 700 to 1,100 pounds. Surfboats were relatively light-weight so that they could be pulled along the beach on a carriage (Figure 13) and then launched directly into the surf (Figure 14). Six crewmen were needed to row the surfboats with the keeper manning a long steering oar at the stern. They were highly maneuverable and excellent for short distances when only a few people were imperiled. Surfboats were ideal for work on the Eastern Seaboard. None of the surfboats were self-righting, but the Beebe-McLellan was self-bailing.

To give some understanding of how often surfboats were used, from 1871 until 1889, the Life-Saving Service launched them 6,730 times to assist people and landed 6,735 persons from shipwrecks. In all those trips, the surfboats only capsized 14 times. However, on six of those capsizings, 41 people died, 27 of whom were life-savers.<sup>34</sup> In other words, capsizing was serious and that is why the surfmen trained for it. A capsizing drill would start with the men seated, they would then grab lines, pull to one side of the boat, and flip the boat upside down (Figure 15). The crew would then lift one side of the boat in unison while still in the water, flip the boat right side up, pull themselves in, and

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 21.



Figure 13. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station Crew with Surfboat, Circa 1910. Source: Author's Collection.



Figure 14. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station Crew in Surfboat, Circa 1910. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #654-A 98318).

return to their seats on the thwarts. The fastest time ever recorded to capsize a surfboat and returned to the seated position was 13 seconds.<sup>35</sup> The righting procedure was so quick that a keeper could actually step over the stern and not get wet (Figure 16).

On the West Coast, the heavier lifeboat was often used. There were two principal types: the heavy English lifeboat and the lighter Dobbins lifeboat. The English lifeboat averaged around 30' long, roughly equivalent to a surfboat but weighed four times as much. This heavier weight was due to its iron keel which gave it self-righting capabilities. It was powered by eight crewmen and steered by the keeper with a tiller. The lifeboat also had self-bailing capabilities and could be outfitted with sails. Because of its weight, the English lifeboat could only be launched directly into the water. Only 37 of the English lifeboats were put into service, all on the Great Lakes.<sup>36</sup>

The Dobbins lifeboat, on the other hand, was a compromise between the surfboat and lifeboat. It was developed by David P. Dobbins, Superintendent of the Ninth District, in 1881. The Dobbins lifeboat was roughly the same length as the English lifeboat at 24', but more than half as light, weighing from 1,600 to 2,000 pounds. It was cheaper to build, was self-righting and self-bailing, and could still carry 33 people safely.<sup>37</sup> Because of its light weight, the lifeboat could be launched like a surfboat directly from the beach (Figure 17) or from a marine railway (Figure 18). It was rowed by eight and steered by the keeper with a tiller (Figure 19). A Dobbins lifeboat appears

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<sup>35</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1907 Annual Reports*, 21.

<sup>36</sup>Stonehouse, 97.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 98-100.





Figure 15. Point Adams Life-Saving Station Crew During Capsize Drill, Circa 1910. Source: Author's Collection.

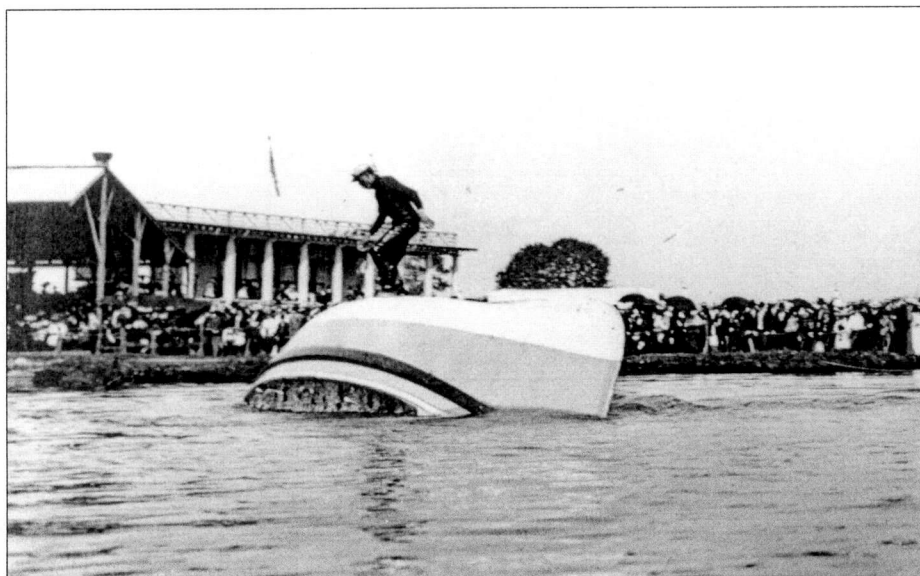


Figure 16. Keeper Walking Around Stern During Capsize Drill at Lewis and Clark Exposition, 1905. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #9999Y387-79857).



Figure 17. Laboring with Dobbins Lifeboat at Klipsan Beach, Washington. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #654-A 45281).

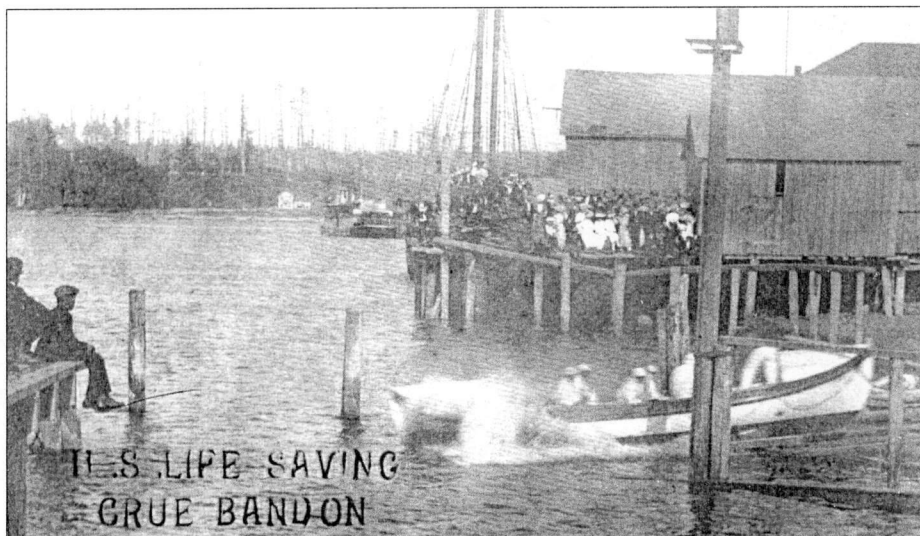


Figure 18. Dobbins Lifeboat Hurling Down Launchway at Coquille River Life-Saving Station. Source: Bandon Historical Society (BHS #1104).



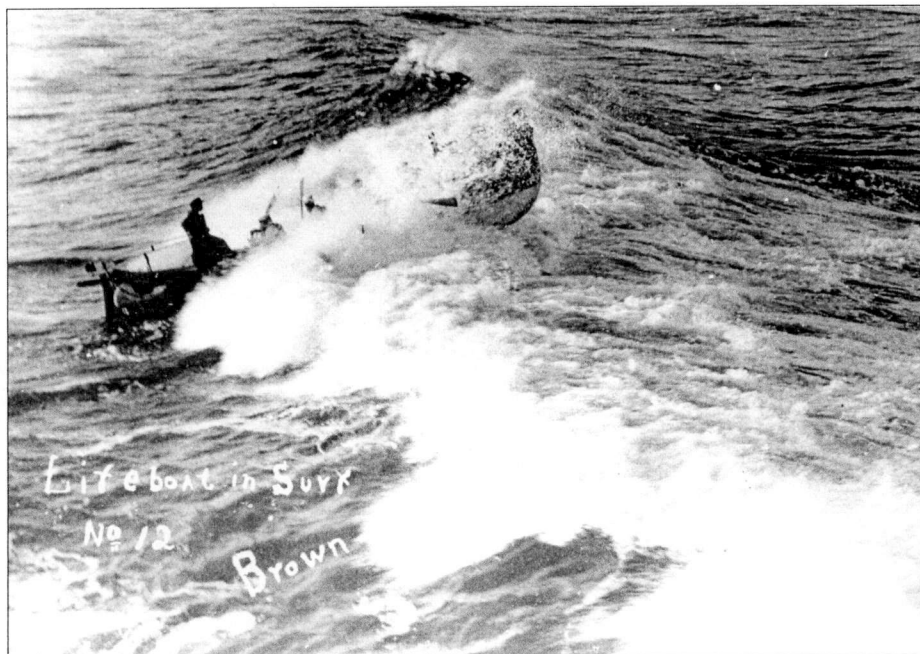


Figure 19. Dobbins Lifeboat at the Coos Bay Bar, 1910. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Surfboats File).

in many of the photos on the Oregon Coast, and it is believed that every Oregon station by 1900 had one in addition to their surfboat.

As early as 1899, the Life-Saving Service began to experiment with putting a gasoline motor in a 34' lifeboat. The weight of the motor proved unsatisfactory in a pulling boat, so an entirely new 36' lifeboat was designed around the engine. The first 36' motor lifeboat in the country went to Waaddah Island Life-Saving Station at Neah Bay, Washington, in 1908. The Pacific surf and vast area that the Waaddah Island station covered precipitated the need. The motor lifeboats were accepted as a godsend. They more than doubled the range of the life-savers and allowed them to arrive fresh at the

scene.<sup>38</sup> Soon, the 13th district had a higher percentage of motor lifeboats in use than any other district in the country (Figure 20). By 1914, there were 147 motor lifeboats and surfboats in service.<sup>39</sup>

The 36' motor lifeboats went through many incarnations throughout their long history. The boat was an extremely successful design that continued to be produced as late as 1956. The last active 36-footer in America was retired from Depoe Bay, Oregon, in 1987. The boat is now on display in Newport News, Virginia, at the Mariner's Museum.<sup>40</sup> Tillamook Bay, Yaquina Bay, Umpqua River, and Port Orford all have their 36' motor lifeboats on display near their respective Coast Guard stations (Figure 21).

Beyond the weekly schedule of drills as set forth by the Life-Saving Service, the crew was also responsible for patrolling the beaches. A lookout was mounted from sunrise to sunset, each crewman taking a watch. On the Oregon Coast, most watches were stood in a lookout tower away from the station which provided a wide view of the surf and beach. Even on Sundays, when there were no drills, the beaches would have to be patrolled. From sunset to sunrise, the surfmen would walk the beach. Two crewmen would operate a four-hour shift no matter what the weather. Each one would walk away from the station in opposite directions to scan the shore watching for signs of distress. On the East Coast, patrolmen would meet up with surfmen from other stations also on

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<sup>38</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1908 Annual Reports*, 23-24.

<sup>39</sup>Shanks, *The U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 111.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 113.

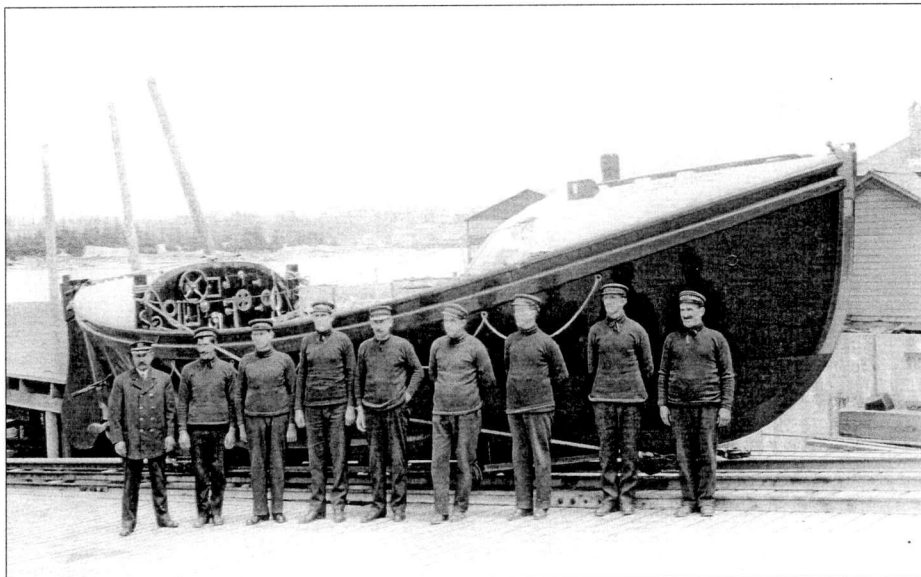


Figure 20. New 36' Motor Lifeboat at Coquille River Lifeboat Station, Circa 1915. Source: Bandon Historical Society.

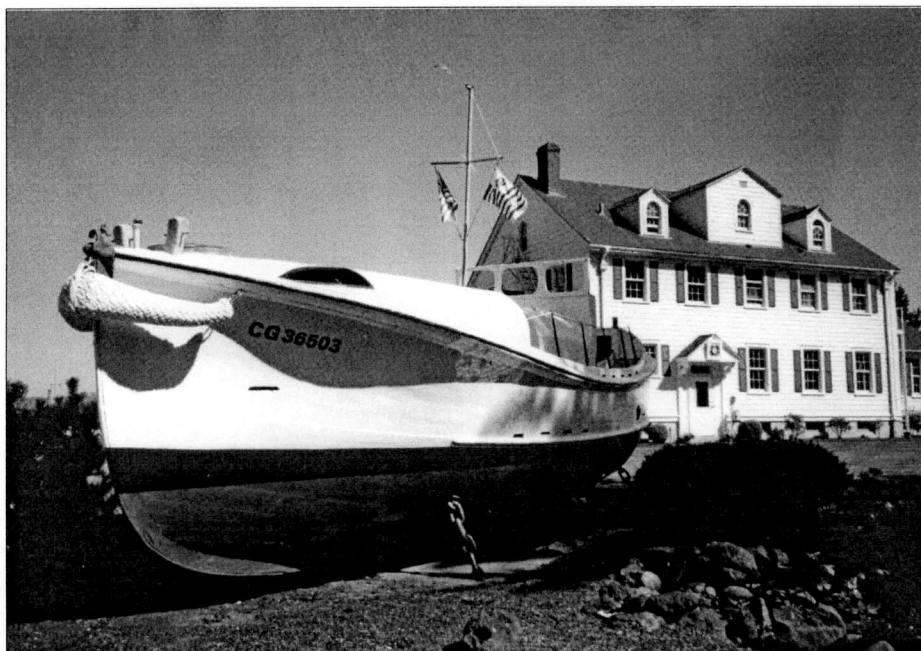


Figure 22. Motor Lifeboat Display at the Yaquina Bay Lifeboat Station, 1999. Source: Author.

patrol and exchange tokens to show that they had completed their assigned “beat.”<sup>41</sup> On the Oregon Coast, since the stations were so isolated, a life-saver would walk until he reached the end of his beat where there would be a post with a key attached. He would insert the key into a patrol clock that he carried (Figure 22), marking the time in which he reached the end of his patrol. If a crewman spotted a ship either too close to shore or aground, he would burn a red Coston flare to either ward off the ship or to signal the ship that help was on the way.

Besides saving lives, the other component of the Life-Saving Service’s mission was to save the property of the shipwrecked mariner. The surfmen did this by warning off ships too close to shore, extricating ships from dangerous situations, and refloating vessels once stranded. A major partner on the West Coast in this work were the tug boats (Figure 23). Tugs rescued survivors, towed disabled ships, pulled vessels off of shoals, and often towed life-savers to the scene of wrecks before the advent of power lifeboats. Frequently, the tugs were the first ones on the wreck scene. Nearly all wreck reports on the Oregon Coast mention the assistance of tugs, as part of the mariner’s duty to render assistance at sea.

Once a wreck did occur, the keeper of the station was entrusted with the protection of the cargo. Sometimes the shipload was a total loss; however, often the cargo washed or was brought to shore practically unscathed (Figure 24). There are many reports on the Oregon Coast of crewman standing watch over goods waiting for the ship’s owner or representatives to arrive at the scene. During the history of the Life-

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<sup>41</sup>The stations on the south shore of Lake Superior and at San Francisco Bay also met up with crewmen from adjacent stations and exchanged tokens.



Figure 22. Patrol Clock, Point Allerton, Massachusetts. Source: Author.



Figure 23. Tug Assisting Schooner over Coquille River Bar, Circa 1910. Source: Author's Collection.



Figure 24. The *Marconi* on 23 March 1909. The Crew was Rescued by Breeches Buoy. Source: Author's Collection.

Saving Service, the agency saved “. . . many more times in cost in property . . .” than what it cost the Service to operate.<sup>42</sup>

Public perception was high on Sumner Kimball’s list, and he did many things to promote the Service. Since all progress in life-saving had been brought about through public pressure, Kimball needed to keep the service in the public eye. Starting with the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, Kimball had the Life-Saving Service represented at each of the large expositions. Kimball was not satisfied with a mere display. He had an entire life-saving station, fully operational with crew, built on each of the exposition grounds. The crew performed breeches buoy and capsizing demonstrations daily “. . . to afford the general public a fairly accurate idea of the serious work of the Service. . . .”<sup>43</sup>

At Oregon’s Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition held in Portland in 1905, there was a life-saving station (Figure 25). A keeper and a crew of eight manned the station from May through October and mounted daily exhibitions (Figure 26). Located on an island in the middle of Guild Lake, sharing space with the U.S. Government Building, the Life-Saving Station continued the Spanish Colonial architectural theme of the island. During its 4-1/2 month run, more than 2.5 million people attended the

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<sup>42</sup>Kimball, 36.

<sup>43</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1907 Annual Reports*, 20-21.





Figure 25. Life-Saving Station at the Lewis and Clark Exposition, 1905. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #9999Y397-79867).

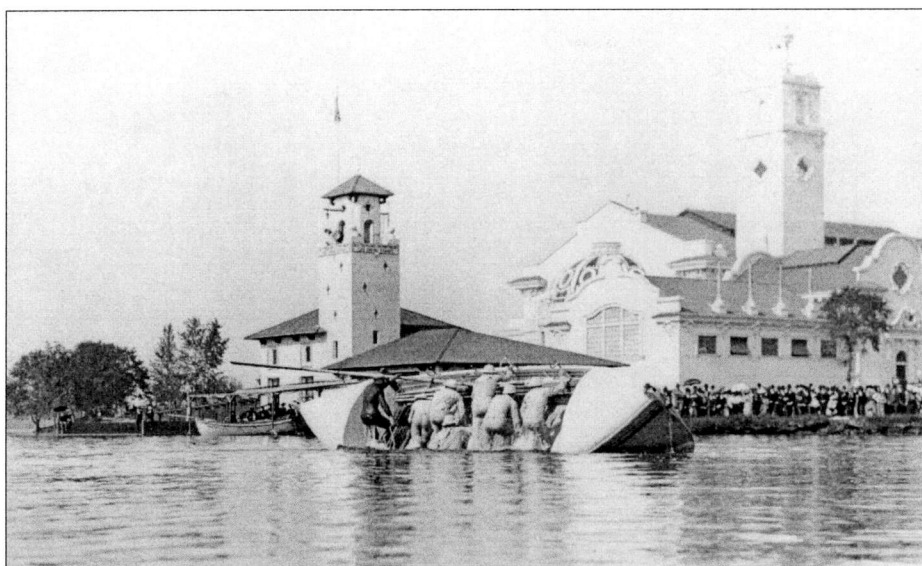


Figure 26. Capsizing Drill in Front of Life-Saving Station at the Lewis and Clark Exposition, 1905. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #9999Y349-79819).



exposition and many local, national, and international visitors were exposed to the Life-Saving Service.<sup>44</sup> The station, unfortunately, no longer stands.

Kimball made sure the story of the Life-Saving Service reached the public in other ways. The *Annual Reports* put out by the Life-Saving Service starting in 1876 are considered some of the most exciting writing ever produced by the federal government; it helped that the raw material was equal to the task. Kimball had brought in William D. O'Connor as his assistant in 1878. It seems as to be coincidence that O'Connor was an experienced writer who wrote previously for the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*. O'Connor's writing brought the exploits of the Life-Saving Service to life for people across the country. Magazines and newspapers of the day carried the message even further and christened the surfmen "storm warriors" and "heroes of the surf."

When rescues did occur, the image of the heroic keeper did not always go unsullied. On 29 January 1883, the *Tacoma* went ashore four miles north of the Umpqua River. A volunteer crew of eight arrived from Empire, but Keeper Desmond of the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station was unwilling to "aid the unfortunates on the wreck" and was roundly censured by the *Coos Bay World*. The newspaper and apparently the community felt ". . . there is no excuse, and it is only a pity that our laws cannot reach him and hang him for the lives of the men who were sacrificed through his pusillanimity and cowardice."<sup>45</sup> This was, of course, an exceptional incident rather than the norm.

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<sup>44</sup>Carl Abbott, *The Great Extravaganza* (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1981), 54.

<sup>45</sup>"Wreck of The Tacoma in 1883, North of the Umpqua," *Coos Bay News*, 2 February 1916.

Promotion of the Life-Saving Service went all the way down to the local level. Life-saving stations became social centers to their coastal communities. The keeper and crew usually came from the locality and were held in great esteem by the citizenry. In many surfmen training photos, there are locals looking on (Figure 27). On Yaquina Bay, non-surfmen got a ride in the new, 36' power boat *Undaunted* when it arrived at Newport in 1914 (Figure 28). Events were often held at the stations. For example, a May Day dance was announced in Newport in 1901:

A good time will be had at the Life Saving Station on May Day. Everyone is invited to go down, and bring their lunch baskets. Captain Clark and his gentlemanly crew will entertain you royally. All those who wish to remain for the evening dance, will find abundance of the delicacies of the land, at the station, to satisfy their appetites. The old and young, the bachelor, the old maid, and the fellows with their sweethearts — All are welcome.<sup>46</sup>

The surfmen of the Life-Saving Service were often looked upon as selfless Samaritans in the locality. Many of these small coastal communities had limited police and fire response. It seems that each *Annual Report* mentions at least one fire that Oregon surfmen assisted in putting out. This may have taxed the crew, but they were deeply embedded in the local community. The Point Adams Life-Saving Station crew was constantly recovering gillnets from the Columbia River and returning them to owners. On 20 April 1894, the Coquille River crew discovered a cow wedged between some logs, so they freed it and returned it to the owner.<sup>47</sup> Kimball pointed out that the life-savers provided “. . . many other services inuring to the public benefit which it has

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<sup>46</sup>“May Day,” *Yaquina Bay News*, 25 April 1901.

<sup>47</sup>Ernest L. Osborne and Victor West, *Men of Action: A History of the U.S. Life-Saving Service on the Pacific Coast* (Bandon, OR: Bandon Historical Society, 1981), 72.

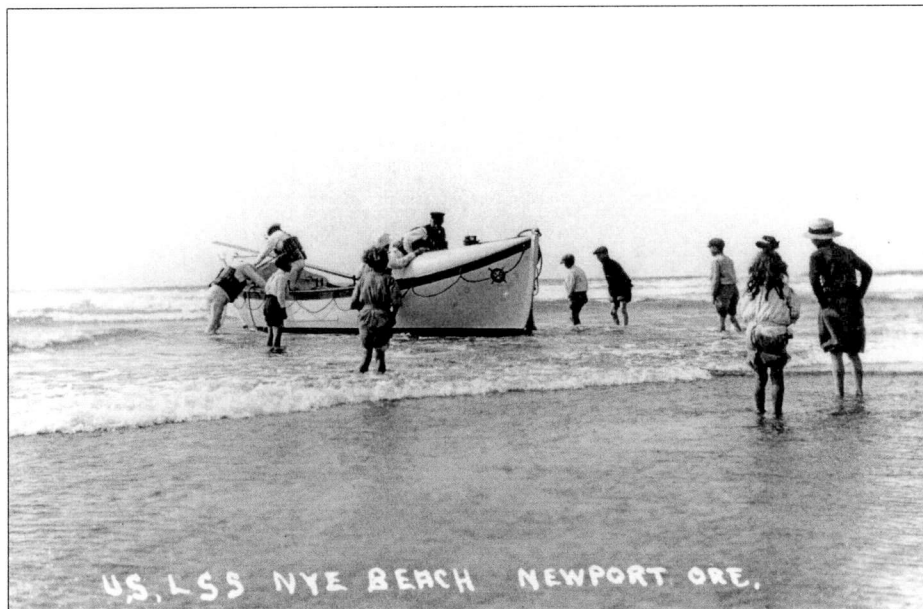


Figure 27. Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station Crew with Lifeboat.  
Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #654-A 52372).



Figure 28. Aboard Yaquina Bay's Motor Lifeboat *Undaunted*, Circa 1914. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #2265).

incidentally rendered,” from the collection of rare marine specimens for science to the prevention of robberies.<sup>48</sup>

By 1915, the Life-Saving Service was a well-oiled machine. Kimball had been at the helm of the Life-Saving Service for 44 years. There were 279 active life-saving stations along the nation’s coastlines. The Service was responding with its own motorized craft, following the maritime industry’s evolution from sail to engine. The Service had 80 motor lifeboats and nearly 150 motorized surfboats by 1915.<sup>49</sup> All of Oregon’s stations had one powerboat, though it was a mixed fleet of 34-footers, 36-footers, and motorized surfboats.<sup>50</sup> Almost all stations were connected via telephone. The first radio distress call by an American vessel was sent on 10 December 1905, marking the dawn of ship-to-shore radio communication. By an Act of Congress of 4 May 1910, every ship carrying more than 50 people was required to have a radio.<sup>51</sup> However, with the life-saving system functioning better than ever, there was a political machine working behind the scenes in an attempt to dismantle the Service.

The Progressive Movement was afoot in the 1910s seeking to curb the excesses of government growth. All agencies came under scrutiny starting around 1910, including the Life-Saving Service, but the Revenue Cutter Service was soon to be seen as the most

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<sup>48</sup>Kimball, 36.

<sup>49</sup>Stephen H. Evans, *The United States Coast Guard: 1790-1915; A Definitive History* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1949), 187-88.

<sup>50</sup>U.S. Coast Guard, *Annual Reports of the Operations of the United States Coast Guard 1915* (Washington: GPO, 1915), 67.

<sup>51</sup>Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II*, 141.

wasteful. Various mergers and consolidations were proposed, including a merger with the Lighthouse Service, but finally an agreement was hammered out to merge the Revenue Cutter Service with the Life-Saving Service.<sup>52</sup>

### United States Coast Guard

On 20 January 1915, Congress passed the Act to Create the Coast Guard which merged the Life-Saving Service with the Revenue Cutter Service. The new military organization was called the United States Coast Guard. Maritime safety, law enforcement, and military readiness were instantly rolled into one group and remain the three principles of the Coast Guard today.

The major impact of the merger was that the old Life-Saving Service converted from a military-like group within the Treasury Department to an independent military organization. Life-saving station keepers became warrant officers, surfmen became enlisted men.<sup>53</sup> A long-sought retirement system was finally implemented. A whole new bureaucracy was instituted that made the stations less autonomous. However, the stations did retain their traditional routine, especially on the Pacific Coast, and little changed in the day-to-day lives of the surfmen.

During World War I, Coast Guardsmen were attached to the Navy. However, the war was in Europe and on the Atlantic Ocean, and had virtually no impact on operations on the Pacific Coast other than to make funding even scarcer. The 1921 *Annual Report*

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<sup>52</sup>Noble, *That Others Might Live*, 149-52.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 152-53.

states, “The state of dilapidation into which some of them [stations] have fallen, through age and usage, should not be permitted to continue longer. The establishment of a number of stations has been specifically authorized by law, but their construction can not be proceeded with in the absence of the necessary funds.”<sup>54</sup>

The passage of Prohibition in 1920 gave the Coast Guard a new law to enforce and funding with which to do it. The Volstead Act of 1920 was an unpopular law, dangerous and unpleasant to enforce. However, funds for its enforcement allowed the Coast Guard to grow at an unprecedented rate to halt “rum running.” The “Rum War” began in 1920 with four years of incidental activities, then heated up for the next ten years, until operations were curtailed in 1933, and the 18th Amendment repealed in 1934.<sup>55</sup>

Liquor smuggling along the Oregon Coast was never as big as along the Atlantic Seaboard. Most of the West Coast rum runners came out of Vancouver, British Columbia, and headed for the big ports of Seattle and San Francisco. However, some rum runners did use the relatively small Oregon ports, the very ports where the Coast Guard was stationed. To counter the smugglers, the Coast Guard stations were augmented with additional patrol craft and personnel. Like the beach patrols, the offshore patrols watched for signs of activity; however, in this case, they were watching for small, fast boats darting into harbors at night to unload their illegal cargo.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>U.S. Coast Guard, *1921 Annual Report*, 30.

<sup>55</sup>Malcolm F. Willoughby, *Rum War at Sea* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1964), 157.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 75-76.

The Coast Guard found itself with a new role, intelligence gatherer. Intelligence data played an important role in intercepting liquor shipments. The Coast Guard was fairly successful in stemming rum running along the Oregon Coast, and much of that was due to information gathering. Toward the end of Prohibition, most of the alcohol in Oregon was coming overland.<sup>57</sup>

Near the end of the Depression, Public Works Administration (PWA) funds came into Oregon to build Coast Guard stations. Created in 1933 by Franklin Roosevelt as one of his New Deal programs, the PWA was developed to reduce unemployment and to restore people's purchasing power through construction projects. At least one station, the Point Adams Lifeboat Station (1938), and the Yaquina Bay Lifeboat Station lookout tower (1936) were built with PWA funds. The PWA's sister program, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) begun in 1935, may also have had some role in Oregon station construction. Three additional stations were built in Oregon in 1939, and it is likely that they received PWA or WPA funds also.

Motorized lifeboats were not the only shakeup in the rescue equipment of the lifesaver. As early as 1915, Coast Guard officers on the East Coast began experimenting with air patrols to search for ships in need of assistance. On 29 August 1916, the Coast Guard was authorized to build ten air stations; however, they were not funded until 1924. The funding finally arrived in the generous form of \$13,000,000 to enforce the Volstead Act. By 1936, there were 45 planes in the Coast Guard. An air station was built at Port

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 76, 83.

Angeles, Washington, in 1935 (Figure 29), but no air stations were commissioned in Oregon until after WWII.<sup>58</sup>

The rescue range of the surfmen continued to increase with new and more powerful boats. As a result, fewer stations were needed, so the Coast Guard closed and consolidated stations, mainly on the East Coast. No stations were closed in Oregon and in fact, two new stations were added, one at Siuslaw River (1917) and one at Port Orford (1934). This demonstrates just how far behind Oregon was in station construction.

Just as commercial shipping started to become safer with the advent of radio communications and direction finding, there was a new group for the Coast Guard to deal with, recreational boaters. The recreational boater hovered close to shore and was often relatively inexperienced in coastal waters. Starting with the arrival of small gasoline powered boats, the numbers of incidents involving small craft began to increase.

On 1 July 1939, the U.S. Lighthouse Service was folded into the Coast Guard, allowing it to take over the maintenance and operation of aids to navigation. Originally, lighthouses were built and operated locally, but in 1789, the U.S. Treasury took over the role and established the U.S. Lighthouse Service. The merger in 1939 completed the Coast Guard's full-service role of protecting life and property along the nation's coastlines.

Statistics show that the Coast Guard saved 203,609 lives during the 70 years from 1871 to 1941, including the work of the Revenue Cutter Service. Property valued at \$1,784,738,124 was saved from the sea. In addition, succor was afforded to 48,023

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<sup>58</sup>Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II*, 37-38.



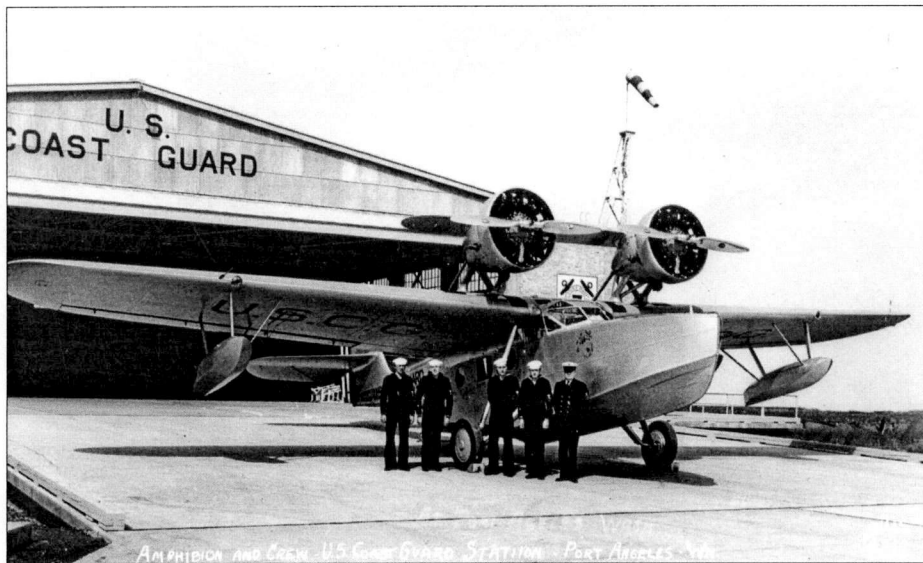


Figure 29. Amphibian at the Port Angeles Air Station. Source: Author's Collection.

persons. The annual averages for these 70 years were 2,868 lives rescued, \$25,137,157 worth of property saved, and 676 persons afforded succor.<sup>59</sup>

A National Emergency was declared by Franklin Roosevelt on 8 September 1939 in response to Germany's invasion of Poland. During the two years before the U.S. entered WWII, the Coast Guard became very active with the neutral convoys in the Atlantic. The Coast Guard was given the duty of supervising the loading of dangerous cargoes, which included explosives and fuel headed to Europe. In Oregon, replacement stations were being constructed at an unprecedented rate. Point Adams, Umpqua River, and Coquille River all received brand-new stations in 1939.

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 6.

The Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary Act was passed on 23 June 1939, laying the groundwork for organizing civilian motorboats and yachts into the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Coast Guard Auxiliary was quite active along the Oregon Coast. In February 1941, they were organized into the Temporary Reserve, which worked to patrol the coasts of the nation during the emergency years. Several “TR” groups were organized at Oregon’s major harbors. By the start of the war, the Temporary Reserve had 5,205 members and 4,524 boats. On 1 November 1941, President Roosevelt signed the Executive Order 8929 that put the Coast Guard under the jurisdiction of the Navy “for the duration of the emergency.”<sup>60</sup>

Throughout WWII, Coast Guard personnel retained their identity as “coasties” by a shield worn on their sleeve to distinguish them from Navy personnel. They served in combat roles in all of the amphibious operations in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. They hunted for enemy submarines, piloted landing craft, and rescued many from the sea. The Coast Guard also monitored and protected all of America’s ports and coastlines from attack, sabotage, and accident. In Oregon, this last role of monitoring the ports and coastline was the most evident. Beach patrols were augmented soon after Roosevelt declared a state of emergency in September 1939. Blackouts were enforced up and down the coast. Mounted patrols, jeeps, and war dogs were brought in to bolster the beach patrols (Figure 30). All of the Oregon stations packed additional patrolmen into the existing barracks. Many temporary buildings, such as barracks, barns, and kennels, were erected just before and during the war to support the beach patrol. In the Summer of

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 7-8, 22.



Figure 30. Beach Patrol, Lake Tachkenitch Near Reedsport, 1942-43.  
Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #317).

1943, as the war waned, patrols were cut back. At the close of WWII, the beach patrols were deactivated entirely.<sup>61</sup>

Starting with 12,000 in September 1939, the ranks of the Coast Guard rose to 25,000 in December 1941, and finished out with 176,000 at the end of the war.<sup>62</sup> Another 50,000 temporary reservists had served in non-combat situations, releasing Coast Guardsmen for duty at sea. The Women's Coast Guard Reserve, whose members were known as SPARS, provided an additional 10,000 for the home front.<sup>63</sup> After August

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<sup>61</sup>Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II*, 45, 53.

<sup>62</sup>Walter C. Capron, *The U.S. Coast Guard*, (New York: Franklin Watts, 1965), 169.

<sup>63</sup>Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II*, 8-10.

1945, the Coast Guard began working quickly to demobilize personnel to pre-war levels. On 1 January 1946, the Coast Guard reverted back to the Treasury Department.<sup>64</sup>

After WWII, the Coast Guard saw the advent of new navigational techniques that made ships less susceptible to running aground. Radio direction finding had been perfected during the war making it easier for ships to plot their positions and stay further from danger. Radar and sonar were refined.

Since a demonstration of the Sikorsky XR-4 helicopter in 1942, the Coast Guard had become interested in the capabilities of the helicopter. The first helicopter humanitarian mission occurred in January 1944, with the first hoist rescue taking place in November 1945.<sup>65</sup> The helicopter was soon perfected and quickly made its way into the Coast Guard's rescue arsenal (Figure 31).

The National Air-Sea Rescue Agency was established in 15 February 1944. This agency was placed under the Coast Guard and started the development of Coast Guard air stations where planes and helicopters were integrated for search and rescue. In Oregon, an air station was built at Astoria and one at North Bend.

The Coast Guard's current role may involve more duties, but their principal task is still to protect people along the nation's coastlines. From wooden boats to steel, from breeches buoy to helicopter, the techniques may have changed over the years, but the mission remains the same: To protect the lives and property of "those that go down to sea."

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<sup>64</sup>Capron, 169-70.

<sup>65</sup>Barrett Thomas Beard, *Wonderful Flying Machines: A History of U.S. Coast Guard Helicopters* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 48-49, 104.



Figure 31. Major General Jackson Transferring from Helicopter to Ship in 1963. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #0091P340-011163).

### CHAPTER III

#### ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the Coast Guard has come full circle. The first federally-funded structures from 1848 were simply gabled storage buildings for a boat and rescue equipment. When the Life-Saving Service solidified in the mid-1870s and began to gain more political clout, Sumner Kimball saw to it that the stations were more pleasing architecturally. Stations took on the architectural style of the day and became highly ornate. When the Life-Saving Service merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to become the Coast Guard in 1915, stations started to become more standard and less decorative. This was due to a shift toward a less detailed architecture in America and also as a cost-saving measure. The Coast Guard has continued to simplify the detailing over the years, and since WWII, has come full circle to the point of creating a purely functional architecture once again.

The first life-saving shelters built were those of the Massachusetts Humane Society. Their first unmanned hut was erected in 1789 on Lovell's Island in Boston Harbor. It was a simple structure, 8' square and 7' tall, outfitted with a wood stove and supplies of food and clothing. A nearby resident was appointed to look after it.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Eugene V. York, "The Architecture of the United States Life-Saving Stations" (Master's thesis, Boston University, 1983), 3.

The first lifeboat station was built by the Massachusetts Humane Society in 1807 at Cohasset, Massachusetts. The unkept station housed a surfboat and rescue equipment and was probably just big enough to house the 30' surfboat. By 1872, the Society had built seventy-six lifeboat stations and eight huts along the Massachusetts coast.<sup>67</sup>

The first federally-funded stations were constructed in 1848 when Congress appropriated \$10,000 for eight boathouses along the New Jersey shore. These unmanned and unkept stations were simple, one-story, gabled boathouses, 16' wide by 28' deep (Figure 32). They were surfaced in shingles and were probably very similar to the lifeboat stations built by the Massachusetts Humane Society.

Through the 1850s, the Revenue Marine continued to oversee the building of stations and extended their coverage to include North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Texas. In 1854, the Great Lakes began to see coverage with 47 lifeboat stations. After this building campaign, new station construction ceased and was not reactivated again until Kimball's arrival in 1871.<sup>68</sup>

With Faunce's inspection report on the condition of the life-saving station network in 1871, new stations were quickly planned to replace old, outmoded, or dilapidated stations, and to fill in the gaps between stations sited too far apart. These new stations were the first to provide for a live-in keeper and crew of six. They were 1-1/2 stories tall, 18' wide by 42' deep, and surfaced entirely with shingles. They were referred to as "red houses" because they were painted entirely red. Instead of a single

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 7, 12-13.



Figure 32. Spermaceti Cove, New Jersey, Boathouse (1848) in 1926. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Stations and Architecture File).

boatroom, the lower story was divided into a large room for the boat and heavy equipment, and a smaller living room in back for the crew. Upstairs was a room for lighter life-saving apparatus and a bunk room for the crew. With the completion of these Red House stations in 1873, the total number of stations was brought to 82.<sup>69</sup>

With the Congressional appropriation of \$100,000 in 1873, a new design was developed for the stations. Twenty-three of what have become known as 1874-type stations were built. These were the first stations to employ a recognizable architectural style (Figure 33). The stations were designed in the mode of the Carpenter Gothic and

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 13-14.





Figure 33. Plum Island Life-Saving Station (Chandler, 1873-74), Massachusetts, an 1874-Type Station. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Stations and Architecture File).

the Stick Style. Influences from the outdated Carpenter Gothic can be seen in the beaded vertical siding and intricate scroll work in the gable. From the Stick Style came the station's gable stick work, brackets and half-timbering to represent the structural elements of the building. Disregarding the detailing, the station design was much the same as the Red House stations from 1871 in size and layout. A lookout platform was added to the roof with an internal ladder to reach it.

A year later, a slightly different plan came out which has become known as the 1875-type station. Again, the main difference between the station plans was in the detailing. The 1875-type station was essentially the same size as the 1874-type stations, 19' wide and 43' deep. It was still 1-1/2 stories tall but it had a steeper roof to provide more useable space on the second floor. The first floor had the same divisions, but the



Figure 34. Cape Arago Life-Saving Station (Chandler, 1878), a Modified 1875-Type Station. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service Photos: Personnel File).

second floor was divided into a large room at the front, a store room at the middle, and two bedrooms in the back. At least 16 of the 1875-type stations were built on the Atlantic and Great Lake coasts. For Oregon, Washington, and California, a modified version was drawn which altered some of the detailing, eliminated the lookout tower, and added dormers. This is the version that was built at Coos Bay, Oregon, for the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station (Figure 34).<sup>70</sup>

The Life-Saving Service built from a standard set of plans, but it was not unusual for builders to make alterations to suit the local materials and conditions. The Cape

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<sup>70</sup>Shanks, *The U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 214-18.

Arago station did not have a lookout tower or platform on its roof but instead substituted a balcony above the boatroom doors. This balcony can be found on the 1875-type clipped gable stations, but the Cape Arago Station did not have a clipped gable. The Cape Arago Life-Saving Station is discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

The 1874-type design has been attributed to Francis Ward Chandler, the first station type connected to a known designer. Chandler was working in the office of Alfred Mullett, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, when Kimball requested plans from Mullett's office in 1874. It is not known unequivocally that Chandler was the designer of the 1874-type station, but has been attributed to Chandler since his name appears on a bill for the plans of 1875-type station and the designs are nearly identical. Chandler had previously worked in the office of Ware and Van Brunt, a firm practicing in the High Victorian Gothic style. He left Washington in 1875 to form the firm of Cabot and Chandler in Boston.<sup>71</sup>

In July 1875, J. Lake Parkinson was appointed to the new position of Assistant Superintendent for Construction within the Life-Saving Service. This allowed for Kimball to directly supervise the designs for his stations. The first design from Parkinson was the 1876-type station. Basically, the station is the same as the 1875-type; however, it has some subtle early Queen Anne influences, such as fish scale shingles and scalloped board ends. Parkinson was also responsible for the Philadelphia Exposition life-saving station, the first exposition station used to promote the Life-Saving Service.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>York, 18-20.

<sup>72</sup>Shanks, *The U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 219-22.

The Superintendent of Construction was responsible for the construction of the stations and for additions and major repairs. Minor repairs were handled by the crewmen themselves. The construction of the stations was performed by contractors in the locality. Advertisements seeking bids were placed in the local newspaper, specifications and plans were sent to interested contractors, proposals were received, and contracts were awarded. The Superintendent of Construction then periodically inspected the station as building progressed.<sup>73</sup>

Parkinson designed five stations of which multiple copies were built and several one-of-a-kind stations before his final design, the 1882-type station. His designs did not vary much from the 1876-type station, though his Lake Superior-type station offered a cross plan, the first station to break from the rectangular mold.<sup>74</sup> All were done in a mix of Gothic and Stick styles. The 1882-type station featured large dormers on each side and the first use of an enclosed watch tower.

Several high-style stations were designed on commission after the 1882-type station by prominent, independent architects. Paul J. Pelz designed what in 1885 can be only described as passé High Victorian Gothic meets Queen Anne at Deal, New Jersey (Figure 35). This design can be considered the pinnacle of ornateness in Life-Saving Service architecture. Its sister station at Bay Head was featured in the 15 September 1885 issue of *American Architecture and Building News*.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 222-24.

<sup>74</sup>York, 32.

<sup>75</sup>Shanks, *The U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 224-25.



Figure 35. Deal Life-Saving Station (Pelz, 1882-83) in New Jersey. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Stations and Architecture File).

John G. Pelton of San Francisco designed a Queen Anne residence for the Golden Gate Park station in 1884 that was repeated at Willapa Bay Station in Washington. These two residences can be considered the only true Queen Anne structures built by the Life-Saving Service. Even the New York firm of McKim, Mead and White participated and designed a masonry station for Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island, in 1888. It is unknown why firms of such stature designed one-of-a-kind stations in the period between Parkinson's departure and the arrival of the next Superintendent of Construction. However, the locations of the stations in wealthy resort areas might have been the reason for the higher profile designs. Kimball himself wrote, "Those [stations] built later are more comely in appearance, while a few, located conspicuously at popular seaside

resorts, make some pretensions to architectural taste.”<sup>76</sup> The desire to break away from the tired Gothic and Stick styles might have played a role, too.

In 1885, Albert Buruley Bibb was working in the Office of Construction. He was given the task of expanding 29 of the old Red House stations. Using the current Shingle style as his mode of choice, he added a lean-to to either side of the rectangular station and extended the roof down over the additions in one unbroken pitch. He then covered all of the work in shingles. The new building now hunkered down in the dunes essentially converting a tall, vertical building into a visually shorter, horizontal structure. Bibb successfully moved the Life-Saving Service away from the Gothic verticality of the past.

Bibb’s first new station design is referred to as a Bibb #2. At least 22 were built between 1887 and 1892 for the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. The design departed dramatically from the previous designs of Parkinson, creating what is essentially a 1-1/2 story bungalow with a boatroom attached like a garage. This was the first station to emphasize the living quarters over the boatroom. The gables were clad in shingles while the first floor had horizontal siding. Capping the boatroom was an enclosed lookout. The style represents an early, strong disassociation from the Gothic style.

Bibb went on to design a total of four station plans and two one-of-a-kind stations. On the West Coast, he is best remembered for designing the Fort Point-type and Marquette-type stations. The design names come from the first location at which the station was built. Only three Fort Point-type stations were built, but all were constructed

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<sup>76</sup>Kimball, 8.

on the Pacific Coast, one of which was at Point Adams (1889) at Hammond, Oregon. The Fort Point-type was the first station to have a detached boathouse. The evolution allowed the boathouse to be placed in a location convenient to launching a boat while the living quarters or station house could be placed in a more protected location. Having the rescue apparatus in its own building also allowed for increased ventilation to dry out the equipment.

The Fort Point-type station house was a symmetrically-planned, gambrel-roofed structure with three prominent dormers. This station type is described thoroughly in Chapter V. The Fort Point-type marked a return to the symmetrical building seen exclusively before Bibb's arrival. In its symmetry, gambrel roof and front door detailing, the style is nodding to the Colonial Revival.

Bibb's last design was the Marquette-type station of which 13 were known to be built. Four of these were built in Oregon, making it the most common Life-Saving Service station type on the Oregon Coast (Figure 36). The Marquette-type was also the first foray into a standard, nationwide architecture, as it was used on the Pacific, Atlantic, and the Great Lakes. Like the Fort Point-type station, the Marquette-type station plan separated the rescue equipment from the living quarters. This type was particularly well-suited for the Oregon Coast where lifeboats were launched directly into the water. The dwelling or station house was symmetrical and rectangular in plan, 50' wide by 30' deep. It was 1-1/2 stories tall and built on wooden piles. The dwelling was clad in horizontal drop siding with wood shingles in the gables. Two large, gabled dormers marked the

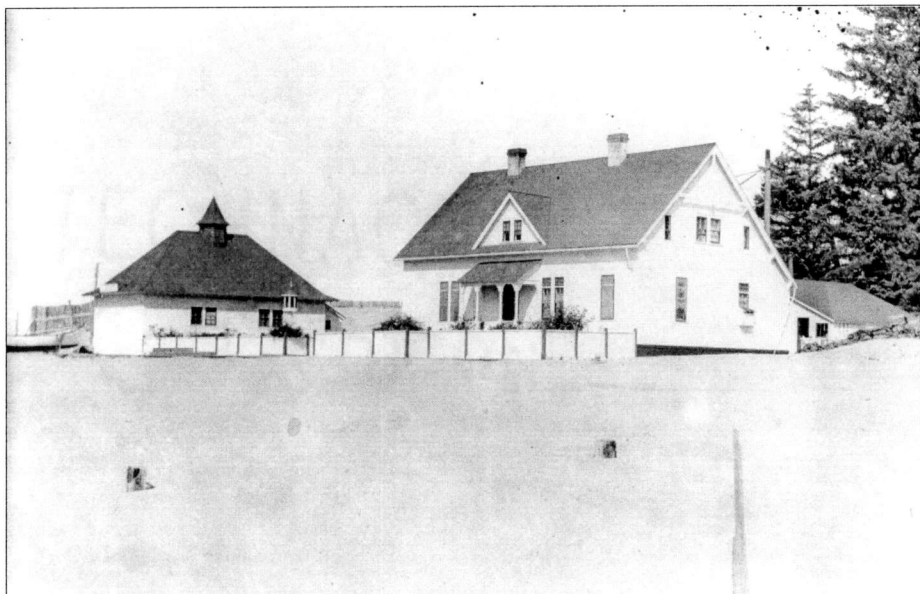


Figure 36. Marquette-Type Dwelling and Fort Point-Type Boathouse at Umpqua River Life-Saving Station (Bibb, 1890) in 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Umpqua River File).

front and rear porches. The roof was surfaced with wood shingles. A simple king post in the gable ends was the only elaboration.

The Marquette-type station house was divided by a central hallway and stair with the right half reserved for the keeper and the left half for the crew (Figure 37). On the main floor, the keeper's living room, office, kitchen and pantry were to the right. On the left were the crew's quarters and mess room. Upstairs, the right half contained the bedrooms for the keeper and his family. On the left was the crew's locker room. There was no bathroom within the station house, though there was a bath house included on the grounds. At the Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station, the crew's quarters became the crew's kitchen, and the crew's locker room became their quarters. It must be kept in mind that



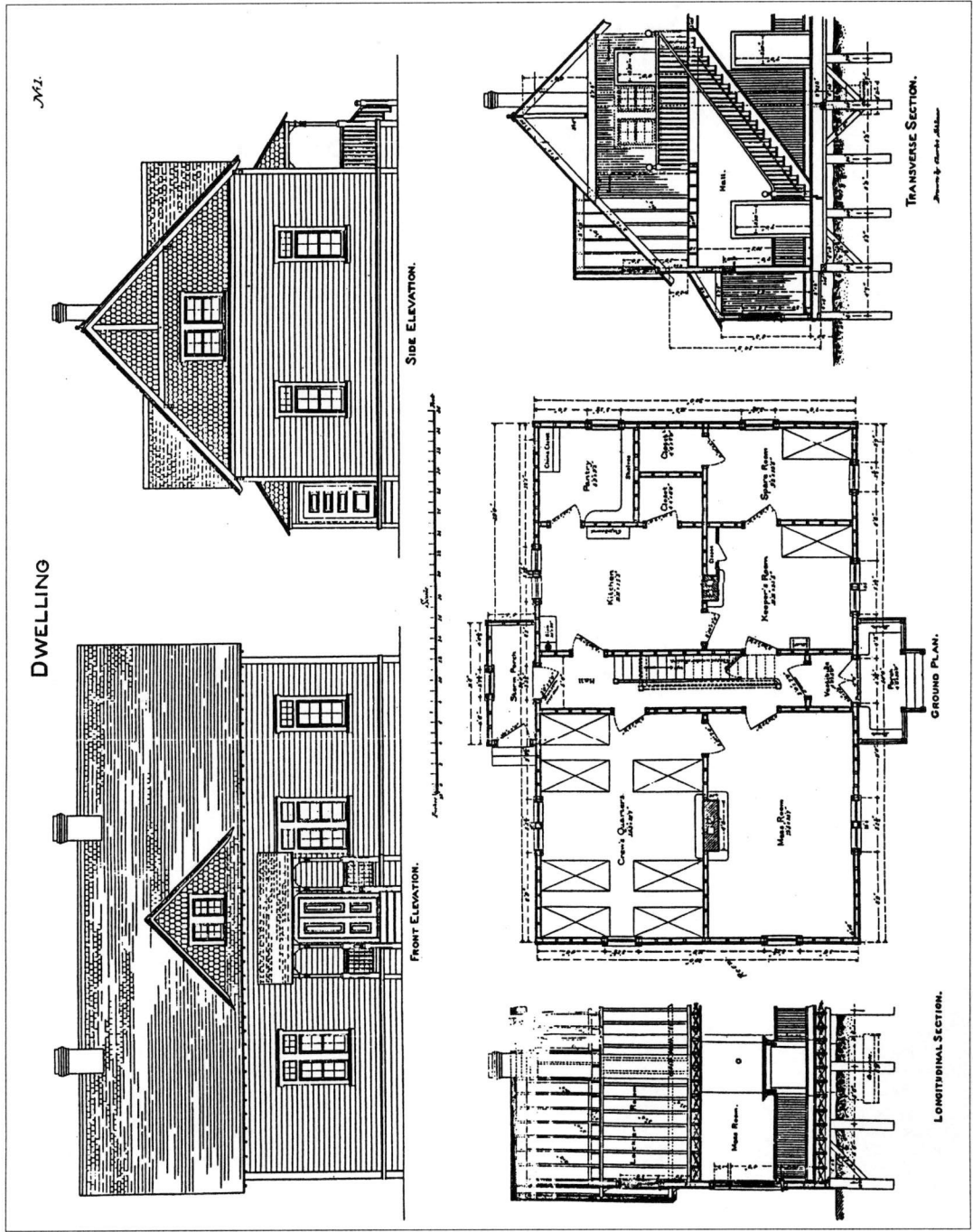


Figure 37. Marquette-Type Dwelling Plans. Source: Wick York.

the stations were often altered to suit the keeper's needs and that no two stations were identical, only similar.

The Marquette-type station continued the new concept of separating the boathouse from the living quarters. All but two of the Marquette stations were built on the Great Lakes and Pacific Coast, suggesting that an integrated boathouse was preferred only on the East Coast. The standard Fort Point-type boathouse plan was recycled and used at all of the Marquette-type stations in Oregon. The boathouse was one story and rectangular in plan, 24' wide by 40' deep (Figure 38). The structure was built on piles and capped by a hip roof. The distinctive feature of a Fort Point boathouse was its "witch's hat" ventilator named for its trademark shape. Allowing in light and increasing the ventilation of the area were two sets of paired, double-hung windows on either side of the boathouse. Paired double doors on the front each led to a bay on the inside, one bay containing a surfboat and the other a lifeboat. The rafters were used to hang equipment such as the lifecar and breeches buoy. A small workbench was situated at the back next to the rear doors. With the beach apparatus cart parked in the bay with the surfboat, the space was fairly cramped (Figure 39).

Bibb left the Service and was succeeded by George Russell Tolman in 1891. Tolman continued with Bibb's Shingle style and produced what has become known as the Quonochontaug-type station in 1892. This plan returned to the concept of combining the boathouse and dwelling into one unit. Twenty-one of these stations were built, though only on the East Coast, lending credence to the idea that the East Coast preferred

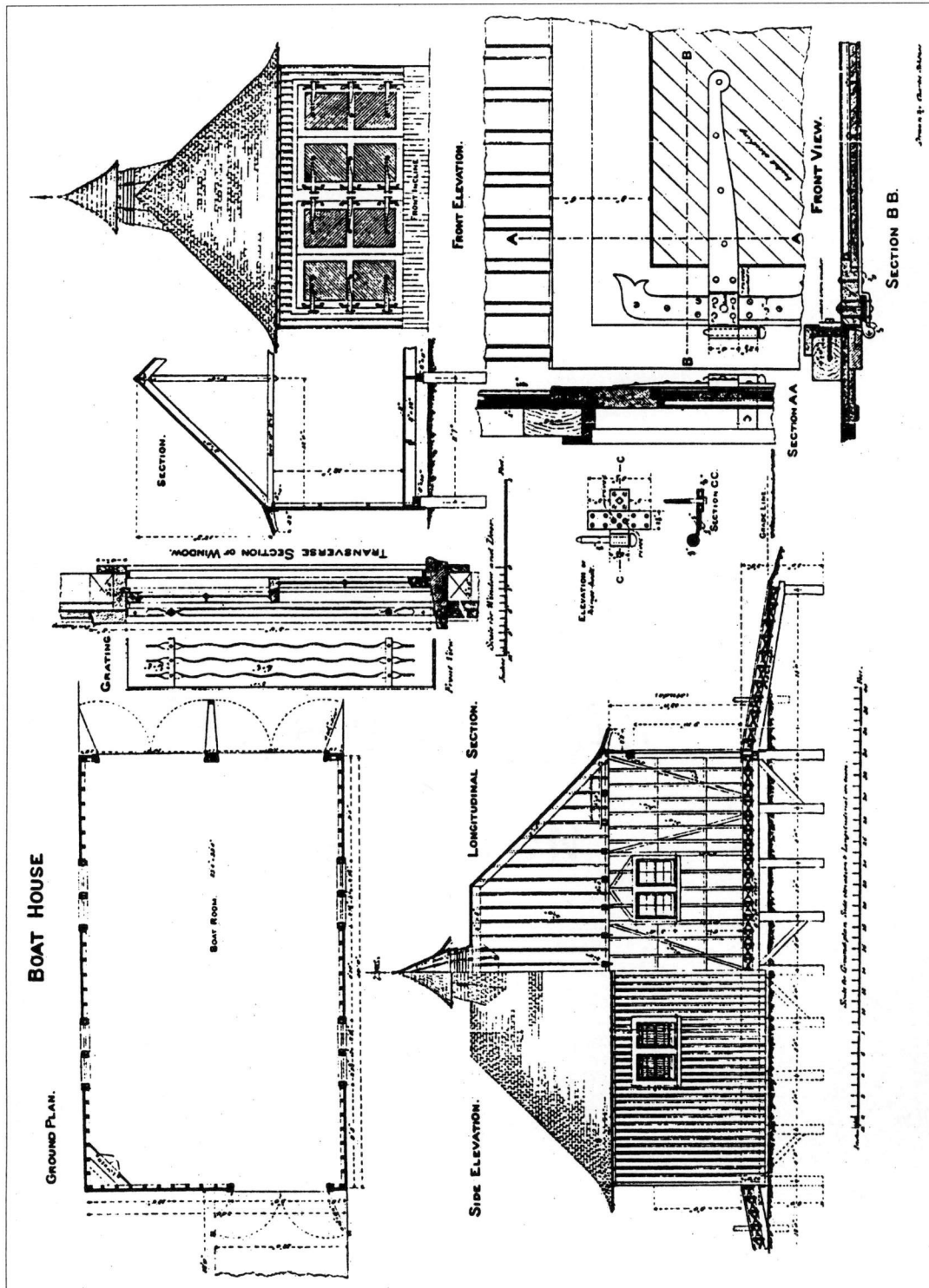


Figure 38. Fort Point-Type Boathouse Plans. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#3-451).

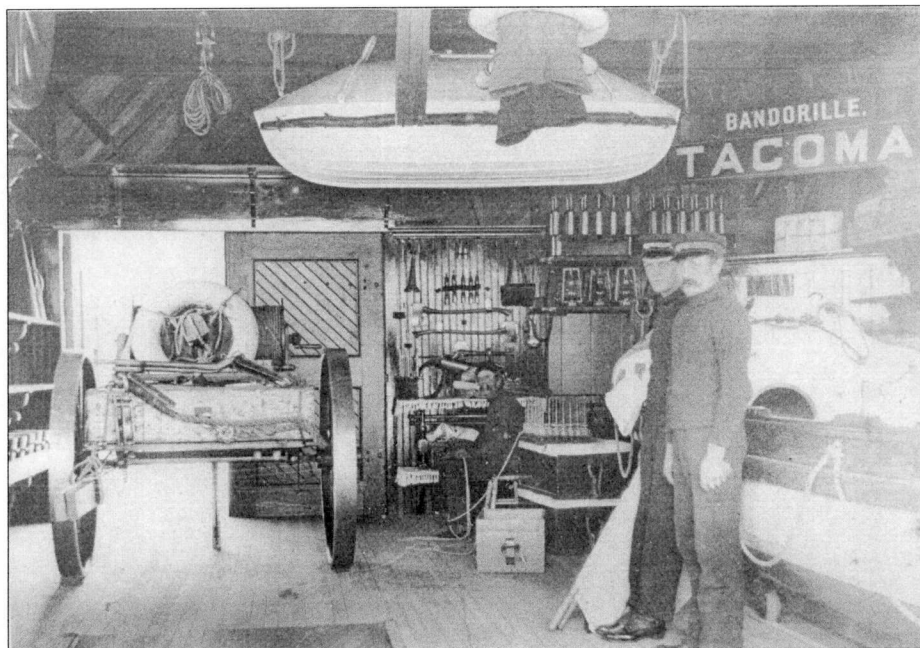


Figure 39. Boathouse Interior, Umpqua River Life-Saving Station, Circa 1900. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #355).

combined buildings and the Great Lakes and Pacific Coast liked their dwellings separate from the rescue boats.

Tolman continued to design in the Shingle style, producing two more designs, the Niagara-type and the Duluth-type, and a sole one-of-a-kind station. The Niagara was similar to the Quonochontaug, but the Duluth departed from the norm and provided a large lookout tower (Figure 40). At least 54 of Tolman's station designs were built, plus a modified version of his Quonochontaug plan was constructed for the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893.

Victor Mendleheff was Tolman's successor in 1898. Mendleheff was the most prolific of the Life-Saving Service architects, producing 13 known designs and working



Figure 40. Avalon Life-Saving Station (Tolman, 1894) in New Jersey. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Stations and Architecture File).

for the Service the longest.<sup>77</sup> Mendleheff started out by designing the Petersons Point-type station, one of which was built on Tillamook Bay, Oregon, at Barview. The station was a gambrel-roof structure, like the Fort Point-type station, but it was much squatter and less symmetrical with an integral porch (Figure 41). It had three dormers, again like the Fort Point-type, but the center one was three-sided to form a diminutive lookout tower. The 1-1/2 story station was sheathed in shingles. Detailing was Colonial Revival with Tuscan columns and lunette windows in the gables. The boathouse was detached. Chapter IX describes the Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station in detail.

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<sup>77</sup>Shanks, *The U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 237.



Figure 41. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station (Mendleheff, 1908) at Barview, Oregon, Circa 1913. Source: Author's Collection.

Mendleheff continued the Colonial Revival detailing and shingle surfaces through the rest of his 13 designs. He switched to a gable roof but continued with the dormers. The miniature tower of the Petersons Point-type station ballooned to a full-scale tower similar to the Duluth-type stations of Tolman. His stations over the next 17 years varied in form somewhat but retained the same 1-1/2 story massing with tower.

Mendleheff's last design for the Life-Saving Service was the Chatham-type station in 1914. The station marked a sudden departure from the one-and-one-half story stations that had been the hallmark of the Life-Saving Service and brought the station to a full two stories in height. This departure aligns with the decade by decade trend of giving the crew more livable space. The Chatham-type was used on both East and West Coasts marking the first time since the Marquette-type stations of a standard, nationwide



architecture. The two-story Chatham design cast a new mold that was to dominate Coast Guard architecture through the 1940s.

At least 30 of the Chatham-type stations were built, one of which was the Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station (1917) at Florence, Oregon. The station house was symmetrical, 44' wide and 24' deep, clad in shingles, with a hipped gable roof (Figure 42). The roof was frequently surmounted by an integrated lookout tower harkening back to the designs of Chandler in the mid-1870s. The boathouse was detached and enlarged to accommodate the evolution to the larger motor lifeboats and their associated equipment. The Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station is described thoroughly in Chapter X.

On 28 January 1915, the Life-Saving Service merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to form the Coast Guard. An all-time high of 279 stations were active at the changeover. It is believed that Mendleheff continued on as architect through the transition period to the Coast Guard.<sup>78</sup> Variations on the Chatham-type station continued to be built through the 1930s.<sup>79</sup> In 1936, the Port Orford Lifeboat Station was built on a variant of the Chatham plans (Figure 43). The station featured a simpler hipped roof, no cupola, and a dormer on the front and back of the building. It also featured a wider front porch. The Port Orford Lifeboat Station is described in detail in Chapter XI.

The Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station (1917) and the Port Orford Lifeboat Station (1936) represent the two ends of the evolution of the Chatham-type station. From the mid-1930s through World War II, a station type known as the Roosevelt-type station,

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>79</sup>Wick York, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 8 April 2000.



Figure 42. Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station (Mendleheff, 1917) at Florence, Oregon. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Siuslaw River File).



Figure 43. Port Orford Lifeboat Station (1934), Station House, in 1996. Source: Author.



dubbed for Franklin D. Roosevelt's tenure as President, was developed by the Coast Guard. Some of these stations were built with funds from Roosevelt's New Deal programs, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Public Works Administration (PWA).<sup>80</sup>

The Roosevelt-type station is a direct descendent of the Chatham-type. Under a skin of Colonial Revival detailing, the Roosevelt-type station is very similar to the Chatham-type. Unlike the balanced facade of the Chatham-type, the front elevation of the Roosevelt-type station was completely symmetrical, right down to the two, one-story wings added to both sides of the building. Colonial Revival detailing was represented by multi-pane windows flanked by operable shutters, large corner boards with capitals, Tuscan columns, eave returns, a water table with cap, and metal railings in Classical motifs. Even the restricted roof of the entry porch was rimmed with a balustrade. It was always painted white with green shutters and a red roof.

The hipped roof of the Chatham was replaced with a gable roof, and like the Chatham, the Roosevelt-type station was frequently topped with a lookout tower. Six small dormers, with arched windows, pierced the attic providing even more livable space. Under the building was a full basement used for mechanical systems and storage. The Roosevelt-type station completed the evolutionary trend of increasing livable space for the crew. The building was a commodious 80' wide and 32' deep, designed to sleep 17

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<sup>80</sup>Dorothy S. Wilkinson, "Facts Available for Preservation and Study of U.S. Coast Guard mid-1930's era Roosevelt-type Lifeboat Stations," *Wreck & Rescue* 12 (Fall 1999): 24.

but able to accommodate more. The station was the apex of square footage with the most livable space of any of the pre-WWII standard station designs.

A total of four Roosevelt-type stations were built in Oregon, making it as prolific in Oregon as the Marquette-type of the Life-Saving Service era. At Point Adams, Oregon, there is an early Roosevelt-type station from 1938 (Figure 44). Generally, the construction dates for the Roosevelt-type stations fall within the Franklin Roosevelt's presidency (1933-45). However, at Yaquina Bay, Oregon, the station was built in 1949. The Yaquina Bay Lifeboat Station is considered one of the last Roosevelt-type stations in the nation.<sup>81</sup>

World War II expanded the number of Coast Guard structures exponentially and hurriedly. This provides a convenient cutoff date for this thesis, as properties underwent expansion in a functional, wartime state, contrasting with the much more thoughtful and detailed designs prior to WWII. Table 1 gives an overview of the stations in Oregon designed before this period of expansion. After WWII, station development continued with the purely functional designs not seen since the Red Houses of 1871-72. Cost of construction and the wave of International Modernism held the elaboration and ornamentation of the designs in check. There has been a modest resurgence of the Roosevelt-type stations with the construction of several simplified versions in the South in an attempt to replicate the Colonial Revival style not seen since WWII.<sup>82</sup> However, there is and never will be a substitute for the original stations.

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<sup>81</sup>Ralph Shanks, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 8 May 2000.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.



Figure 44. Point Adams Lifeboat Station (1939), Station House, in 1997. Source: Author.

Table 1. Each Oregon Station by Date Activated with Year Constructed and Architectural Style.

<b>Station</b>	<b>When Station Activated</b>	<b>Year Construction Began</b>	<b>Architectural Style</b>
Cape Arago LBS	January 1879	1878	Modified 1875-Type
Point Adams LSS	December 1889	1889	Fort Point
Coquille River LSS	Early 1891	1890	Marquette
Coos Bay LSS	August 1891	1890	Marquette
Umpqua River LSS	September 1891	1890	Marquette
Yaquina Bay LSS	April 1896	1895	Marquette
Yaquina Bay LSS	August 1906	1871	Lighthouse
Tillamook Bay LSS	May 1908	1907	Petersons Point
Coos Bay LBS	September 1916	1915	One-of-a-Kind
Siuslaw River LBS	March 1918	1917	Chatham
Yaquina Bay LBS	April 1932	1931	One-of-a-Kind
Port Orford LBS	July 1934	1933	Chatham
Point Adams LBS	April 1939	1938	Roosevelt
Umpqua River LBS	Late 1939	1939	Roosevelt
Coquille River LBS	January 1940	1939	One-of-a-Kind
Tillamook Bay LBS	January 1943	1942	Roosevelt
Yaquina Bay LBS	December 1949	1949	Roosevelt

## CHAPTER IV

### COOS BAY STATIONS

Mariners consider Coos Bay the best natural harbor between San Francisco and Puget Sound, and today, it is the world's largest forest-products shipping port.<sup>83</sup> The bay has forged the history of the region and was the most important factor in the development of the area. Coos Bay is located two-thirds of the way down the Oregon Coast and is the economic focus for the towns of Coos Bay (formerly Marshfield), North Bend, and Empire (Figure 45).

There have been three station locations throughout the history of water rescue on Coos Bay. The first station was situated at Gregory Point two miles southwest of the entrance to Coos Bay. The station was activated in 1879 and was the first life-saving station on the Oregon Coast. In 1891, the station was abandoned for a far more hospitable location just inside the entrance to Coos Bay at North Spit. In 1916, the station was moved for the third and final time to the south side of the Coos Bay and the harbor town of Charleston. The station buildings at Charleston still stand and are being used today by the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, a program of the University of Oregon.

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<sup>83</sup>State of Oregon, *1991-92 Oregon Blue Book* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Printing, 1991), 340.

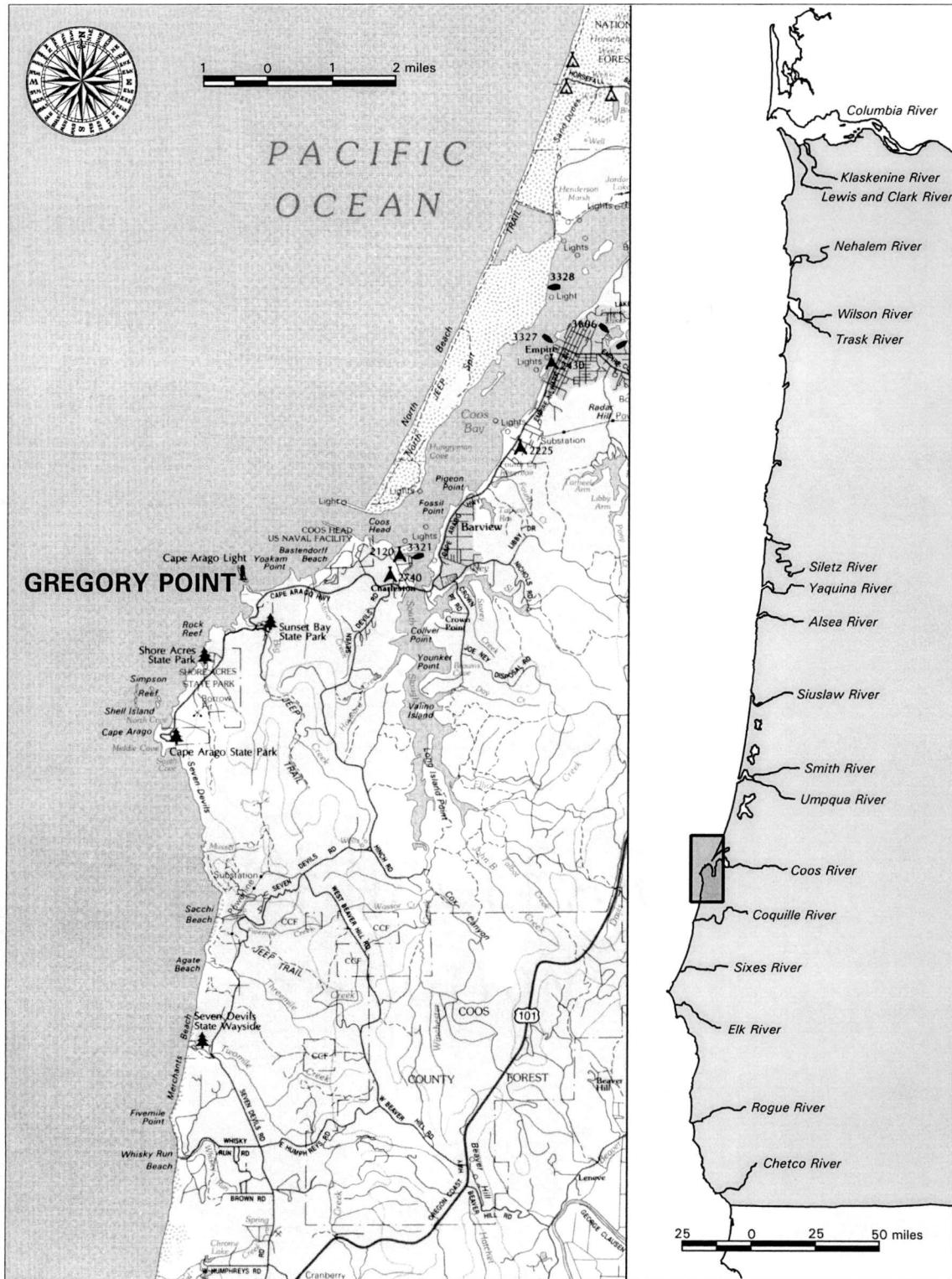


Figure 45. Location of Gregory Point, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

### Cape Arago Life-Saving Station

The first life-saving station built on the Oregon Coast was the erroneously named Cape Arago Life-Saving Station, as Cape Arago itself was actually another two miles southwest of the station location (Figure 46). However, it was built next door to the Cape Arago Lighthouse (1866) so it took on the misnomer. The Cape Arago Station was one of the most impractically sited life-saving stations erected on the Oregon Coast. It was built in late-1878 on pilings in a small cove on Lighthouse Island (Figure 47). At this point in time, there were no permanent life-saving crews, just a full-time keeper. If there was a need to perform some kind of water rescue activity, the keeper would first have to be informed of the wreck, as the station was not in a location from which to watch for trouble. The keeper would then have to travel to the nearby town of Empire to find volunteers. He would round up volunteers and then bring them back to the life-saving station to launch the boat with the volunteer crew. The *Coos Bay News* chided the situation sarcastically on 22 January 1879, “No fear of the loss of life on our bar now . . . Mr. Lobree needn’t put on that life preserver nor say those prayers. Hereafter he can just quietly throw himself into the arms of the man on shore.”

Fortunately, it was a rare day when rescue operations were mounted from the Cape Arago Station. Entire years went by without any rescues. The logbooks are generally filled day after day with nothing more than solitary notes such as, “Had the



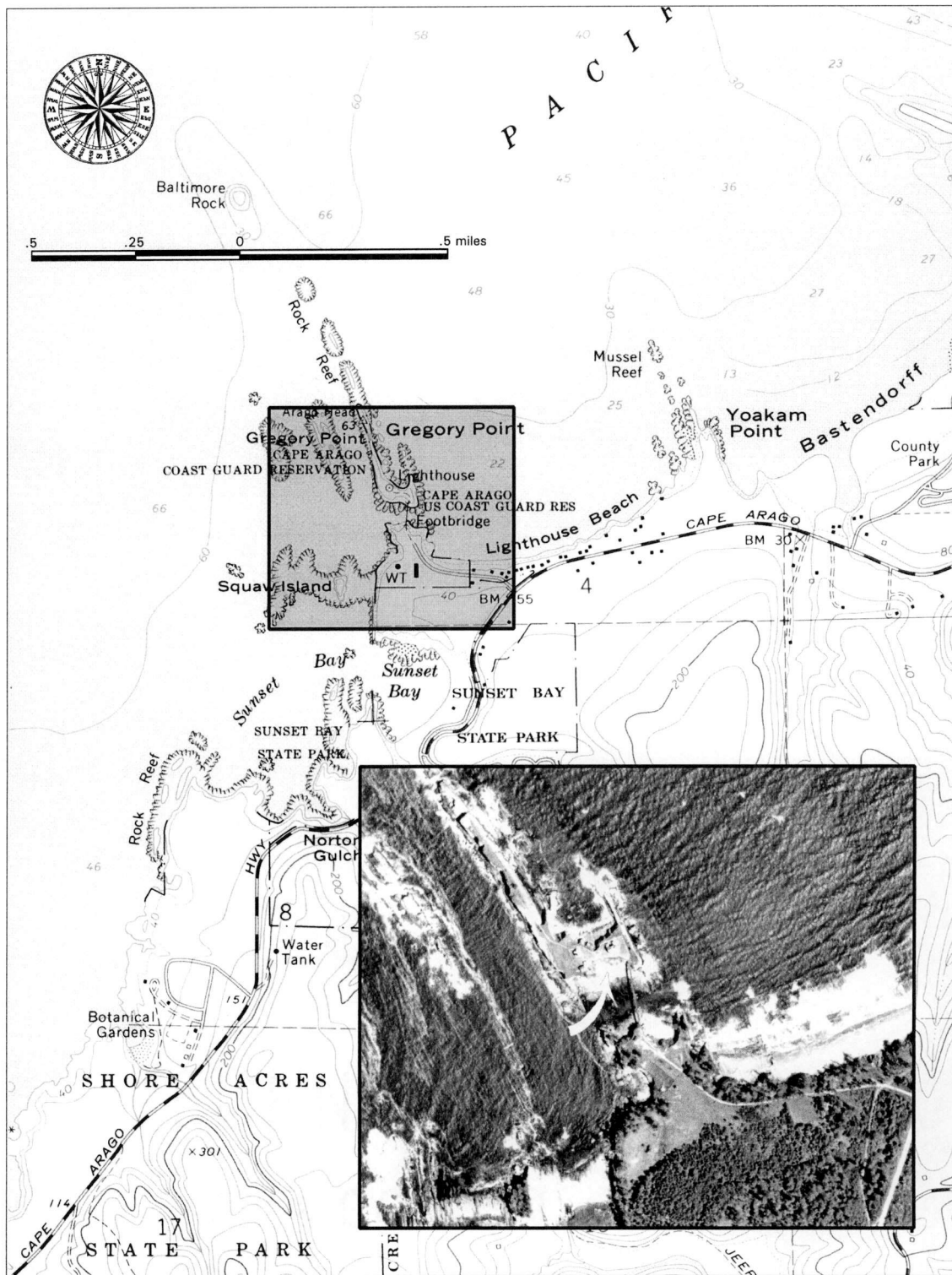


Figure 46. Aerial Photo of the Cape Arago Station Area in 1939 Superimposed Over the Cape Arago, Oregon, USGS Map (1973 Revision).



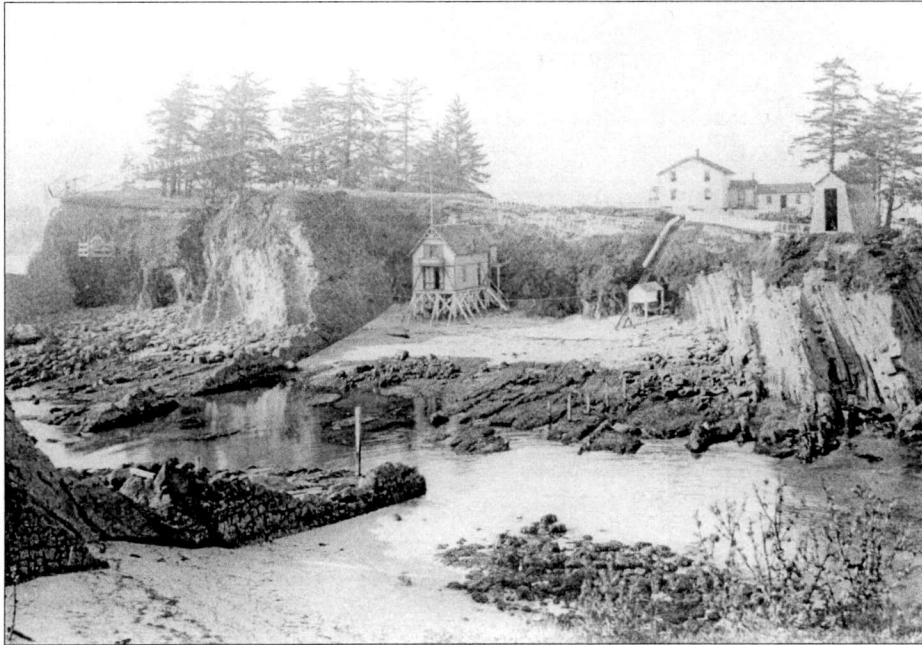


Figure 47. Cape Arago Station, 1885. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service Photos: Personnel File).

boathouse open for ventilation” and “Cleaned House.”<sup>84</sup> Later keepers made all-day trips on an average of once a week for “mail and supplies.” An occasional steamer or schooner would pass by and the keeper would make note of it. On average, two or three ships would pass by the station on any given day during the history of the Cape Arago Station. A busy day would see ten schooners, two steamers and a bark sailing into and out of Coos Bay.<sup>85</sup>

This lack of excitement was not the luxury many keepers sought. In fact, the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station, later to become the Coos Bay Life-Saving Station, had

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<sup>84</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, “Logbooks of the Life-Saving Service,” Cape Arago Life-Saving Station, National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, 1884-1902.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 31 January 1884.

14 keepers in 37 years, the highest turnover rate on the West Coast. Of those fourteen, four transferred to other stations and ten simply resigned. Isolation probably played the biggest factor at Cape Arago, but other common reasons would be low pay, no retirement plan, and health reasons.<sup>86</sup>

The design for the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station came from Francis Ward Chandler and is known as a Modified 1875-type station. At least 16 of the 1875-type stations were built on the Atlantic and Great Lake coasts. For Oregon, Washington and California, a modified version was drawn which altered some of the detailing and eliminated the lookout tower, substituting a dormer instead. This is the version that was built at Cape Arago.<sup>87</sup>

The 1875-type station was 19' wide, 43' deep and 1-1/2 stories tall. It was capped by a gable roof. The first floor was essentially a boatroom with a living room at the rear. It had an internal stair located at the back of the boatroom which led to a second floor divided into two rear rooms, a store room at the middle, and a large room at the front. A tall flag pole rose from its front gable above the boatroom doors.

As mentioned previously, the Cape Arago Station was a modified version of the 1875-type. In fact it had modifications unseen at any other life-saving station (Figure 48). The Life-Saving Service did build from a standard set of plans, but it was not unusual for builders to make alterations to suit the local materials and conditions. Cape Arago did not have a lookout tower or platform on its roof but instead substituted a

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<sup>86</sup>Noble, *That Others Might Live*, 64-65.

<sup>87</sup>Shanks, *The U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 214-18.



Figure 48. Detail of Cape Arago Station, 1885.  
 Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service Photos: Personnel File).

balcony above the boathroom doors. This balcony can be found on the 1875-type clipped gable stations, but the Cape Arago Station did not have a clipped gable. To access the balcony, there was a door flanked by two windows. The 1875-type stations had the window but no door; the 1875-type clipped gable had the door but no windows; the Cape Arago Station had both the windows and the door.

The Cape Arago Station's gable stick work was simplified to a collar brace and king post pattern. Its diagonal bracing at the corner is unlike other stations in that they usually used either a diamond pattern or an X pattern; Cape Arago used a straight diagonal board. This detailing was the same on the Shoalwater Bay Life-Saving Station

and the Neah Bay Life-Saving Station, both built in 1877 in the Washington Territory, and probably provided the plans for the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station. Local contractors were found for the construction of the Shoalwater Bay and Neah Bay stations; however, a bid low enough could not be obtained for the Cape Arago station so the federal government was forced to build the station.<sup>88</sup>

Where the Cape Arago station diverged from all other stations was that the entire building was raised on pilings to place the boatroom above the high water line. The stilts were in turn braced by 8" by 8" diagonal braces 15' long.<sup>89</sup> It is believed all other 1875-type stations had a ramp from their boatroom; Cape Arago had none. Instead the surfboat was pulled into slings under the station building and hoisted up into the boatroom.<sup>90</sup>

One more peculiarity about the Cape Arago station was its location below a cliff in a cove. The local builder constructed a flight of stairs from the top of the cliff down to a small room off the back of the second floor, something not seen at other stations. This provided access directly to the second floor from the outside. There was also a flight of stairs leading from the living room down to the beach of the cove. Both of these stairs are later additions not built during the initial construction phase.

Since the keeper did not mount regular beach patrols, there was little to do other than station maintenance and making repairs after storms. Large repair or construction

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<sup>88</sup>George Richard Reynolds, "The United States Coast Guard in the Northwest: 1854-1900" (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1968), 128.

<sup>89</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, "Logbooks of the Life-Saving Service," Cape Arago Life-Saving Station, 30 November 1885.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 31 July 1886.

projects were contracted out, but the keeper was responsible for maintenance. Keeper Abbott recorded in the 1884 logbook his work in May and June painting the station. He whitewashed the “foundation,” rails and steps for three days; he “coal tarred” the lower frame for a day; he painted the roof for three days; and he painted the building itself for seven days.<sup>91</sup>

The logbooks are made up of a series of one-page, preprinted forms. The keeper was responsible for recording weather conditions throughout the day, beach patrols, the number of ships that passed, and general remarks. Two additional questions on the form were related to maintenance: “Is the house thoroughly clean?” and “Is the house in good repair?” Usually these questions receive a ubiquitous, “Yes;” however, after storms the question about good repair often received a “No.” The station’s location on the cove made it susceptible to pounding surf and logs carried in that surf.

On 10 January 1885, Keeper Abbott determined that the station was not in good condition and reported that, “The veranda is rotten all through, wetting and staining the front of the building, the floor is of tounge[d] [sic] and grooved lumber and it is impossible to make it tight with putty or with caulking, a new one is badly needed, and should be covered with either zinc or canvas painted.” This was one of the few repairs made at the station during its life by a contractor and it cost \$55.00.<sup>92</sup>

Note the aerial car faintly visible on the left edge of the photo in Figure 47. The car ran out from the mainland to Lighthouse Island where the lighthouse and life-saving

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., May-June 1884.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 12 May 1885.

station were built. There was a report by Keeper Abbott that on 24 November 1885, “a tremendous sea . . . carried away the Bridge that connected the Island with the mainland also the Ladders at both ends of the Bridge together with the Light Keepers Boat.”<sup>93</sup>

There is a notation on 26 November that Keeper Abbott “effected communication with mainland by means of rigging the Beach Apparatus. . . .” This is likely the aerial car visible in the photo as the photo dates to 1885. A new bridge was built, but it was carried away by “heavy surf” in November 1888.<sup>94</sup> Maintenance on the structure was such a headache, keepers referred to it as the “Bridge of Sighs.”<sup>95</sup> The bridge that stands today (Figure 49) linking the mainland to Lighthouse Island is similar but not identical in appearance to the one in the circa 1910 photo (Figure 50). Undoubtedly, the bridge across the channel has been reconstructed several times.

On 24 June 1885, a deed was received by the Keeper William Abbott for a piece of land on South Slough as a location for an auxiliary boathouse.<sup>96</sup> Abbott reports in the 1885 logbook that on 17 August, the contractor had finished a boathouse on South Slough. Unfortunately, the 24 November storm that washed away the bridge also knocked the boathouse over onto its side; however, the rescue boats were saved. The boathouse was salvaged, rebuilt, and continued to be used at South Slough.

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 24 November 1885.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 22 November 1888.

<sup>95</sup>James A. Gibbs, *Oregon's Seacoast Lighthouses: An Oregon Documentary*, Bert Webber, editor (Medford, OR: Webb Research Group, 1992), 66-67.

<sup>96</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, “Logbooks of the Life-Saving Service,” Cape Arago Life-Saving Station, 24 June 1885.



Figure 49. Bridge to Lighthouse Island, 1999. Source: Author.

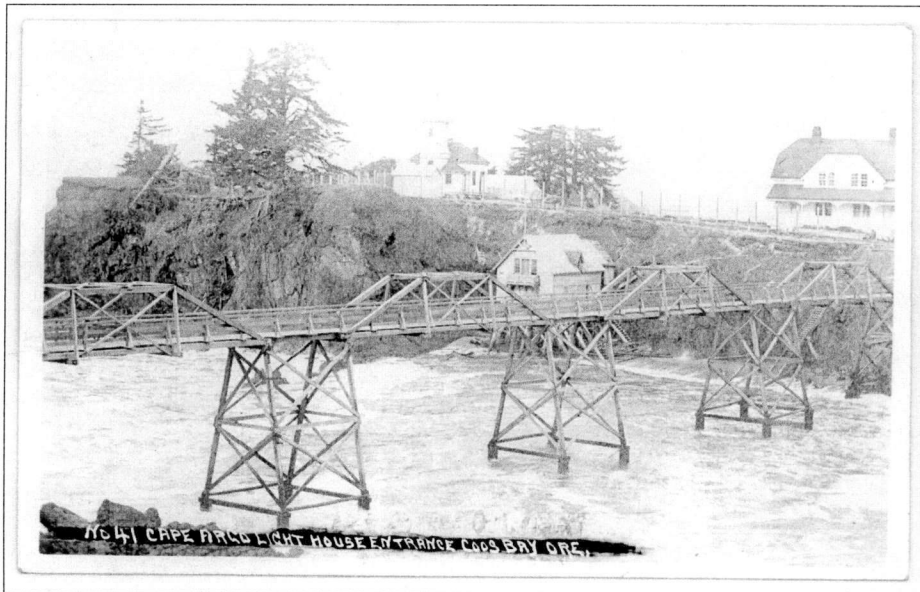


Figure 50. Bridge to Lighthouse Island, Circa 1910. Source: Author's Collection.



Figure 51. Location of Former Cape Arago Station, 1999. Source: Author.

The Cape Arago Life-Saving Station was too small to house a crew and it was poorly sited; therefore, the location was abandoned in 1891. The station building continued to show up in the foreground of pictures of the Cape Arago Lighthouse. In the circa 1910 photo (Figure 50), the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station is still there; however, it is badly deteriorated and surrounded by logs. Without maintenance to the structure, the station was doomed to the elements (Figure 51).

#### Cape Arago Life-Saving Station at North Spit

The U.S. Life-Saving Service moved the operations of the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station from Lighthouse Island to the North Spit of Coos Bay in July 1891. As early as September 1890, Keeper Joseph Hodgson had been assisting in locating a site for



a new station.<sup>97</sup> According to the daily logbooks, by March 1891, a building contractor was involved in the project. Keeper Hodgson moved the boats and gear on 8 July 1891, to the new station on North Spit. On 1 August 1891, Hodgson “shipped” a crew of eight surfmen, and the station began patrols for the first time in its history. Keeper Hodgson oversaw the transition from a poorly located station with no crew to an infinitely better situated station with a full compliment of eight paid surfmen.

Even though the new station at North Spit was even further away from the land form known as Cape Arago (Figure 52), the station retained the original Cape Arago name and continued to be documented as the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station until mid-1902 when it became known as the Coos Bay Life-Saving Station.<sup>98</sup> Keeper Hodgson helped in siting the station approximately two miles from the entrance to Coos Bay on the north edge of the bay (Figure 53). The station house was placed on a small rise just off Hungryman Cove (Figure 54).

The move to the new location was a wise one. The life-savers found themselves in a much better position from which to launch rescues. On 20 October 1896, the steamer *Arago* ran aground on the rocks of the north jetty at the mouth of Coos Bay. Only 19 of the 32 passengers and sailors survived that morning; however, the rescue of the 19 was roundly praised. Captain Reed of the *Arago* lived to write the U.S.L.S.S. superintendent of the 12th District: “I must thank you for the lives of all of us that were rescued by the United States life-saving crew, for I believe it was through your efforts

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 8 September 1890.

<sup>98</sup>The *Annual Reports* continued to use the Cape Arago name for the station until the 1902-03 season when it was changed to the Coos Bay Life-Saving Station.

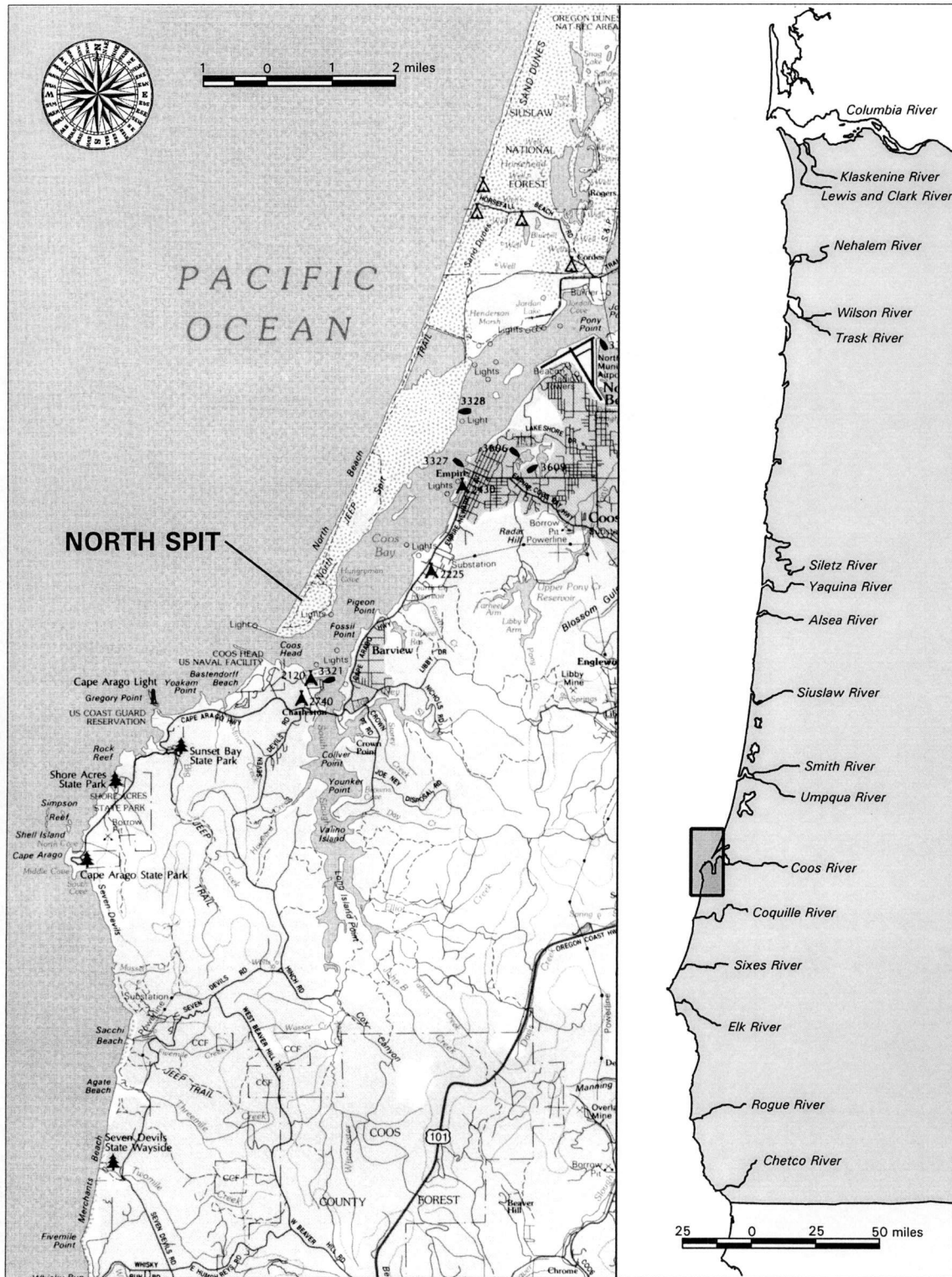


Figure 52. Location of North Spit on Coos Bay, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

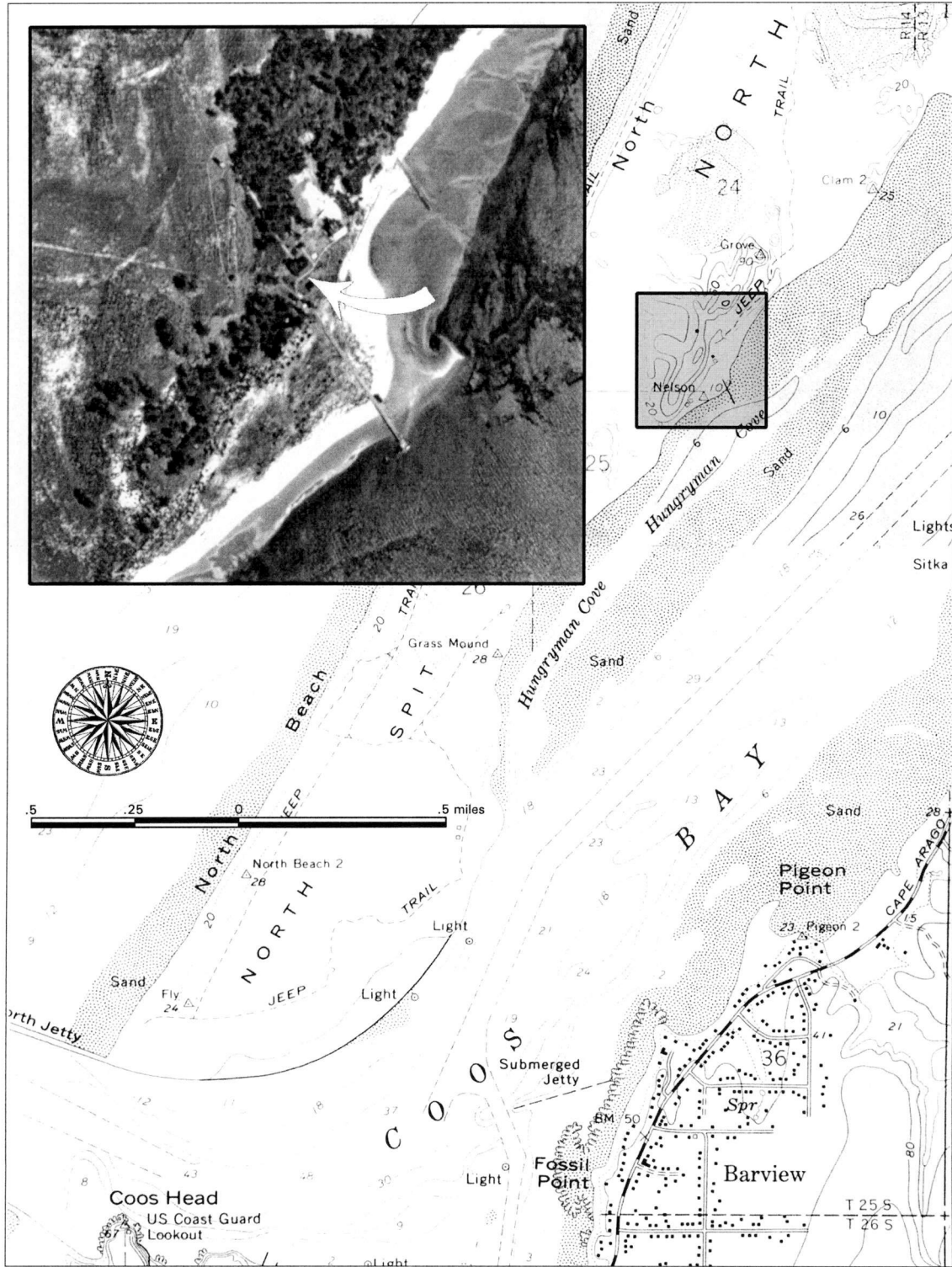


Figure 53. Aerial Photo of the Cape Arago Station Area on North Spit in 1939 Superimposed Over the Empire, Oregon, USGS Map (1970 Revision).



Figure 54. Coos Bay Life-Saving Station at North Spit, circa 1910.  
Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #0028P207-006940).

that the life saving station was changed from Cape Arago, from where no lifeboat could have reached us that day or the next.”<sup>99</sup>

The fully-staffed life-saving station was just part of the federal maritime improvements occurring at the mouth of Coos Bay. For many years, Oregon representatives to Congress had been fighting for federal money to enhance the entrance to the bay. Lumber and coal drove the economy of the area, and if the ships could not reach the goods, there was no money to be made. In June 1861, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey began the formal charting of Coos Bay, finishing in 1866. However, the harbor improvements suggested in that survey did not get underway until 1879. The first stone was laid for a jetty across the South Slough on 6 April 1880. The Army Corps

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<sup>99</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1897 Annual Reports*, 39.

of Engineers thought that blocking the South Slough would stop sediments from entering the mouth of Coos Bay. Unfortunately, the construction project went on for ten years before it was abandoned in 1890 as too impractical to justify the costs. Standard jetties were then designed to jut out 1,800 feet on either side of the harbor entrance.<sup>100</sup>

At this time, the Columbia River and Yaquina Bay already had their first jetties, so the designer of those breakwaters, James Polhemus, was brought in to supervise the construction of jetties at Coos Bay. The north jetty was started in 1890 and finally completed in 1901. The directed flow of water out of Coos Bay scoured out the bar crossing, deepening the channel from an average of 11 feet to 17 feet. Later dredging further deepened the channel. A south jetty was not completed until 1928.<sup>101</sup>

The improved entrance to the bay did not eliminate the need for the life-saving service, however. Wrecks continued to occur because of increased ship traffic, vicious crosscurrents at the entrance, storms, and larger ships. The wreck of the *New Carissa* in February 1999 is testimony to the still hazardous conditions at the entrance to Coos Bay. The most tragic wreck ever to occur at Coos Bay ensued on 12 January 1910.<sup>102</sup> The wreck of the *Czarina* took 23 lives and was described as the worst disaster in 25 years in the United States.<sup>103</sup> The official account of the wreck is presented in Appendix A.

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<sup>100</sup>Dow Beckham, *Stars in the Dark: Coal Mines of Southwestern Oregon* (Coos Bay, OR: Arago Books, 1995), 50-51.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 51-52.

<sup>102</sup>Nathan Douthit, *A Guide to Oregon South Coast History* (Coos Bay, OR: River West Books, 1986), 77.

<sup>103</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1910 Annual Reports*, 59.

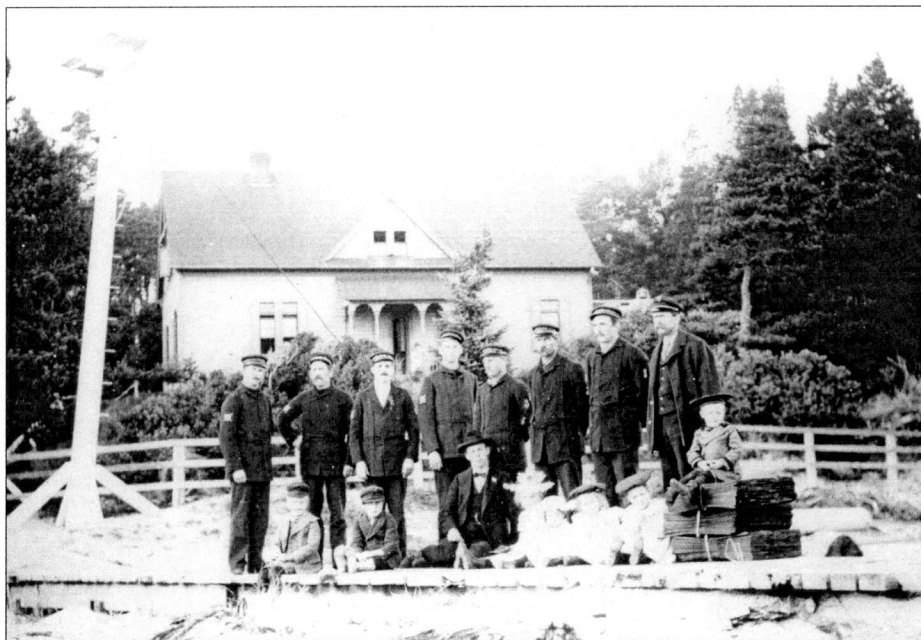


Figure 55. Cape Arago Life-Saving Station at North Spit, 1898.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service Photos:  
Personnel File).

The station house at North Spit (Figure 55) was built from the standard Marquette plans as described in Chapter III. In general, the house was divided by a central hallway and stair with the right half reserved for the keeper and the left half for the crew. On the main floor, the keeper's living room, office, kitchen, and pantry were to the right. On the left was the crew's living room and quarters. Upstairs, the right half contained bedrooms for the keeper and his family. On the left was the crew's locker room.

The boathouse was a standard Fort Point-type boathouse. It was located close by, most likely to the southwest, enabling quick access to the bar. The building was one-story with two bays and measured 24' wide by 40' deep. One bay held a surfboat and the other bay a lifeboat. The boathouse is thoroughly described in Chapter III.



A pair of water towers were built adjacent to the station house to capture runoff from the roof of the station house. In Figure 54, a washhouse can be seen to the left of the station house. A washhouse was necessary since the station house had no plumbing other than the hand pump to the kitchen sink. In 1892, the crew built a wharf in front of the station constructed of planks found on the beach.<sup>104</sup> During September 1893, the crew built a woodshed.<sup>105</sup> The wreck pole is visible to the left of the group in Figure 55. A tall flag pole rises over the station yard. A post topped by a bell box appears to the left of the station house. During June 1892, the crew built a handsome picket fence around the property.<sup>106</sup>

Many of the stations along the Oregon Coast had auxiliary buildings scattered around the vicinity. The majority of these structures were lookout towers and boathouses. The lookout towers were always positioned at the most advantageous site so as to be able to observe as much of the waterway and beach as possible. Usually this site was far too inhospitable or remote to build the station itself. Auxiliary boathouses were often built at supplemental locations so that if a rescue boat could not be launched from a principal location due to tide or bar conditions, an auxiliary boat could be launched from a different location usually outside of the entrance to the waterway, often from a beach.

The *Annual Reports* noted, "Near the point of the spit, and overlooking the entrance, is the service observation tower and a house that shelters a boat and other

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<sup>104</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, "Logbooks of the Life-Saving Service," Cape Arago Life-Saving Station, 25 February 1892.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 4 September 1893.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 2 June 1892.

equipment designed for the use of the life-saving crew in affording assistance to vessels that get into difficulty on the bar and in contiguous waters.”<sup>107</sup> The boathouse was a simple, gabled-roof, two-bay structure with a wooden boardwalk to ease the movement of the boat carriage over the soft sand. Less is known about the lookout tower, though it was built during September 1893 and was probably similar to the one at the Umpqua River Life-Saving Station (see Chapter VII).<sup>108</sup>

The Cape Arago Life-Saving Station at North Spit, later known as the Coos Bay Life-Saving Station, was abandoned after 25 years in favor of the protection and convenience of the South Slough town of Charleston. The old station house was abandoned in 1916, but the water tanks were recycled and moved across Coos Bay to the new station site. The U.S. Navy occupied the old station in 1941 and used it as a direction finder station during World War II. At the end of the war it was returned to the Coast Guard and in 1953 sold to a private party as surplus. It burned sometime around 1967.<sup>109</sup>

#### Coos Bay Lifeboat Station

On 28 January 1915, the U.S. Life-Saving Service merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to form the U.S. Coast Guard. Most of the construction work undertaken by the Coast Guard after the merger and up through the 1920s involved repairs rather

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<sup>107</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1910 Annual Reports*, 59.

<sup>108</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, “Logbooks of the Life-Saving Service,” Cape Arago Life-Saving Station, 18 September 1893.

<sup>109</sup>“Golden Years of Lifesaving,” *Coos Bay World*, 21 September 1974.



than new construction.<sup>110</sup> However, on the Pacific Coast there was such a lack of stations that the building of new stations continued unabated. In what could have been one of the first stations built by the new Coast Guard in the United States, construction began in 1915 in Charleston to replace the Coos Bay Life-Saving Station at North Spit.

Charleston is on the south side of the entrance to Coos Bay (Figure 56). It is a seacoast fishing town; boats and docks dominate the landscape and modern oyster shell middens mark the entrance into town. The new station's location was probably somewhere near the site of the old auxiliary boathouse built for the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station when the station was located at Lighthouse Island. The new location was situated quite close to the entrance to Coos Bay and near a high promontory ideal for a lookout tower; two essential features the old station lacked (Figure 57).

The idea to build a new station developed as early as 24 April 1913, as that is when two parcels of land were acquired for the new site. Government machinery moves slowly and it took several years before drawings were made. The drawings are unique to this station and it is believed to be one of a kind. Some of the drawings for the new station are actually dated a few days before the formation of the Coast Guard, but all of the drawings are firmly labeled, "Coos Bay Coast Guard Station." It was not until September 1916 that the crew on the North Spit moved across the bay to the new Charleston location.

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<sup>110</sup>Shanks, *The U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 241.

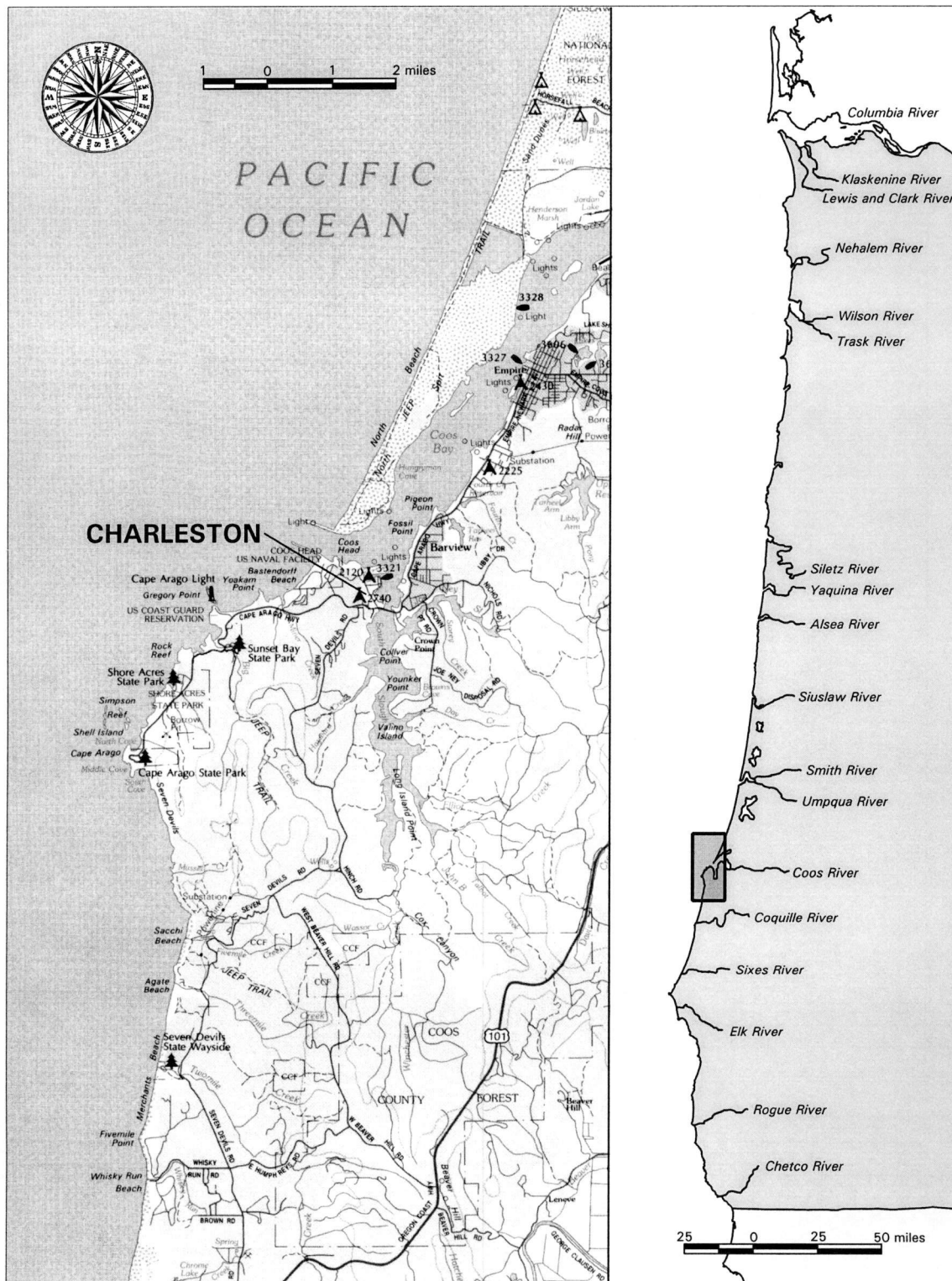


Figure 56. Location of Charleston on Coos Bay, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

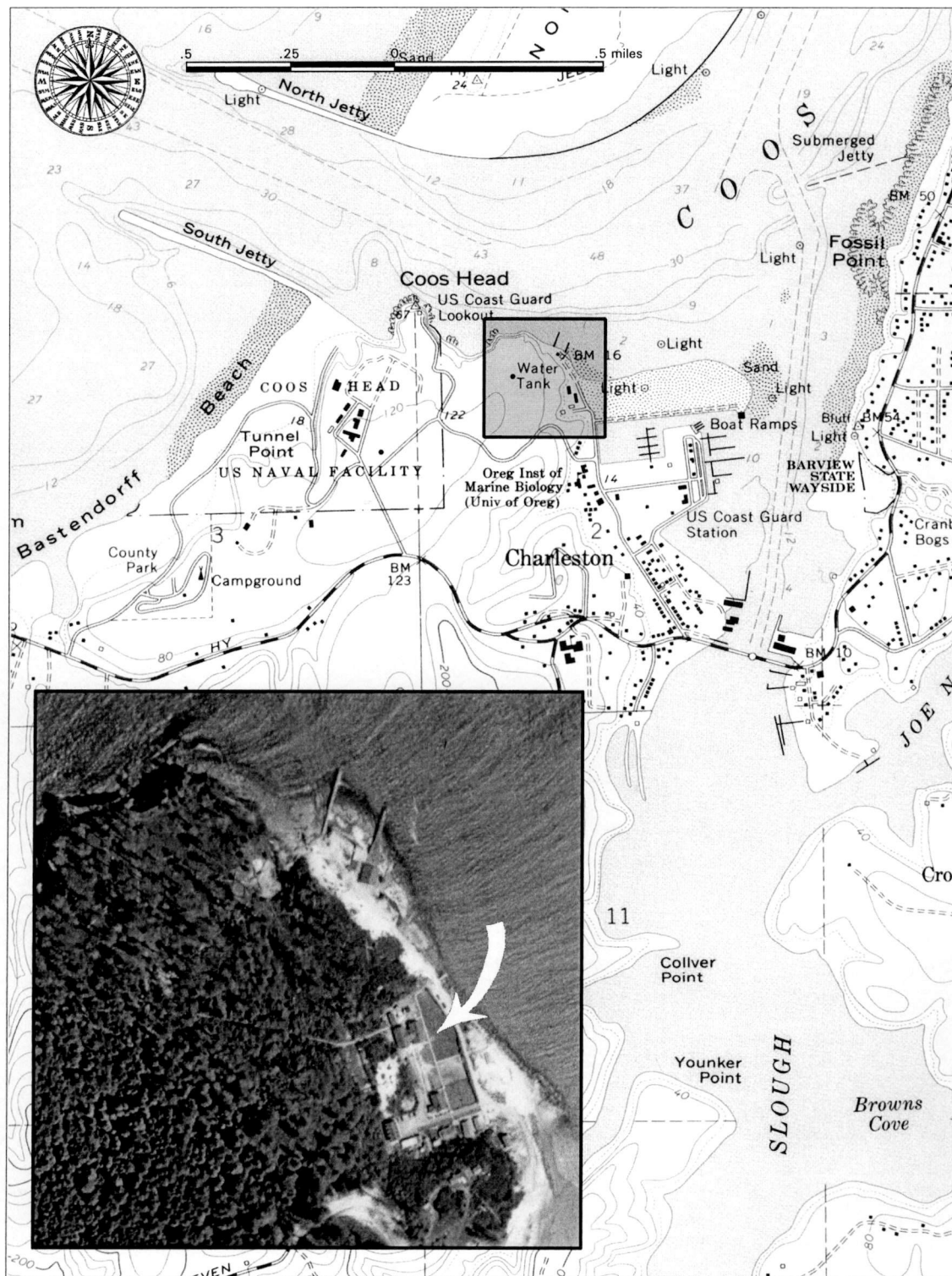


Figure 57. Aerial Photo of the Coos Bay Station Area at Charleston in 1939 Superimposed Over the Empire, Oregon, USGS Map (1970 Revision).

It appears structures were built and placed exactly as planned on the site drawing (Figure 58). When compared to period photographs, there appears to be not one variation by the builder (Figure 59). Part of the bluff behind the station was removed to enlarge and level the site. The keeper's dwelling was placed toward the south and the crew's dwelling to the north (left and right, respectively, in Figure 59). A woodshed was placed behind the crew's dwelling (Figure 60). The cistern water tank was positioned between the keeper's dwelling and the crew's dwelling. The tank was served by a pump house between the tank and the woodshed. A sewage settling tank was placed between and forward of the two dwellings. Its discharge pipe led into the bay and is visible in Figure 60 to the upper left. Wooden boardwalks connected the buildings. Sometime between 1917 and 1923, the two water tanks were moved from the old station on North Spit and placed on the carved out shelf on the bluff. By 1923 the entire compound was surrounded by a white picket fence.

The woodshed was a simple building 24' 6" wide by 12' 6" deep with a structure of 6" by 6" posts and sills and 2" by 6" studs. It was placed on 12" by 12" concrete piers and clad in shingles 5" to weather. It survived until at least 1954, but it is gone today. The pump house was 8' by 8' with a shed roof, two windows, and a door. It had a concrete floor and full foundation. The cistern water tank was 6' in diameter and 4' tall and was placed on a structure of 6" by 6" with 3" by 6" bracing, 12' in the air. The structure was 7' 8" square and rested on 16" by 16" concrete piers. The cistern water tank disappeared by 1951, and by 1954, a gabled roof building was built over the cistern, which has also been demolished.

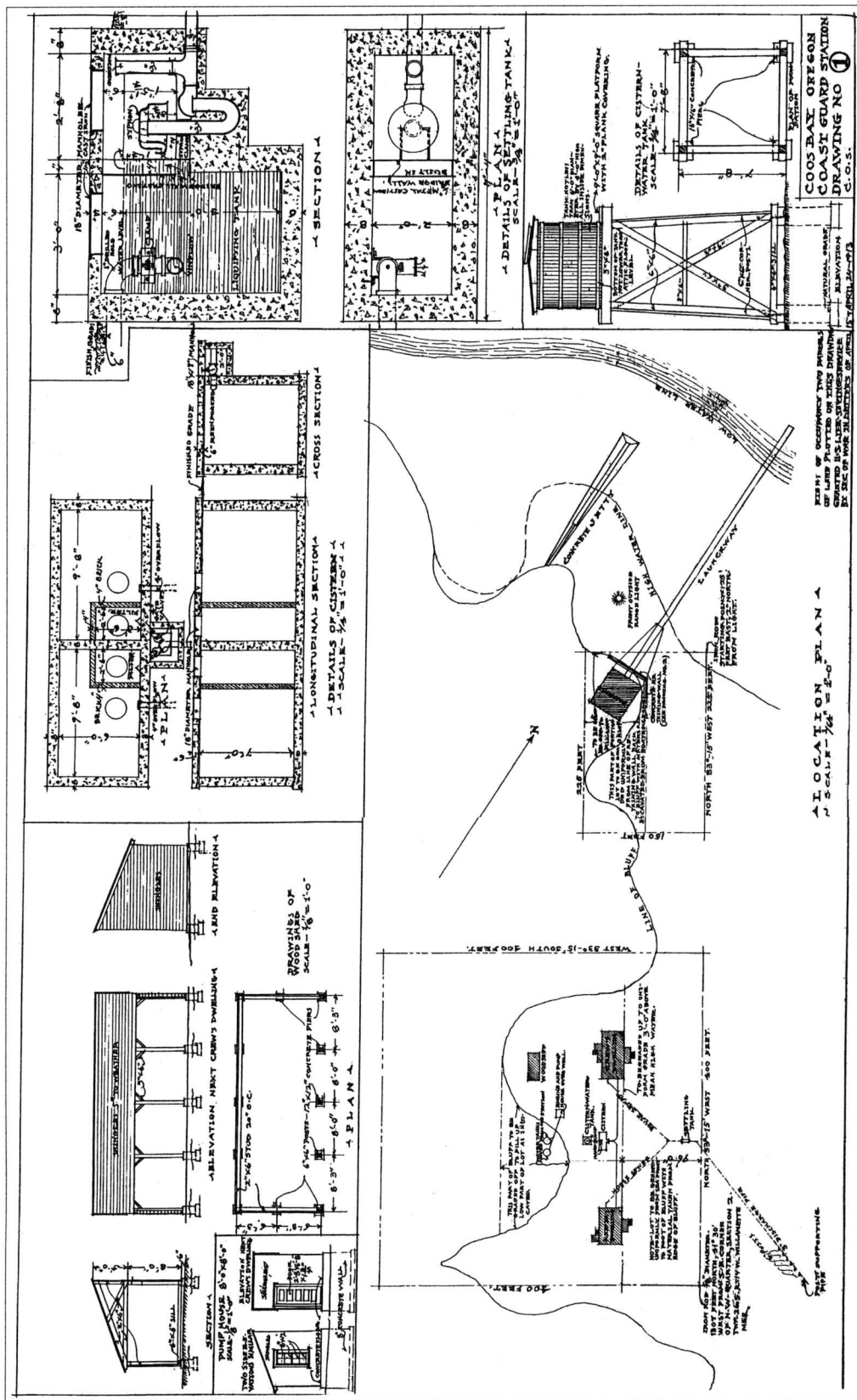


Figure 58. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, Site Plan, 1915. Source: Oregon Institute of Marine Biology.





Figure 59. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, circa 1916. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #654-A 98320).



Figure 60. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Coos Bay File).

Fortunately, the keeper's dwelling, the crew's dwelling, and the boathouse have not suffered the same fate as the auxiliary buildings. The keeper's dwelling was a simple gable-roof structure, built on concrete piers. It was 46' 8" wide by 27' 0" deep and had a living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and an office (Figure 61). Windows were double-hung, six-over-one, and the roof and walls were sheathed in shingles. The vestibule on the rear of the keeper's dwelling was enlarged sometime between 1923 and 1939, according to historic photographs.

The crew's dwelling was designed in the same simple style as the keeper's dwelling, but was wider across the front at 56' 6" wide by 27' 0" deep (Figure 62). It had three bedrooms for six of the crew members, a single bedroom each for the top two crewmen, a mess room, kitchen, bathroom, and a storm clothes room. Minimal detailing was the same as on the keeper's dwelling.

The crew's dwelling received a substantial addition sometime between 1923 and 1939, according to photographs. During that period, a building approximately identical to the crew's dwelling was built behind and parallel to the crew's dwelling and then connected at the center by a hyphen to create a H-shaped plan (Figure 63). This new "addition" became "the dorm" and the old crew's dwelling became "the office."<sup>111</sup>

It was common practice at stations for married crew members to build houses close to the stations. These small, one-story, gable roof structures are purely vernacular, built with local materials by local carpenters. Five are recognizable in Figure 63 to the

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<sup>111</sup>According to a site plan dated 1968, created by the University of Oregon, on file at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology.

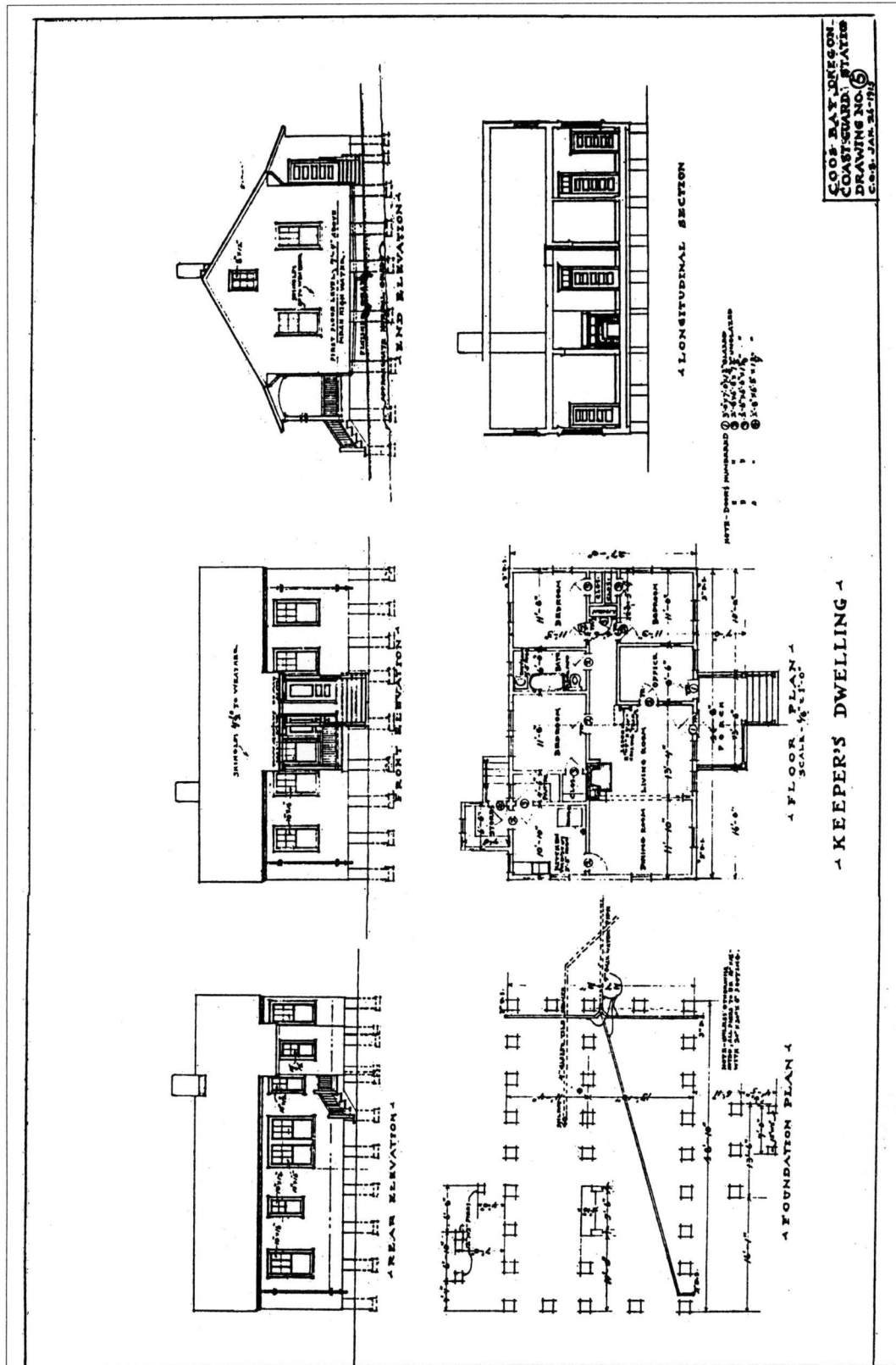


Figure 61. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, Keeper's Dwelling, 1915. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#3-412).



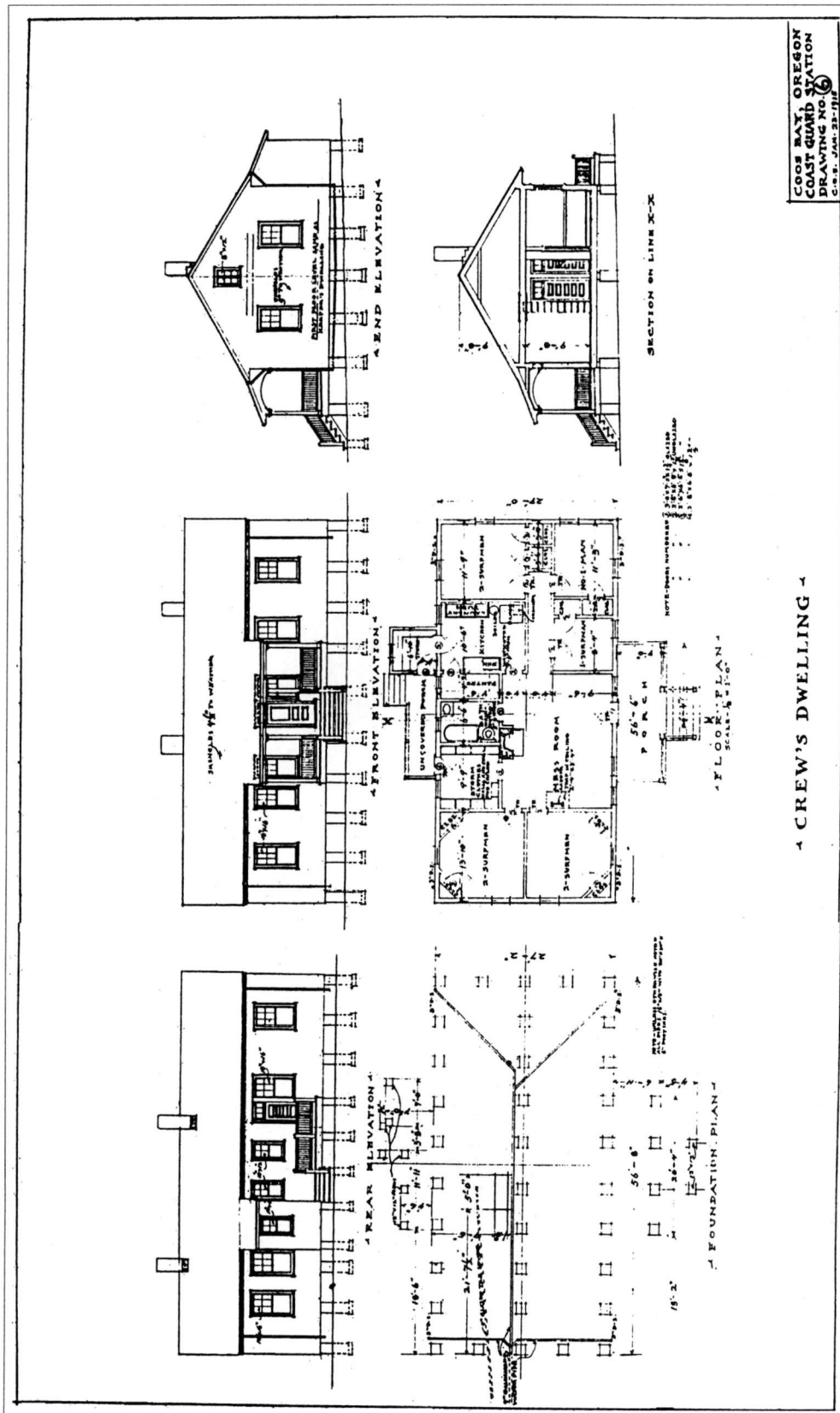


Figure 62. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, Crew's Dwelling, 1915. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#3-413).



Figure 63. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, 1954. Source: National Archives (RG 26-CGS, Box 2, Folder Coos Bay).

left, and one is visible under construction in 1923 in Figure 60. These dwellings have been lost over time, though they may have been moved and recycled elsewhere.

The boathouse was as unique as the dwellings for the keeper and crew (Figure 64). The Coos Bay Lifeboat Station boathouse is believed to be the only one built from the plans drawn. The building measured 40' wide by 50' deep and was three-bays wide and five-bays deep (Figure 65). In 1915, the bays stored one 34' motor lifeboat, one Dobbins lifeboat, one Monomoy surfboat, and one Beebe-McLellan surfboat.<sup>112</sup> Its distinctive features are the six buttresses on each side of the building, recalling the 1874-type stations with their side buttresses. Like the dwellings for the keeper and crew, the roof and walls of the boathouse were covered in shingles, 4-1/2" to

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<sup>112</sup>U.S. Coast Guard, *1915 Annual Report*, 69.



Figure 64. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, Boathouse, 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Coos Bay File).



Figure 65. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, Boathouse Ramp, 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Coos Bay File).

weather on the roof, 5" to weather in the gable, and 6" to weather on the walls (Figure 66). Posts were 6" by 6", beams were 6" by 8", and rafters were 2" by 8".

Extending from the front of the boathouse was the 338' launchway (Figure 67). Only the upper portion of the launchway, where there were three sets of railroad tracks, was covered in planks. This portion was supported by a wooden framework of 12" by 12" members bolted to concrete piers. Once the three tracks merged, the remaining four-fifths of launchway was simply rails on wooden pilings. These wooden piles were replaced in 1940 with concrete piers when the boathouse underwent a general upgrade to the approaches around the boathouse. A large concrete jetty was built in 1916 to the west of the boathouse and launchway to protect them from the onslaught of storms and surf.

Sometime between 1923 and 1931, a carpentry shop was built adjacent to the boathouse to the west. The building still stands, but it has been rehabilitated into a guest house altering its original use, exterior, and interior drastically. The original lookout tower stood further to the west on a high promontory overlooking the entrance to Coos Bay. The tower has since been replaced with a modern lookout at the same location. A standard, Roosevelt-type, four-bay garage was built behind the keeper's dwelling, circa 1940, and still remains today; however, its garage doors have been replaced, windows replaced, and a large entrance stair has been tacked onto its southern end wall.

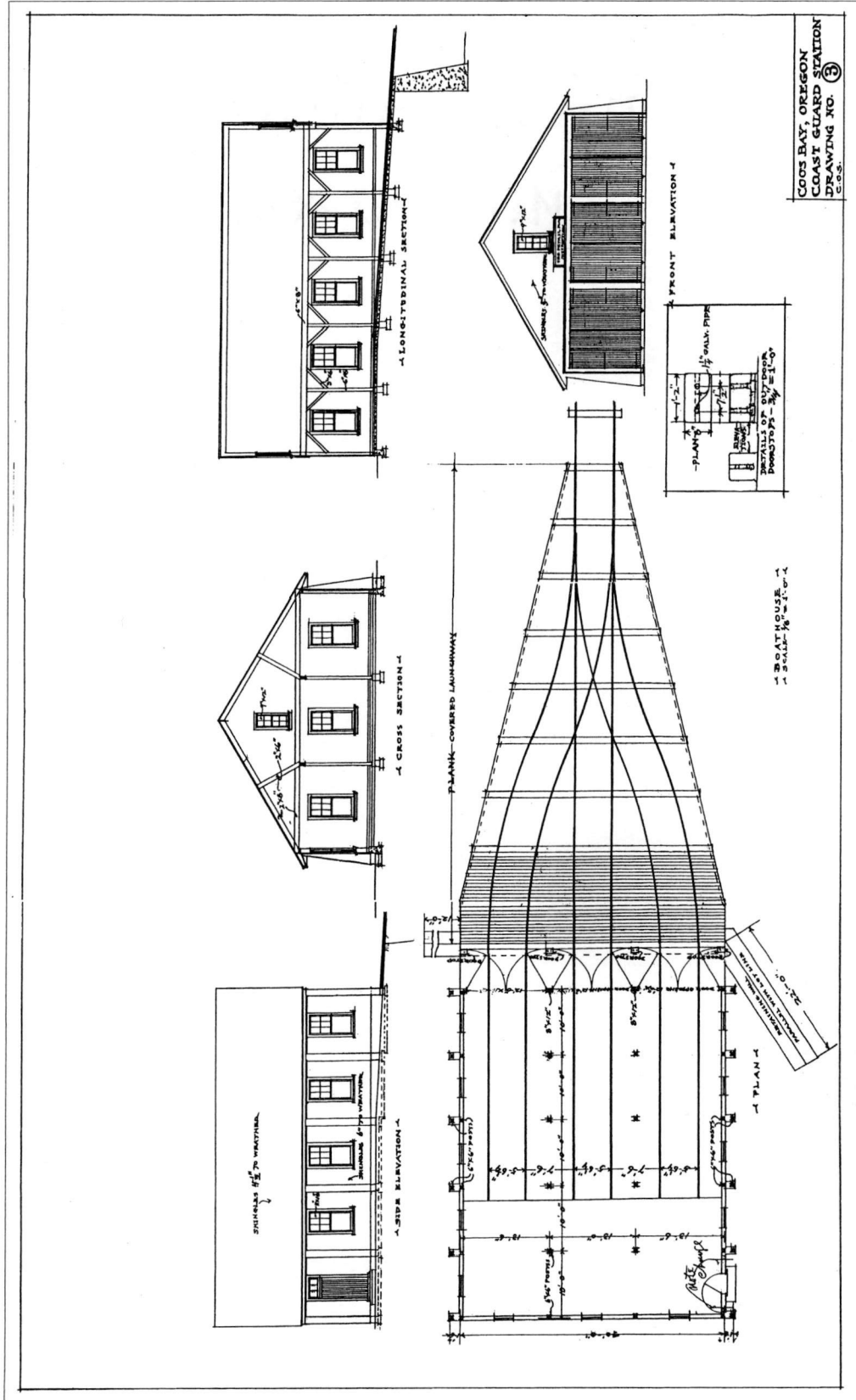


Figure 66. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, Boathouse Plan, 1915. Source: Oregon Institute of Marine Biology.

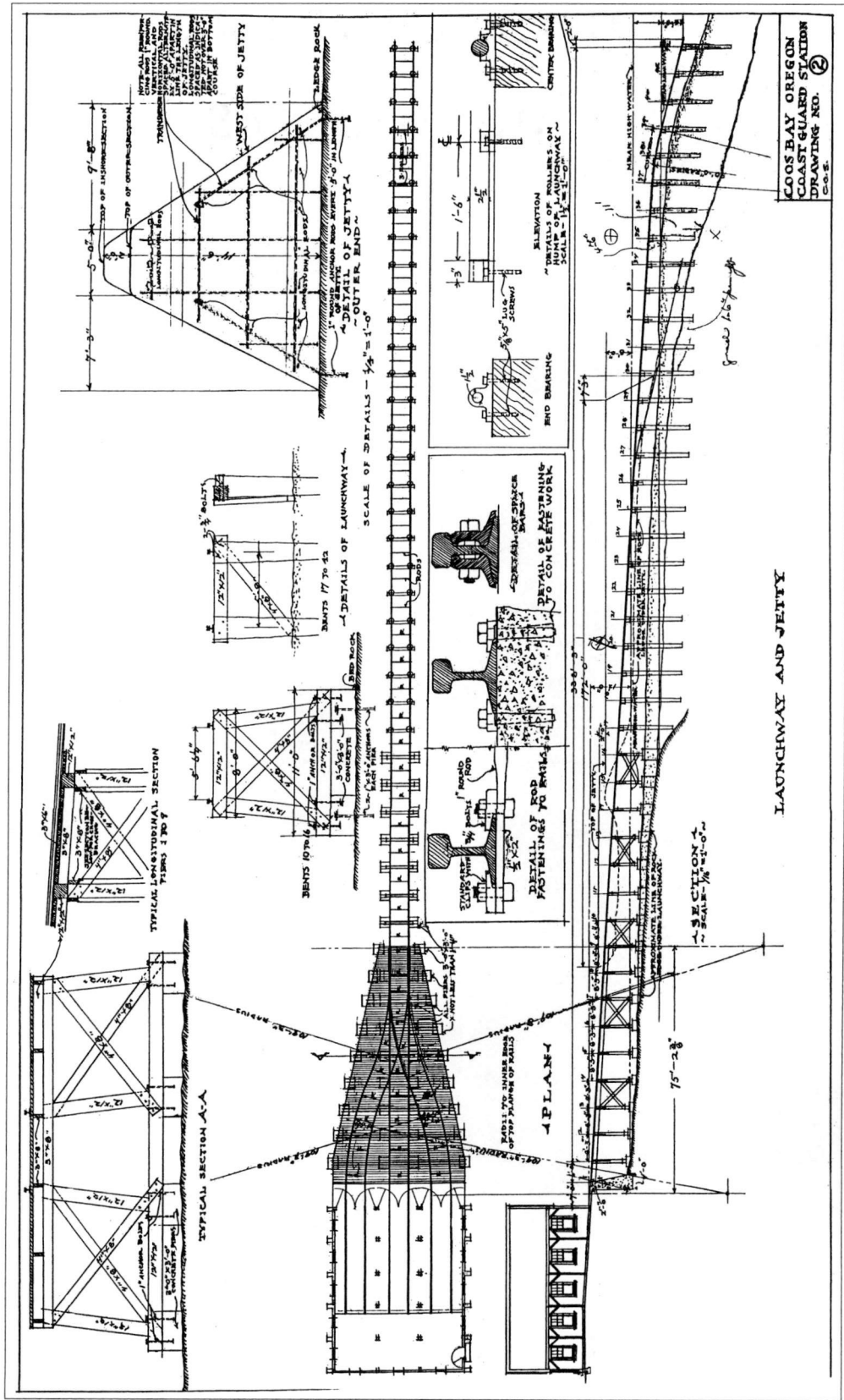


Figure 67. Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, Launchway Plan, 1915. Source: Oregon Institute of Marine Biology.

### Preservation

Any remains above the beach sand are gone from the cove on Lighthouse Island where the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station once stood (see Figure 51). Not even a piling from the original station is visible. However, there is a chance for interpretation of the site through a photographic plaque display. The oldest known photograph of the station is shown in Figure 47. It was taken at a point that would make an interesting location for a plaque displaying the photograph along with history of the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station. However, the site is on restricted federal property, and a visitor needs permission to even reach the overlook point to the island. Only Coast Guard personnel are allowed to cross the bridge to Lighthouse Island.

Like the station on Lighthouse Island, the station at North Spit has been reported to have no above ground remains. This area also has extremely restricted access, due to the wreck of the *New Carissa* (1999), wildlife conservation issues, and its inaccessibility by vehicle. A water approach in a shallow-draft water craft would be the best means to investigate the old station site; however, the author was not able to make such a trip.

Unlike the Lighthouse Island and North Spit sites, there are physical remnants of the 1916 Coos Bay Lifeboat Station at Charleston. The boathouse remains nearly intact, the crew's dwelling has been altered, and the keeper's dwelling is visible. All three buildings are currently being used by the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology (OIMB), a facility of the University of Oregon.



The boathouse is the most intact of the three buildings. The building is in its original location. In 1975, the University of Oregon rehabilitated the boathouse and turned it into a lecture hall for OIMB. As designed by the University of Oregon Physical Plant, there were plans to build a two-story, lighthouse-like tower on the rear of the building to serve as an entrance. Instead, a much more modest projection was built on the back of the boathouse to serve as a lobby and to create an area for a men's restroom and a women's restroom (Figure 68). On the front of the boathouse, the doors were removed and replaced with multi-light inoperable windows (Figure 69). The eastmost bay received a three-sided bay window and the westmost bay has a door next to its fixed window. Inside, the sloped floor of the boatroom was terraced with a new floor over the old to accommodate level seating. A projection booth was added to the rear of the boatroom. There were plans to renovate the attic space; however, this was never performed, and the attic space remains as originally built.

The rails have been removed from the launchway but their impression in the wood of the decking remains. Where the decking ends, the concrete pilings continue on into the water and give an excellent sensation of what the launchway once was. A pump shed and large diameter water lines have been added to one side of the ramp.

Both the boathouse and the remains of the launchway should be maintained in their current configuration. Future adaptations of the boathouse should not be performed if they disturb the Coast Guard-era elements.

Between 1968 and 1970, the Coast Guard built new family housing on the old Coos Bay Coast Guard Station site. Fortunately, they did not destroy the dwellings of the



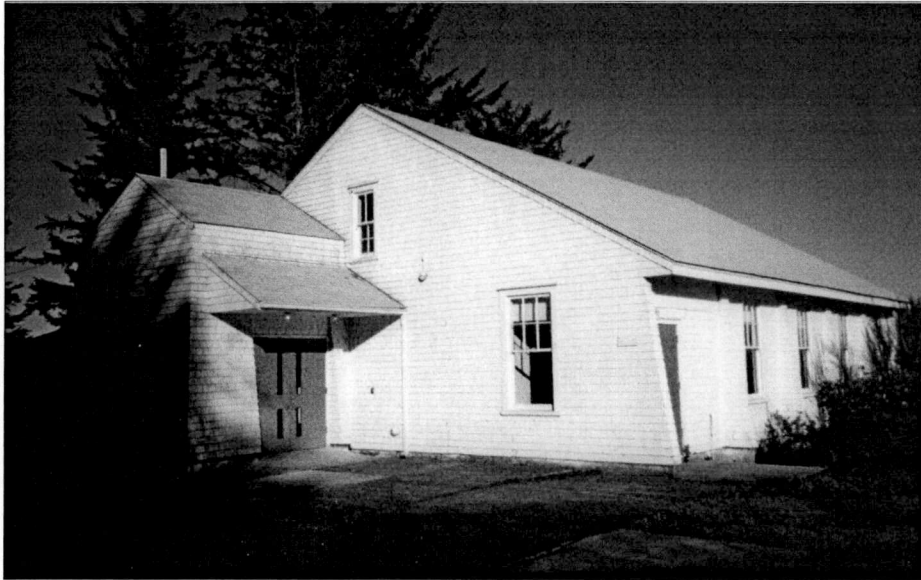


Figure 68. Former Boathouse (1915), Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, 1999. Source: Author.



Figure 69. Former Boathouse and Launchway (1915), Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, 1999. Source: Author.

keeper or crew. Instead, these buildings they moved south a couple of hundred yards to the site of a former Civilian Conservation Corps camp. This group of buildings became the core campus for the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology. The new Coos Bay Lifeboat Station was built to the east on the “new” waterfront on land reclaimed from the South Slough.

The crew’s dwelling underwent a dramatic rehabilitation from dwelling to neurobiology research lab. The design came out of the office of Kruse & Fitch Architects of Seattle in 1968.<sup>113</sup> Several more alterations have occurred since, the latest being a large, just-completed, two-story addition to its south elevation. However, the crew’s dwelling is still unmistakable from the exterior and should remain as such (Figure 70). At a minimum, the wood shingle siding, windows, and porch should be retained. The interior has been too heavily altered to offer any interpretive value.

The keeper’s dwelling has been served an even worse life sentence than the crew’s dwelling. It has been enveloped by a just-completed, two-story library complex (Figure 71). Only through photo comparison can the exterior of the former keeper’s dwelling be distinguished. The new building does not differentiate the keeper’s dwelling in any way on the interior. A plaque on the interior denoting what the building once was is the only means left to present the history of the former Coast Guard building.

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<sup>113</sup>Plan on file at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology.



Figure 70. Former Crew's Dwelling (1915), Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, 1999. Source: Author.



Figure 71. Former Keeper's Dwelling (1915), Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, 1999. Source: Author.

## CHAPTER V

### POINT ADAMS STATIONS

The Columbia River is the largest river on the West Coast and separates Oregon from Washington. At Oregon's northwest corner, the Columbia River flows into the Pacific Ocean. Where the two bodies of water meet, the confluence produces some of the most consistently turbulent water anywhere in the world. Due to these hazardous conditions, the area has become known to mariners as the "Graveyard of the Pacific."

At Oregon's northwest corner are Point Adams and the town of Hammond (Figure 72). The area around Hammond was home to the earliest Euro-American settlements in the West. Lewis and Clark settled in for the Winter of 1805-06 just six miles southeast of Hammond on Young's Bay. Five miles to the east, Astoria was the first American city established on the West Coast. Settled as a fur trading post in 1811, Astoria was named for Pacific Fur Company pioneer John Jacob Astor, 88 years before Hammond became a town. The original indigenous populace of the area was the Clatsop Indians.

All the people who settled on the tip of Oregon were drawn by the same thing, the Columbia River. The river acted as a highway into the interior, it provided plenty of fish and ample game along its banks, and there were seemingly inexhaustible supplies of fur-bearing creatures. Despite a tense feud between the British and Americans, Astoria held on and gradually settlers from the East began to populate the area. In the 1840s, Portland

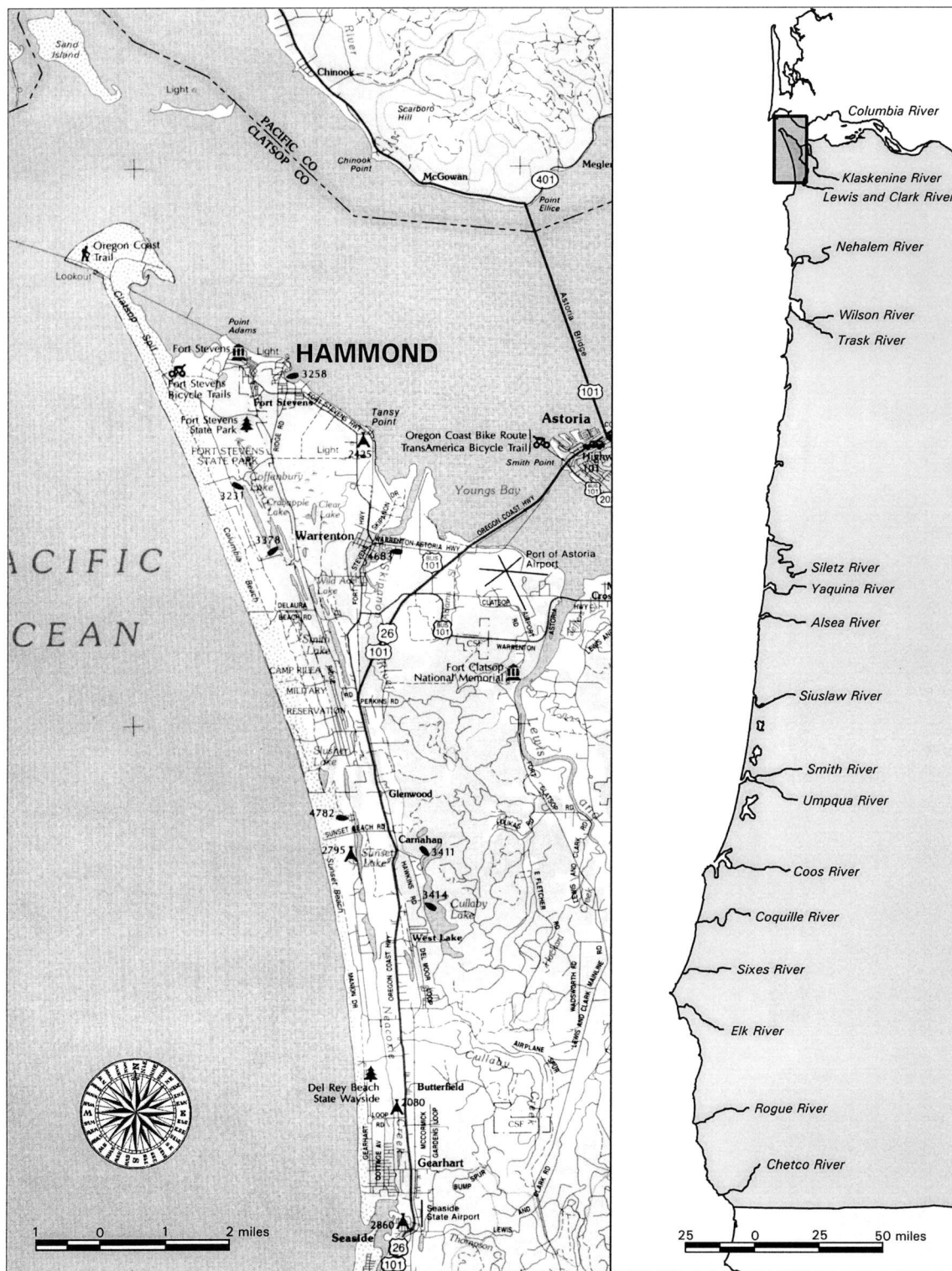


Figure 72. Location of Hammond, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

was becoming the major trade center north of San Francisco. The news of gold strikes in California in 1848 solidified the link between Portland and San Francisco, with Astoria being the way point for those traveling by sea. A customs house was established at Astoria in November 1848 to monitor goods sailing between San Francisco and Portland.

Development of the ports along the Oregon Coast was hampered by a lack of aids to navigation. When the *Tonquin* arrived with Astor's party from the Pacific Fur Company in 1811, they lost two boats and eight men while taking soundings to navigate over the Columbia bar.<sup>114</sup> Soon, a primitive range system was set up for river navigation. White flags would be tied to trees on the shore that, when lined up by a ship's pilot, would show that the ship was in the channel. At night, the flags would be substituted with bonfires; however, piloting in the dark was rarely risked. Bar pilots came into use in the 1840s and were licensed by the Oregon provisional government starting in 1846.<sup>115</sup>

The Revenue Cutter *Jefferson Davis* arrived in the Oregon Territory in September 1854. This marked the first federal government assistance to mariners in the region. The ship was sent in response to a request from the Collector of Customs to counter smuggling. The cutter enforced the customs laws by meeting ships offshore and inspecting their cargo. In addition to enforcing customs laws, the *Jefferson Davis*

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<sup>114</sup>Frank Turner, "The Graveyard of the Pacific," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 7 September 1958.

<sup>115</sup>Sally Donovan and Barb Kachel, *National Register Multiple Property Nomination for Lighthouse Stations of Oregon* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1992), E.6, E.19.



transported government officials, protected lighthouse personnel and other settlers from harassment by Indians, and rescued survivors of shipwrecks.<sup>116</sup>

Communications and commerce along on the Pacific Coast depended almost exclusively upon water transportation. The local populace relied on the waterways to remain in contact with the East Coast, California, Washington, and other Oregon settlements. However, there were still no modern aids to navigation in the Oregon Territory when the *Jefferson Davis* arrived in 1854. A navigator had to rely on spotting a prominent headland, when the weather cooperated, and using the land form to guide his ship to harbor. At night or in poor visibility, ships would remain well offshore to avoid running aground. Navigators often mistook landmarks and led their ships into danger. It was obvious that a system of navigational aids would be needed to facilitate shipping.<sup>117</sup>

In August 1848, Congress created the Oregon Territory. In that Act, a lighthouse for Cape Disappointment<sup>118</sup> and a system of buoys for the Columbia River and Astoria Harbor were specifically mentioned.<sup>119</sup> Quickly, officers of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey were sent out to find suitable locations for the aids. The survey recommended that 16 lights be constructed along the Pacific Coast: ten in California, five Washington, and one in Oregon at Umpqua River. The light at Cape Disappointment was given high

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<sup>116</sup>Rear Admiral Ed Nelson, Retired, "History of the Coast Guard in Clatsop County" *Cumtux* (Summer 1994).

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Cape Disappointment is the headland on the north side of the Columbia River entrance.

<sup>119</sup>Nelson.

priority but was slowed when the bark *Oriole* wrecked on the Columbia bar while carrying supplies to build the lighthouse.<sup>120</sup>

The Cape Disappointment Lighthouse became the first major navigational aid to be established in the Oregon Territory when it was lit on 15 October 1856. A sister lighthouse was constructed on the Oregon side at Point Adams in 1875, but discontinued in 1899, and demolished in 1912. The Cape Disappointment light is still active today and is the oldest on the Pacific Coast. The first revenue cutter to be stationed in Astoria was the *Joseph Lane*, a schooner that arrived on 20 March 1856. The *Joseph Lane* assisted ships over the bar, inspected cargoes, and aided mariners in distress.<sup>121</sup>

In addition to keeping the lights burning, lighthouse keepers were tasked with life-saving duties. The keeper of the Cape Disappointment Lighthouse, J.W. Munson, was the first to provide life-saving services at the mouth of the Columbia prior to the arrival of the Life-Saving Service. After 17 died when the *Industry* wrecked on the Columbia bar in March 1865, Munson rebuilt a lifeboat that he found on the beach and fitted it with air tanks. He is credited with providing the first life-saving equipment on the Columbia River.<sup>122</sup> Finally, in 1878, the Life-Saving Service augmented Munson's life-saving operation with the Cape Disappointment Lifeboat Station, converting it to a life-saving station with a full-time winter crew in 1882. By 1888, there was a full-time crew of eight surfmen year-around.

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<sup>120</sup>Donovan and Kachel, E.21.

<sup>121</sup>Nelson.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.



The crew at Cape Disappointment Life-Saving Station found themselves extremely busy during fishing season. Just outside the mouth of the Columbia lay the favorite fishing ground for gillnetters. Almost every year the *Annual Reports* document the death of one or two of the fishermen near Peacock Spit, a narrow strip of land projecting out from Cape Disappointment. "The fishing ground is dangerous and the men are venturesome, while many of them, notwithstanding the accidents constantly occurring in the vicinity, seem to not fully comprehend the dangers of the place," noted the *Annual Reports*.<sup>123</sup> The boats the gillnetters used were small and crewed by two men, a boatpuller and a netpuller. The nets were long and heavy and often dragged the boat and the men into the breakers. The life-savers would actually go on patrol among the hundreds of fishing boats and wait for trouble at Peacock Spit. They would have a crewman in the lookout tower on Cape Disappointment signal them if there was an emergency and direct the pulling boat to the scene.

#### Point Adams Life-Saving Station

With the large numbers of rescues occurring at the mouth of the Columbia River in the 1880s, Superintendent Kimball deemed another station necessary. Oregon Senator John H. Mitchell requested an appropriation for a life-saving station at Fort Stevens in early 1886.<sup>124</sup> With a slight alteration of the location to Point Adams, the appropriation for the life-saving station was folded in with another 17 stations under House Resolution

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<sup>123</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1904 Annual Reports*, 34.

<sup>124</sup>Congress, Senate, 49th Cong., 1st sess., S. 1496, 1886.

6975 and approved by Congress on 10 April 1886. Its quick approval showed how vital it was to get an additional station on the Columbia River.

Land was purchased at a lightly populated, waterfront area east of Fort Stevens, on the north edge of what was soon to become the town of Hammond (Figure 73). The Point Adams Life-Saving Station was built during 1889 and put into service in December 1889, according to *The Daily Astorian*. It was the first true life-saving station to be erected in Oregon, as the Cape Arago Life-Saving Station did not have a crew, only a keeper, prior to 1890. The Point Adams station had eight men on duty year-around. Starting in 1900, an extra man supplemented the crew from 1 May to 25 August, the only Oregon station to have such a large crew during the Life-Saving Service era. The Cape Disappointment station across the river also received a ninth surfman in 1900. The Point Adams and Cape Disappointment stations were two of the five most heavily staffed stations in the nation.<sup>125</sup> Some of the greatest tandem rescue efforts in the United States occurred between these two stations. One of them, the wreck of the *Rosecrans* in 1913, is detailed in Appendix B.

The station Albert Buruley Bibb designed for Point Adams was quite novel for its time. Bibb had started working for the Life-Saving Service in 1885 doing remodels of old stations. The first station he designed from scratch was in 1887 and became known as a Bibb #2. The design departed dramatically from its predecessors in what was essentially a 1-1/2 story bungalow with a boatroom attached like a garage. This was the

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<sup>125</sup> According to the *Annual Reports*, the only stations with larger crews were the Fort Point and Golden Gate stations guarding San Francisco Bay which had nine surfmen each year around, and the Baaddah Point station in Washington which had ten surfmen year around.

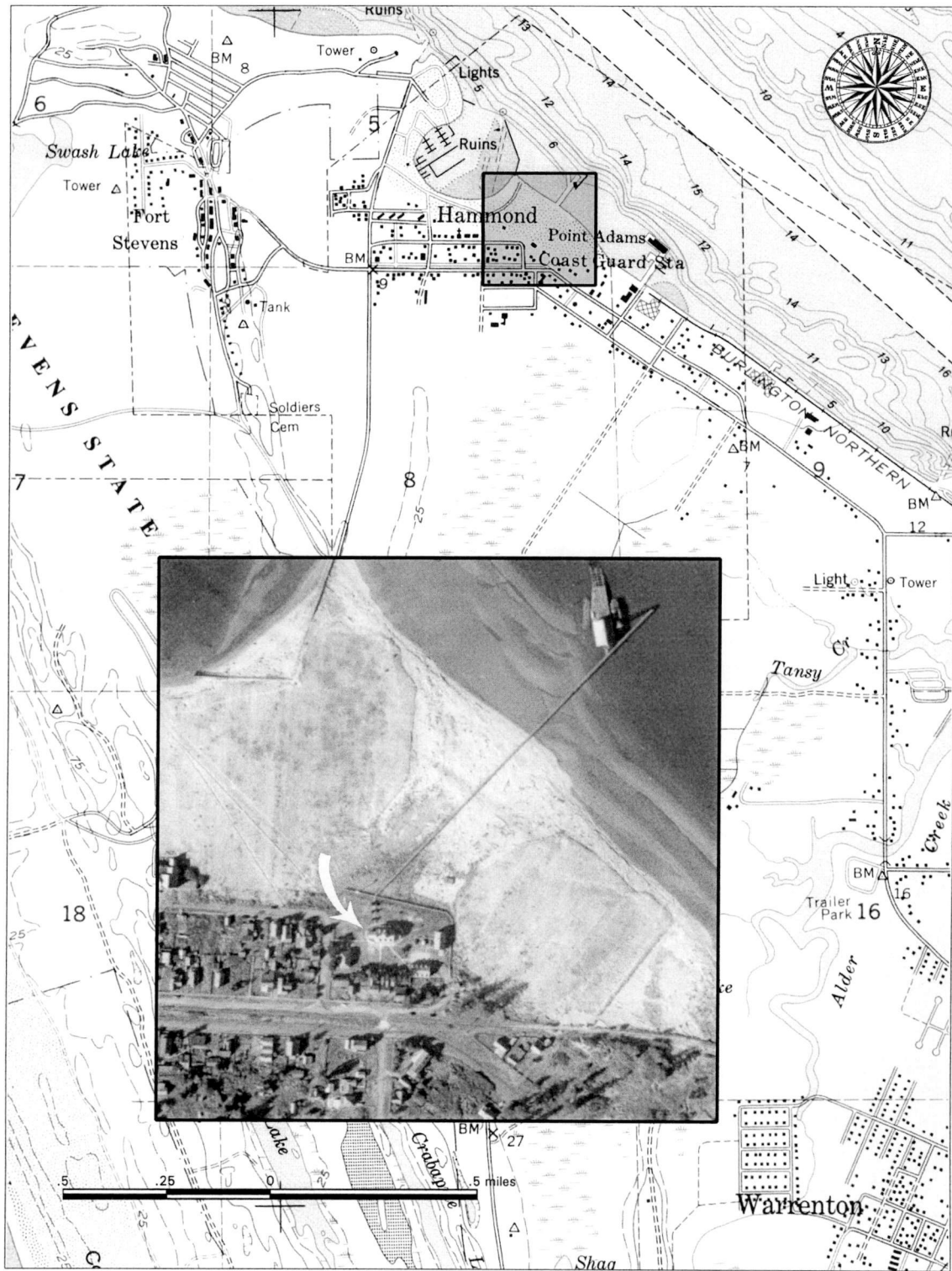


Figure 73. Aerial Photo of the Point Adams Station Area in 1945 Superimposed Over the Warrenton, Oregon, USGS Map (1984 Revision).

first station to emphasize the living quarters over the boatroom. For Point Adams two years later, he went one step further and detached the boatroom entirely from the dwelling (Figure 74). The evolution allowed the boathouse to be placed in a location convenient to launching a boat while the living quarters could be placed in a more protected location. Having the rescue apparatus in its own building also allowed for increased ventilation to dry out the equipment. Only three of what has become known as the Fort Point-type stations were built, but all were constructed on the Pacific Coast.

The Point Adams station house was a symmetrically-planned, gambrel-roofed structure with three prominent dormers (Figure 75). In its symmetry, gambrel roof and front door detailing, the style is nodding to the Colonial Revival. The one sheet shown in Figure 76 is the only drawing that could be found for the three stations built. The design was short-lived, as all three stations were built in 1889, and no more would come from the plans. The Fort Point Life-Saving Station on San Francisco Bay was the prototype, followed by the Point Reyes Life-Saving Station just north of San Francisco Bay, and finally the Point Adams Life-Saving Station. The Fort Point Life-Saving Station is the only one that still stands, and it was the last U.S. Life-Saving Service station still in use in the nation when it was decommissioned in 1990. Today, it is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

The plan for the Fort Point Station in Figure 76 shows two additions using the original plan as a base drawing. There is a tiny office to the right of the entry and a three-sided bay on the right-side elevation. These modifications were not made to the Point Adams Life-Saving Station. Variances from the plans made at Point Adams were



Figure 74. Point Adams Life-Saving Station, Circa 1900.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Point Adams File).



Figure 75. Point Adams Life-Saving Station, Circa 1910. Source:  
Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #654-A 10541).

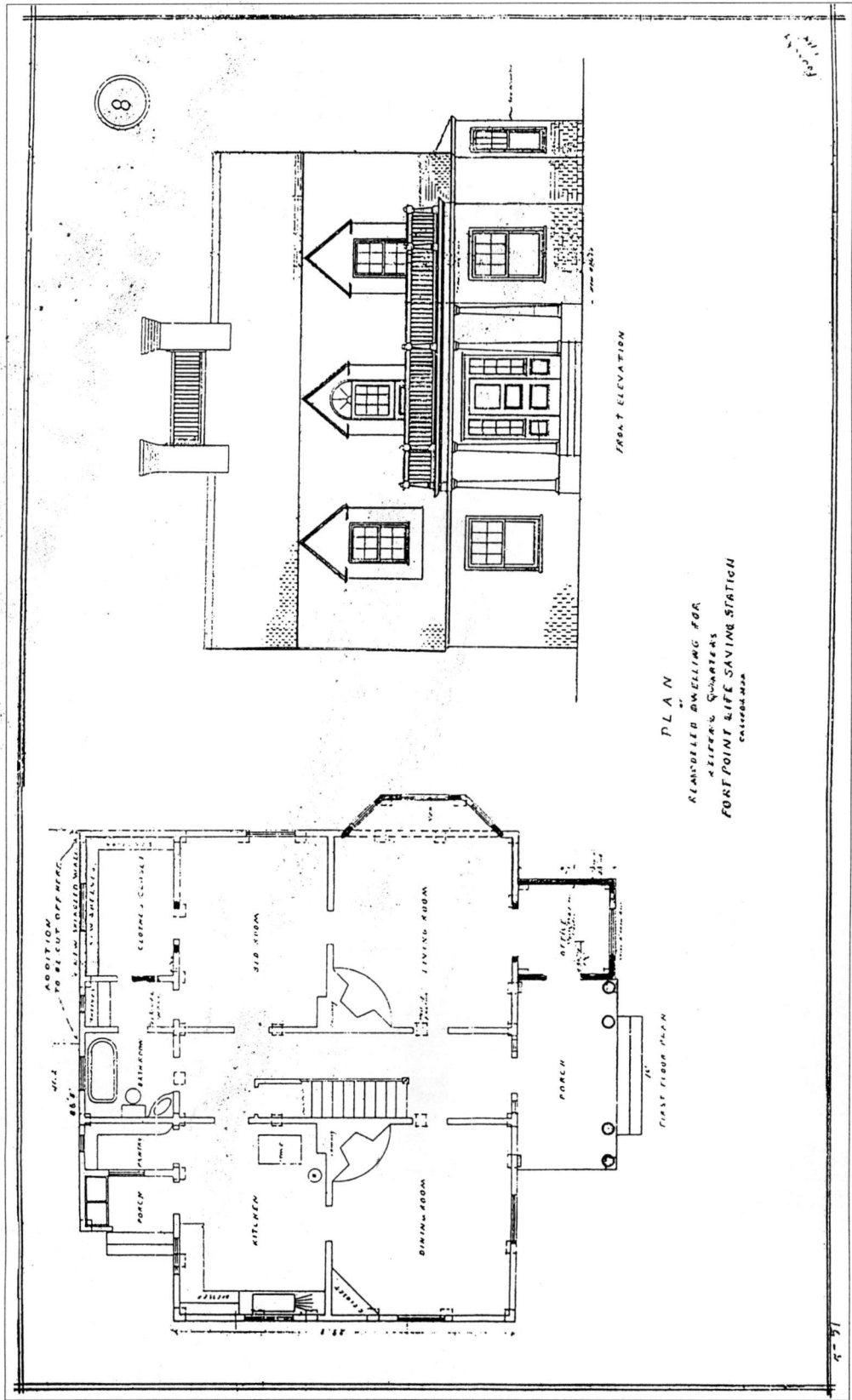


Figure 76. Fort Point-Type Station Plan. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#5-51).

operable shutters, eight-over-eight windows at the first floor, and an entry porch with steps off of all sides. As was typical among Oregon life-saving stations, the plan is symmetrical with a central entry and stair hall. Colonial detailing abounds, such as multi-pane windows with shutters, sidelights at the entry, classical porch columns, a lunette in the central dormer, and eave returns on the dormers. The entire building was sheathed in shingles.

The plans show the central stair hall with dining room and kitchen to the left and living room and bedroom to the right. At the end of the stair hall was a bathroom containing a bathtub, toilet, and sink. This was the first and only life-saving station in Oregon to include a bathroom inside the station house. The second floor would have had a central stair hall leading to four bedrooms for housing the crew, two to a room. The attic space was ventilated at the end walls and would have been used for storage. The roof was surmounted with a lookout between brick chimneys with corbeled caps. Undoubtedly, there was access through the attic to reach the lookout position. There was no basement. Heat was provided by fireplaces in the dining room and living room, and based on the fact there were six flues, there was a fireplace in each of the four crew rooms.

From the Fort Point plans, there was apparently an ell projecting from the rear of the station. A one-story ell is visible in one of the earliest photos of the Point Adams Station and was probably the keeper's bedroom, most likely accessible only from the



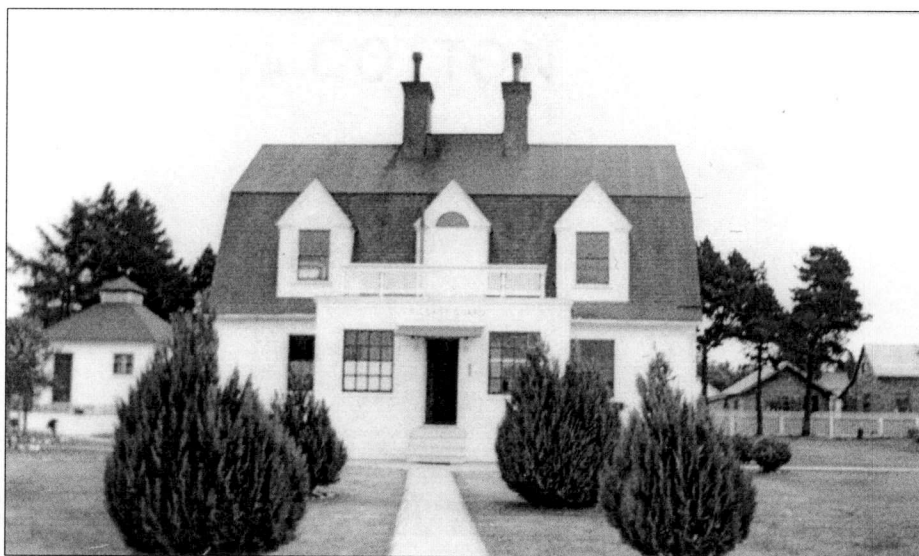


Figure 77. Point Adams Coast Guard Station, 1938. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #0020P364-000364-A).

outside. Sometime between 1923 and 1931, the front porch was filled-in (Figure 77). Apparently the door in the middle dormer was sealed off at about the same time, possibly to house a bathroom for the second floor.

The station's boathouse was a standard Fort Point-type boathouse located to the west of the station house. The building was one-story with two bays and measured 24' wide by 40' deep. The hip roof had a flared eave and was capped with a distinctive "witch's hat" ventilator. This standard boathouse plan is thoroughly described in Chapter III.

A short path from the boathouse led to the original riverwall about 150' in front of the station. The wood revetment was built to stem erosion from the Columbia River. At the riverwall was a ramp for launching the pulling boat. There is a note in the 1914 *Annual Reports* that states, ". . . serious erosion of site, necessitating removal of

boathouse and launchway to another location . . .” at Point Adams.<sup>126</sup> The 1915 *Annual Report* clears up the matter when it mentions, “The boathouse has been moved to a new location and the launchway rebuilt.”<sup>127</sup> Photos corroborate that at some point between 1905 and 1923, Point Adams did acquire another boathouse, one built on piles in the water with an attached launchway. Photos in 1923 show a two-bay boathouse, approximately 900' from the riverwall and connected to shore by a long boardwalk, well out into the Columbia River. The one-story, gable roof boathouse was approximately 25' wide and 40' deep. Between the station and the boathouse appears a vast area of sand on the 1945 aerial (see Figure 73). This sand is the dredge spoils produced by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1930s and 1940s to help retain the Point Adams shoreline and at the same time deepen the Columbia's channel.<sup>128</sup>

Adjacent to the station house to its east was a square, one-story storehouse with a pyramidal roof and cupola ventilator. Next to the storehouse was a 1-1/2 story, gable-roofed carpentry shop. Both of these were built sometime between 1889 and 1905. However, along with the 1889 station house, they were demolished by 1945.

A shop building was erected east of the station between 1923 and 1939. It was used as a carpentry shop for small boat repair, maintenance, and storage. The shop building, approximately 20' wide by 45' deep, was constructed with a post-and-beam foundation. The one-story structure was a utilitarian building with little detail. The

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<sup>126</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1914 Annual Reports*, 21.

<sup>127</sup>U.S. Coast Guard, *1915 Annual Report*, 35

<sup>128</sup>David Miller, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 10 May 2000.

building had a gable roof and was clad entirely in shingles. Illuminating its interior were horizontal bands of multi-pane windows, four on the side and two on the front, along with a large door on the back.

#### Point Adams Lifeboat Station

The Point Adams Lifeboat Station was erected to replace the inadequate life-saving station house built 50 years earlier in 1889. The new station was the first of the four Roosevelt-type stations to be built on the Oregon Coast. These stations followed a standard plan developed by the Coast Guard and were for the most part built during Franklin Roosevelt's administration (1933-45), hence the designation, Roosevelt-type. The new Point Adams station was begun in October 1938, and built as a Public Works Administration Project (PWA). George Buckler of Portland was the general contractor and it cost \$44,000 to build.<sup>129</sup> What was unusual about the construction process at Point Adams was the proximity of the old and new buildings (Figure 78). The Coast Guard designers wanted to site the new station as close as possible to the site of the old station; however, they also wanted to continue to use the old station until the new station was ready in April 1939. Therefore, the new station was built just a few feet in front of the old station.

Like the former Fort Point-type life-saving station house, the new Roosevelt-type station house was completely symmetrical across the front. However, the new station's Colonial Revival roots were much more apparent. Colonial Revival detailing was

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<sup>129</sup>“Point Adams New Station Nearly Ready,” *Astorian Budget*, 16 March 1939.



Figure 78. New Point Adams Coast Guard Station, 1939. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Point Adams File).

represented by multi-pane windows flanked by operable shutters, large Classical corner boards, Tuscan columns, eave returns, a water table with cap, and metal railings in Classical motifs. Even the restricted roof of the entry porch was rimmed with a balustrade. On the rear elevation was an entrance door sheltered by a small gable hood supported by distinguished brackets.

The building was a commodious 80' wide and 32' deep, designed to sleep 17 but could easily handle more people. On the first floor was a central stair hall, dividing officer's quarters to the left from the crew's living space on the right (Figure 79). On the left was the Officer in Charge's (OIC) office, living room, bathroom, and bedroom. On the right was the crew's mess, kitchen, and day room. At the end of the stair hall was a spare bedroom. The second floor was divided symmetrically into four bedrooms for the crew (Figure 80). Each room was setup to sleep four with four beds and four built-in







lockers. At the end of the stair hall was the crew's bathroom with two toilets, two sinks, and two showers. In the stair hall, the staircase continued on to the attic which was divided into two large bunk rooms with lockers on the end walls. A fold-down stair in the stair hall provided access to the 9' by 9', continuously manned, lookout.<sup>130</sup> Six dormers, with arched windows, pierced the attic. Under the building was a full basement with a drill room, boiler room, storm clothes room, provision room, and laundry room. The entire building was surrounded by a concrete sidewalk in the form of a large oval.

As for the building's structure, its exterior walls and subfloor were constructed entirely out of "wolmanized" (i.e., pressure-treated) lumber to help prevent dryrot and insect damage. The foundation had an interesting composition where a 10" reinforced concrete wall was poured, covered with an asphaltic waterproofing, and then sandwiched with a 4" concrete wall to protect the waterproofing. Inside, the floors were covered in mottled brown battleship linoleum except in the kitchen where it was green and in the bathrooms which had "the newest type cork tiled floor."<sup>131</sup>

A standard, four-bay equipment building was built in 1939 to the south of the station (Figure 81). Stations starting in the 1930s all had what were called equipment buildings, which served as garages for vehicles and small boats, plus had storage space for equipment in the attic. The plan of the building was approximately 50' wide by 30' deep and built on a concrete foundation. The equipment building continued the Colonial

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<sup>130</sup>Unlike all other Oregon stations, it is believed Point Adams did not have a lookout tower detached from the building. Their principal lookout was integrated into the dwelling.

<sup>131</sup>"Point Adams New Station Nearly Ready," *Astorian Budget*, 16 March 1939.





Figure 81. Equipment Building (1939) at Point Adams Lifeboat Station, 1997. Source: Author.

Revival theme of the station house with its arched, multi-light windows in the dormers, eave returns at the gable ends, a lunette over the gable windows, and water table with cap. Each dormer was centered over a garage door that contained 10 lights over 15 panels. On the back side, there were four more dormers. On the west elevation was an entrance door sheltered by a small gable hood supported by elegant brackets. The building was clad in shingles and finished with classical corner boards.

It appears that at about the same time as the station house and equipment building were being erected, a second boathouse was erected next to the boathouse out in the Columbia River. For awhile there were three boathouses at the station. This 1939 boathouse was also two-bays wide but significantly larger at about 35' wide by 50' deep. It also was one-story, shingle-clad with a gable roof and loft area. For a short time the

two boathouses sat side by side at the end of the long boardwalk, but by 1945, the c.1915 boathouse was gone. The 1939 boathouse was unfortunately lost in 1982 during a winter storm. A good portion of the long walkway remained and was used for a tidal gauge station. However, the rest of the walkway over the water was destroyed by an ice storm in 1988. The Army Corps of Engineers then removed the rest of the walkway pilings back to the shoreline in early 1989.<sup>132</sup> Fortunately, the portion of the walkway over land still remains today.

#### Preservation

The Point Adams station complex is remarkably intact (Figure 82). The station was decommissioned c.1963 and was used for a brief time by the Clatsop Community College. In 1969, the National Marine Fisheries Service bought the station complex and its 5.8 acres from the Coast Guard to use as a research station. At the time, the National Marine Fisheries Service was well aware of the historic importance of the station and have done their best to preserve what remains over the past 30 years.<sup>133</sup> The Point Adams 1889 station house, the c.1915 boathouse, and the 1939 boathouse are all gone, but the 1889 boathouse, c.1925 shop building, and the 1939 station house and equipment building all survive.

The 1939 station house is the most intact building on the site (Figure 83). It retains its original exterior appearance with only the addition of a non-integral, metal fire

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<sup>132</sup>Miller.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.



Figure 82. Decommissioned Point Adams Lifeboat Station Complex, 1997. Source: Author.



Figure 83. Station House (1939) at Point Adams Lifeboat Station, 1997. Source: Author.

escape on either side of the building to serve the second floor and attic. The shutters have been removed, but they are in on-site storage. On the interior, the National Marine Fisheries Service has not altered the spatial arrangement, only the use of the rooms. All decorative features have been retained. Much of the original signage, cabinetry, closets, and hardware remains. Unfortunately, most of the light fixtures have been replaced over the years; however, in the entry hall there is an original 1939 light fixture. The National Marine Fisheries Service has even continued to use the same shades of paint, such as pale yellow and pale gray, on the interior. The station house is a good model of adaptive reuse.

The original boathouse from the 1889 station is a rare artifact (Figure 84). The only other boathouse remaining in Oregon from the Life-Saving Service era is at Barview on Tillamook Bay. Of the five Fort Point-type boathouses built in Oregon, Point Adams has the only one remaining. Unfortunately, the boathouse lost its most character-defining feature, the witch's hat ventilator, sometime after 1939. It has also lost its two, paired boatroom doors, its flared eave, and some of its windows. During the Coast Guard era, an entry door was inserted along with several newer windows. However, the boathouse is structurally sound and well maintained. As with all of the buildings on the site, a new cedar shingle roof was installed in 1990. If there was a strong desire, coupled with financial support, this would be a prime building for restoration back to its 1889 appearance. At the very least, National Marine Fisheries Service should continue to maintain the structure and not alter it further.

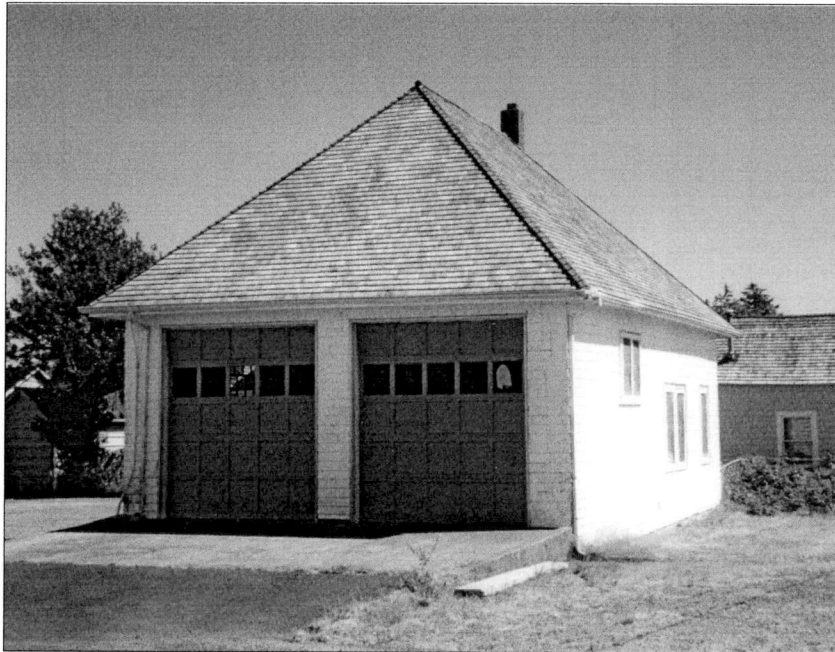


Figure 84. Boathouse (1889) from Point Adams Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.

The exterior of the equipment building (1939) is in excellent shape. The attic space has been adapted into a meeting space. The other four-bay, Roosevelt-type equipment buildings in Oregon are at Siuslaw River and Coos Bay and are identical to the one at Point Adams. The Coast Guard still uses the Siuslaw River and Coos Bay equipment buildings and have altered their exteriors significantly to meet their current needs. In contrast, the Point Adams equipment building has excellent integrity. The National Marine Fisheries Service should continue to maintain the building in its current state, its exterior should not be altered, and its interior not be changed any further. The same applies to the c.1925 shop building. It is in good condition, and it should continue to be used and maintained.

In front of the station were the ubiquitous wreck pole and flag pole. Both of these disappeared sometime after 1945. A bell stand stood in front of the station through WWII, but has also since been removed. The original wood riverwall is still visible in the brush, though it is now well inland behind the dredge spoils. The wooden boardwalk that led to the c.1915 and 1939 boathouses still remains, though it is truncated once it reaches the water's edge. In 1939, a 50', four-legged, steel signal flag tower was erected northeast of the station house. The tower still stands today, making it the only pre-WWII signal flag tower still standing in Oregon.

In summary, the National Marine Fisheries Service should continue to maintain their 1889 boathouse, their c.1925 shop building, and their 1939 station house, equipment building, and signal flag tower. They should retain their concrete sidewalks, the boardwalk out to the Columbia River, and the remains of the old riverwall. Along with the Port Orford Lifeboat Station, Point Adams is the most intact pre-WWII Coast Guard Station in Oregon. At a minimum, the National Marine Fisheries Service should pursue a National Register Nomination for the site encompassing these buildings. Once listed, they could search for additional funds for the preservation of the station's important buildings.

## CHAPTER VI

## COQUILLE RIVER STATIONS

The Coquille River is considered one of the most dangerous river entrances on the Oregon Coast (Figure 85). During a 20-year period from 1891 through 1910, the *Annual Reports* recorded 55 strandings at the mouth of the Coquille River. In comparison, the Coos Bay area reported only 41, the Umpqua River had 14, and the Tillamook Bar had 11. In fact, the Coquille River was second only to the San Francisco Bay area (with 71 groundings) on the entire Pacific Coast during this same time period, and the Coquille River's shipping volume was far less. Part of the difficulty at Coquille River is that the distance between its two jetties is only 500 feet, with the channel itself narrowing to 100 feet. Prior to the construction of the jetties, however, the bar was even more dangerous. The only deaths of Oregon life-savers occurred during a boat drill on the Coquille Bar in 1892. Groundings occurred constantly due to shifting winds, cross currents, engine breakdown, steering failure, and broken tow lines. The life of a surfman at Bandon was a busy and risky one.

The Coquille River principally serves the town of Bandon located on the south side of the river's mouth (Figure 86). The first settlers in the area arrived in 1853, though Hudson Bay Company trappers had been in the area as early as 1826. The native Coquille Indians had, of course, lived in the area long before that. The river was the highway for such settlements as Coquille, Myrtle Point, Prosper, and Powers. Bandon





Figure 85. Tug Towing in a Schooner Over the Coquille River Bar, Circa 1910. Source: Author's Collection.

received a post office in 1877, and quickly formed into a community based on lumber, salmon, and dairy products. Bandon was located only 20 miles from Empire City on Coos Bay, yet almost all of the traffic went by water; as late as 1886, there was not even a wagon road between the two areas.<sup>134</sup>

The Coquille River entrance was recognized early on as extremely dangerous. The first schooner to finally make it across the bar came down from the Umpqua River on 25 August 1859. Reportedly, the locals lined the banks to greet their economic salvation.<sup>135</sup> An initial \$4,000 was raised by the community in 1880 to finance a feeble attempt to confine the river to one channel. In 1884, the federal government kicked in

<sup>134</sup>Gibbs, *Oregon's Seacoast Lighthouses*, 49.

<sup>135</sup>Jerry Winterbotham, *Umpqua: The Lost County of Oregon* (Brownsville, OR: Creative Images Printing, 1994), 122.

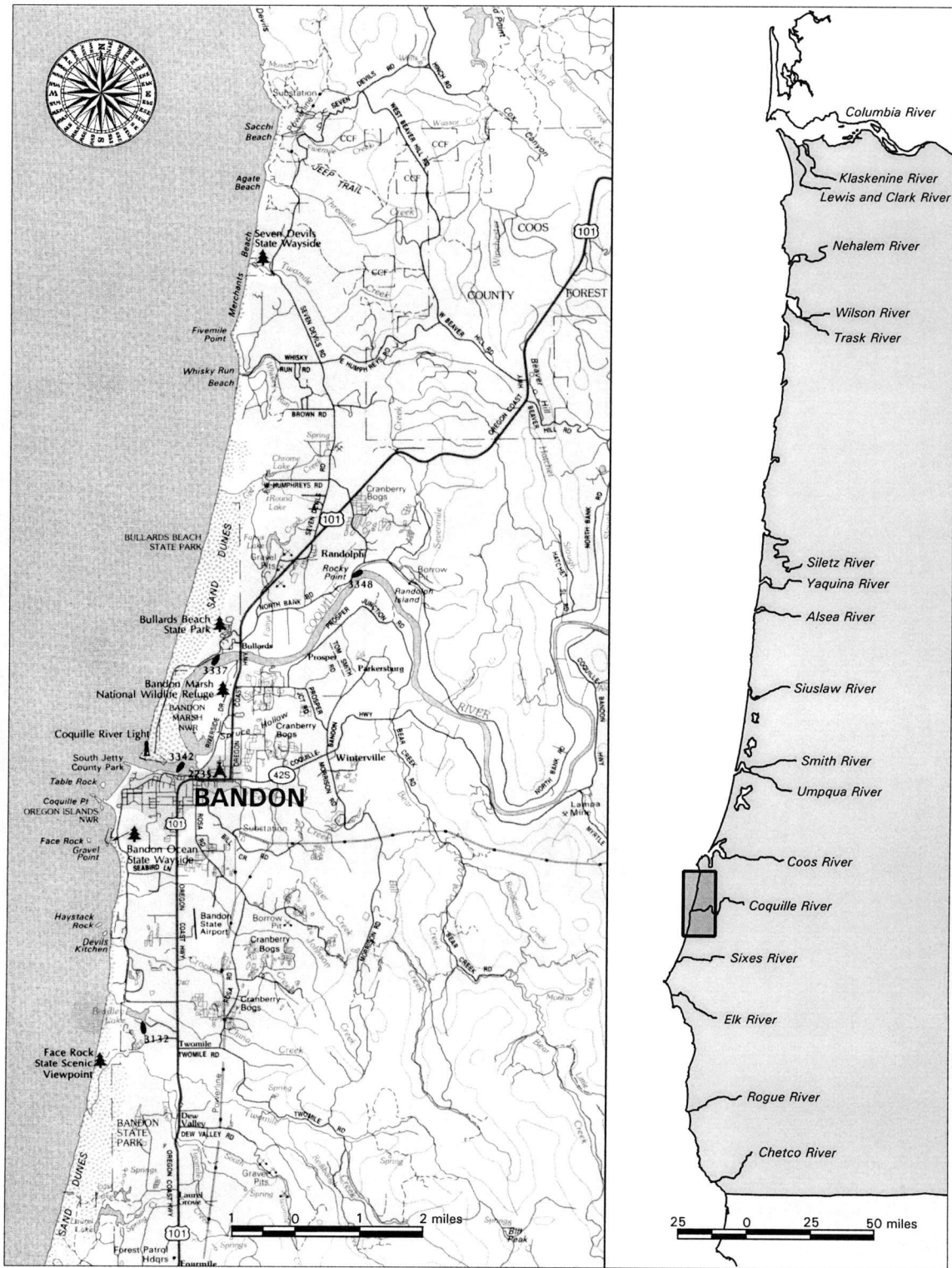


Figure 86. Location of Bandon, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

\$10,000 toward the effort and started building a jetty on the south side of the mouth of the Coquille. In 1895, more money was sunk into the south jetty, and a north jetty was begun. Both of the jetties were declared complete in 1908.<sup>136</sup>

The Lighthouse Bureau did not rank the need for a lighthouse at the Coquille River very highly. Not until 1891 did Congress appropriate funds to build a lighthouse station on the north spit of the Coquille River. The light was illuminated in 1896, making it the 11th lighthouse to be erected in Oregon. Today, the Coquille River Lighthouse is an Oregon State Parks property and is open to the public.

#### Coquille River Life-Saving Station

At about the same time as the lighthouse was being discussed, a life-saving station was proposed for the Coquille River. Oregon Representative Binger Hermann requested the establishment of a life-saving station in 1889.<sup>137</sup> The argument must have been persuasive and the facts clear, as a station with crew was approved on 20 February 1889. It appears that this was the fastest approval of a bill for any Oregon life-saving station. The amount appropriated was \$8,000, whereas most stations of this period and area were receiving \$5,000. Construction on the station was well underway by June 1890, and it was activated in early 1891. The keeper made do with a crew of seven until 15 December 1911, when the station finally acquired an eighth surfman.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Donovan and Kachel, E.33.

<sup>137</sup>Congress, House, 50th Cong., 2nd sess., H.R. 1643, 1889.

<sup>138</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1912 Annual Reports*, 108.

The station was built on the standard Marquette plan with a Fort Point-type boathouse, as described in Chapter III. The station complex was situated on the west end of the Bandon waterfront on First Street (Figure 87). The boathouse was located on the river's edge with a launchway descending directly into the water (Figure 88). The station house was located on the bluff above the boathouse at the end of an 81-step staircase (Figure 89). In general, the 50' by 30' house was divided by a central hallway and stair with the right half reserved for the keeper and the left half for the crew (Figure 90). On the main floor, the keeper's living room, office, kitchen and pantry were to the right. On the left was the crew's living room and quarters. Upstairs, the right half contained the bedrooms for the keeper and his family. On the left was the crew's locker room.

The boathouse was a Fort Point-type boathouse. The standard Fort Point boathouse is thoroughly described in Chapter III. The Coquille River boathouse was located on the waterfront approximately 70' below the station complex. The building was one-story with two bays and measured 24' wide by 40' deep. One bay held a surfboat and the other bay a lifeboat. A launchway led from the building directly into the Coquille River. Around 1915, a diminutive boathouse was appended onto the original boathouse to store the crew's new 36' motor lifeboat (Figure 91). A new launchway was built adjacent to the old one to give the new motor lifeboat a direct run into the river.

As with other stations, there were auxiliary buildings. To the south of the station house were two gable-roofed structures. One was one-story and most likely the wash house. A larger, 1-1/2 story building was probably the workshop. A round water tank, elevated by a square, battered stand, was squeezed in between the 1-1/2 story building





Figure 88. Coquille River Life-Saving Station Crew with Lifeboat, Circa 1912. Source: Bandon Historical Society (BHS #34).

and the station house. Boardwalks connected the buildings, and a picket fence surrounded the station site.

About a mile southwest of the station there was a lookout station to watch the river mouth (Figure 92). The watch house was similar to those mounted at other stations on a tower. This one, however, was elevated by its location on Coquille Point and had no need for additional height. The watch house was an 8' cube with windows on each side, capped by a hipped roof, and built on a wooden platform. Below the lookout on the beach was an auxiliary boathouse where a surfboat and equipment were kept just in case the boats from the station could not get across the bar in an emergency (Figure 93).<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1910 Annual Reports*, 59.





Figure 89. Coquille River Life-Saving Station Staircase to Station House, Circa 1910. Source: Bandon Historical Society (BHS #1559).



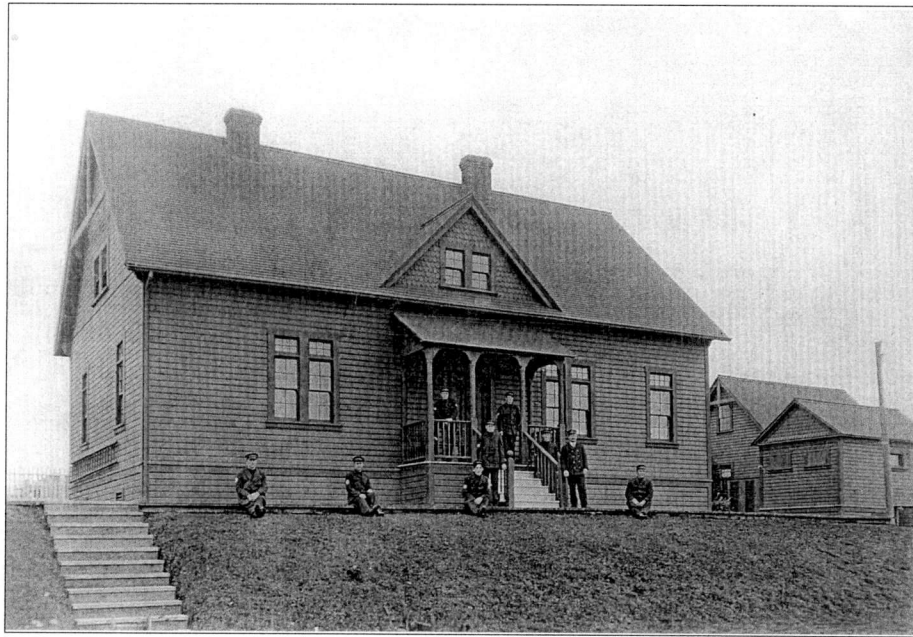


Figure 90. Coquille River Life-Saving Station, Circa 1900. Source: Bandon Historical Society.

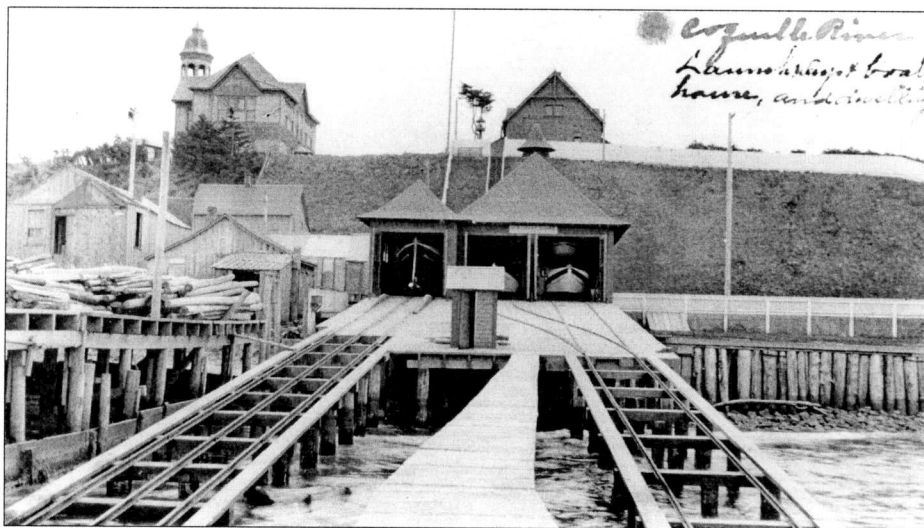


Figure 91. Coquille River Life-Saving Station Boathouse with Station House Directly Behind on Hill, 1916. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Coquille River File).

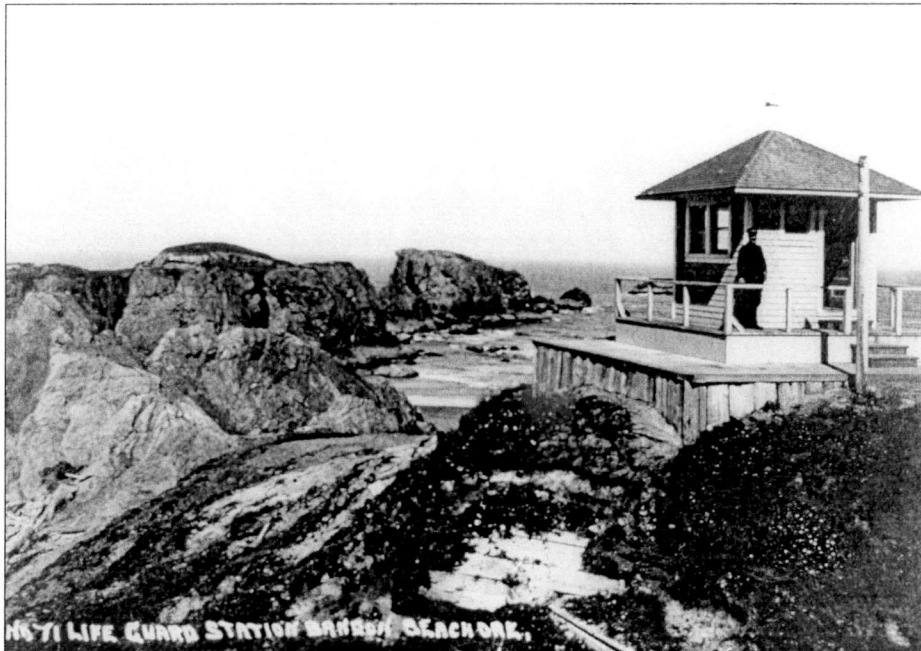


Figure 92. Lookout at Coquille Point, Circa 1900. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Life-Saving Service: Stations File).



Figure 93. Lookout and Abandoned Boathouse at Coquille Point, Circa 1910. Source: Bandon Historical Society (BHS #178).

In late-1916, a concrete sidewalk and retaining wall were poured at the base of the station bluff. At the stair to the station, the retaining wall opened in two places to create two, eight-step flights that rejoined into one before going up the hill. Between 1923 and 1936, the upper portion of the launchway was replaced with a concrete ramp and bulkhead.

Plans were drawn in November 1933 to insert a basement under the station house. Final drawings were made in February 1934 and the basement was built soon after (Figure 94). An exterior entrance to the basement from the rear was provided, as well as an interior stair from the central hall. A furnace and hot water tank were installed. A small lean-to was erected on the south end of the building to house the first toilet for the station house. A new garage building was also built at the same time. It was a 1-1/2 story structure, 22' wide by 27' deep, with a gable roof penetrated by two dormers. Inside were a bedroom and bathroom over a two-bay garage. Unfortunately, most of the town of Bandon burned down soon after in 1936. Only 16 out of approximately 500 buildings survived the blaze on 26 September 1936. The station complex did not outlive the firestorm (Figure 95). All that did survive were the boats, the concrete launchway, and the bell stand on the hill.

#### Coquille River Lifeboat Station

The new Coquille River Lifeboat Station was “. . . the finest and most substantial building erected in Bandon since the fire of ‘36 . . . ,” declared the local *Bandon Western*

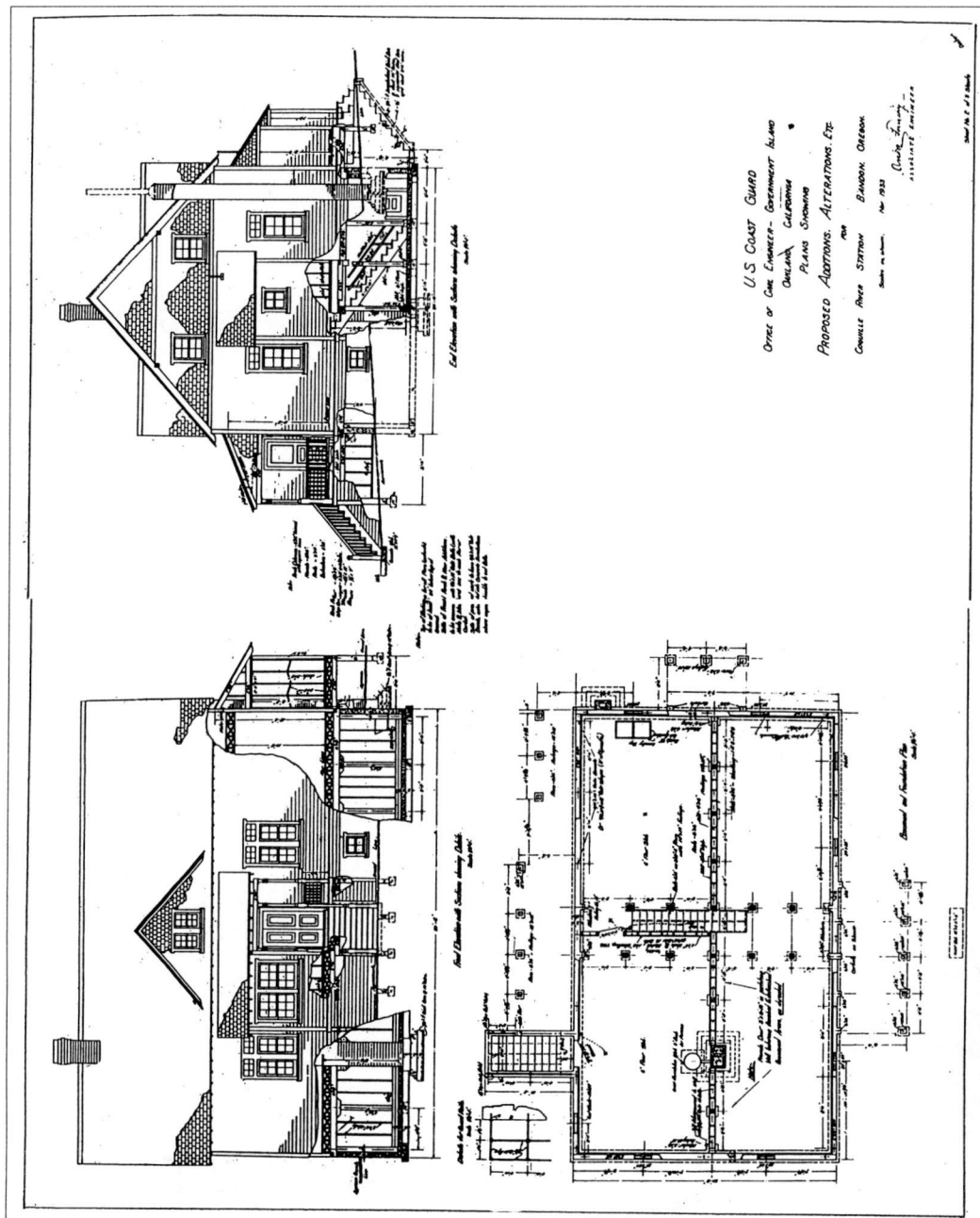


Figure 94. Coquille River Life-Saving Station Remodel Plan, 1933. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#3-439).

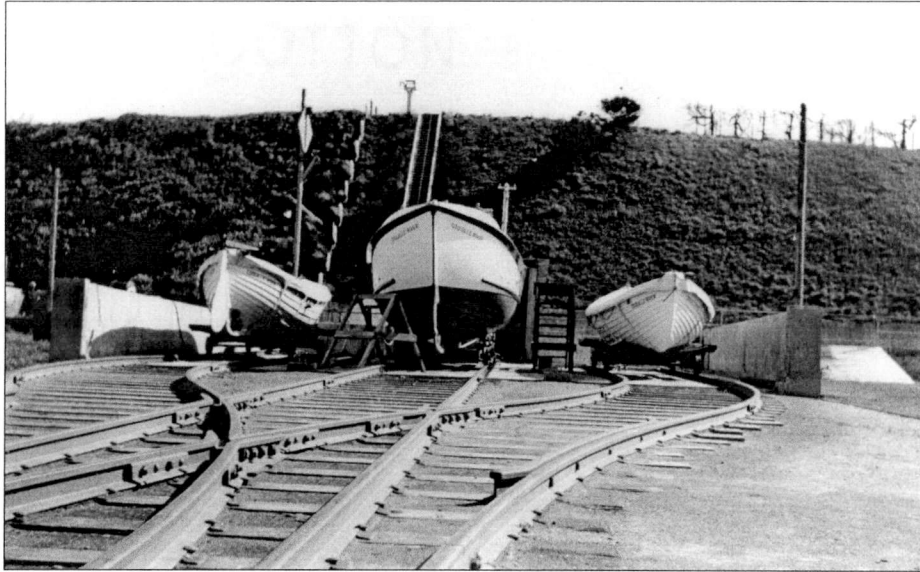


Figure 95. Remains of the Coquille River Life-Saving Station Boathouse After Bandon Fire, 1938. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Coquille River File).

*World* newspaper in 1940.<sup>140</sup> Quinn Construction Company of Portland was the general contractor for the building; however, local subcontractors were used on the job. Working drawings were completed by the Coast Guard on 23 December 1938, and construction started in February 1939 (Figure 96). It was decided to consolidate all of the Coast Guard operations into one building on the waterfront, similar to the one on Yaquina Bay's waterfront, though larger. The structure cost approximately \$80,000, but equipping the station drove the cost up to \$125,000. This was by far the most expensive of the pre-WWII stations built in Oregon. The station was built on the site of the old

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<sup>140</sup>“Completing Federal Structure,” *Bandon Western World*, 11 January 1940.

boathouse to take advantage of the existing launchway; however, the site had to be enlarged, so two lots to the east were purchased from the Gallier Estate.<sup>140</sup>

After the old life-saving station and boathouse had been destroyed on 26 September 1936, the crew was housed in the town's former city hall. Captain J.A. Trantor and the crew finally moved into their new station in late-January 1940 after waiting more than three years for their new dwelling (Figure 97). The *Bandon Western World* noted that to the east of the station, "Married members of the crew have bought lots and built small houses . . . forming a colony that is now termed, 'Little America.'"<sup>141</sup>

The new, two-story station was 120' wide by 54' deep, making it easily the largest station constructed on the Oregon Coast. It was built on a reinforced concrete foundation with a concrete bulkhead along the river to protect the property. The station's exterior walls and subfloor were constructed entirely out of wolmanized Douglas fir lumber to help prevent dryrot and insect damage.<sup>142</sup> The first floor had a 54' by 42' boatroom built over the former launchway not destroyed by the fire (Figure 98). To the left of the boatroom was the crew's kitchen, mess room, utility room, storm clothes locker, and porch. To the right were the three-bay equipment room and workshop, and the office of the Officer in Charge. The equipment room housed a surfboat, a lifeboat, a tractor, truck, and automobile. On the left side of the second floor, there was a bathroom and three bedrooms for two surfmen each (Figure 99). The center section of the second floor

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<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>Photo caption, wolmanized lumber truck, Coquille River File, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.



Figure 96. Coquille River Lifeboat Station Under Construction, 1939. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Coquille River File).



Figure 97. Coquille River Lifeboat Station, 1939. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #0028P244-006977).



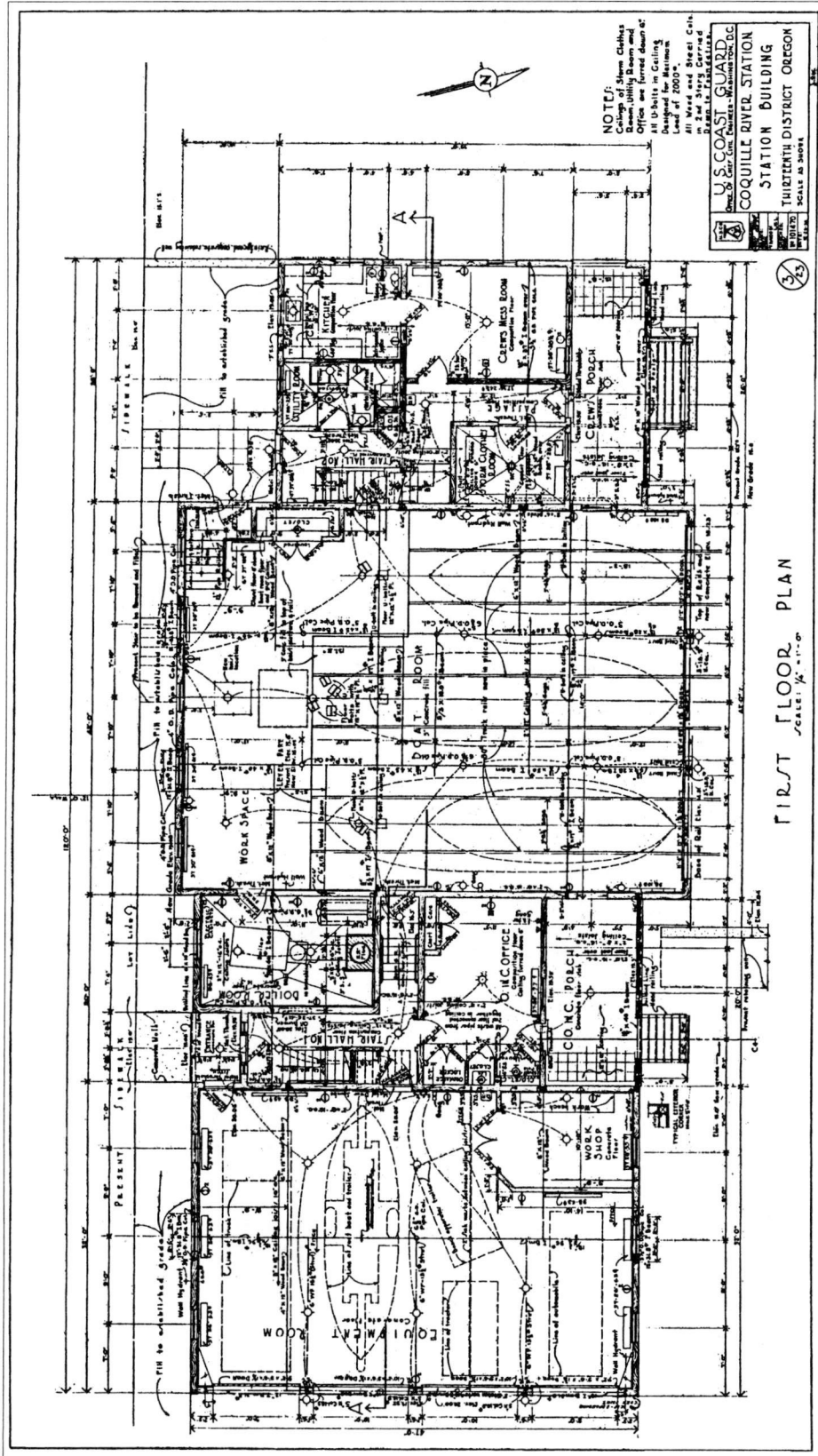


Figure 98. Coquille River Lifeboat Station, First Floor Plan, 1938. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit, Oakland, CA.

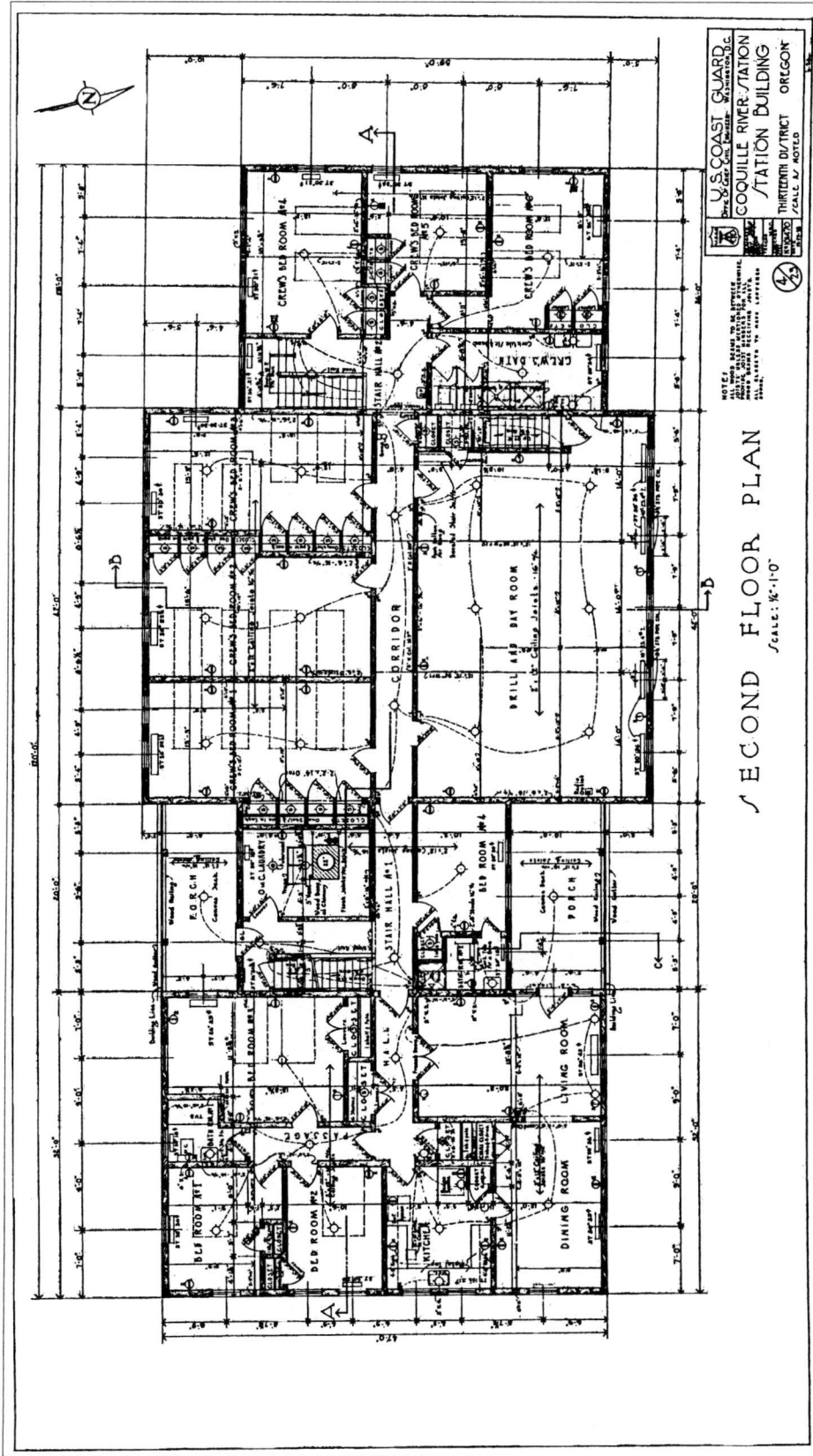


Figure 99. Coquille River Lifeboat Station, Second Floor Plan, 1938. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit, Oakland, CA.

contained a large day room and three more bedrooms large enough for four crewmen each. The right side of the second floor had four more bedrooms, and a kitchen, dining room, living room, and laundry room. The third floor was used for storage space, but during WWII, the area was converted into additional living quarters for the patrolmen (Figure 100).<sup>144</sup> Windows and doors were all weather-stripped with copper. The building was completely electrified with “. . . electric ranges, refrigerators, etc.” An oil-burning heating system serviced the entire building. The station also boasted the “latest style” of one-piece, stainless steel sinks.<sup>145</sup> The old Life-Saving Service bell was removed from its stand on the top of the hill and put into a new stand east of the building.<sup>146</sup>

The Coquille River Lifeboat Station was used heavily during WWII. Besides the Coast Guard’s usual role of protecting life at sea, the station was under Navy jurisdiction and entrusted with beach patrols. The station served as headquarters for a beach patrol that covered a range of about 15 miles of coast centered on Bandon. Throughout the war, local marine traffic remained heavy as large shipments of milk, salmon, and lumber left the port.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup>Kay Linke and Greg Dilkes, *National Register Nomination for Coquille River Life Boat Station* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1983), 8.2.

<sup>145</sup>“Completing Federal Structure,” *Bandon Western World*, 11 January 1940.

<sup>146</sup>William Alvey, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 25 May 2000.

<sup>147</sup>Linke, 8.2.

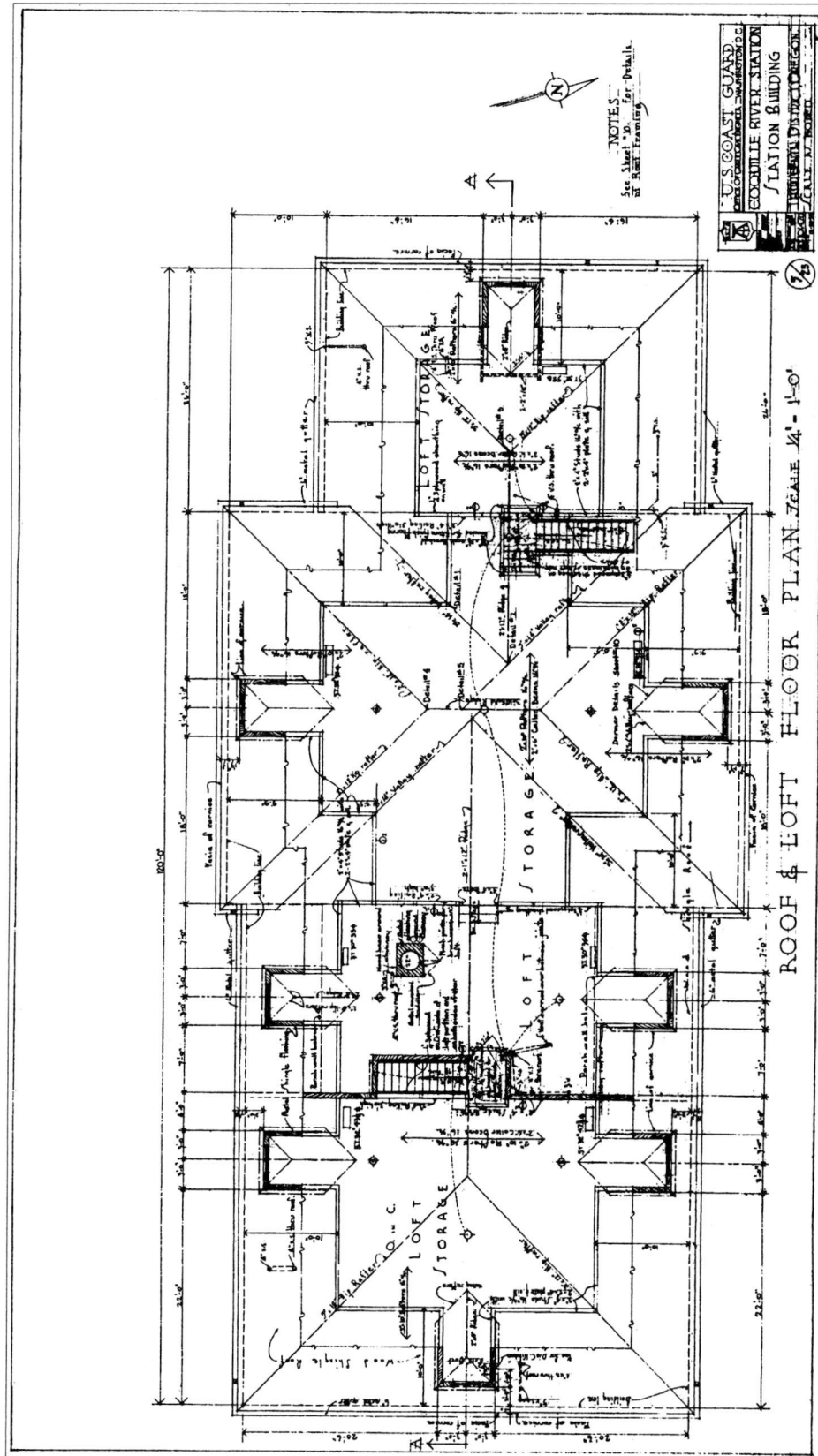


Figure 100. Coquille River Lifeboat Station, Attic Plan, 1938. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit, Oakland, CA.

The Coast Guard scaled back quickly after WWII. In July 1946, the station was decommissioned. The station was reactivated in 1962, with a seven-man contingent. From 1964 until 1969, a portion of the building was used by the Bandon School District to teach boat building.<sup>148</sup> Finally, the Coast Guard moved out of the station entirely in Fall 1971. The building was deemed too costly to maintain to justify its retention.<sup>149</sup> The Coast Guard “surplused” the station, and it was acquired by the National Park Service. In June 1980, the structure was transferred from the National Park Service to the Port of Bandon, which still owns it today.

#### Preservation

Of course, the fire of 1936 took the 1891 station complex. The auxiliary boathouse below the lookout tower out on Coquille Point was torn down before 1916. The lookout tower itself has also disappeared over time. Today, the Coast Guard monitors the mouth of the Coquille River during the summer months only. They still occupy the old life-saving station property on “Coast Guard Hill,” using a post-WWII lookout tower and operating out of a double-wide mobile home (Figure 101). The former Coquille River Lifeboat Station stands virtually intact and mostly vacant (Figure 102). The station was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. It is owned by the Port of Bandon who have only a few of the potential spaces rented. The Port uses the equipment room at the east end of the building as a vehicle maintenance shop. The

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid.

<sup>149</sup>“Coast Guard to Cut Bandon Operations,” *Bandon Western World*, 22 April 1971.



Figure 101. Aerial of Station with Current Coast Guard Lookout at Upper Right and "Little America" to Left, 1966. Source: National Archives (RG 25-CGS, Box 2, Folder Coquille River Station).



Figure 102. Former Coquille Lifeboat Station, 1999. Source: Author.



boatroom remains unused. The Port has maintained the exterior well and should continue to do so according to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*.

This building is the most underutilized of the former Coast Guard stations in Oregon. Business offices make a good, compatible reuse of the structure, as long as rehabilitation standards, as defined in the Secretary's *Standards*, are followed. Its largest tenant, the Bandon Historical Society, operated a museum displaying the history of Bandon starting in 1991. Unfortunately, they were forced out by rising rents in 1995. Today, the museum occupies the old city hall on Highway 101, its new location tripling their attendance. The museum had occupied the former day room and three bedrooms at the center of the second floor of the station. This space is an ideal home for a maritime museum, and it is unfortunate that it is not being used for such a purpose. The day room is 42' by 20' and has five windows overlooking the river. The three adjacent rooms are each 13' by 24' and face Coast Guard Hill. A Coast Guard, military, or maritime museum would not conflict with the mission of the Bandon Historical Museum and might even generate a synergistic relationship.<sup>150</sup>

Another option for the adaptive reuse of the building would be to create a maritime teaching program, similar to what has been created at Hull, Massachusetts, by the Hull Life-Saving Museum, and use the station as the learning facility. The large, three-bay boatroom and adjacent four-bay garage would make ideal boat building space. Students could be housed on the second floor and in the attic space. There are bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry facilities. The day room could be a lecture hall. There

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<sup>150</sup>Judy Knox, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 25 May 2000.



are even multiple exits from the upper floors, a safety code issue that is rarely met easily by Coast Guard stations. The ground floor is level with the street, making for straightforward disabled access, another feature seldom found in Coast Guard stations. If it were promoted and capitalized upon, the Coquille River Lifeboat Station could be a fine asset for the community of Bandon.

## CHAPTER VII

## UMPQUA RIVER STATIONS

European settlement on the Umpqua River was solidified in 1836 when representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company built Fort Umpqua near the site of present day Elkton. The presence of the fort encouraged settlement of the area by nonnatives. The fort was abandoned in 1852, but not before the area began to be populated by Americans.<sup>151</sup> In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the settlements along the Umpqua River became major trading partners with the gold fields of California and Southern Oregon. The settlers knew there was a fortune to be made in supplying the miners with food and timber. The town of Scottsburg, about 30 miles up the Umpqua, thrived during the gold rush in California in 1849, and then again in 1852 with the gold rush in Southern Oregon.<sup>152</sup> Only two, navigable rivers, the Columbia and the Umpqua, cut through the Coast Range and connect the Pacific to the Willamette Valley. Being the further south, the Umpqua was the quickest water route to the Southern Oregon mines from San Francisco or Portland. When the Pacific Coast was surveyed for aids to navigation, the only lighthouse recommended for Oregon was one for the Umpqua River.

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<sup>151</sup>Joyce Ruff Abdill, ed., *Historic Douglas County, Oregon* (Roseburg, OR: Douglas County Historical Society, 1982), 12-13.

<sup>152</sup>Sally Donovan and Marianne Kadas, *National Register Nomination for U.S. Coast Guard Station, Umpqua River, Administration and Equipment Building* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1992), 8.8.

The entrance to the Umpqua River is twisted by an enormous sand spit dangling from the north side of the mouth and projecting southward (Figure 103). The entrance to Coos Bay is configured similarly but on a larger scale. This “North Spit” forces the river southward in an attempt to find an outlet to the ocean. At least eight major shipwrecks occurred at the mouth of the Umpqua River between 1850 and 1857, several coming to rest on North Spit, before a lighthouse was erected. On 3 March 1851, Congress appropriated \$15,000 toward the construction of a light at the Umpqua River. Title for 33 acres on North Spit was obtained 1 October 1851, across the river from the small settlement at Winchester Bay. Funds continued to be appropriated over the years until enough was collected and construction was finally begun in 1855. Due to construction difficulties on the isolated Oregon Coast, the lighthouse was not illuminated until Fall 1857. Unfortunately, the lighthouse was built on the unstable sand of North Spit. In February 1861, the structure was undermined by a winter storm and collapsed soon after. Fortunately, the light was removed from the tower before the disaster.<sup>153</sup>

For more than 30 years, pilots made do without a lighthouse. The Lighthouse Board argued in 1864 that a lighthouse at Cape Arago would serve the region better. This, of course, helped the economic situation of Coos Bay while hurting the economy of the Umpqua River Valley. Finally, Congress acted on 2 October 1888, by purchasing a large amount of stable land on the south side of the Umpqua on a low headland far back from the ocean and river. Construction began in 1891. Problems with contractors, cost

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<sup>153</sup>Gibbs, *Oregon's Seacoast Lighthouses*, 81-82, 88.

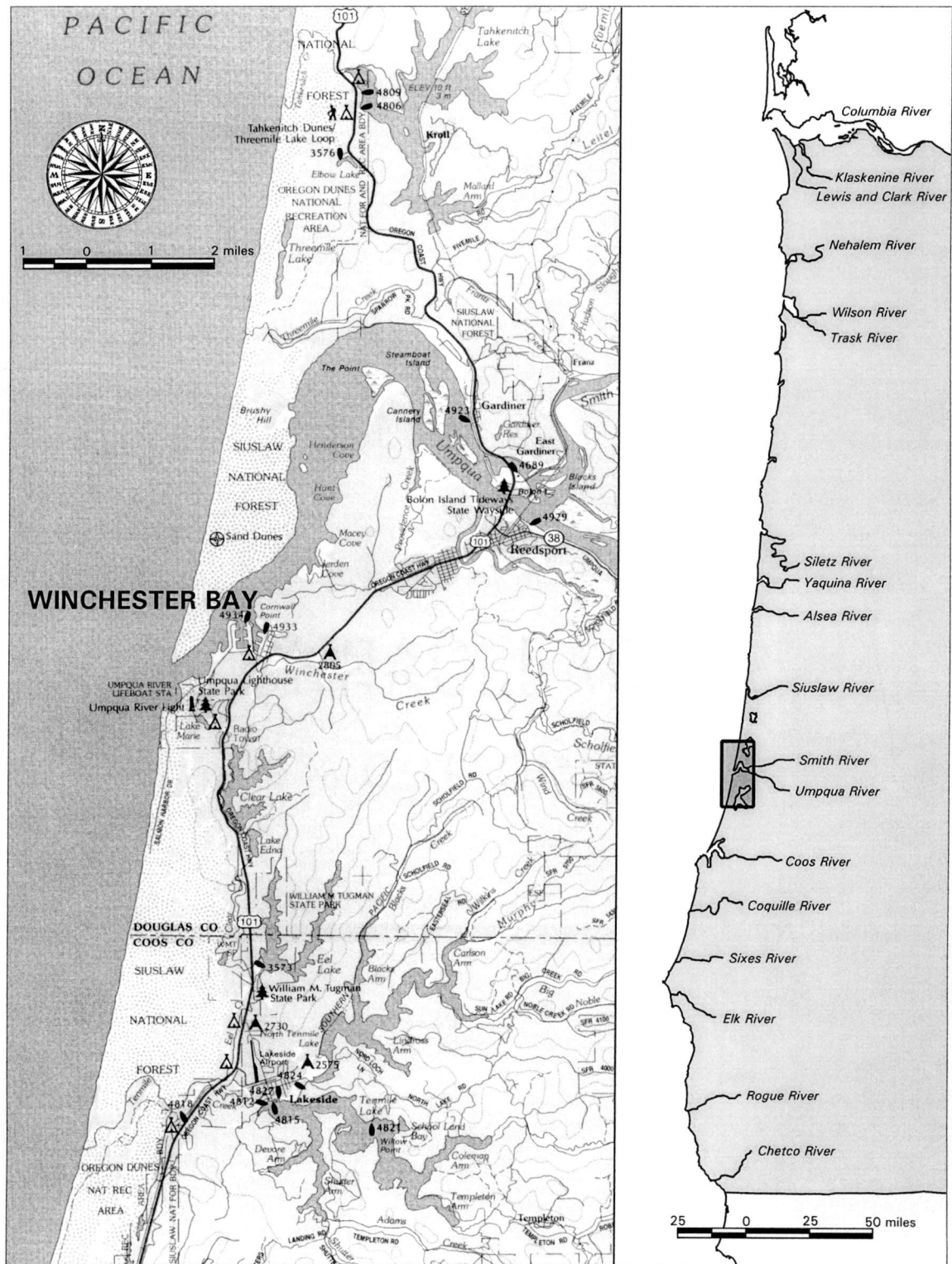


Figure 103. Location of Winchester Bay, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

overruns, and construction errors kept the light from being illuminated until 31 December 1894.<sup>154</sup>

### Umpqua River Life-Saving Station

After the Umpqua River Lighthouse collapsed in 1861, shipwrecks began to occur with increasing frequency. The 1870s saw a long string of tragic disasters. Besides pushing for a new lighthouse, the local populace also requested a life-saving station. Oregon Representative Binger Hermann requested an appropriation of \$8,000 in early 1888 to establish a life-saving station near the mouth of the Umpqua River.<sup>155</sup> The proposed station was rolled into House Resolution 8181, along with ten other life-saving stations, and approved on 17 July 1888; however, a limit of \$5000 was set per station.

A site for the station was selected to the southwest of Fort Umpqua on Army Hill,<sup>156</sup> northeast of the 1857 lighthouse (Figure 104). Conveniently, it was located on land owned by the U.S. Government since the 1850s.<sup>157</sup> The Umpqua River Life-Saving Station opened in September 1891, with a full-time crew of seven. It was not until 1 July 1893 that the station acquired an eighth surfman.<sup>158</sup> The station was built according to

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 82-85, 88.

<sup>155</sup>Congress, House, 50th Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 1766, 1888.

<sup>156</sup>This Fort Umpqua was not associated with the Fort Umpqua erected by the Hudson's Bay Company. The Fort Umpqua on North Spit was built in 1856 to mark the southern boundary of the Siletz Indian Reservation. It was dismantled in 1862.

<sup>157</sup>Donovan and Kadas, 8.15.

<sup>158</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1894 Annual Reports*, 13.

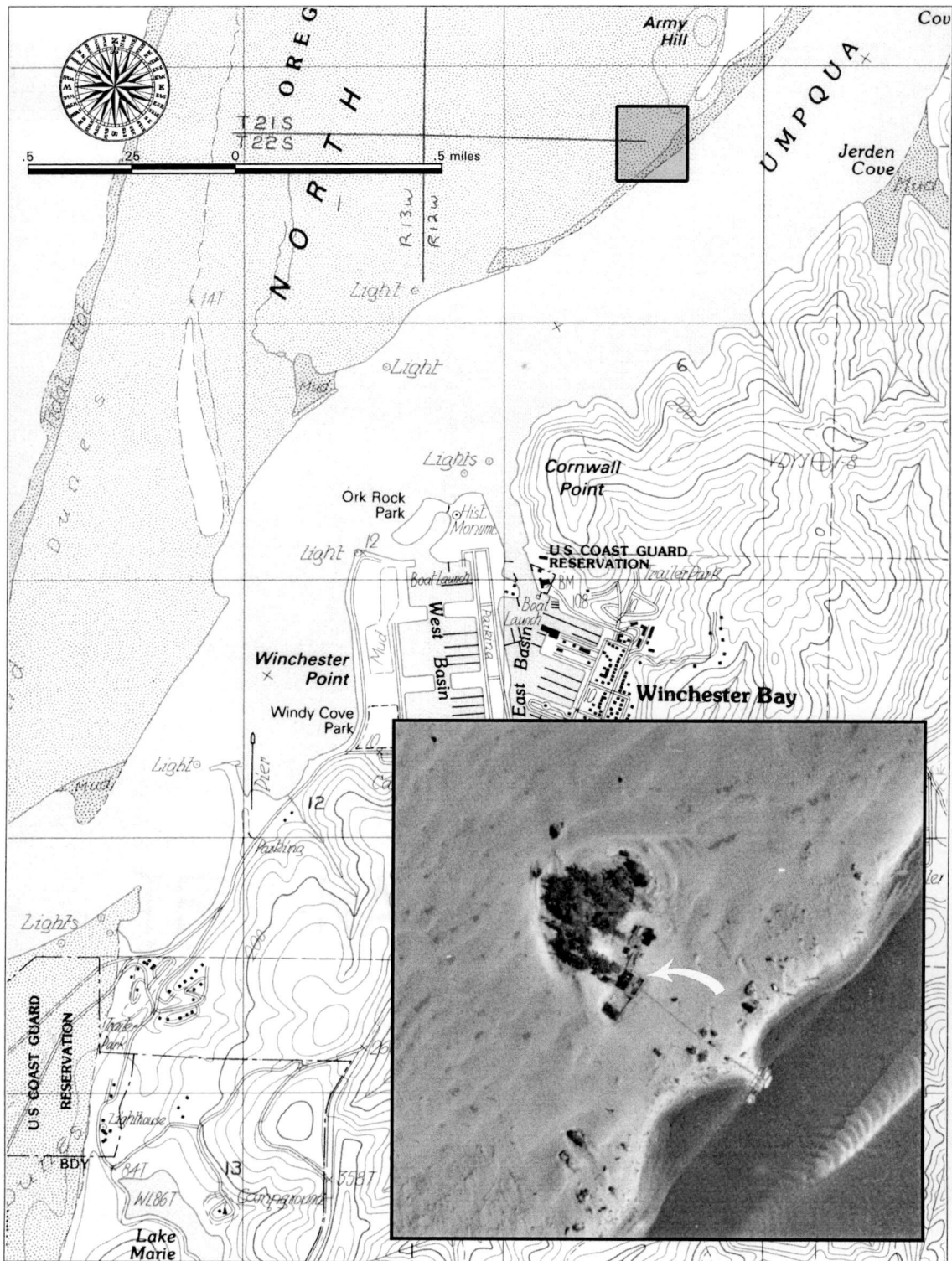


Figure 104. Aerial Photo of the Umpqua River Life-Saving Station Area in 1939 Superimposed Over the Winchester Bay, Oregon, USGS Map (1985 Revision).





Figure 105. Umpqua River Life-Saving Station, 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Umpqua River File).

the standard Marquette plan with a Fort Point-type boathouse (Figure 105) as described in Chapter III. The station complex was located on a small area of stable soil, 1800' southwest of the base of Army Hill, adjacent to the river beach. In general, the 50' by 30' house was divided by a central hallway and stair with the right half reserved for the keeper and the left half for the crew. On the main floor, the keeper's living room, office, kitchen and pantry were to the right. On the left was the crew's living room and quarters. Upstairs, the right half contained bedrooms for the keeper and his family. On the left was the crew's locker room.

The boathouse was a Fort Point-type boathouse. The standard Fort Point boathouse is thoroughly described in Chapter III. The Umpqua River boathouse was located adjacent to the station house about 60' away to the southwest. The building was



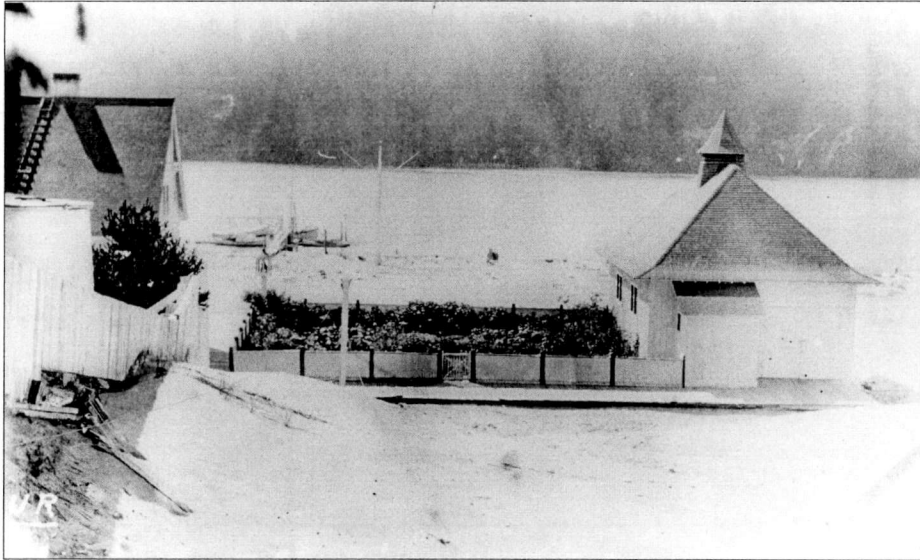


Figure 106. Behind Umpqua River Life-Saving Station, 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Umpqua River File).

one-story with two bays and measured 24' wide by 40' deep. One bay held a surfboat and the other bay a lifeboat. Unusual tracks or guides made from large timbers led from the boathouse to the river's edge about 400' away making for an easy launch. On the back was a lean-to added sometime after the station's construction.

There were many auxiliary structures on the station grounds. At the water's edge, there was a small wharf. The wreck pole stood next to the landing. In the area between the boathouse and station house was a garden surrounded by a solid board fence (Figure 106). At the corner of the garden closest to the front of the station house was an elaborate bell stand. The bell was used to summon the crew in an emergency. The front yard of the station house was also surrounded by a solid board fence. No other station in Oregon appears to have had a solid fence suggesting that drifting sands were especially a



Figure 107. Shop Building Behind Umpqua River Life-Saving Station, 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Umpqua River File).

problem at Umpqua. A solid fence also extends from the back of the station house toward the hill connecting up to the station's flag pole and a structure with a pyramidal roof. Directly behind the station house was a gable roof structure with lean-to, most likely the shop building (Figure 107). Attached to the shop building on its northeast side was a paddock area enclosed by a picket fence. According to Figure 107, there were two horses contained within this corral, the earliest sign (1923) of station horses found in Oregon. Another gable roof structure stood northeast of the corral, probably a small barn for the horses. A small pyramidal roof building was next to the barn. Southwest of the shop building was a small gable roof building. Behind that was the ubiquitous water storage tank. Wooden boardwalks connected the buildings. The lookout tower was



Figure 108. Lookout at Umpqua River Life-Saving Station, 1923.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Umpqua River File).

located closer to the mouth of the Umpqua River about a mile away from the station house (Figure 108).

The Army Corps of Engineers had been working on making the Umpqua River safer and more accommodating to river traffic since they first surveyed it in 1870. The channel was deepened and obstructions removed upriver, but nothing was done at the mouth of the Umpqua. A 1896 survey showed that the expense was too great to build jetties at the entrance. Finally, commerce picked up enough to justify the cost. Work was begun around 1923, funded by the federal government and the Port of Umpqua. A jetty on the north side of the river was completed in 1927. A jetty on the south side of

the river was started in 1930 and completed in the late 1930s. The jetties made the river more navigable thus boosting commercial interests and the local economy.<sup>159</sup>

### Umpqua River Lifeboat Station

A new lifeboat station was erected in 1939 to replace the inadequate life-saving station house built nearly 50 years earlier in 1891. Work was begun on the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station by the general contractor, Lillebo Construction Company, in early 1939.<sup>160</sup> It was decided to locate the station next to the Umpqua River Lighthouse (1894). As mentioned earlier, the Lighthouse Board had learned its lesson and erected the new lighthouse on a stable shelf of land on the south side of the Umpqua River entrance (Figure 109). The lighthouse reserve was 190 acres and could easily accommodate a neighbor to the north of the lighthouse keeper's dwelling.

The new station was the second of the four Roosevelt-type stations to be built on the Oregon Coast (Figure 110). These stations followed a standard plan developed by the Coast Guard and were for the most part built during Franklin Roosevelt's administration (1933-45). Like the former Marquette station house at North Spit, the new station house was completely symmetrical across the front. Colonial Revival detailing was represented by multi-pane windows flanked by operable shutters, large Classical corner boards, Tuscan columns, eave returns, a water table with cap, and metal railings in Classical motifs. Even the restricted roof of the entry porch was rimmed with a balustrade. On the

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<sup>159</sup>Donovan and Kadas, 8.11.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid., 7.1.

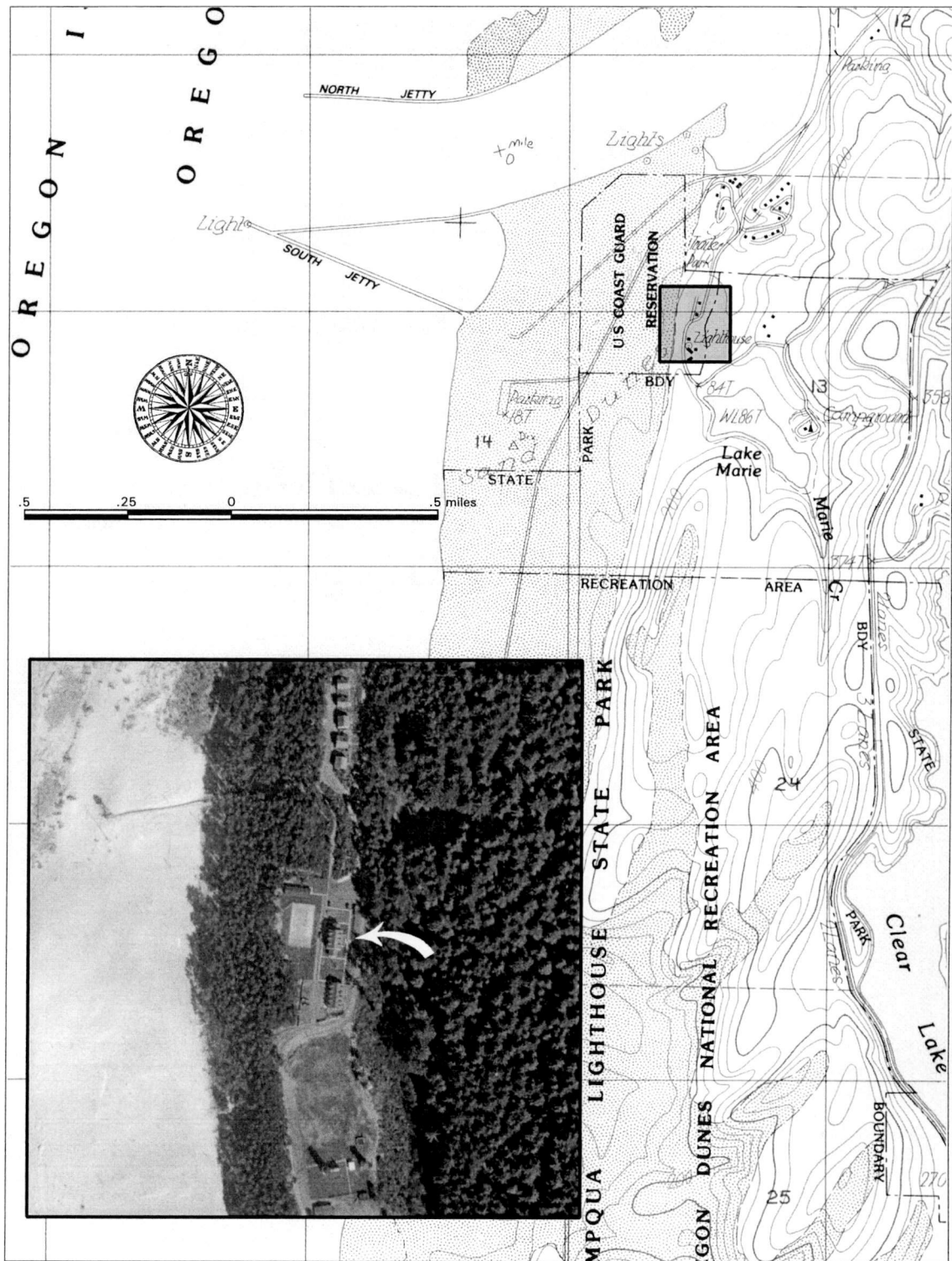


Figure 109. Aerial Photo of the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station Area in 1945 Superimposed Over the Winchester Bay, Oregon, USGS Map (1985 Revision).



Figure 110. Umpqua River Lifeboat Station, 1939. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Umpqua River File).

rear elevation was an entrance door sheltered by a gable hood supported by distinguished brackets. The building was painted white with green shutters and a red roof.

The building was a commodious 80' wide and 32' deep, designed to sleep 17 but could easily handle more. In fact, 18 men were stationed there in 1956 and many more during WWII.<sup>161</sup> On the first floor was a central stair hall, dividing officer's quarters to the left from the crew's living space on the right (Figure 111). On the left was the Officer in Charge's (OIC) office, living room, bathroom, and bedroom. On the right was the crew's mess, kitchen, and day room. At the end of the stair hall was a spare bedroom. The second floor was divided symmetrically into four bedrooms for the crew (Figure 112). Each room was setup to sleep four with four beds and four built-in lockers. At the end of the stair hall was the crew's bathroom with two toilets, two sinks, and two

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<sup>161</sup>Gerry Pratt, "Light Station Marks 99 Years of Duty on Oregon's Coast," *Oregonian*, January 1956.



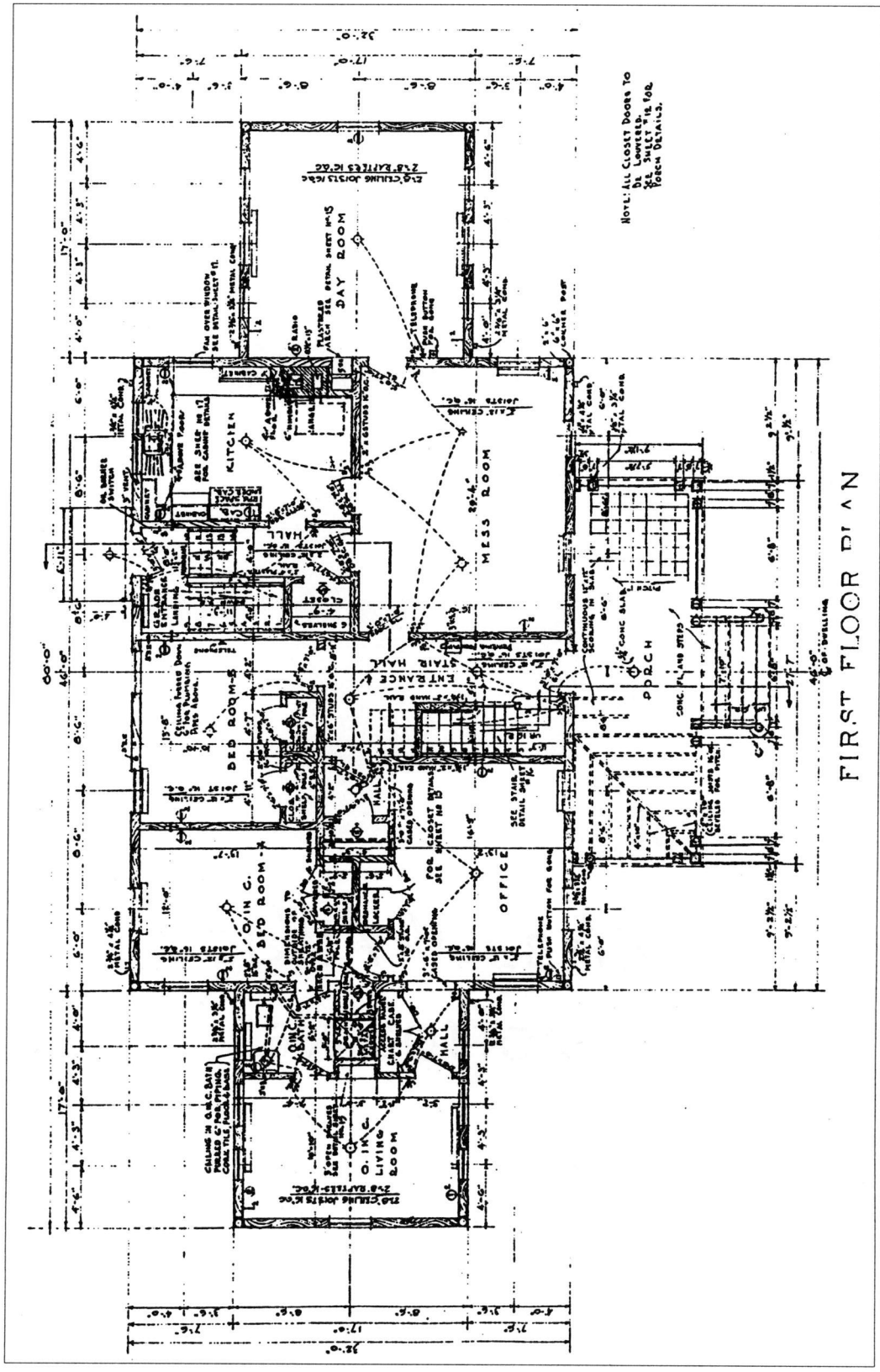


Figure 111. First Floor Plan, Umpqua River Lifeboat Station, Drawn October 1938. Source: Umpqua River Coast Guard Station National Register Nomination.



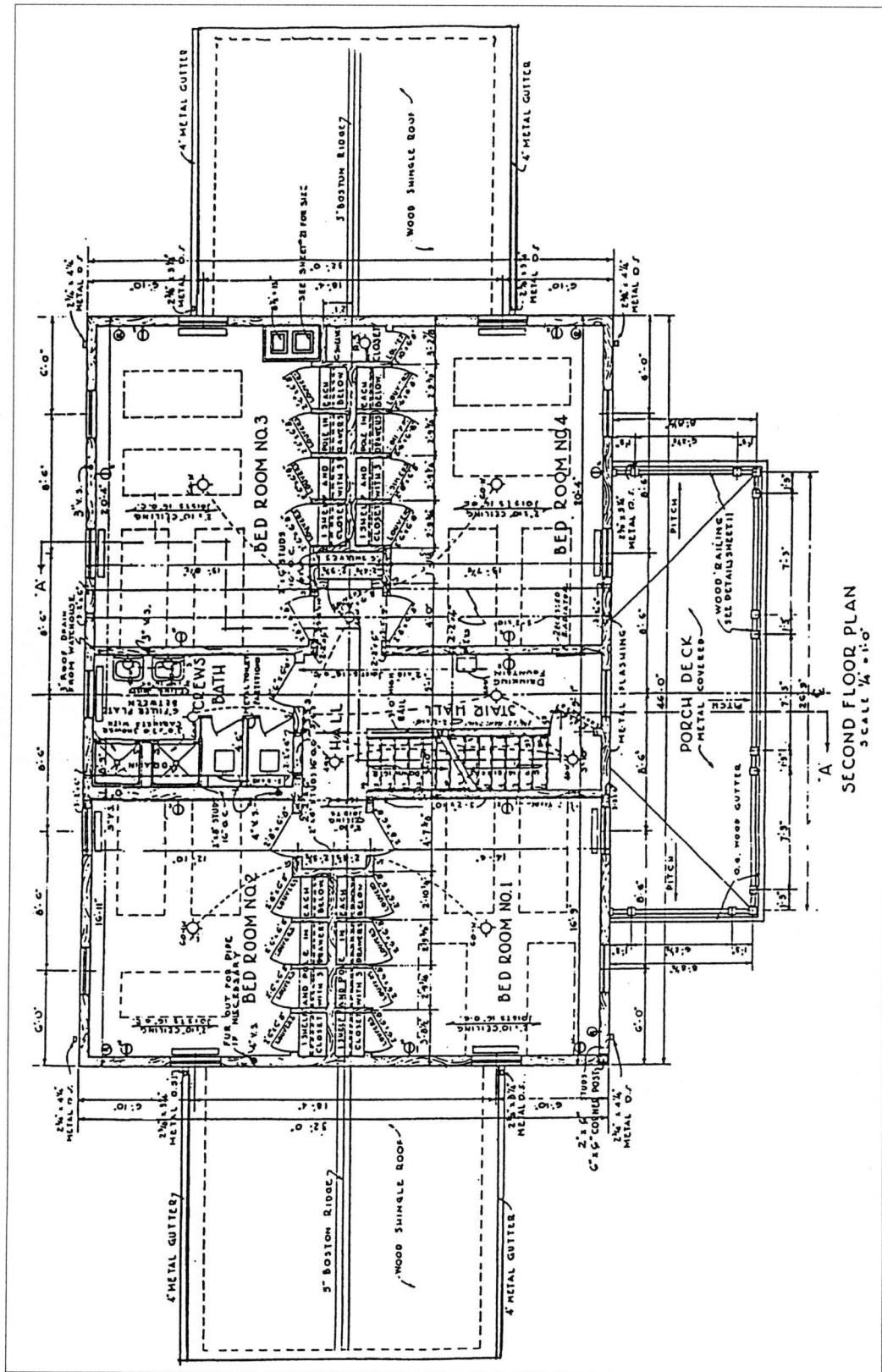


Figure 112. Second Floor Plan, Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station, Revised Drawing May 1940. Source: Tillamook Bay Coast Guard Station National Register Nomination.



Figure 113. Equipment Building at Umpqua River Lifeboat Station, 1991. Source: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (Umpqua River Coast Guard Station File).

showers. In the stair hall, the staircase continued on to the attic which was divided into two large bunk rooms with lockers on the end walls. Six dormers, with arched windows, pierced the attic. Under the building was a full basement with a drill room, boiler room, storm clothes room, provision room, and laundry room.

A standard, five-bay equipment building was also built in 1939 to the north of the station (Figure 113). Stations starting in the 1930s all had what were called equipment buildings, which served as garages for vehicles and small boats, plus had storage space for equipment in the attic. The plan of the building was approximately 62' wide by 30' deep and built on a concrete foundation. The equipment building continued the Colonial Revival theme of the station house with its arched, multi-light windows in the dormers, eave returns at the gable ends, a lunette over the gable windows, and water table with cap. Each dormer was centered over a garage door that contained 10 lights over 15

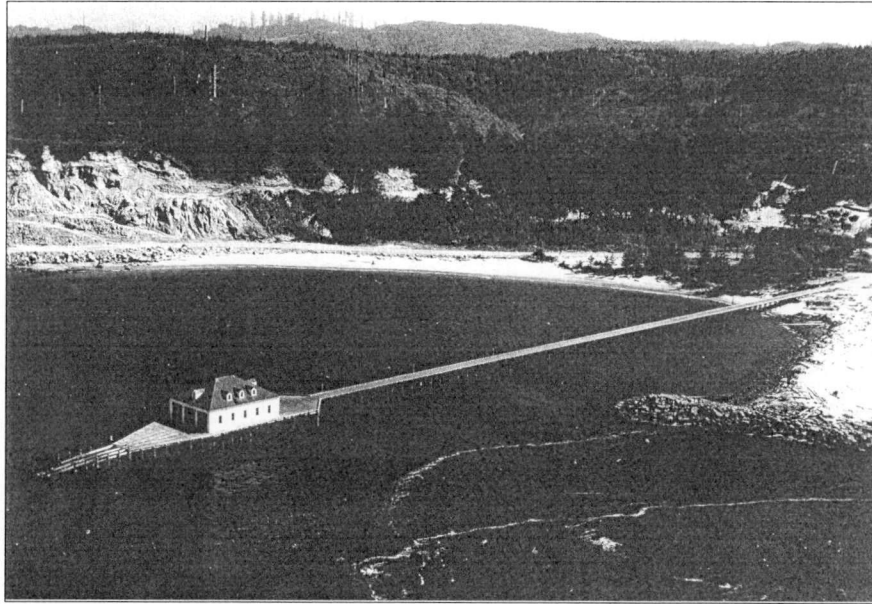


Figure 114. Boathouse at Umpqua River Lifeboat Station, 1962.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Umpqua River File).

panels. On the back side, there were five more dormers. The attic was divided into two dormitory rooms and a bathroom during WWII to house beach patrolmen.<sup>162</sup> On the south elevation was an entrance door sheltered by a small gable hood supported by elegant brackets. The building was clad in shingles and finished with classical corner boards. It was painted in the same color scheme as the station house.

The boathouse for the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station was situated on the Umpqua River nine-tenths of a mile away to the north. The boathouse was built in 1939 at the same time as the station. It was constructed on pilings out in the river at the end of a nearly 800' long wharf (Figure 114). The wharf was wide enough and strong enough to accommodate vehicles. The boathouse was approximately 40' wide by 60' deep,

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<sup>162</sup>Donovan and Kadas, 7.5.

one-story, shingle-clad with a hip roof and loft area. The boathouse was three-bays wide, with overhead garage doors on the front and back of the building. Five windows on each side along with six gable dormers helped illuminate the space. The boathouse was the largest, pre-WWII Coast Guard boathouse on the Oregon Coast. Unfortunately, the boathouse was gutted by fire 20 March 1966.<sup>163</sup> The wharf still stands and is maintained by Douglas County for the use of the public as a crabbing pier.

A 65' lookout tower was erected on the edge of the dunes, northwest of the station house in the 1939. The tower has a metal frame with a wooden watch house capped by a pyramidal roof. A watch was maintained 24 hours a day. The tower still stands today and is maintained and used by the Coast Guard when needed. A concrete tennis court was built behind the station house, which is still visible today. A four-sided, battered water tower was erected behind the lighthouse to the east. The area where the lighthouse keeper's dwellings once stood became the drill field where the wreck pole was set up for breeches buoy practice. The water tower disappeared between 1959 and 1966, along with the wreck pole. The water tower was replaced by a pump house.

As with most life-saving and lifeboat stations along the Oregon Coast, a small community of dwellings associated with the families of married surfmen sprung up near the station. A reference to a “. . . few cabins at the bottom of the hill . . . assigned to married crewmen . . .” is the only reference to the family housing at Umpqua.<sup>164</sup> On the 1945 aerial, there are five small dwellings visible to the north of the station on the road

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<sup>163</sup>“Sunday Night Blaze Destroys Umpqua River Coast Guard Boathouse Near Winchester Bay,” *Coos Bay World*, 21 March 1966.

<sup>164</sup>Donovan and Kadas, 8.16.



Figure 115. Umpqua River Lifeboat Station with Station Buildings at the Bottom and “Little America” at the Top, 1945. Source: University of Oregon Map Library (53VV16PI-M516-PS 26 Sept 45 5M-167).

leading up to the station (Figure 115). Most logically, this was the family housing. The homes no longer stand at their former location, but they may have been taken elsewhere given Oregon’s history for moving buildings.

After only 20 years, plans were already afoot in 1959 to dispose of the buildings and boathouse of the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station.<sup>165</sup> In 1968, the Coast Guard moved out of the station buildings and into their new home to the north in Salmon Harbor on Winchester Bay. Starting in 1971 when the old station buildings were declared surplus, the Douglas County Parks Department began an effort to acquire the station from the

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<sup>165</sup>Photo caption, station disposition plan, Umpqua River File, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

Coast Guard.<sup>166</sup> Douglas County finally received the buildings and 4.7 acres in 1976, and set to work rehabilitating the station house into a local museum. On 19 June 1980, the former station house was opened to the public.<sup>167</sup>

### Preservation

The Umpqua River Life-Saving Station built in 1891 on North Spit was abandoned in 1939 when new quarters were built for them adjacent to the Umpqua River Lighthouse. There are reportedly no above ground remains of the old life-saving station. Like the North Spit at Coos Bay, this area has restricted access due to wildlife conservation concerns and is inaccessible by vehicle. A water approach by boat would be the best means to investigate the old station site; however, the author was not able to make such a journey.

Fortunately, the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station is still quite intact when compared to the life-saving station (Figure 116). The boathouse was lost in 1966, but the 1939 station house and equipment building still stand thanks to Douglas County Parks. After Douglas County acquired it in 1976, they began the work of turning the station house into a local history museum. They retained all of the exterior features, right down to the operable shutters (Figure 117). Inside the station house, the mess room, OIC office, and day room were converted into exhibit rooms without harming the finishes. The histories of the Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard on the Umpqua River are on

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<sup>166</sup>Larry Bacon, "Station's Fate Uncertain," *Eugene Register-Guard*, 3 February 1975.

<sup>167</sup>Donovan and Kadas, 7.5.





Figure 116. Station House at Umpqua River Lifeboat Station, 1991. Source: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (Umpqua River Coast Guard Station File).



Figure 117. Rear Elevation of the Station House at Umpqua River, 1991. Source: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (Umpqua River Coast Guard Station File).



display in the mess room. The other two rooms have exhibits on the county's maritime history, settlement, logging, and Native Americans. The day-to-day operation of the museum is done by Douglas County Parks Department volunteers.<sup>168</sup>

To accommodate the 1970s rehabilitation, the OIC bedroom and spare bedroom were joined by removing the wall between them to create a visitor's lobby and information area. The OIC living room was divided to create men's and women's restrooms, with the former OIC bathroom and hallway serving as anterooms. The kitchen is still used as a kitchen; however, the cabinetry dates to a 1958 remodel.<sup>169</sup> Rooms on the second floor and in the attic were left unaltered. Only one room on the second floor is used and only as a meeting room once a week. In the basement is a for-profit gift shop. Douglas County leases the space to the business, and fortunately, the basement features remain mostly unaltered.<sup>170</sup> Much of the interior woodwork and hardware have been retained throughout the building. The ceiling on the first floor was lowered to accommodate a sprinkler system.

Unlike the adaptive reuse of the station house at Point Adams, the Umpqua River station has had to also accommodate the disabled public. The most difficult problem encountered when rehabilitating the Roosevelt-type stations is conforming to the American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The ADA is civil rights legislation that requires less-able people be given access through the removal of architectural barriers.

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<sup>168</sup>Ed St. John, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 24 May 2000.

<sup>169</sup>Photo caption, kitchen remodel, Umpqua River File, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

<sup>170</sup>Ed St. John, 24 May 2000.

The station design conforms to the basic tenant of Classical Revival government architecture which dictates that the building be elevated and that the public must ascend stairs to get inside. This design feature has been a curse to government buildings across the country. In situations where the historic architecture would be severely compromised, leeway can often be given and the disabled accommodated through documentation of the inaccessible areas. Since the entire museum was unattainable to the disabled, something had to be done to allow all people into the building. To welcome the less-able into the station house, a door was cut into the south elevation at a window location to provide for ramp access to the first floor. This entrance acts as the principal entrance to the museum. Another door has been cut into the north elevation at another window location to allow an access ramp into the basement. Due to fortuitous ground elevation changes, the two ramps are not too obtrusive. Shifting the visitor's entrance to the rear corner was an awkward compromise, as the building was designed to be entered from front and center, but accommodations and a choice had to be made. Because of its symmetry and decorative features, the front elevation of a Roosevelt-type station should never be altered.

The five-bay equipment building is in excellent shape. Four- and five-bay equipment buildings were built at all of the Roosevelt-type stations. A five-bay equipment building still stands at Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station; however, the building at Tillamook has had its garage doors replaced. An exposed sprinkler system was installed by Douglas County during the rehabilitation of the station between 1976 and 1980. Douglas County Parks uses the building today as a maintenance shop. Outside the

equipment building sits a 36' motor lifeboat rehabilitated by a local Boy Scout troop in the late 1970s.

The 1939 lookout tower, maintained and operated by Coast Guard, should continue to be maintained. The only other pre-WWII lookout tower on the Oregon Coast still standing is the one at Yaquina Bay, and its watch house has been highly altered. The tower is integral to telling the story of the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station and should be retained.

In 1992, both the station house and equipment building were listed on the National Register. These buildings should continue to be maintained as described in the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* in Appendix C. Other than minor paint problems, the only maintenance issue observed was that the plantings should be kept further from the building, or at least kept well-trimmed, particularly the shore pine on the southeast corner. Further alterations to the original fabric of the building should not be performed, but if required by the County, they must be done in compliance with the *Standards*. A last recommendation would be for the Coast Guard to add the lookout tower to the National Register Nomination, as it was integral to the operation at the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station.

## CHAPTER VIII

## YAQUINA BAY STATIONS

Yaquina Bay forms a southern boundary for the town of Newport on Oregon's central coast (Figure 118). There have been four station locations throughout the history of water rescue on Yaquina Bay. The first station was located 1-1/2 miles south of the entrance to Yaquina Bay at South Beach. This life-saving station was activated in April 1896. In 1906, the station was abandoned for the more advantageous quarters of the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse on the north side of the bay. The crew then moved down to the waterfront in 1932, and into their one-of-a-kind lifeboat station on Front Avenue. Unfortunately, in 1944, the station burned down to the pilings, and the Coast Guard was forced to occupy temporary quarters. A new lifeboat station was built in 1949 on a shelf of land just east of the Yaquina Bay Bridge. The building is still being used today as the Coast Guard station for Yaquina Bay.

Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station at South Beach

As early as 1888, Oregon Senator John H. Mitchell and Oregon Representative Binger Hermann had introduced legislation for a station at Yaquina Bay to protect the vital shipping interests of Newport.<sup>171</sup> The proposed station was rolled into House

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<sup>171</sup>Congress, Senate, 50th Cong., 1st sess., S. 559, 1888; Congress, House, 50th Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 1767, 1888.

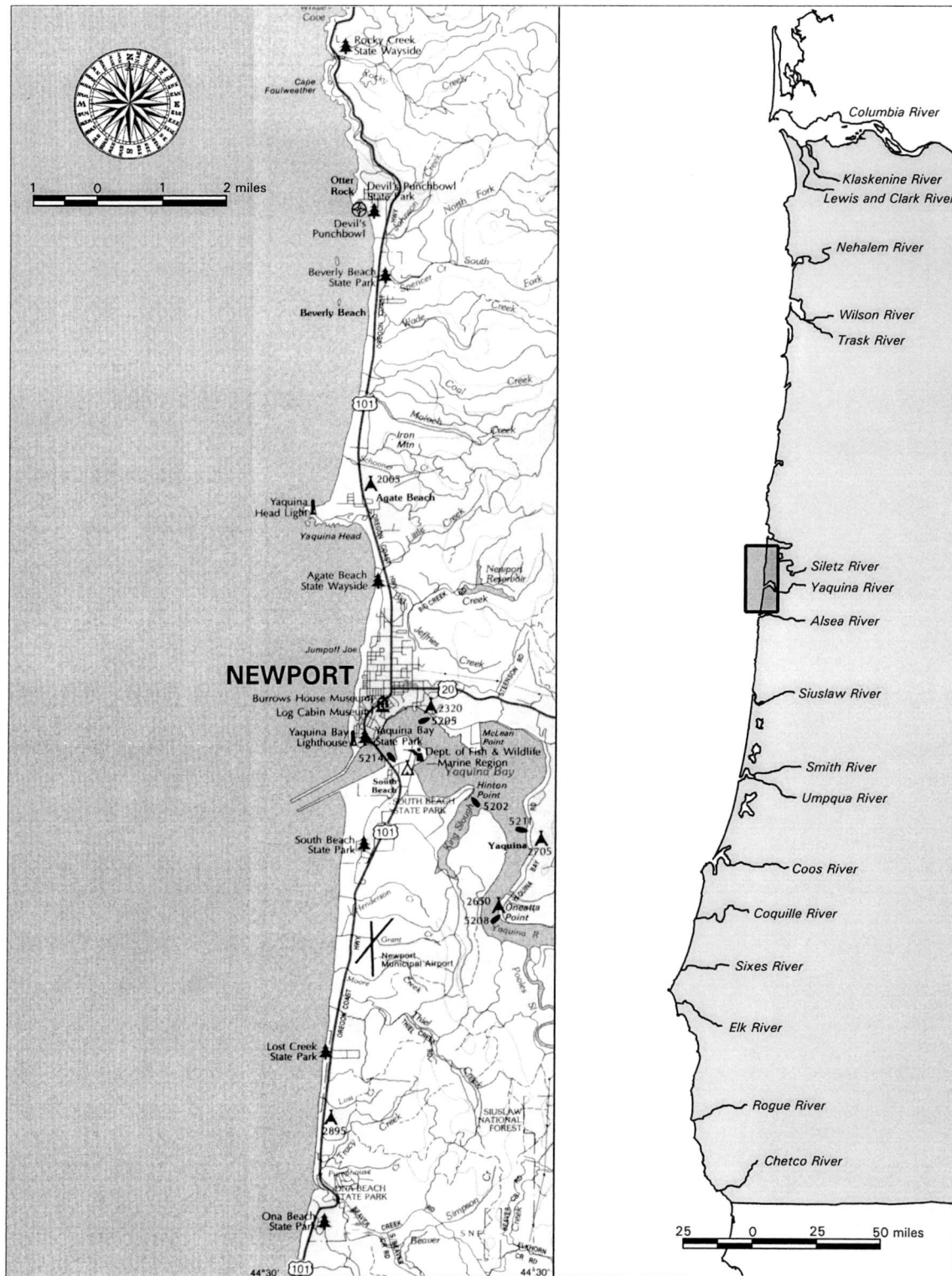


Figure 118. Location of Newport, Oregon, Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

Resolution 8181, along with ten other life-saving stations, and approved on 17 July 1888, with a limit of \$5000 per station. House Resolution 8181 had included the life-saving station at Umpqua River, which was soon built in 1891. Yaquina Bay's life-saving station was inexplicably held up until it was finally manned with a crew of seven in April 1896.<sup>172</sup>

The logical location for the station would be a site where a surfboat could be launched easily and close to the probable location of shipwrecks. A site 1-1/2 miles south of the mouth of Yaquina Bay was chosen to satisfy these two desires (Figure 119). The site was flat with an easy transition from stable land to the beach sand, plus most of the shipwrecks occurred south of the Yaquina Bay entrance.<sup>173</sup> The station was positioned just above the high tide line and consisted of a station house, boathouse, barn, woodshed, and utility building (Figure 120).<sup>174</sup> A drill field was created in front of the station between it and the water. The wreck pole was erected at the far north end of the field (Figure 121).

The station house was built from the standard Marquette plans as described in Chapter III. In general, the house was divided by a central hallway and stair with the right half reserved for the keeper and the left half for the crew. On the main floor, the keeper's living room, office, kitchen, and pantry were to the right. On the left was the

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<sup>172</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1896 Annual Reports*, 13.

<sup>173</sup>Steve M. Wyatt, *Guarding the Coast: Yaquina Bay's Life Savers* (Newport, OR: Lincoln County Historical Society, 1996).

<sup>174</sup>"Life-Saving Crew Helps Bring Water Rescue to Newport," *Newport News-Times*, 29 September 1982.

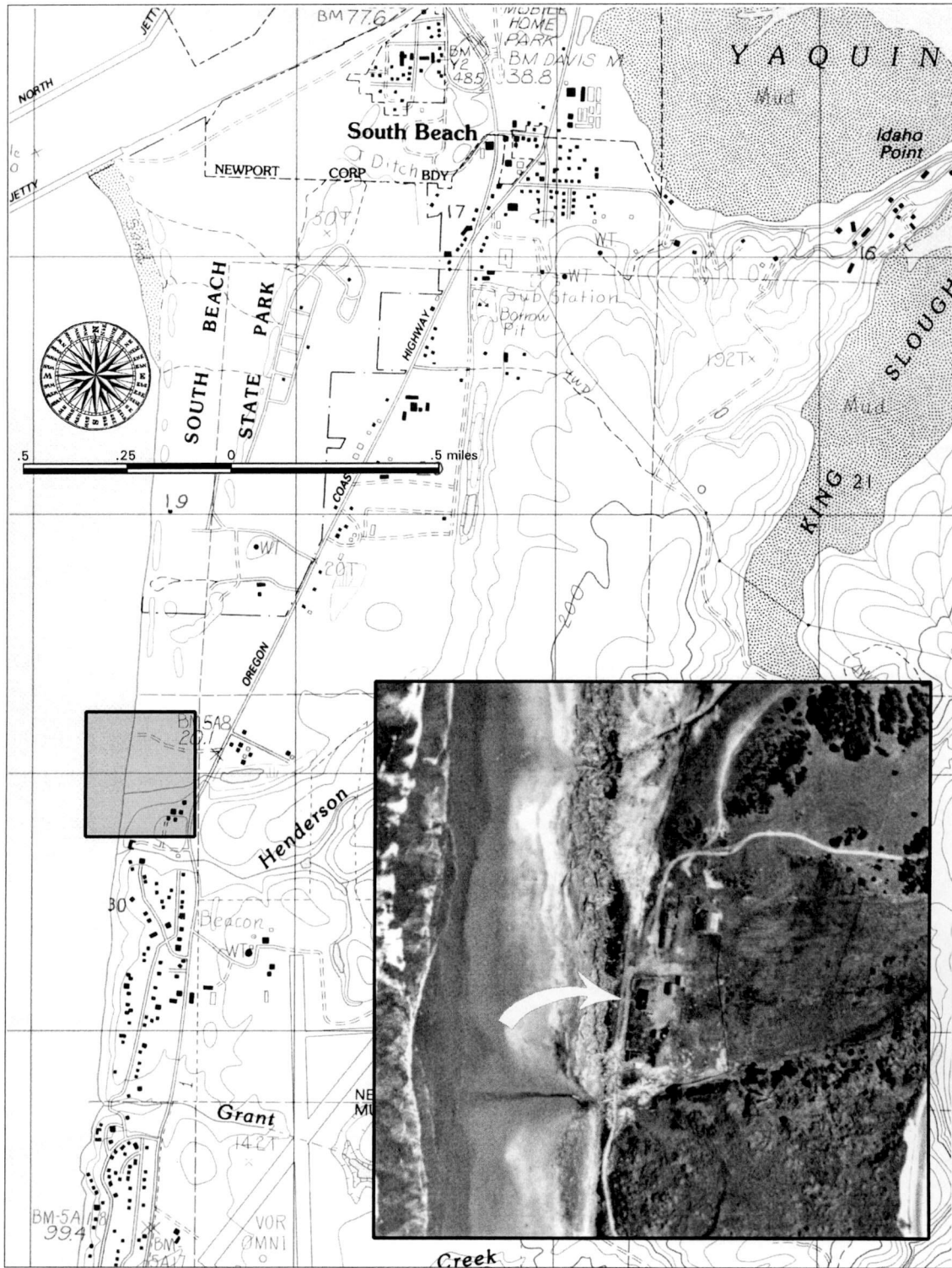


Figure 119. Aerial Photo of the South Beach Station in 1939 Superimposed Over the Newport South, Oregon, USGS Map (1984 Revision).





Figure 120. South Beach Station, 1906. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #590).

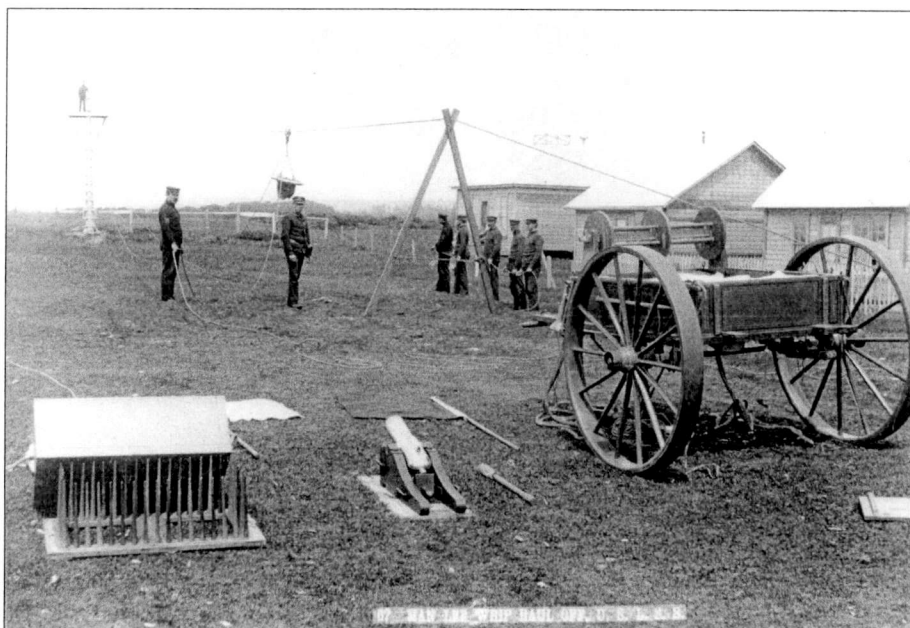


Figure 121. South Beach Beach-Apparatus Drill, Circa 1905. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #0351P034-021001).

crew's living room and mess room. Upstairs, the right half contained the bedrooms for the keeper and his family. On the left was the crew's quarters.<sup>175</sup> This living arrangement varied from the standard Marquette plans in that typically the crew lived on the main floor and had their lockers on the second floor. It must be kept in mind that keepers often altered their stations and that no two stations were identical, only similar.

The boathouse was a standard Fort Point-type boathouse. It was one-story, 24' wide by 40' deep, with two bays. One bay held a surfboat and the other bay a lifeboat. A wooden ramp and boardwalk extended from the front of the boathouse toward the beach. The Fort Point-type boathouse is thoroughly described in Chapter III.

As shown in Figure 122, there were small dwellings in the foreground. It was common practice at isolated stations for married crew members to build small houses close to the stations. These one-story, gable roof structures are purely vernacular, built with local materials by local carpenters. These dwellings have been lost over time, though they may have been moved and recycled elsewhere. Also visible near the center of the photo is an outhouse behind the woodshed, as indoor toilet facilities were not provided for at the station. Other ancillary structures on the station grounds were the flag pole, bell stand, boardwalks, and fencing. All were made of wood. The Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station also had the most impressive signage of any of the stations on the Oregon Coast (Figure 123). Unfortunately, none of these ancillary structures have stood the test of time.

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<sup>175</sup>Ibid.

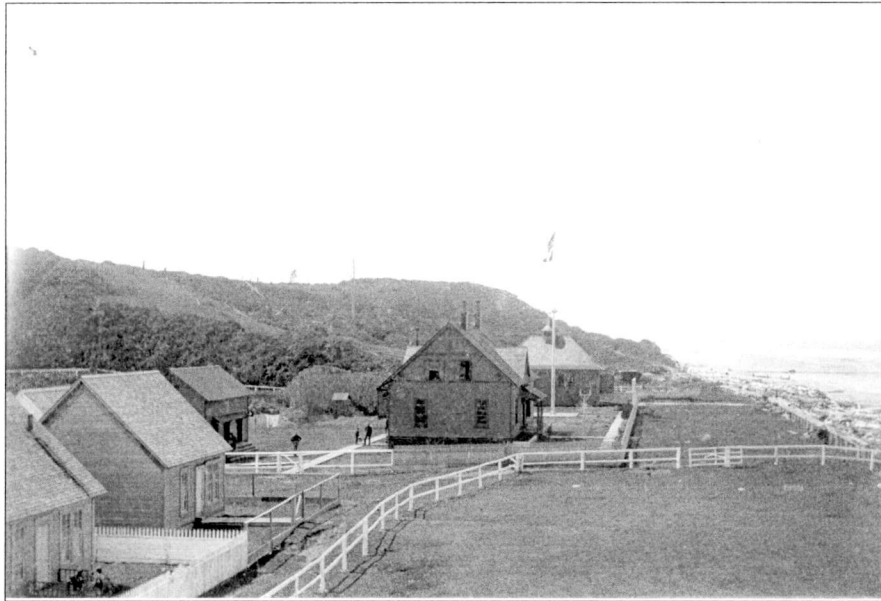


Figure 122. South Beach Station, 1904. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #589).

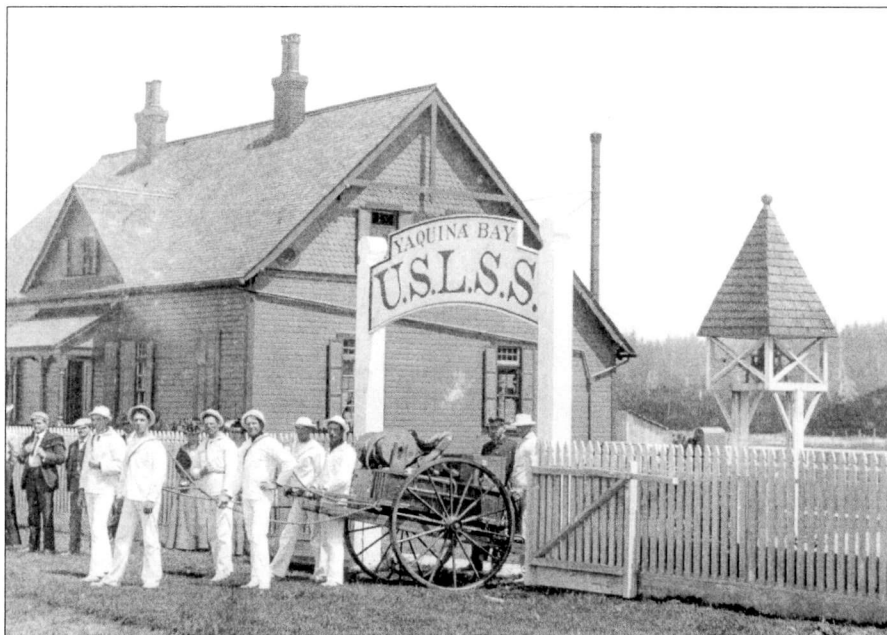


Figure 123. South Beach Station, Circa 1905. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #1099).

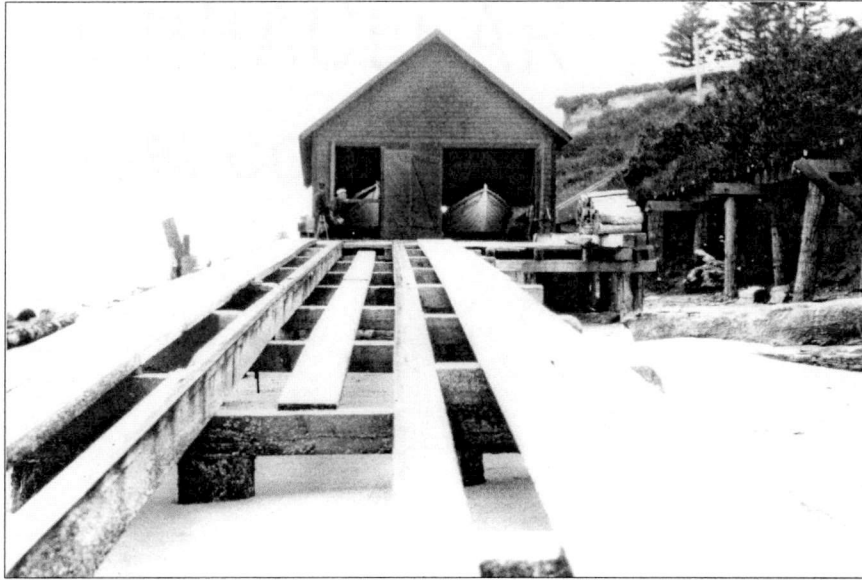


Figure 124. Yaquina Bay Station Boathouse After Move, 1923.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Yaquina Bay File).

Lifeboats, as opposed to surfboats, were a more practical type of rescue boat on the Oregon Coast. Lifeboats were considerably larger and heavier than surfboats so they could not be easily hauled by hand to a launch site. Instead they were usually launched directly into the water from their boathouse down a long ramp. The lifeboats were cradled in carriages fitted with railway wheels correlating to rails on the launchway. This provided a quick launch and easy recovery of the boat. The station at South Beach had such a boathouse on the south shore of Yaquina Bay. It was a two-bay, gable roof boathouse built to hold two rescue boats (Figure 124). A switch was provided partway down the ramp so that only one set of rails went into the water.

The principal drawback of the site at South Beach was the lack of elevation to scan the ocean and shore for wrecks. Three-mile beach patrols verified by patrol clocks

had to be mounted continuously.<sup>176</sup> Also, though it is only about five minutes by car today, the station was considered isolated in its day from nearby Newport. Therefore, within ten years, plans were laid to move the station closer to Newport.

By 1906, the station and crew were ready to move to new quarters on the north side of Yaquina Bay in Newport. The South Beach site was abandoned after only ten years of service. The station buildings at South Beach were eventually acquired by the William S. Ladd estate of Portland. The station structures disappeared sometime after 1939 but before 1951.<sup>177</sup>

#### Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station at Yaquina Bay Lighthouse

“Monday evening, Capt. S.I. Kimball, General Supt. Of the U.S. Life-Saving Service, Capt. C.H. McLellan, General Inspector of Washington D.C., and Capt. D.F. Tozin, U.S.R.C.S. Inspt. of the 13th Life-Saving District with headquarters at Portland, arrived in this city to arrange for the transfer of the Yaquina Bay Life-Saving station to the north side of the bay.”<sup>178</sup> With this event in 1906, the Yaquina Bay Life-Saving station was moved from South Beach to the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse. The team inspected the lighthouse and its residence as to its “condition for immediate occupancy.” The group decided to have the boathouse on the south side of the bay floated over to a new site near the “powder house” on the north side of the bay. The boathouse at the old

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<sup>176</sup>Pernot S. Duff, “Yaquina Bay Lifesaving Station Tales,” *Sunday Oregonian Magazine*, 18 March 1951.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid.

<sup>178</sup>“Life-Saving Station Transferred,” *Yaquina Bay News*, 2 August 1906.



Figure 125. Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (1871) Prior to Life-Saving Service Occupation. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #654-A 38714).

station site on South Beach was kept as an auxiliary boathouse to store a surfboat and beach gear.<sup>179</sup>

The team felt the lighthouse would make a good quarters for the crew and the tower an excellent lookout station (Figure 125). Reported the *Yaquina Bay News*, “. . . the patrol duty is no longer necessary, which will be a great relief to the members of the crew as the exposure they were formerly subject to was very trying upon their health.”<sup>180</sup> A residence building near the lighthouse became home to Keeper Wellander and his family.

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<sup>179</sup>Ibid.

<sup>180</sup>Wyatt, *Guarding the Coast*.

The lighthouse, built in 1871, is the second oldest existing lighthouse on the Oregon Coast.<sup>181</sup> The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is only one of two lighthouses built in Oregon by the U.S. Lighthouse Board with the light integrated into the residence.<sup>182</sup> The structure is the oldest building in Newport, a seaport town founded in 1866.<sup>183</sup> The lighthouse is significant to the life-saving service in that it is considered the only lighthouse in the United States used as a life-saving station.

The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is situated on a 65' tall bluff on the north side of the mouth of Yaquina Bay (Figure 126). The lighthouse was designed by Robert Stockton Williamson, lighthouse engineer, with Cape Cod massing and details.<sup>184</sup> The builder was Ben Simpson, a local contractor.<sup>185</sup> It was constructed between May and October 1871 and illuminated on 3 November 1871.<sup>186</sup> The lighthouse is a two-story wood frame structure built on a high brick basement. A square light tower rises another story from its east elevation. The main body of the house measures 34' wide by 24' 6" deep with a one-story ell projecting from the rear elevation (Figure 127). The ell is 29' long by 12' 6"

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<sup>181</sup>The oldest standing lighthouse in Oregon is the Cape Blanco Lighthouse from 1870.

<sup>182</sup>The other was the Point Adams Lighthouse, built in 1858, and burned in 1912.

<sup>183</sup>Elisabeth Walton, *National Register Nomination for Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1974).

<sup>184</sup>Donovan and Kachel, F.11.10.

<sup>185</sup>Walton, *National Register Nomination for Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse*.

<sup>186</sup>Bruce Roberts and Ray Jones, *Western Lighthouses: Olympic Peninsula to San Diego* (Old Saybrook, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1993), 48.



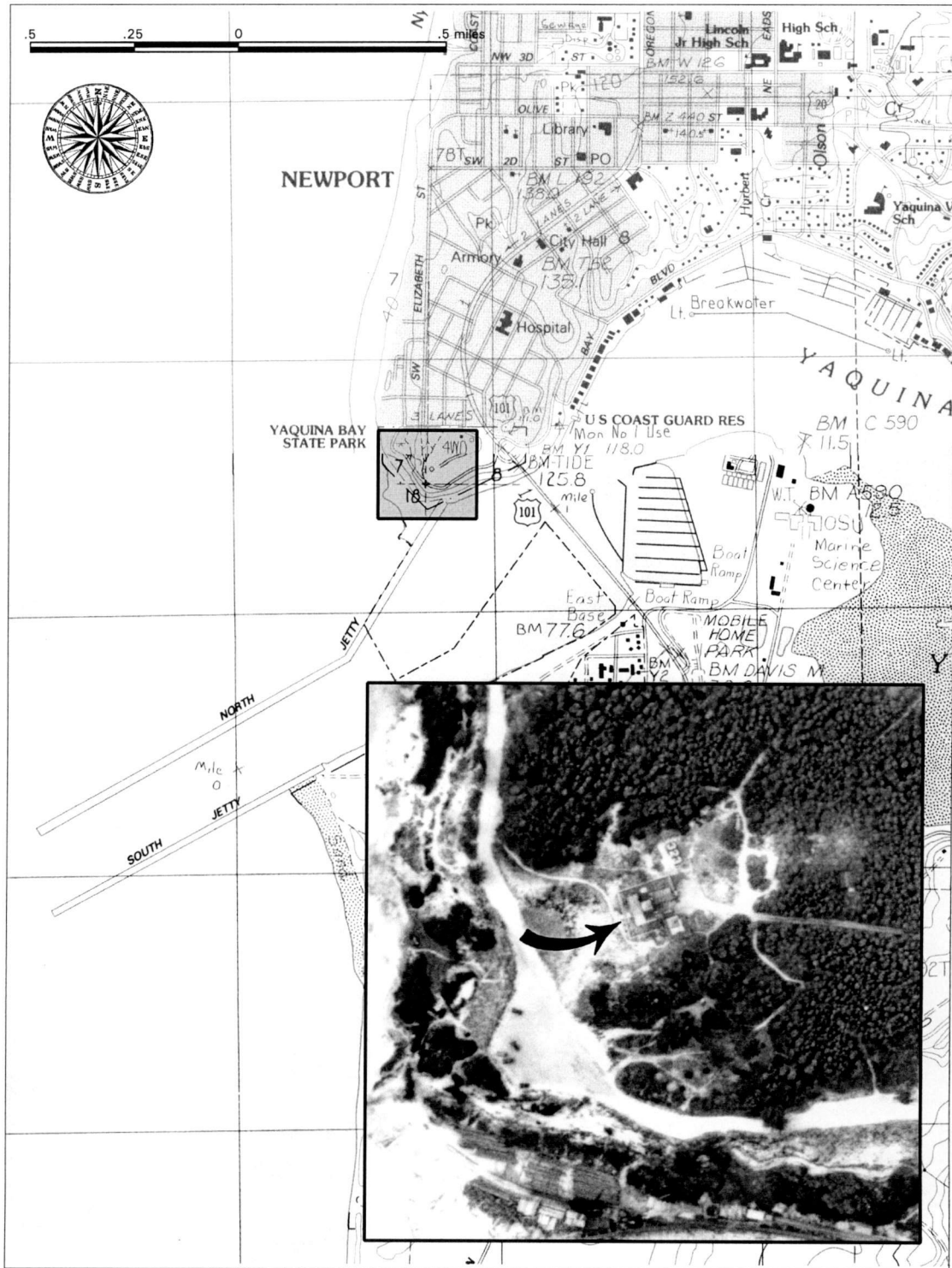


Figure 126. Aerial Photo of the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse Station in 1939 Superimposed Over the Newport North, Oregon, USGS Map (1984 Revision).



Figure 127. Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station, 1917. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Yaquina Bay File).

wide and housed a workshop, storeroom, and toilet. A gallery runs along the ell's south side, set off by posts and arches.

The windows of the lighthouse are six-over-six, double-hung, with a wood sash. They are protected by reconstructed storm shutters. The drop siding is a cedar in a channel rustic pattern. The lantern room is made of iron and housed a fifth-order Fresnel lens. Two brick chimneys straddle the ridge of the cedar shingle roof. The front entrance is protected by a reconstructed gabled-roof porch, decorated with scroll work and supported by bracketed posts. The front door is a reconstruction. The central hall is lit by a transom over the door. Most of the reconstruction and repair work was performed

by Oregon State Parks personnel in 1973-75. The lighthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.<sup>187</sup>

The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse was superceded by the Yaquina Head Lighthouse just three years after construction of the bay light. On 1 October 1874, the light at Yaquina Bay was extinguished. Keeper Charles Pierce, his wife, and eight children moved south for duty at the Cape Blanco Lighthouse. Royal Bensell and his wife moved into the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse as caretakers, as the Lighthouse Board did not relinquish title to the structure. In 1888, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moved into the building while harbor improvements were underway including the construction of the Yaquina Bay jetties.<sup>188</sup>

It is unknown how the life-savers adapted to the space in the lighthouse. Since it was a dwelling for a lighthouse keeper and his large family, the building most likely was used in the same manner. The life-saving keeper had his own house down the hill, so the crew had the run of the house. The main floor had a central hall plan, with the dining room and kitchen to the left, and the parlor and work room to the right (Figure 128). Upstairs were four bedrooms divided up among the crew. An eighth surfman was finally added to the crew on 1 May 1913, so the rooms would have divvied up evenly after then.<sup>189</sup> Storm clothes were probably kept in the basement.

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<sup>187</sup>Elisabeth Walton, *Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse Restoration*, typed manuscript (Salem, OR: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1973).

<sup>188</sup>Walton, *National Register Nomination for Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse*.

<sup>189</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service, *1913 Annual Reports*, 137.

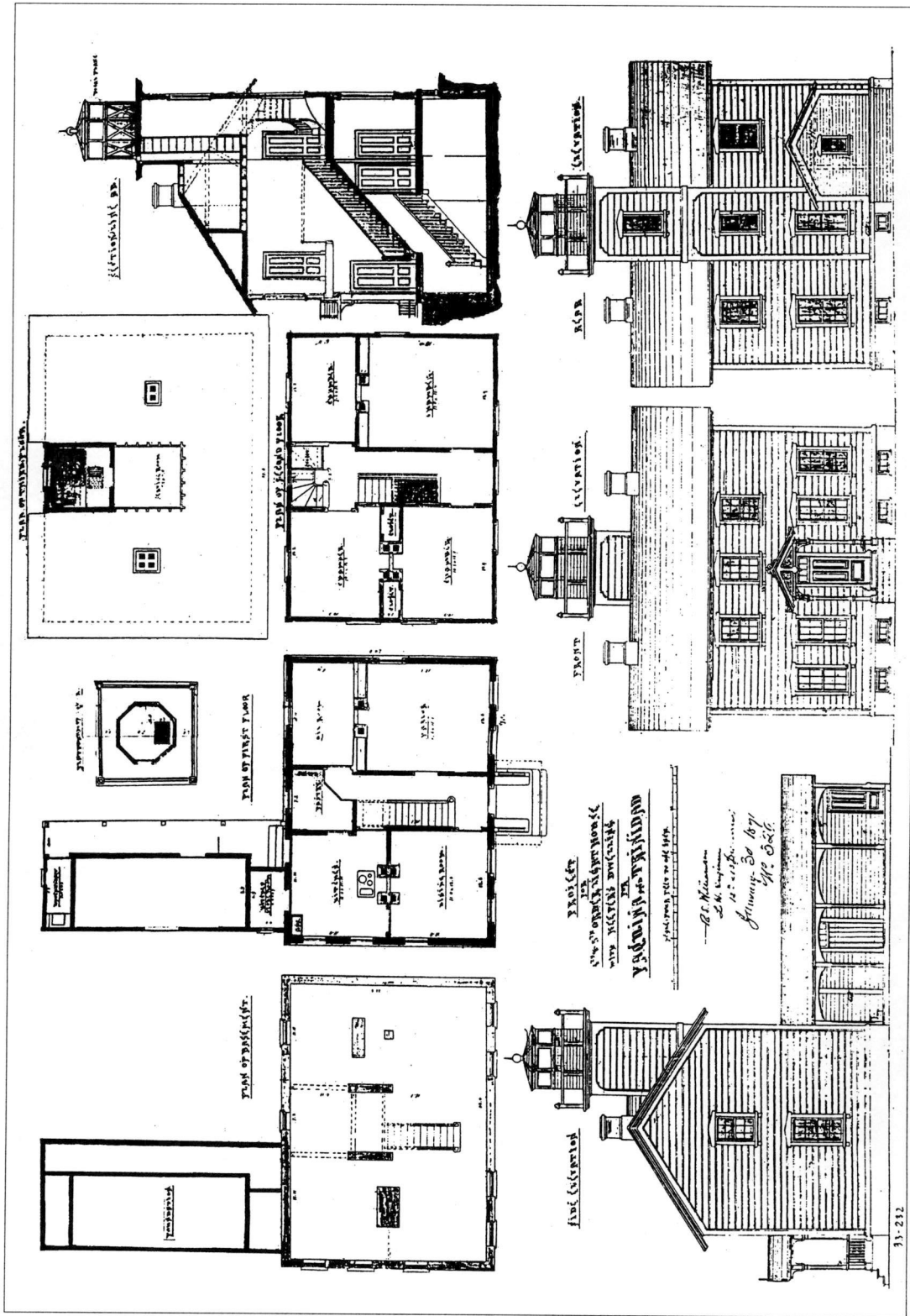


Figure 128. Williamson's 1871 Plans for the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#33-232).

In 1933, the Coast Guard moved out of the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse for new quarters on the waterfront. The federal government released the 36-acre property in 1934 to the State of Oregon Highway Commission for highway right-of-way and park purposes. Park personnel used the property for a time but the residence proved unsatisfactory and the lighthouse was scheduled for demolition in 1946.<sup>190</sup> The threat to the lighthouse galvanized the community, and local citizens campaigned for its preservation. Out of the rescue effort emerged the Lincoln County Historical Society, formed in 1948. The Oregon Highway Commission continued to threaten the structure until 1955 when the commission finally reversed its decision and decided to retain the building for its “scenic and historic interest.”<sup>191</sup> The historical society opened the lighthouse as a house museum in 1965, under a lease agreement with Oregon State Parks, a division of the Highway Commission, and continues to operate it as such today.

The integrity of the lighthouse is good, and the condition is excellent. Many of the interior features have been maintained or restored. The operable window shutters were removed sometime during the occupancy of the Life-Saving Service prior to 1923, but have since been reconstructed in a compatible manner. A central forced-air heating system was installed in 1974. The ell was sensitively reconstructed during the 1973-75 rehabilitation using the original plans, historic photographs, and archaeological evidence to house modern restrooms.

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<sup>190</sup>Walton, *National Register Nomination for Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse*.

<sup>191</sup>James M. Howes, *The Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse: A Brief History* (Newport, OR: Lincoln County Historical Society, 1968).

### Yaquina Bay Lifeboat Station

“A new site was also looked over for a new station building with regard to the future should the Government at any time require the use of the present building.”<sup>192</sup>

This statement was made in 1906 when the Life-Saving Service moved into the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse. The “site” the federal government had looked at was on the west end of Newport’s waterfront (Figure 129). In August 1911, the Newport City Council purchased a lease from John Margson, and coupled with an adjoining tract of waterfront property from the federal government, requested the U.S. Life-Saving Service erect a “first class life saving station, with the best modern improvements.”<sup>193</sup>

What was built soon after was a small boathouse (Figure 130). Not much is known about this “bay boathouse” other than what can be gleaned from photographs. The boathouse that was moved from the southern shore of Yaquina Bay still acted as the principal boathouse (Figure 131). The “beach boathouse” had been moved in 1909 further east to a more sheltered location near the site of the present Yaquina Bay Bridge.<sup>194</sup>

On 8 August 1930, a “fire of unknown origin” destroyed the beach boathouse along with all of its equipment. The boathouse had contained two lifeboats, a surfboat,

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<sup>192</sup>“Life-Saving Station Transferred,” *Yaquina Bay News*, 2 August 1906.

<sup>193</sup>Newport Commercial Club to the Newport Common Council, 23 August 1911, typed manuscript (Lincoln County Historical Society, Newport, Oregon).

<sup>194</sup>“Removal of U.S.L.S. Boat House Underway,” *Yaquina Bay News*, 23 September 1909.



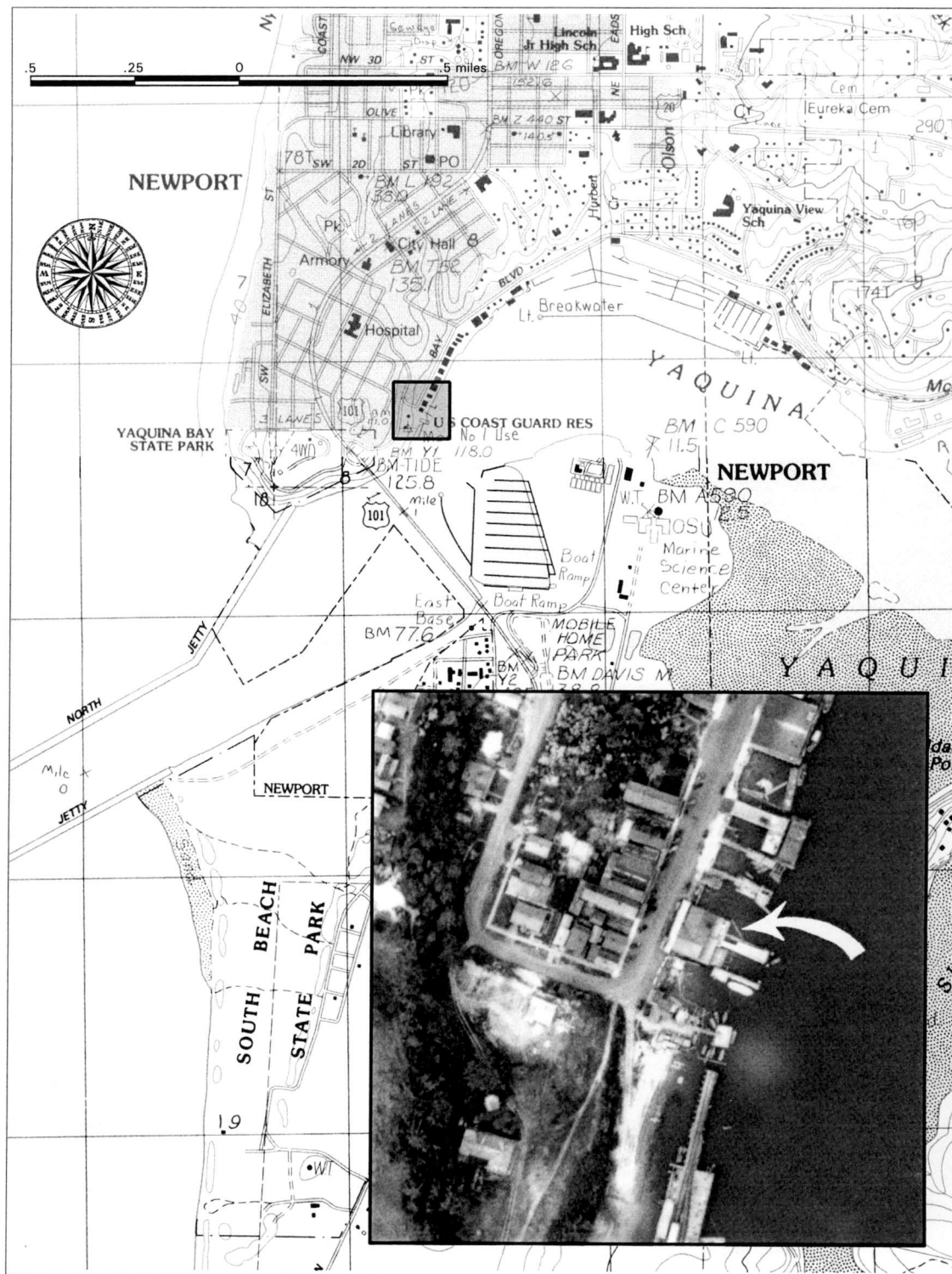


Figure 129. Aerial Photo of the Yaquina Bay Station in 1939 Superimposed Over the Newport North, Oregon, USGS Map (1984 Revision).





Figure 130. Yaquina Bay Boathouse, 1931. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Yaquina Bay File).

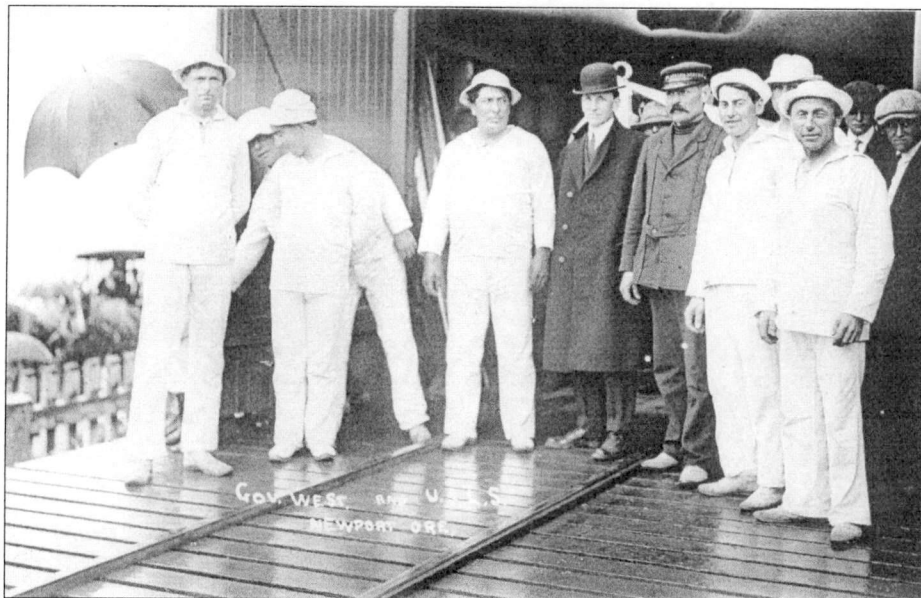


Figure 131. Governor Oswald West (in Derby) with Life-Saving Crew at New Boathouse Location, Circa 1912. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #335).



Figure 132. Yaquina Bay Station, Circa 1932. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #252).

and a beach cart. The loss was estimated at \$20,000. Only one of two Lyle guns was salvaged from the ruins. Luckily, there was a Monomoy surfboat and a beach cart stored at the old boathouse at South Beach.<sup>195</sup>

The Coast Guard finally took this opportunity to build what the locals had always wanted, a first class life-saving station. In September 1931, a contractor from Seattle, William Wills, began demolishing the old “bay boathouse” that was in the path of the new station.<sup>196</sup> Construction went quickly and on 5 April 1932, Captain Anton Gustafson declared the new station open and ready for occupancy (Figure 132). The cost was \$18,000 plus \$6,000 for the furnishings. The building comprised a crew quarters, kitchen, and dining room, plus it allowed for the housing of a lifeboat, surfboat, a truck,

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<sup>195</sup>“Coast Guard Boat House Burned,” *Yaquina Bay News*, 14 August 1930.

<sup>196</sup>“Work Starts on New Coast Guard Quarters [sic],” *Newport Journal*, 7 September 1931.

and the beach apparatus.<sup>197</sup> The building was two stories, built on pilings in a T-shaped plan (Figure 133). Integral to the station was a two-bay boatroom sloped to the launchway (Figure 134). The structure was covered in shingles and left natural to the weather. By WWII it had been painted white. Nine-over-nine, double-hung windows illuminated the interior. The only elaboration to the elevations was a gabled entry hood supported by heavy brackets over the street-side door.

In November 1934, the Coast Guard secured property to build a residence for the station keeper at the corner of Bay and First streets.<sup>198</sup> The old lighthouse keeper's dwelling that had been occupied by the Coast Guard since 1906 needed to be torn down to make way for the coastal highway project's Yaquina Bay Bridge (1936). In July 1935, construction was begun on the new keeper's house. A crew of eight Coast Guard carpenters were assisted by members of a local crew. The new building contained six rooms on the first floor and two rooms upstairs, and had a full concrete basement with garage. The house was steam heated and built in the "Cape Cod style" at an estimated cost of \$6,500.<sup>199</sup> The house still stands in its original location today.

In March 1936, a lookout tower was put into service just southeast of the lighthouse. It stands 50' tall and 115' above the water, overshadowing the lighthouse.

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<sup>197</sup>"New Station Officially Dedicated," *Newport Journal*, 6 April 1932.

<sup>198</sup>"Coast Guard Keeper Will Have New Residence Here," *Yaquina Bay News*, 22 November 1934.

<sup>199</sup>"Will Build New Quarters," *Newport Journal*, 3 July 1935.

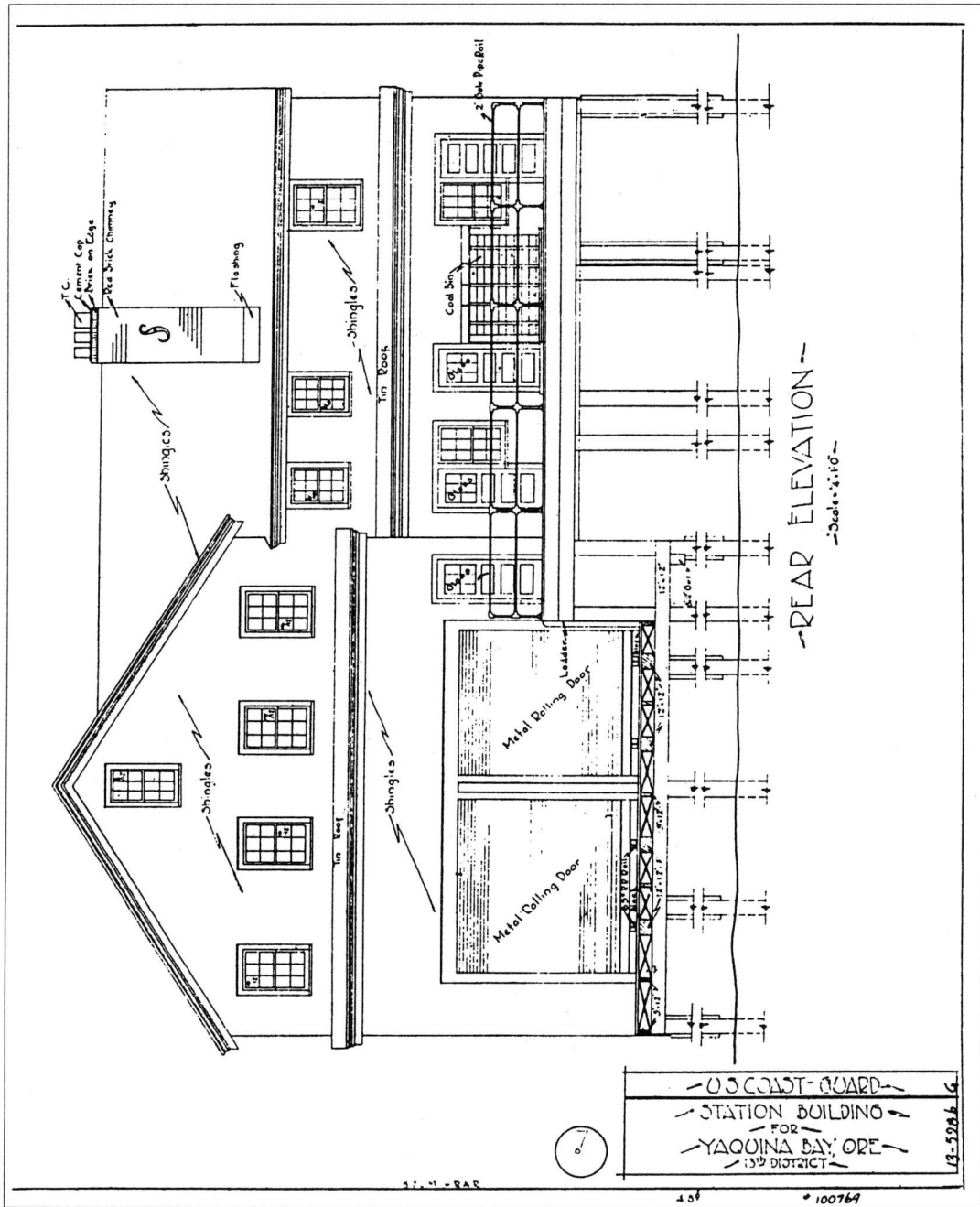


Figure 133. Yaquina Bay Station, Rear Elevation. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#13-598b).

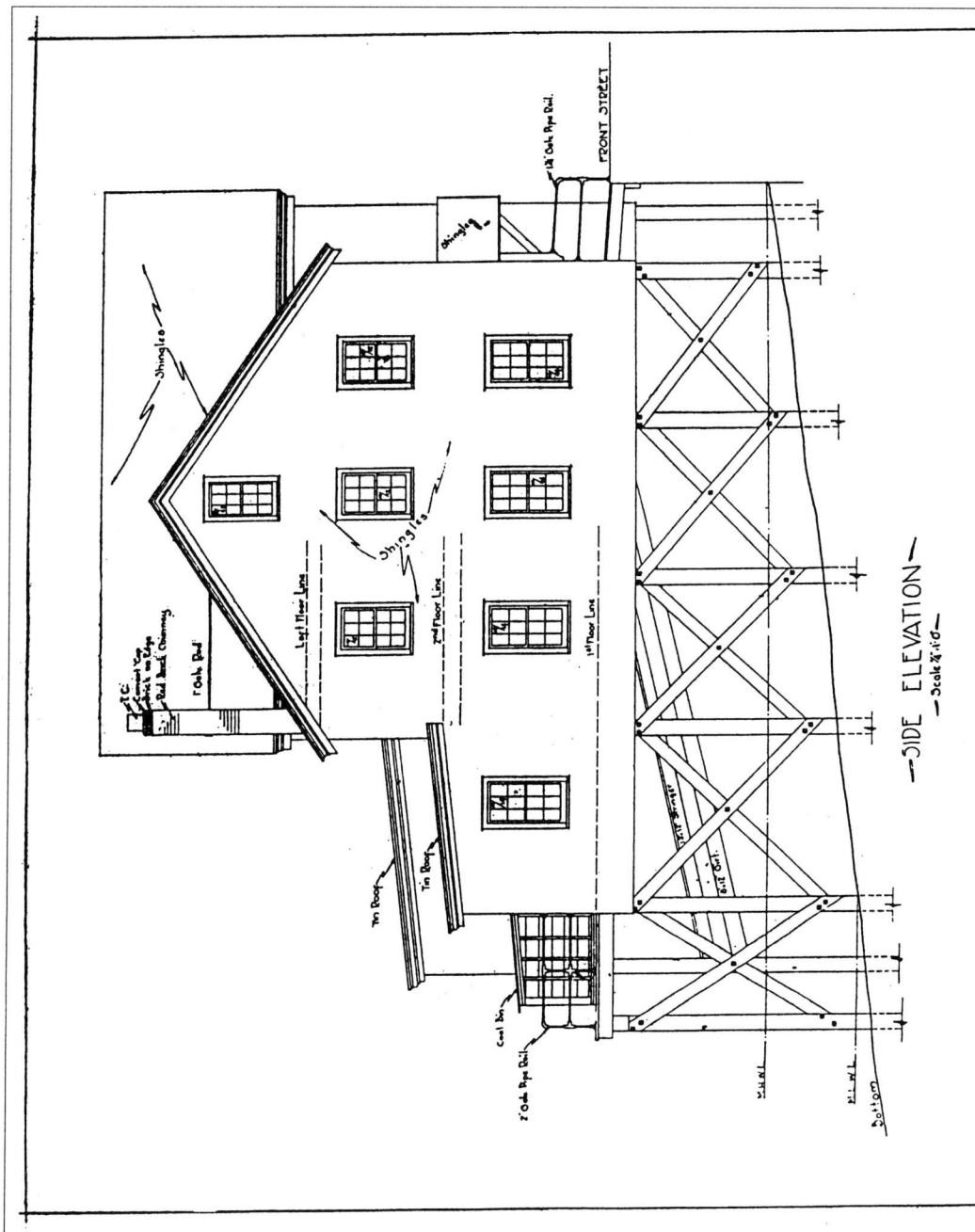


Figure 134. Yaquina Bay Station, East Elevation. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#13-599a).



Figure 135. Yaquina Bay Station, Circa 1935. Source: Oregon Historical Society (OrHi #04552002-019153).

The tower was built as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project and is still used as a lookout today, though the watch room has been altered.<sup>200</sup>

In 1941, the Yaquina Bay Station was expanded on its west side to accommodate the activities of the wartime beach patrol, making it “one of the best and more modern equipped stations along the Oregon coast” (Figure 135).<sup>201</sup> On 1 November 1941, the Coast Guard was assigned to the Navy which expanded the Coast Guard’s duties to include beach patrol. As its name implies, the purpose of the beach patrol was to patrol the beach watching for signs of enemy activity or invasion. Yaquina Bay was one hub of

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<sup>200</sup>“New Look-out Station in Service,” *Newport Journal*, 18 March 1936.

<sup>201</sup>“Yaquina Bay Coast Guard Station Burns to Ground,” *Yaquina Bay News*, 6 January 1944.

the beach patrol on the Oregon Coast. Richard Van Hine, the station keeper in 1943, was in charge of 500 Navy personnel, most of whom were on beach patrol.<sup>202</sup>

On 2 January 1944, the Yaquina Bay Station also succumbed to a fire of “unknown origin.” The fire departments from Newport and Toledo, plus Coast Guardsmen and Army troops, could not contain the blaze (Figure 136). All motorized equipment was saved, though one pulling boat burned.<sup>203</sup>

The crew lived at the Abbey Hotel after the fire for several months. Fortunately, beach patrol activities were scaling back with the war. The crew then moved into six temporary barracks moved to a site above the waterfront owned by the American Legion. However, due to postwar construction material shortages, it was not until 1948 that bids went out for the construction of two new Coast Guard buildings on a shelf of land east of the Yaquina Bay Bridge. The land had been purchased from the Port Commission in 1945 and had been used by the Coast Guard as a drill field. One building was to be a 2-1/2 story frame structure to contain the headquarters of the local Coast Guard and provide accommodations for a crew of 22 men, consisting of a bunk room, recreation room, galley, and mess hall (Figure 137). The other building was to be 1-1/2 stories on a

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<sup>202</sup>Wyatt, *Guarding the Coast*.

<sup>203</sup>“Yaquina Bay Coast Guard Station Burns to Ground,” *Yaquina Bay News*, 6 January 1944.



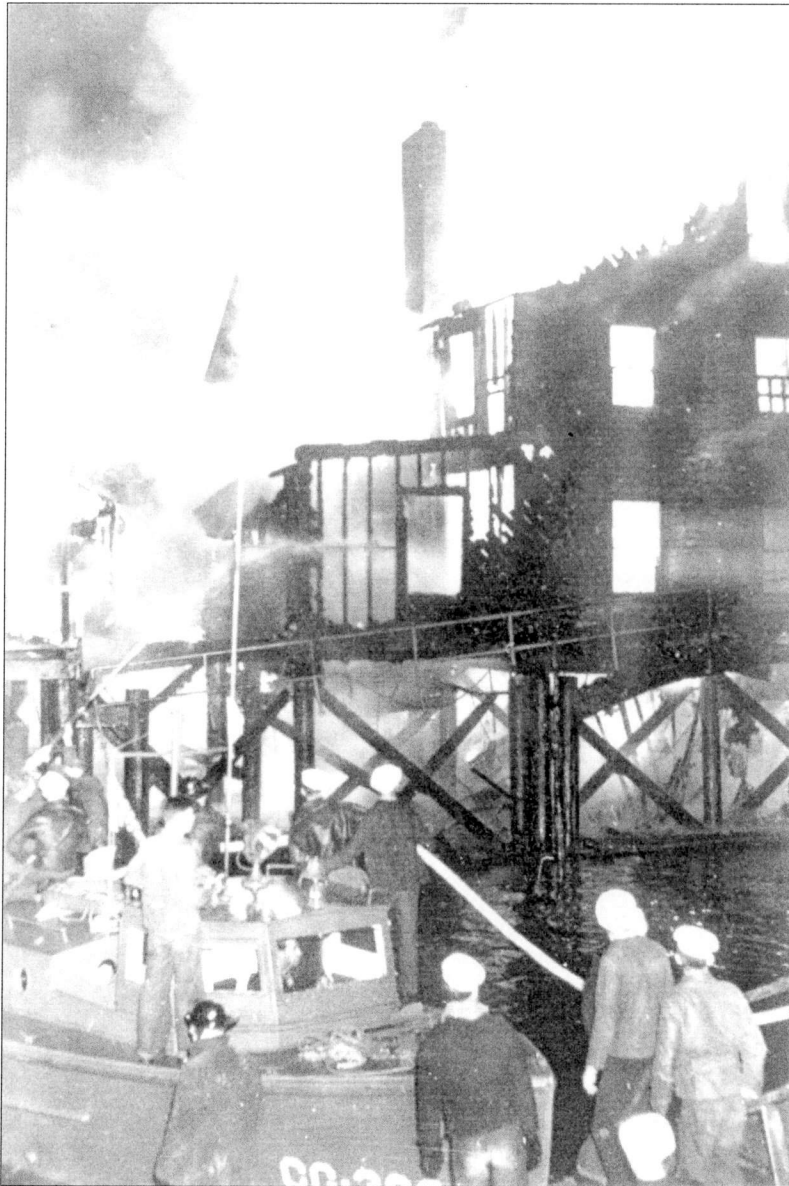


Figure 136. Yaquina Bay Station, 2 January 1944. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #1091).



Figure 137. Yaquina Bay Station Under Construction, 1949. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Yaquina Bay File).

concrete slab and used to house motor equipment.<sup>204</sup> Both buildings were built using Minalith fire-retardant treated fir.<sup>205</sup>

The Coast Guard moved into their new station on 14 December 1949 (Figure 138). The day following, the six temporary buildings on American Legion land were transferred to the Legion in lieu of “restoration of the property and rent.”<sup>206</sup> The buildings were located on Harbor Drive between 10th and 11th Streets and were eventually demolished to make way for Pacific Communities Hospital.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup>“New Building for Coast Guard Soon,” *Newport News*, 30 December 1948.

<sup>205</sup>Photo caption, station construction, Yaquina Bay File, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

<sup>206</sup>“Legion Gets Coast Guard Station Back,” *Newport News*, 22 December 1949.

<sup>207</sup>Wyatt, *Guarding the Coast*.



Figure 138. Yaquina Bay Station House, 1983. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (13-CGD-0924830306).

At some point between 1944 and 1949, a three-bay boathouse was built on piles in front of the new station. Unfortunately, it was crushed in 1979 by the Peruvian freighter, *Inca-Huayayna-Capac*, when it lost control of its steering. A new boathouse was erected in its place. The 1949 workshop was torn down in early 1980s for a new barracks. The dormers from the crushed boathouse were recycled and used on the new barracks.

### Preservation

Any above ground remains of the life-saving station at South Beach were obliterated sometime between 1939 and 1951. However, that does not mean that there

are no structures from the station in existence. Oregon has a long tradition of moving buildings, and the station outbuildings were relatively easy to move. More investigation in the South Beach area would be required to determine if all remnants of the station are truly gone.

The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is one of only three vestiges of the Life-Saving Service in Oregon. Its preservation has been a long running battle that started as one of the earliest preservation efforts in Oregon. The State of Oregon has maintained it for the last 66 years and listed it on the National Register in 1974. Currently, the story of the Life-Saving Service's occupation of the lighthouse is underrepresented, a situation that is a problem across the nation. The southwest chamber on the second floor (i.e., the large bedroom) is designated the Coast Guard room, but it is limited to just pictures and some clothing displays. There is very little documentation in the room. Considering that the Lighthouse Board only operated the light for three years and the Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard occupied the station for 27 years, the small display is inadequate and should be enhanced, particularly with more documentation. Another option to make the Life-Saving Service-era more prominent at the lighthouse would be to recreate the Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station sign that once hung over the entry porch.<sup>208</sup> The maintenance of the building itself is quite good considering the limited funding given Oregon State Parks. For example, the building is due to be painted in June 2000, prior to the complete failure of the exterior paint. The volunteer group, the Yaquina Lights, staffs the museum, gift shop, and keeps the house in order. Donations and gift shop revenue are recycled

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<sup>208</sup>Photograph of sign in Shanks, *U.S. Life-Saving Service*, 198.

back into the building. From the standpoint of physical reminders of the Life-Saving Service, it is imperative that the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse be preserved.

The keeper's house erected in 1932 still stands in its original location and is being used by the local Coast Guard commander. The house should continue to be maintained as used as a residence. The Coast Guard has rebuilt the watch house at the top of the 1935 lookout tower so that the lookout's integrity is now low. Since the fire in 1944, all that remains of the Coast Guard Station on Front Street is the concrete launchway.

The Yaquina Bay Coast Guard station built in 1949 on Naterlin Drive has turned out to be one of the last of the Roosevelt-type stations to be built in the United States. The station house has good integrity and is in excellent condition (Figure 139). The most glaring modification is an enlarged central dormer on its street-side elevation (Figure 140); however, its waterside (i.e., front) elevation is intact. The station is a great example of a late Roosevelt-type station, joining the ranks of the older Roosevelt-type stations at Point Adams (1938), Tillamook Bay (1942), and Umpqua River (1939). Continued use and maintenance of this station is the most practical option for the station house.



Figure 139. Yaquina Bay Station, 1983. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (13-CGD-092283-07-06).



Figure 140. Yaquina Bay Station, Street Side, 1999. Source: Author.

## CHAPTER IX

## TILLAMOOK BAY STATIONS

In 1788, John Meares, a British naval officer with Portuguese papers, was searching for the Columbia River. Unable to locate the river, he traveled further south and discovered what he called Quicksand Bay. Living on and near the bay were a band of Salish Indians. When Lewis and Clark came across the same natives nearly 20 years later, the explorers referred to them in their journals as the “Kilamox” and “Killamuck.” Over the years, the name evolved into “Tillamook,” and Quicksand Bay became known as Tillamook Bay.<sup>209</sup>

Slowly but persistently, American settlers drove the Tillamook away from their bay. Dairy farms began to dominate the area’s fertile valleys. Tillamook County was created by the Oregon territorial legislature on 15 December 1853, solidifying the spelling of Tillamook. A post office was established at the town of Tillamook on 12 March 1866.<sup>210</sup> The town of Barview, closer to the mouth of Tillamook Bay, was named in 1884 (Figure 141). Dairy continues to be the dominant industry in the county. The Tillamook Cheese Factory is the world’s largest cheese plant.<sup>211</sup> Much of the rich

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<sup>209</sup>Donovan and Kachel, E.5.

<sup>210</sup>Lewis A. McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names*, 6th ed. (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1992), 835.

<sup>211</sup>State of Oregon, *1991-92 Oregon Blue Book*, 352.



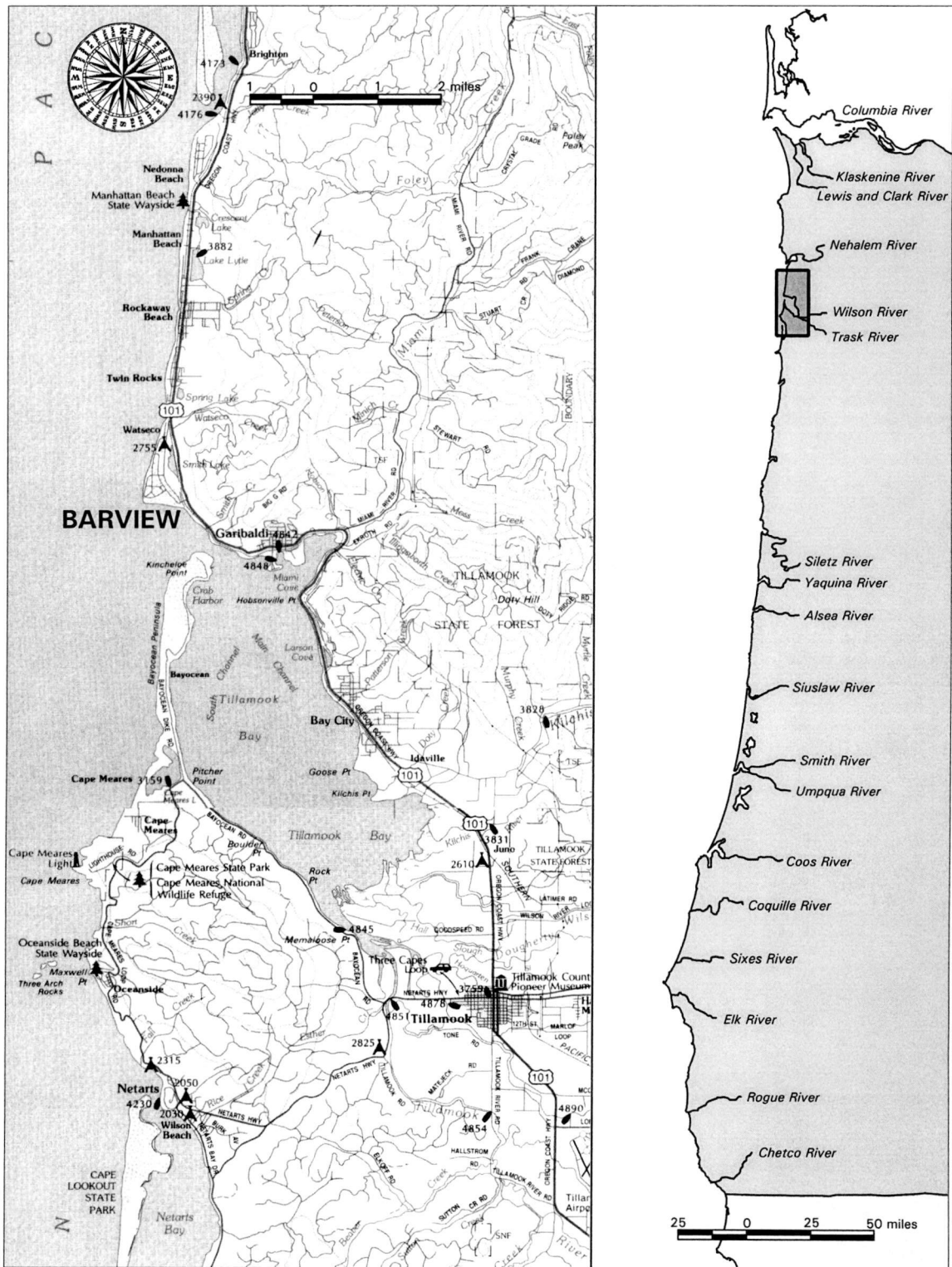


Figure 141. Location of Barview, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

timber land surrounding the area was destroyed during the “Tillamook Burns” of the 1930s. Today, timber harvesting is returning as reforested areas mature.

The dairy and timber products had to travel by sea to reach their markets. Aids to navigation were required to help mariners reach those markets. However, the entrance to Tillamook Bay was not considered extraordinarily dangerous. The Lighthouse Board finally recommended a lighthouse be erected at Cape Meares, a headland about five miles south of the entrance to Tillamook Bay, in 1886. Work was well underway on the petite, 38' iron lighthouse in 1889. The lamp was illuminated on 1 January 1890.<sup>212</sup>

#### Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station

As early as 1889, Oregon Representative Binger Hermann was pushing for a life-saving station at Tillamook Bay.<sup>213</sup> Simultaneously, he was crying out for one at the nearby Nehalem River. Unfortunately, Hermann was denied both locations. In 1904, Representative Hermann tried again, pointing out that there were no stations between the Columbia River and Yaquina Bay.<sup>214</sup> For 50 miles in either direction of Tillamook Bay there was no protection. This was the largest stretch of unprotected coastline in Oregon. This argument prevailed and Congress approved the construction of a station at Tillamook Bay on 28 April 1904.

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<sup>212</sup>Gibbs, *Oregon Seacoast Lighthouses*, 159-60.

<sup>213</sup>Congress, House, 51st Congress, 1st session, HR 4622, 1889.

<sup>214</sup>Congress, Senate, 58th Congress, 2nd session, S 2698, 1904.

As typical, the construction process went slowly. In 1905, a site was selected and title for land obtained (Figure 142). In July 1907, a contract was let out to Ferguson & Houston of Astoria to build the station house, boathouse, outbuilding, flagstaff, and drill pole. The price was set at \$8,797 and was to be completed by 31 December 1907.<sup>215</sup> It is assumed the station was completed on time, as Keeper Robert Farley started to get the station ready prior to May 1908. To assist in preparations, one surfman was hired on from 14 May to 20 May 1908. On 21 May, Keeper Farley reported that the station was “in condition for service” and that he had “shipped” six more surfmen.<sup>216</sup> The crew immediately went to work on the weekly drills and started patrolling the beach. The District Superintendent and Assistant Inspector were on hand for the opening. While there, they inspected the coastline and set the beach patrol limit at three miles north of the station. Before the District Superintendent left, he selected a site for the lookout tower and left Keeper Farley in charge of purchasing the materials and building the structure.<sup>217</sup> No image or description has been found of the lookout.

The design for the station came from Victor Mendleheff in 1898. It was drawn for the Petersons Point Life-Saving Station on Grays Harbor, Washington. The Petersons Point station and the Tillamook Bay station were the only ones built from the plans. The station was a gambrel-roof structure, like the Fort Point-type station at Point Adams

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<sup>215</sup>F.G.F. Wadsworth, New York, to Andre Fouchy, Norfolk, VA, 5 July 1907, typed transcript, Northwest Coast Guard Museum, Seattle, WA.

<sup>216</sup>U.S. Life-Saving Service. “Logbooks of the Life-Saving Service.” Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, 20 May 1908. It was not until 8 December 1912, that an eighth surfman was added to the crew.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid., 21 May 1908.

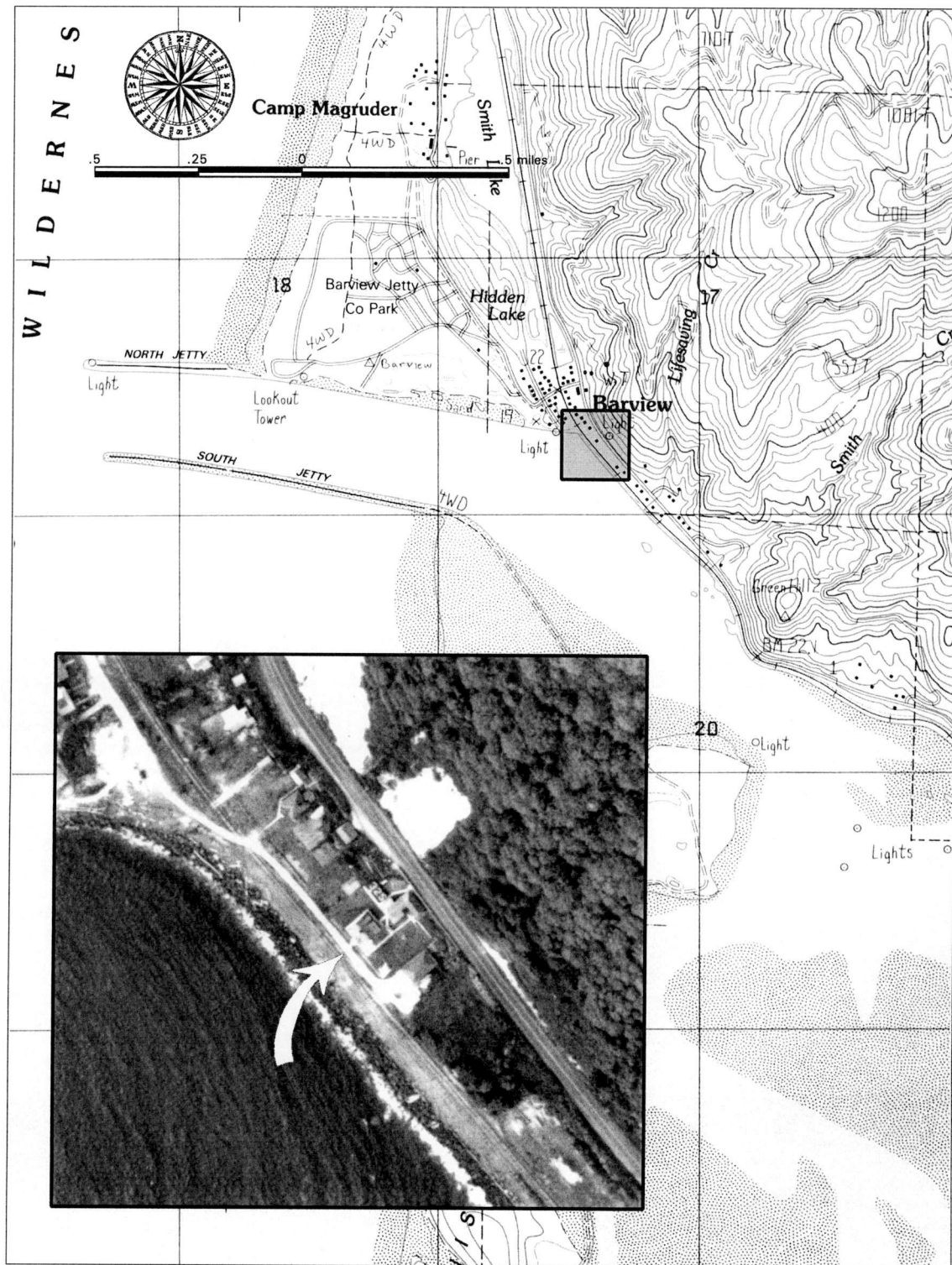


Figure 142. Aerial Photo of the Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station Area in 1939 Superimposed Over the Garibaldi, Oregon, USGS Map (1985 Revision).

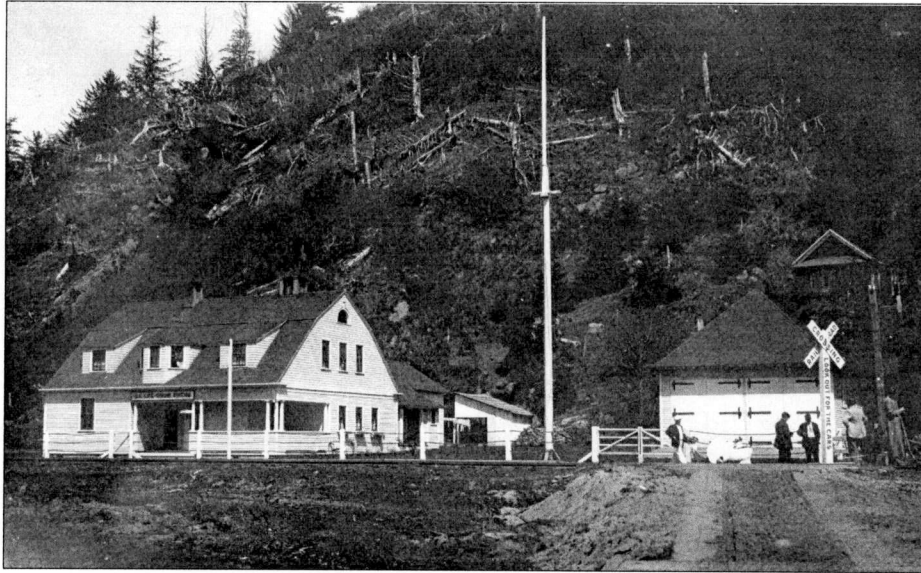


Figure 143. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station, Circa 1910. Source: Author's Collection.

designed by Bibb, but it was much squatter and less symmetrical with an integral porch (Figure 143). It had three dormers, again like the Fort Point-type, but the center one was three-sided to form a diminutive lookout tower. The 1-1/2 story station was sheathed in shingles. Detailing was Colonial Revival with Tuscan columns and lunette windows in the gables.

Unlike the earlier symmetrical plan at Point Adams, the Tillamook Bay station was simply balanced. The building was nearly square at 43' 9" wide by 39' 6" deep. It had a central hall plan, but an integrated porch wrapped around the right corner to counter the symmetry (Figure 144). The central hall divided the keeper's office, living/dining room, and kitchen on the right, from the crew's sitting room and kitchen/dining room on the left. At the end of the stair hall was a wash room. Upstairs,

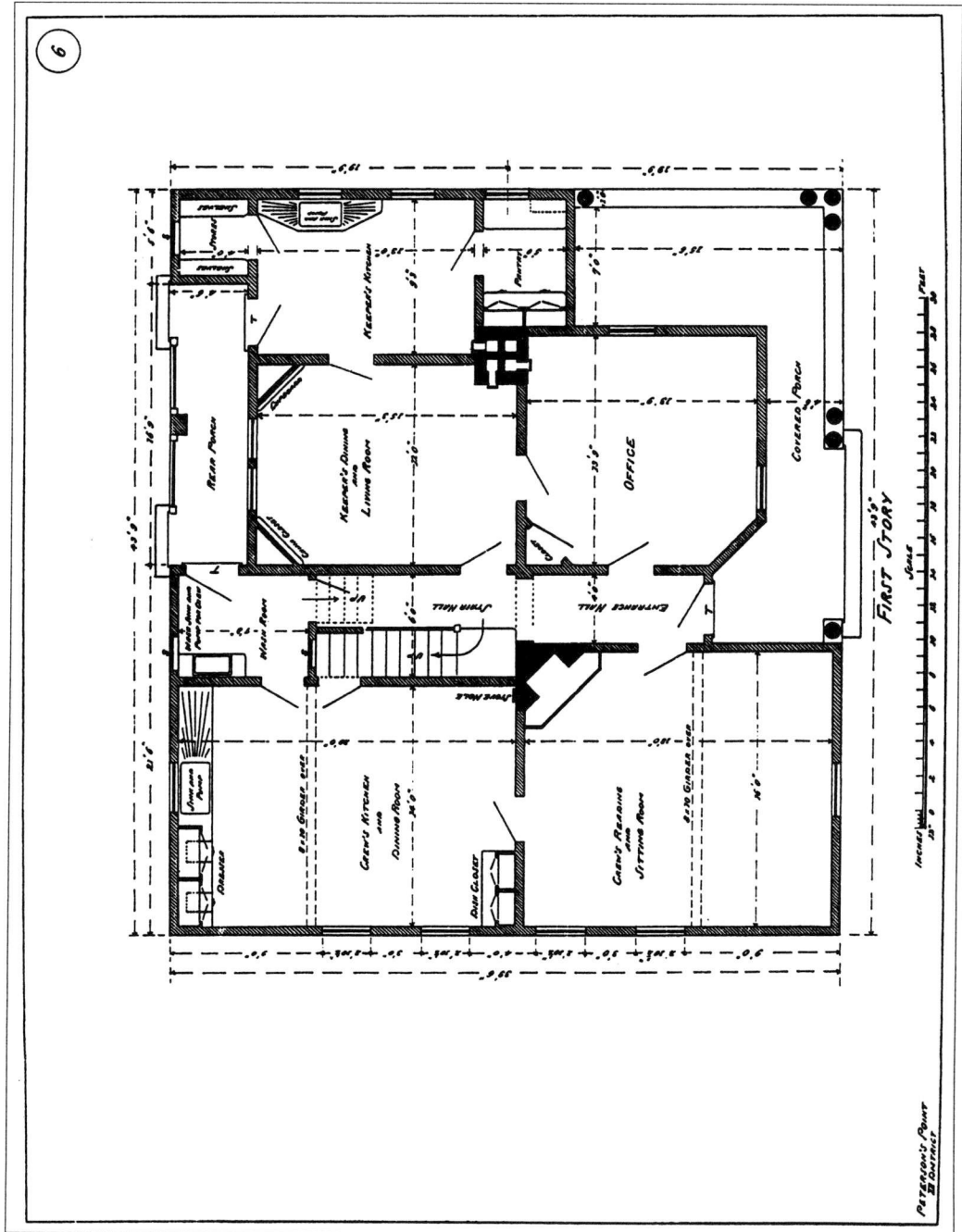


Figure 144. First Floor Plan, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#424).



the right half contained two rooms for the keeper and his family, and the left half was the crew's quarters (Figure 145). In the center was a spare room for guests.

Unlike the Point Adams station that had an interior bathroom, Tillamook Bay had a washroom in the station house and two privies in a symmetrical shop building behind the station house (Figure 146). This building was quite unusual in that it is thought to be the only Life-Saving Service building to combine privy and shop into one structure. The building was one story in a T-shaped plan. It was 28' wide by 37' deep and had a wraparound porch on the front leading to the privies. A central hall plan led past coal, wood, and oil storage rooms, and back to the shop area. Upstairs was a loft space.

The boathouse was almost a direct copy of the Fort Point-type boathouse designed by Bibb, only simplified. It had the identical framing, it was one story, and it was rectangular in plan with the same overall dimensions, 24' wide by 40' deep (Figure 147). The structure was built on a concrete foundation, unlike the pilings of the Fort Point-type, and capped by a hip roof. One simplification was the elimination of the "witch's hat" ventilator. Admitting in light and ventilating the area were two sets of paired, double-hung windows on either side of the boathouse. Paired double doors on the front each led to a bay on the inside, one bay containing a surfboat and the other a lifeboat. Hinge details were simplified from the Fort Point-type (Figure 148). The rafters were used to hang equipment, such as the lifecar and breeches buoy. A small tool locker was situated at the back corner. A pair of doors led out the back.

This was the only Oregon station plan found with drawings for ancillary structures (Figure 149). The water tank was placed up on the hillside to store water from







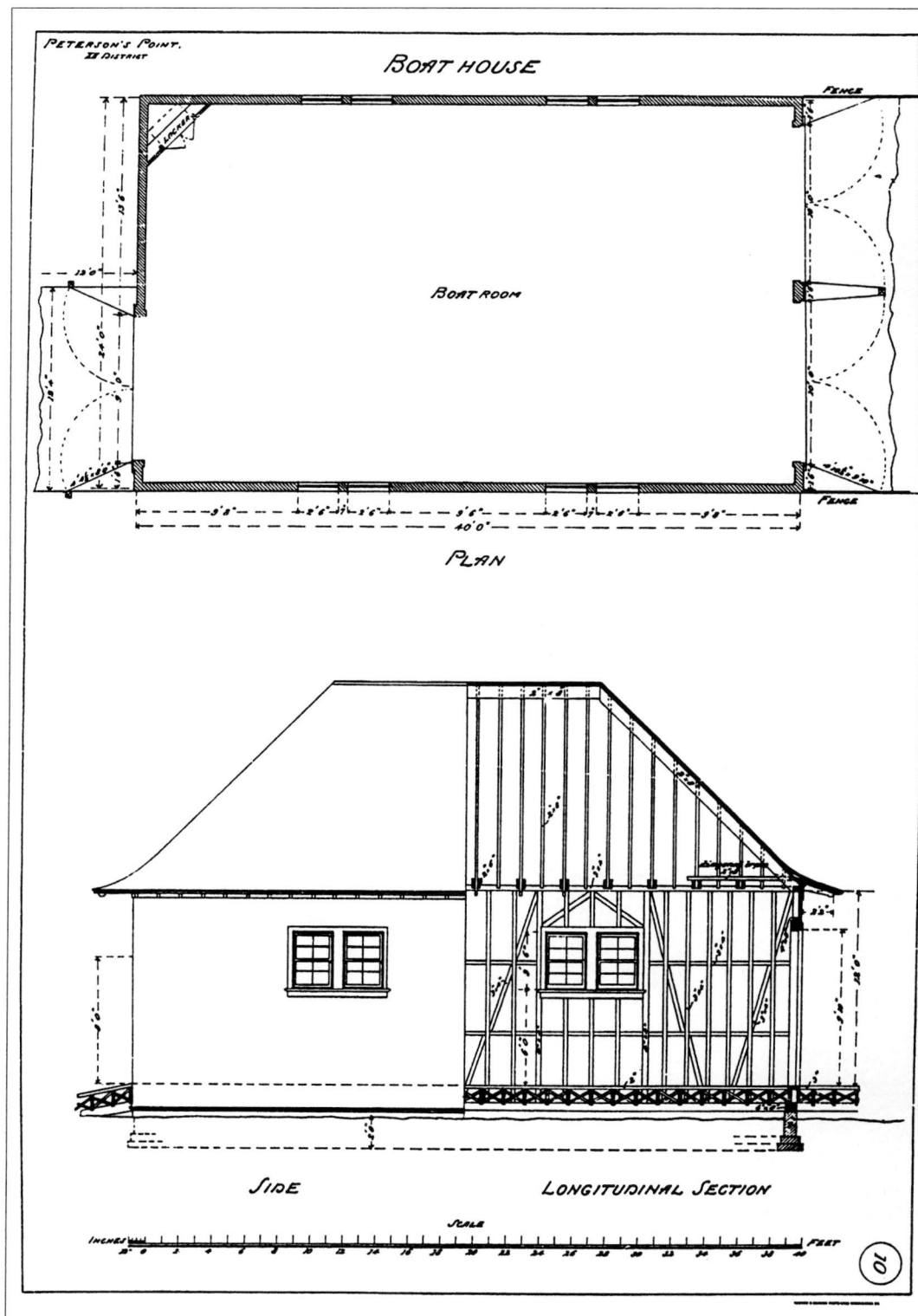


Figure 147. Plan and Section, Boathouse, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station.  
Source: Nautical Research Centre (#428).

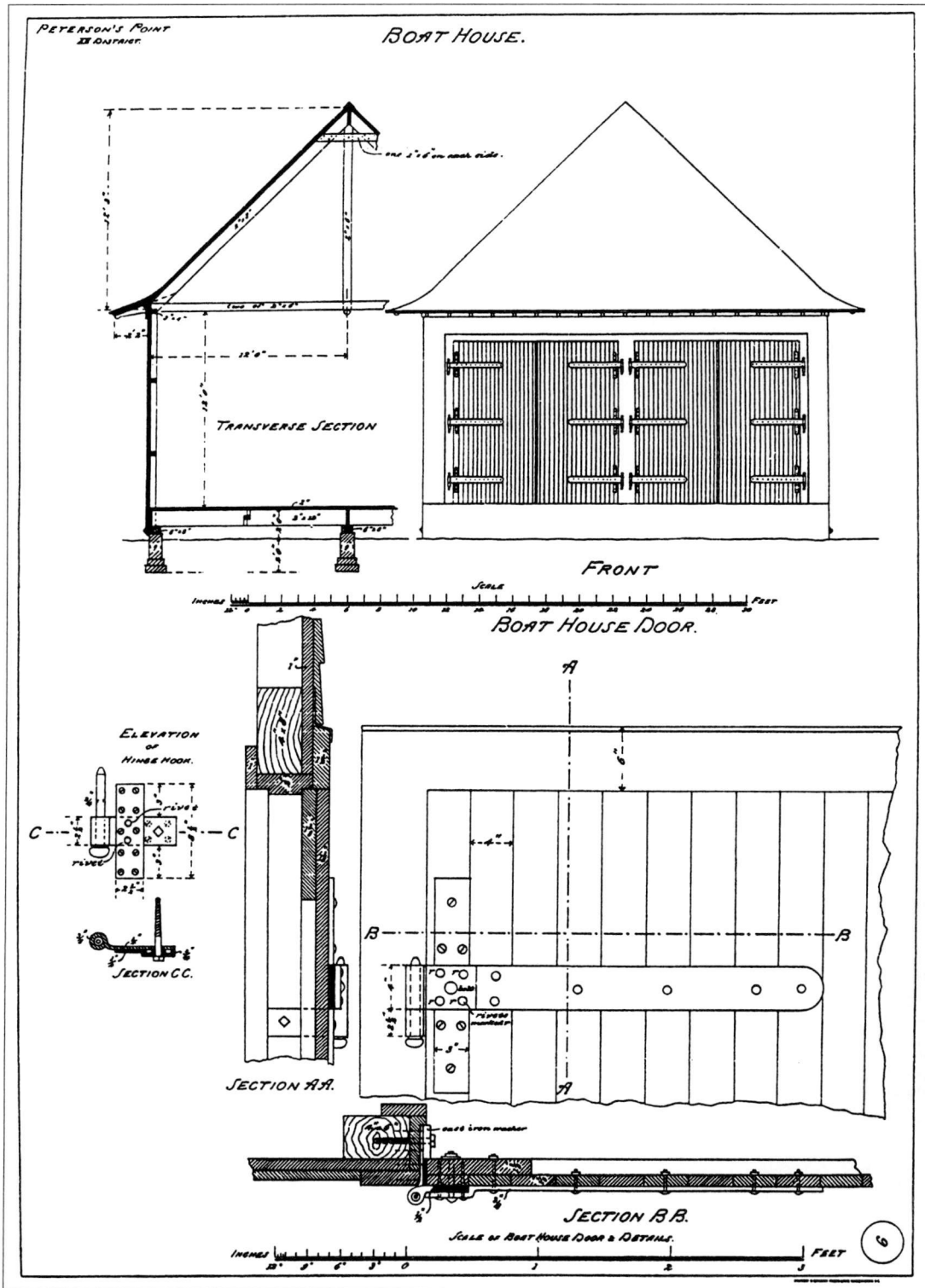


Figure 148. Boathouse Details, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#427).

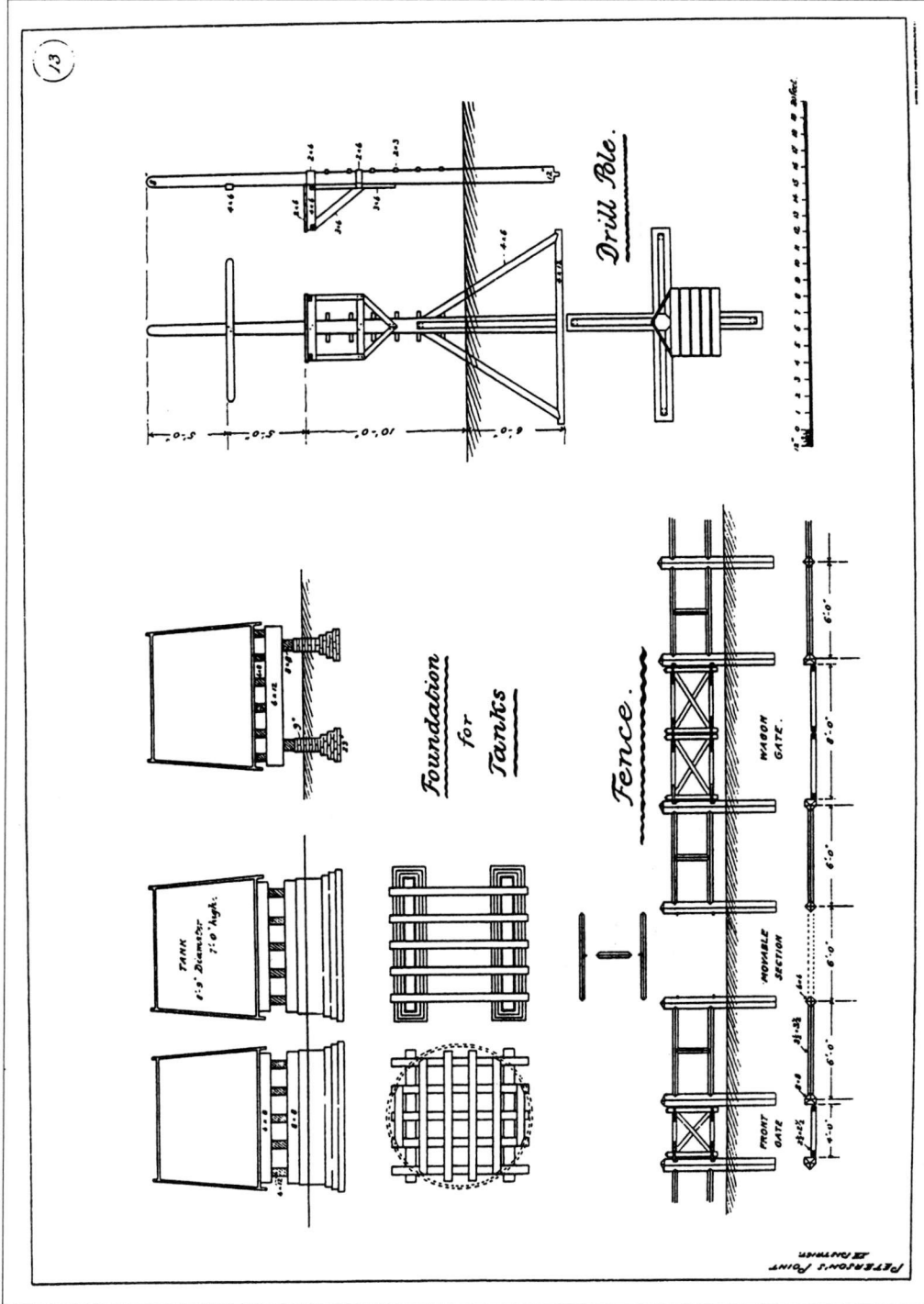


Figure 149. Auxiliary Structures, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#431).

Lifesaving Creek. The rail fence, as designed, was first built as a series of posts connected by three hawser “rails.” A wooden gate was fashioned in front of the boathouse. Around 1923, the crewmen built the fence according to Mendleheff’s design. It is unclear where the wreck pole was set up. The area northwest of the station appears too small for a drill field. Most likely the wreck pole was located down on the beach. A flagpole between the station house and boathouse was replaced by a standard, 50' metal signal flag tower prior to 1923.

Only minor improvements were made at Tillamook Bay until funds were appropriated by Congress in 1912 to construct a jetty on the north side of the entrance. However, on 23 October 1915 before the jetty was complete, a large storm came up and washed out the entire stretch of beach, and some neighboring buildings, in front of the station. The station yard was littered with rocks and logs (Figure 150).<sup>218</sup> Fortunately, the P. R. & N. Railroad had built a set of tracks (c.1910) in front of the station separating the station from Tillamook Bay. The railroad grade probably saved the station from being leveled by the ocean. The jetty was completed by 1917, and the railroad grade was thoroughly riprapped all along its course on the edge of Tillamook Bay (Figure 151). However, another storm on 4 January 1936 came up and cut through the jetty, littering the station yard once again with debris.<sup>219</sup> Since the 1936 gale, no storms have come into Tillamook Bay to cause such havoc.

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<sup>218</sup>Stephen Dow Beckham, “U.S. Life Saving Station, Bar View, Oregon,” *State of Oregon Inventory, Historic Sites and Buildings* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Highway Department, 1974).

<sup>219</sup>Photos, 1936 storm damage, Tillamook Bay File, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC.



Figure 150. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station After 1915 Storm. Source: Author's Collection.



Figure 151. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station, Circa 1920. Source: Author's Collection.



Keeper Farley's wife put the crewmen to work landscaping the grounds. Flower boxes were added to the Keeper's kitchen windows. Highway 101 runs directly behind the property and above it along the hillside. The stone work of the highway retaining wall was mimicked around the property by the crew in a series of rock walls and terraces built in the 1920s. Concrete sidewalks were built around and connecting the buildings. A series of rose arbors were erected over a serpentine stone wall to the northwest of the building. The crew even built a fountain out of stones between the boathouse and the shop building.<sup>220</sup>

Prior to 1923, a small, hipped roof building was attached perpendicularly to the rear of the shop building. This was then replaced by a larger, hipped roof building in the same location in the 1930s. This larger building was used for wood storage, tool room, and laundry. The station passed into private hands when a new station was built at Garibaldi in 1942. The interiors of both the station house and shop building were divided up into multi-family accommodations during and after WWII. In 1973, it was acquired by the current owner, Gary Newkirk of Portland.<sup>221</sup>

The Coast Guard kept a surfboat housed at an auxiliary boathouse 1-1/8 miles east of the station prior to 1923. In 1935, at what was probably near the auxiliary boathouse, the station received a new, three-bay boathouse and launchway. However, instead of being on shore, this boathouse was built on piles approximately 750' away from shore. A long walkway connected the back of the boathouse to land. The

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<sup>220</sup>Gary Newkirk, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 15 July 1997.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid.

boathouse was one-story with a gable roof and clad entirely in shingles. The boatroom doors were roll-up metal doors in 1947. Rails left each boat bay and joined together in a single set leading down the launchway and into the water. The boatroom was lit by five, double-hung windows on either side of the building and two on the rear. Upstairs was a loft area lit by a double-hung window on either end. The walkway from the shore wrapped around the outside of the boathouse on the east side and continued parallel to the end of the launchway.

#### Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station

The desire for more space, a better location, and a more modern facility, dictated the need to build a new station. It was decided to move further into Tillamook Bay to Garibaldi and away from the harsh weather at the mouth of the bay (Figure 152). A site for the station was acquired about 1-1/2 miles to the southeast of the life-saving station in July 1938 (Figure 153). The station was built during 1942 from the standard Roosevelt-type plans drawn in 1938, with modifications in 1939 and 1940. The station cost an estimated \$45,000 and was occupied in January 1943.<sup>222</sup> The station house faces south across the highway and to the bay.

The new station was the third of the four Roosevelt-type stations to be built on the Oregon Coast (Figure 154). These stations followed a standard plan developed by the Coast Guard. Colonial Revival detailing was represented by multi-pane windows flanked

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<sup>222</sup>Sally B. Woodbridge, *National Register Nomination for United States Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1993).

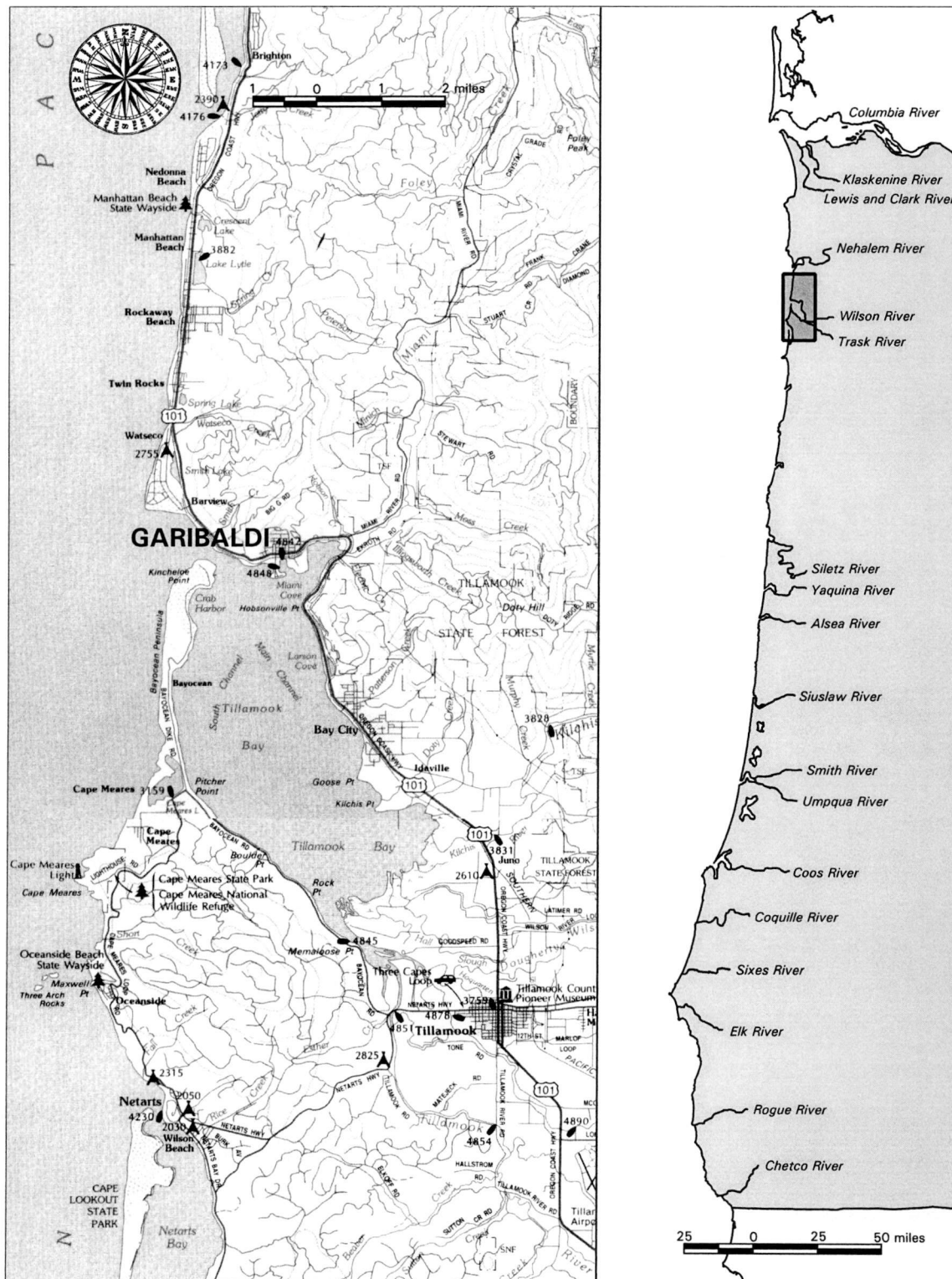


Figure 152. Location of Garibaldi, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

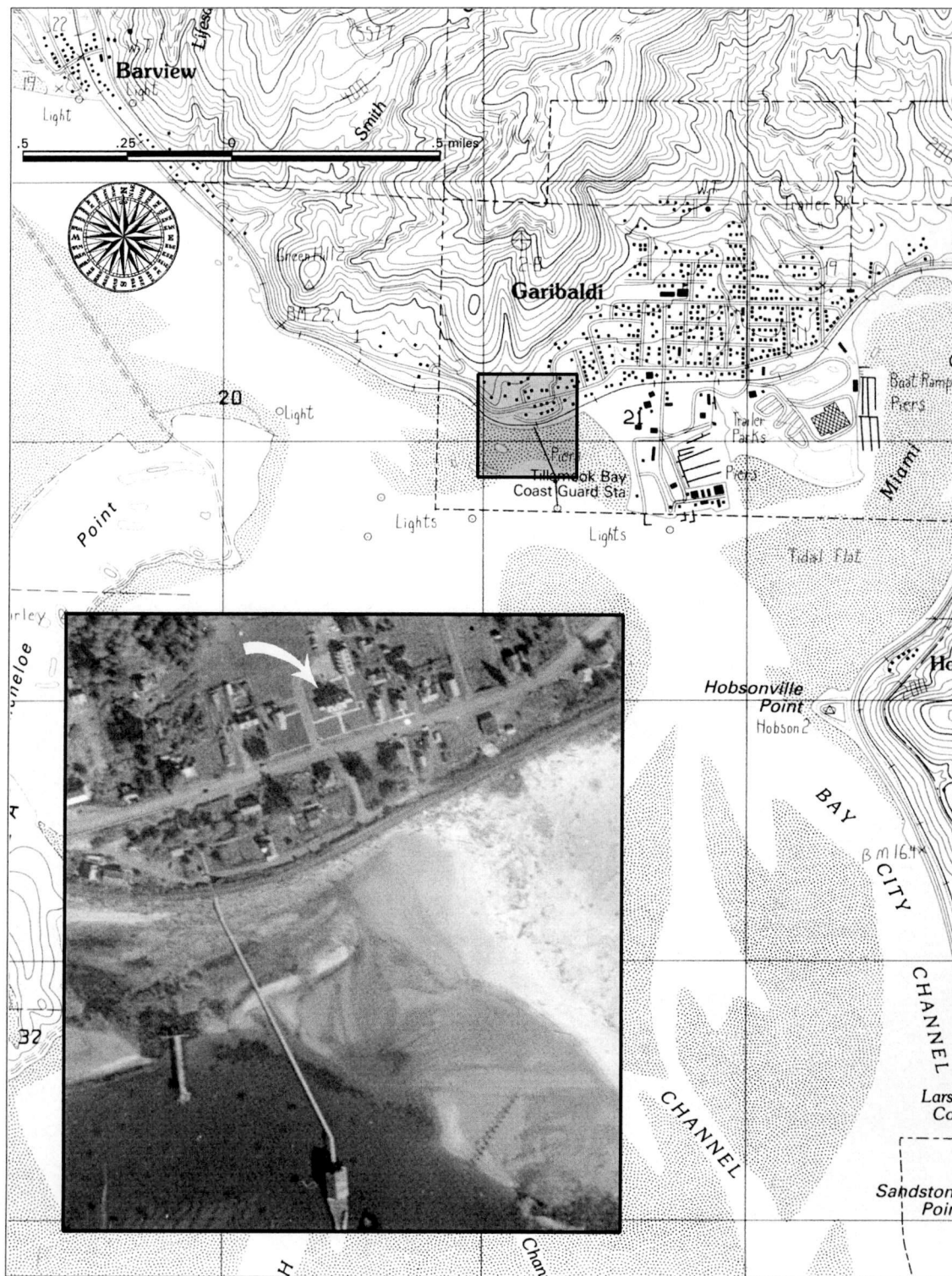


Figure 153. Aerial Photo of the Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station Area in 1939 Superimposed Over the Garibaldi, Oregon, USGS Map (1985 Revision).



Figure 154. Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station at Garibaldi, 1945.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Tillamook Bay File).

by operable shutters, large Classical corner boards, Tuscan columns, eave returns, a water table with cap, and metal railings in Classical motifs. Even the restricted roof of the entry porch was rimmed with a balustrade. On the rear elevation was an entrance door sheltered by a gable hood supported by distinguished brackets. The building was painted white with green shutters and a red roof.

The building was a commodious 80' wide and 32' deep, designed to sleep 17 but could easily handle more personnel. On the first floor was a central stair hall, dividing officer's quarters to the left from the crew's living space on the right. On the left was the Officer in Charge's (OIC) office, living room, bathroom, and bedroom. Since there was



a separate OIC house built on the station grounds, it is unsure how this area was used. On the right was the crew's mess, kitchen, and day room. At the end of the stair hall was a spare bedroom. The second floor was divided symmetrically into four bedrooms for the crew. Each room was set up to sleep four with four beds and four built-in lockers. At the end of the stair hall was the crew's bathroom with two toilets, two sinks, and two showers. In the stair hall, the staircase continued on to the attic which was divided into two large bunk rooms with lockers on the end walls. Six dormers, with arched windows, pierced the attic. Under the building was a full basement with a drill room, boiler room, storm clothes room, provision room, and laundry room.

The Roosevelt-type station built at Garibaldi differed slightly from the stations at Point Adams (1938) and Umpqua River (1939). On the wings, the three windows on the front facade were replaced with a single, larger window. The arched windows on the end walls became simpler, wooden fan details over rectangular windows. Otherwise, from the exterior, all of Oregon's Roosevelt-type stations look the same. On the interior, the kitchen layout appears to have been the only change to the first floor plans between 1938 and 1940. The other floor plans did not change. The lifeboat station built at Yaquina Bay in 1949 followed the same plans as the Garibaldi station; however, like Umpqua River, Yaquina Bay was built without a lookout monitor.

In 1986, the interior of the station house was rehabilitated into a duplex, with one family's quarters on the first floor and another family's quarters on the second floor. An obtrusive, shed-roofed stair tower was attached to the rear of the building to provide access to the second floor (Figure 155). The center dormer on the rear elevation was also



Figure 155. Rear Elevation, Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station, 1997.  
Source: Author.

enlarged. A metal fire escape has been attached to the exterior to provide an alternate exit from the attic and second floor. Other than a kitchen and bathroom rehabilitation, the first floor layout changed little. On the second floor, the interior stair was sealed off and a kitchen built over it. A dining room and living room were created out of two of the original bedrooms. Washer and dryer alcoves were built and several room entries reoriented. However, six of the original lockers are still present.<sup>223</sup>

To the west of the station house is the Officer in Charge's (OIC) house. Built for an estimated \$25,000, it is a two-story, gable-roofed structure that continues the Colonial Revival theme of the station house (Figure 156). It has double-hung, nine-over-nine

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<sup>223</sup>Ibid.





Figure 156. Officer-in-Charge's House (1942), Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station, 1997. Source: Author.

windows with operable shutters. Bull's-eye windows light the attic. The front porch is covered by a flared, shed roof supported by slender columns connected by thin, diagonal spacers. Like the station house, the OIC house has flanking, one-story wings. The south wing was originally an open porch and has since been glazed in. The north wing was an attached garage, which has now been converted into living space.<sup>224</sup>

To the north of the station house is the five-bay equipment building. The building was constructed for approximately \$20,000 on the same plans as the equipment building at the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station.<sup>225</sup> The building was approximately 62' wide by 30' deep and built on a concrete foundation. The equipment building continued the Colonial Revival theme of the station house with its arched, multi-light windows in the

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<sup>224</sup>Ibid.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid.

dormers, eave returns at the gable ends, a lunette over the gable windows, and water table with cap. On the back side, there were five more dormers. On the south elevation was an entrance door sheltered by a small gable hood supported by elegant brackets. The building was clad in lap siding and finished with classical corner boards. It was painted in the same color scheme as the station house. The original, 10-lights-over-15-panels garage doors were replaced with metal overhead doors in the 1980s.

A standard, 50' steel lookout tower was erected at the edge of the beach at the north jetty. It is the same as the lookouts built at Umpqua River and Yaquina Bay. The plan dates from 1935, though it is uncertain when the tower was actually built at Tillamook Bay. The steel tower was cross-braced with angled steel members. At the base was a 7' by 5' radio equipment building. Three flights of stairs led a crewman to the watch house through a trap door in the floor. The watch house was an 8' cube, sheathed in shingles, and capped with a pyramidal roof. Three of the walls had three windows each, and the fourth wall had two windows with a door to exit out onto the gallery.

The station had a standard, 50' signal flag warning tower adjacent to the station house to the southeast. The tower was removed some time after 1977. The original rail fence that surrounded the property has been replaced with a chain link fence. In 1982, a modern barracks building was built to the north of the station house and the equipment building. It is incompatible with the Colonial Revival architecture of the 1942 station; however, it is sited a reasonable distance away from the station house. An open-air pavilion was also built in 1986 behind the OIC house.

### Preservation

If there is any desire to save the history of the Life-Saving Service in Oregon, then the life-saving service structures at Barview must be given top priority. The Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station represents three-fifths of all remaining Life-Saving Service architecture in Oregon.<sup>226</sup> All three of the life-saving station buildings stand intact in their original configuration, though their condition has deteriorated. The grounds still have the rock work and plantings done by the crew. The fencing and the signal flag tower have unfortunately been lost.

The station is the only remaining example of a Petersons Point-type station in the nation (Figure 157). The Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station is a prime candidate for restoration (Figure 158). The original plans still exist, and there are many historic photos of the buildings. This is the only privately held station on the Oregon Coast. Unfortunately, an undersized sewer line for the town of Barview was installed through the property. The line occasionally backs up onto the property and into the station buildings. As a consequence, the buildings are condemned for human habitation. The owner, Gary Newkirk, has been in a legal entanglement with the sewer district over the issue for a decade. It is vital that the deterioration of these buildings be arrested.

The Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station has not been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Documenting the complete history of the station would be a good first step. Future considerations would be creating a condition assessment of

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<sup>226</sup>The Point Adams Life-Saving Station boathouse (1889) and the Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station at the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (1871) are the other two.



Figure 157. Station House (1907), Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.

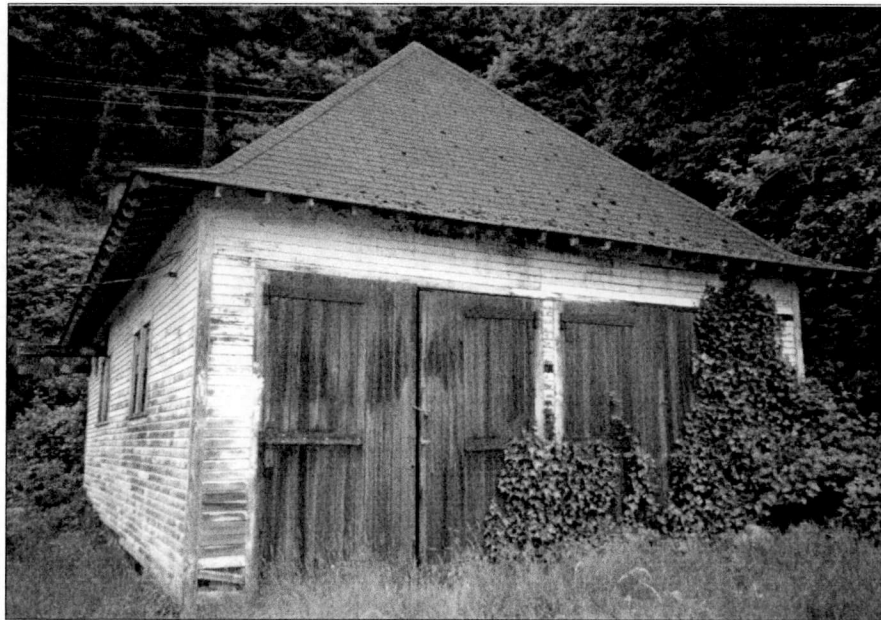


Figure 158. Boathouse (1907), Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.



Figure 159. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station (1907) in 1997.  
Source: Author.

property, finding legal assistance to settle the sewage problem with the sewer district, developing a preservation plan, and then implementing the plan. The buildings are far from a lost cause and can be saved (Figure 159).

The Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station was listed on the National Register in 1993. Since the station is listed and owned by a government body, any exterior alterations to the station house, equipment building, or OIC house need to be approved by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. The rehabilitations that the station house went through in the 1980s are fortunately confined to the rear elevation. None of the Roosevelt-type stations should have any alterations performed on their front elevation. The station house, OIC house, and equipment building should continue to be used and maintained, according to the Secretary's *Standards*.

The Coast Guard disposed of the 1935 boathouse in the 1970s, turning it over to the Port of Garibaldi. The Port has chosen to rehabilitate the structure into a commercial venture, in this case, a bait and tackle shop. Upstairs is an apartment. The public can walk out on the long walkway to the boathouse and around the outside to look at the launchway and the boats passing by. People fish and crab off of the walkway. The boathouse is the terminus for a walking trail from the old lumbermill site to the east. The structure is being maintained and used, though not for its highest and best use.

The National Register Nomination for the lifeboat station should be expanded to include the boathouse and the lookout tower. Both elements are integral to the function of a lifeboat station. The Tillamook Bay boathouse is the only one left in Oregon built on pilings offshore. With the original station house, keeper's house, boathouse, lookout tower, and equipment building, the Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station is the most intact pre-1950 station in Oregon.

## CHAPTER X

## SIUSLAW RIVER STATION

The economic potential of the Siuslaw River was overlooked in the 1850s. In fact, the Siuslaw River did not even show up on the 1851 coastal survey report. Shipping finally started to come to the Siuslaw when Duncan and Company located a salmon cannery and sawmill near the mouth of the river in 1876.<sup>227</sup> However, not until the *Alexander Duncan* crossed the Siuslaw River bar in 1877, did the potential of the Siuslaw begin to be discussed outside of the immediate vicinity.<sup>228</sup> In 1880, with pressure from the Oregon Congressional delegation, Congress authorized the first survey of the Siuslaw through the Rivers and Harbors Act. In 1883, a beacon was placed at the river's mouth.<sup>229</sup>

In 1889, Congress appropriated \$80,000 toward the construction of the Heceta Head Lighthouse eight miles to the north of the Siuslaw River. However, Lighthouse Board member Vice Admiral S.C. Rowan expressed mixed feelings about the Siuslaw River area when he wrote, "It does not appear that a harbor light is needed by the sparse

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<sup>227</sup> Alfred Lomax, "Berth of the Blues," *Eugene Register-Guard*, 19 June 1966.

<sup>228</sup> Gibbs, *Oregon's Seacoast Lighthouses*, 95.

<sup>229</sup> Alfred Lomax, "Berth of the Blues," *Eugene Register-Guard*, 19 June 1966.



commerce of this river. But it is quite evident that a coast light is required to divide the dark space between Cape Arago and Cape Foulweather.”<sup>230</sup>

There is no doubt that Rowan’s comments were unappreciated by the citizens of the small town of Florence (Figure 160) at the mouth of the Siuslaw. The Siuslaw River did not support as many settlements as the Umpqua or Columbia, though the Siuslaw was the only other river to penetrate through the Coast Range. The first American settlers had arrived in the area in the 1850s, but Hudson Bay Company trappers had been in the region 30 years earlier.<sup>231</sup> The first area residents were, of course, the Siuslaw Indians. Like other coastal settlements, the river was the road. Small coasting vessels brought supplies irregularly from San Francisco to the Siuslaw River towns of Florence, Cushman (formerly Acme), and Mapleton (formerly Seaton). Return cargoes were canned salmon, salt salmon, and miscellaneous produce from the farms of the region.<sup>232</sup>

The town of Florence slowly built up three miles from the mouth of the Siuslaw. How the town was named is unclear. Either Florence was named after A.B. Florence, who was a member of the state senate representing Lane County in the late-1850s, or the town was named after a wrecked French bark whose nameboard, *Florence*, washed up near the Siuslaw River in 1875.<sup>233</sup> By 1879, there was a post office, and by 1900, the population had reached 300.

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<sup>230</sup>Gibbs, *Oregon’s Seacoast Lighthouses*, 96.

<sup>231</sup>Stephen Dow Beckham, *The Indians of Western Oregon* (Coos Bay, OR: Arago Books, 1977), 107.

<sup>232</sup>Alfred Lomax, “Berth of the Blues,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, 19 June 1966.

<sup>233</sup>McArthur, 319.

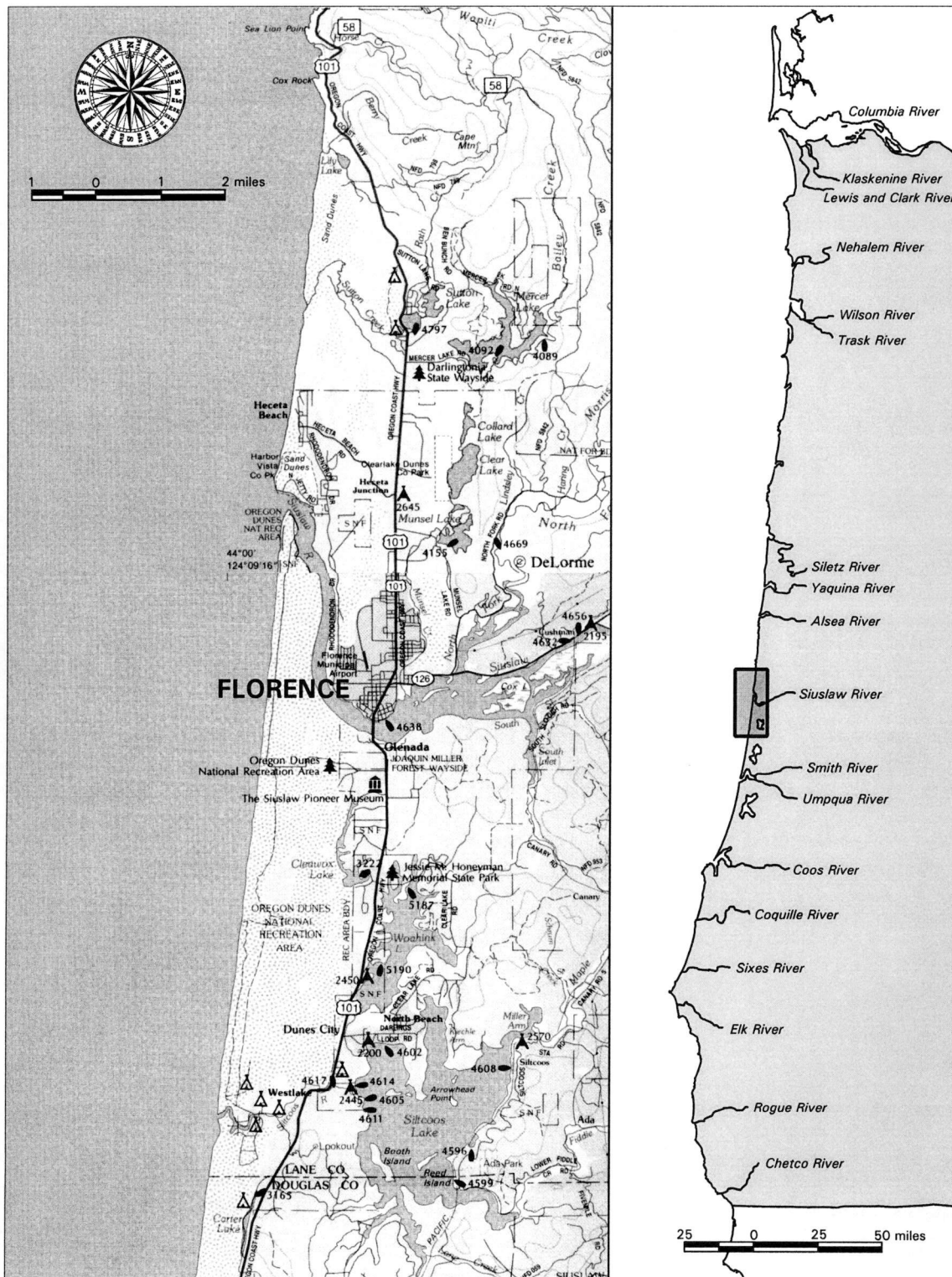


Figure 160. Location of Florence, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

It was hoped that a lighthouse would improve navigation in the area and perhaps bring more vessels to the nearby river. Property was acquired for the lighthouse and construction commenced in 1892. The building of the 56' tower was difficult due to its isolation. Construction materials came from San Francisco and Astoria, landed at Florence, and then came overland on a hastily built wagon road. The lens itself was brought in through the surf at Cape Cove below the construction site. Finally, on 30 March 1894, the lighthouse was lit, making it the tenth lighthouse on the Oregon Coast.

Simultaneously, other improvements were occurring to make the Siuslaw more navigable. Residents appealed to the Oregon Congressional delegation in 1890 and got a federal appropriation of \$50,000 for harbor improvements. Unfortunately, the money did not go far. "When Captain Thomas W. Symonds of the United States Army Corps of Engineers reported that further expenditures for the benefit of this isolated river port were not justified, the usually peaceful village blazed into high-pitched anger and relieve its frustration by hoisting his shabby likeness at the end of a rope."<sup>234</sup> Residents were appeased when two jetties were started in 1892 on both sides of the entrance to the Siuslaw River. However, due to lack of funds and bad weather conditions, work on the jetties was stopped in 1901. Additional monies were secured through the Rivers and Harbors Act in 1910, and the project was finally finished in 1917.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>234</sup>Alfred Lomax, "Berth of the Blues," *Eugene Register-Guard*, 19 June 1966.

<sup>235</sup>Donovan and Kachel, E.34.

### Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station

One other maritime improvement was sought by the locals: a life-saving station. As early as 1889, Congress had been solicited for a life-saving station at the mouth of the Siuslaw.<sup>236</sup> However, like an automobile traffic signal, not enough shipwrecks had yet occurred to warrant it. In another request in 1893, Superintendent Kimball still did not back the proposal, as there had only been two accidents at the Siuslaw in 28 years of recorded shipping. However, two more wrecks suddenly occurred, one in 1894, and another in 1895. At those disasters, the Umpqua River crew had rowed 25 miles to render assistance. Kimball wrote, "While these statistics would not, in my judgment, imply a necessity for the establishment of the proposed station, yet, in view . . . of the increasing commerce at this point, I am now inclined to favor the proposition."<sup>237</sup> With such light advocacy, the station was shelved again by Congress.

Over the years, there were more attempts introduced by Oregon congressmen to obtain a life-saving station on the Siuslaw. Finally, a month after the Life-Saving Service became the Coast Guard, House Resolution 8904 passed on 4 March 1915 to establish a life-saving station at the mouth of the Siuslaw, not to exceed \$12,000. It took several years to buy property and get the station built, but finally, it was reported on 21 September 1917 that the station would be opening soon (Figure 161).<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>236</sup>Congress, House, 51st Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 3903, 1889.

<sup>237</sup>Congress, House, 54th Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 23, 1896.

<sup>238</sup>"Open Station Before Long," *Florence The West*, 21 September 1917.

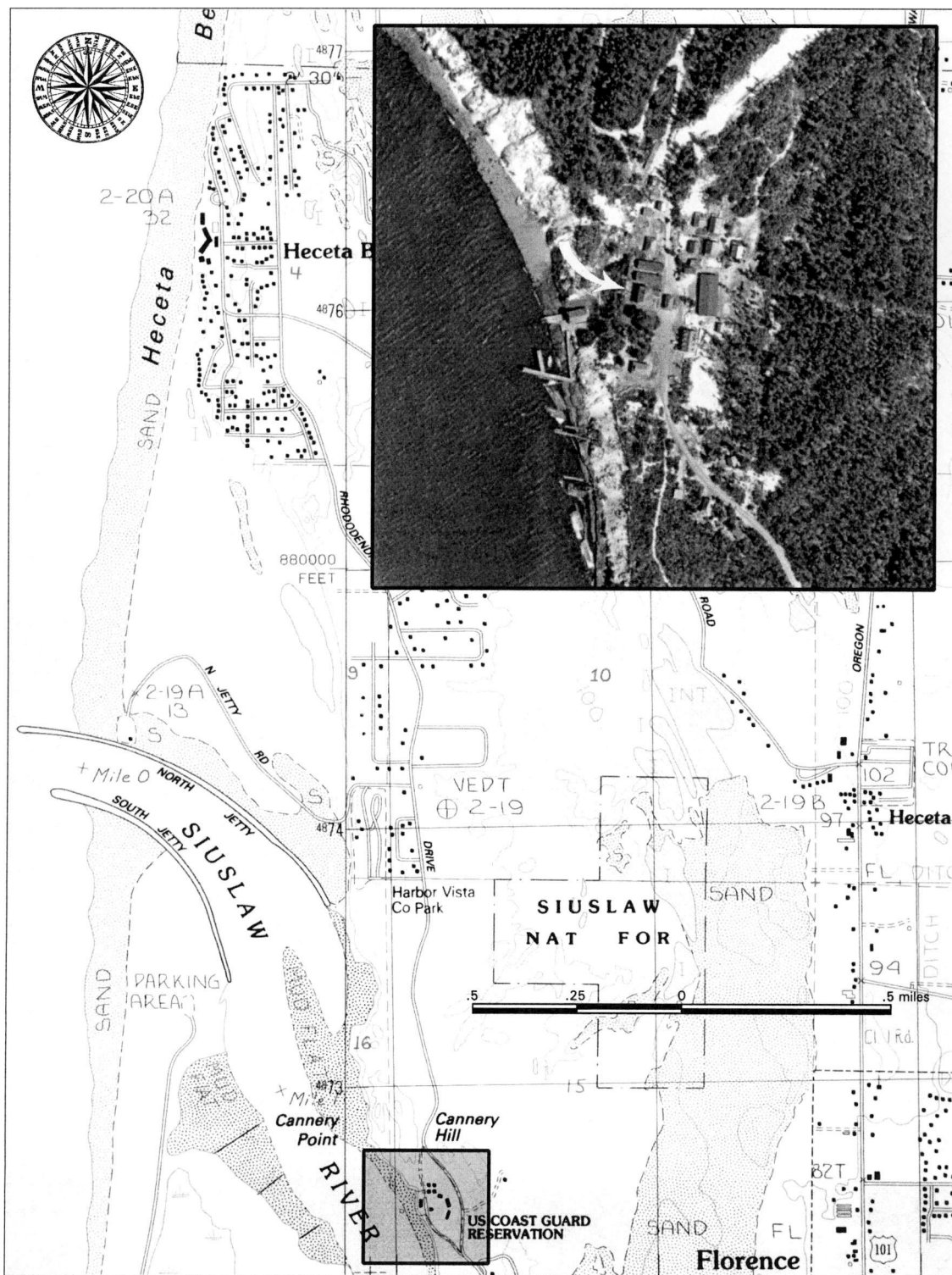


Figure 161. Aerial Photo of the Siuslaw River Station Area in 1945 Superimposed Over the Mercer Lake, Oregon, USGS Map (1984 Revision).



Figure 162. Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station, 1917. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Siuslaw River File).

Florence's paper, *The West*, reported, "It has been some twenty-five years since it was first suggested that a life saving station should be established at the mouth of the Siuslaw river. . . ." <sup>239</sup> Actually, the residents had struggled for 28 years to get the Coast Guard to build in their community. Only Port Orford worked longer to get a station. Captain Theodore Roberge came down from Cape Disappointment and was appointed keeper. <sup>240</sup> The crew was "shipped" in March 1918, five men from the Florence area and three from other locations. <sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup>"Siuslaw Station Has Full Crew," *Florence The West*, 29 March 1918.

<sup>240</sup>"Station Keeper Arrives Here." *Florence The West*, 14 December 1917.

<sup>241</sup>"Siuslaw Station Has Full Crew," *Florence The West*, 29 March 1918.



The station built at the Siuslaw River is known as an early Chatham-type station (Figure 162). It was designed by Victor Mendleheff who had been designing stations for the Life-Saving Service, and then the Coast Guard, for 18 years prior to this station's design. Starting with the original Petersons Point design (1898) used at Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station (1907), he had continued with Colonial Revival detailing and shingle surfaces through all of his 13 designs, including the Chatham-type. However, the Chatham station marked a sudden departure from the 1-1/2 story stations that had been the hallmark of the Life-Saving Service and brought the station to a full two stories in height. This aligned with the decade by decade trend of giving the crew more living space. At least 30 Chatham-type stations were built on both East and West Coasts marking the first time since the Marquette-type stations of a standard, nationwide architecture. Variations on the Chatham-type station continued to be constructed through the 1930s.<sup>242</sup> In fact, the 1934 station built at Port Orford is representative of the tail end of development of the Chatham-type in the United States. From that point on, the Coast Guard transitioned to the Roosevelt-type stations.

The station house was symmetrical, 39' 8" wide and 24' 6" deep, clad in shingles, with a hipped gable roof (Figure 163). The roof was surmounted by an integrated lookout tower nestled between two brick chimneys. Windows were double-hung, six-over-two, though in the tower, the windows were one-over-one for increased visibility (Figure 164). The hipped roof of the entry porch was supported by square, battered columns and connected to the building by a balustered rail. Mendleheff had gradually

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<sup>242</sup>Wick York, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 8 April 2000.



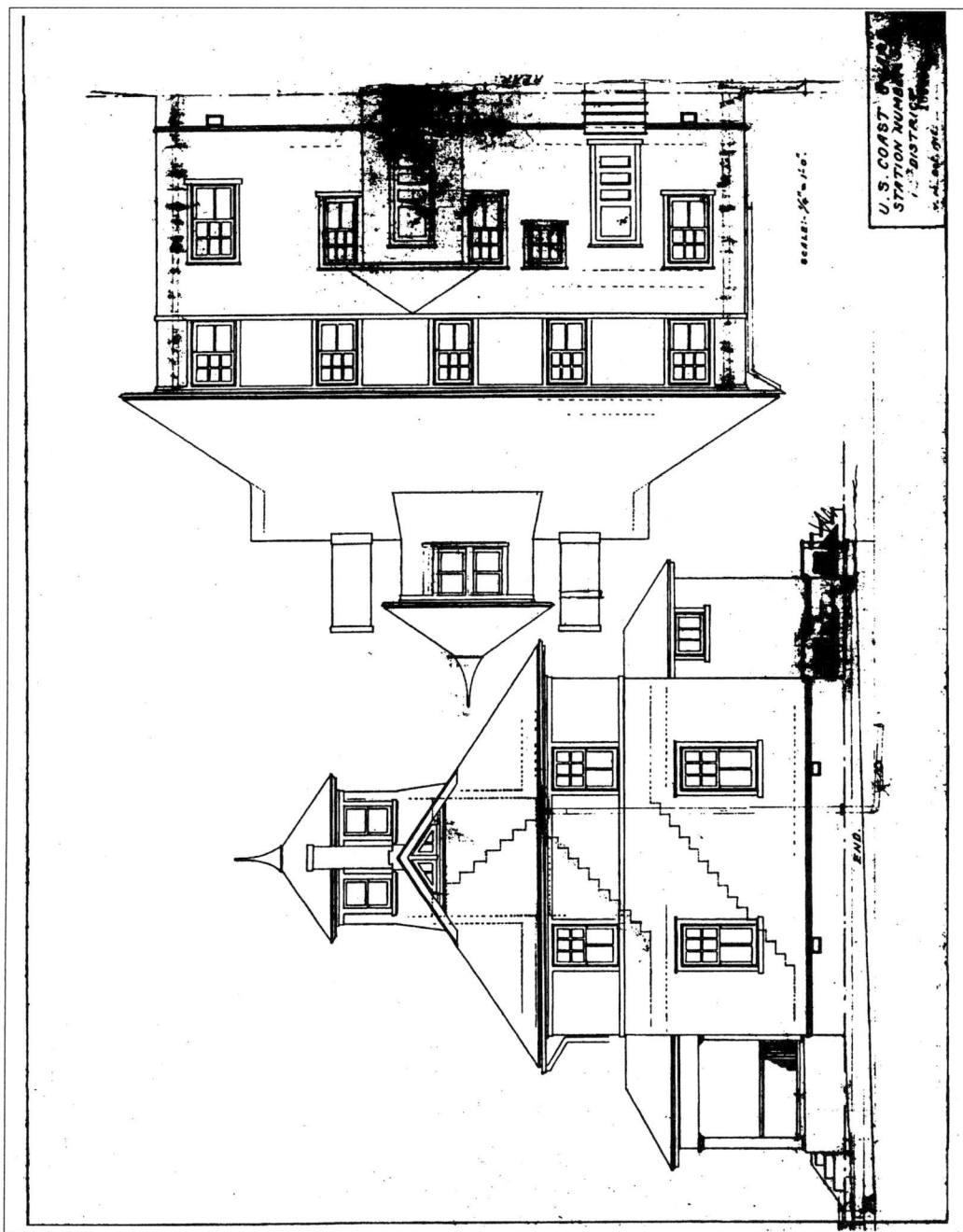


Figure 163. Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station, Side and Rear Elevation Drawings, October 1916.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit, Oakland, CA.



decreased the number of Colonial Revival details over the years to the point where the exterior Colonial elements were limited to the entry porch only.

Mendleheff tinkered with the Chatham-type plans continually. At first glance, the Chatham-type stations all look alike. But when compared in detail, there is tremendous variety. Wick York and Ralph Shanks have been working to categorize and inventory the Chathams around the country. The number of known Chatham stations is continuing to increase as more are discovered. Through their research, the variety in the design is just becoming evident. When comparing the Chatham station built at Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina, to the one built at the Siuslaw, two stations that were designed only a few months apart, there are distinct variations. The porch is wider on the one at Hatteras and supports three front entrance doors; the station at Siuslaw had a small porch and only one entrance. Hatteras had six-over-one windows; Siuslaw had six-over-two. In the gables, Hatteras had a four-pane, double-hung window; Siuslaw had two, triangular, hopper windows to fill each gable. On the rear elevation, Hatteras had an exterior door, whereas Siuslaw had a small ell containing a storm clothes room from which the surfmen could grab their gear on the way out the back door.

Inside the station, the storm clothes room of Hatteras was replaced with a second bathroom at Siuslaw (Figure 165). A spare bedroom at Hatteras was replaced by a kitchen and pantry at Siuslaw. The office at Hatteras was divided into two rooms at Siuslaw. Mendleheff seemed willing to reconfigure the station house in a multitude of ways, customizing it for the needs of different locales. Only in size and window placement did the two stations have a common first floor plan. Upstairs, the two plans



become more similar (Figure 166). The floor was divided evenly into four bedrooms, two crewmen per room. The attic was used for storage, and in an emergency, bunk space. A steep staircase led from the attic to the lookout monitor. The entire structure was supported by a concrete foundation.

The Siuslaw plans called for asbestos roofing shingles, as fire danger in the isolated location was a concern; however, it is not known if this was implemented. There is a photo of one of the outbuildings with a barrel of water on the roof for fire fighting. Fire was always a danger at the stations, as boathouses at Umpqua River, Port Orford, Coquille River, and two at Yaquina Bay all burned down. Besides fighting fires in the community, there are several entries in the *Annual Report* of surfmen fighting fires in their own station complex.

According to historic photos, the station house remained virtually unaltered until at least 1939. In the 1945 aerial, the station house is shown to have lost its lookout and a large, two-story ell had been added to the rear to accommodate additional crew during the war. The station house was still standing in 1967, but by 1983 it had been replaced with a new operations center.

Figure 167 shows several of the outbuildings constructed at the station. Directly behind the station to the east was a one-story, hipped roof, shingle-covered shop building. Like the station house, the shop building still stood in 1967, but was gone by 1983, replaced by asphalt. Further to the east on a small hill was a wood frame water tower, ubiquitous at all Oregon stations. It was also still standing in 1967, but gone by 1983. Between the station house and the shop building was the bell stand. To the southeast of

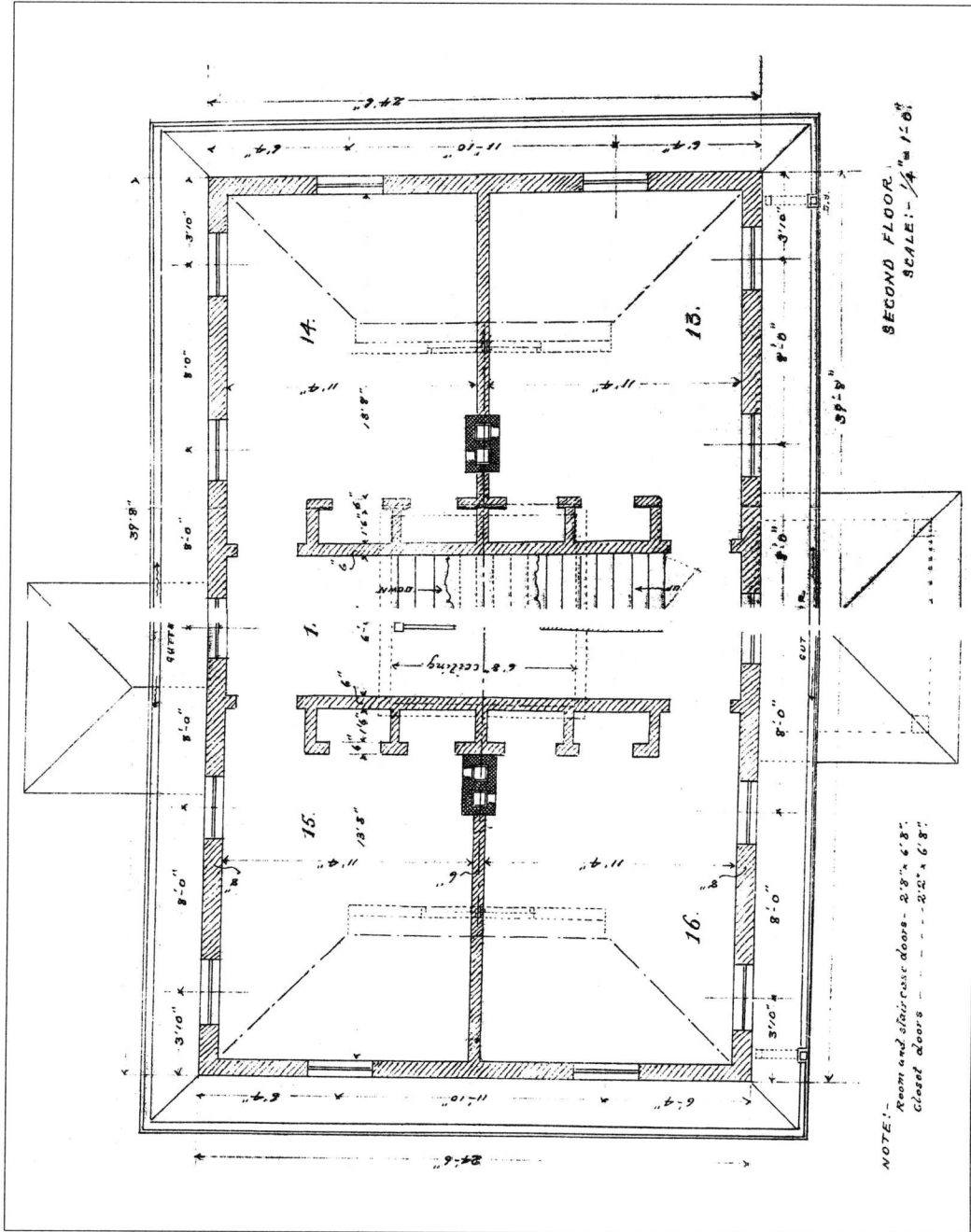


Figure 166. Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station, Second Floor Plan, October 1916. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit, Oakland, CA.



Figure 167. Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station From North, 1923.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Siuslaw River File).

the station house was the wreck pole and drill field. The station's buildings were all connected by boardwalks. Rail fences divided up the compound. Log retaining walls were built around the station house to level the yard. All of these auxiliary structures have disappeared over time.

To the north of the station house, and just visible at the right corner of Figure 167, was the home of one of the crew members. Reported *The West* in 1918, "Most of the men are married and will soon erect cottages near the station for homes for their families. They will make quite a little community in that part of the city limits of Florence."<sup>243</sup> This community was Siuslaw's "Little America," a development that cropped up at most stations in Oregon to house the families of the crew. There appears to have been at least

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<sup>243</sup>"Siuslaw Station Has Full Crew," *Florence The West*, 29 March 1918.



five homes built to accommodate the wives and children, but by 1967, most of the homes were gone, replaced entirely by 1983 with standard Coast Guard family housing.

Due south of the station house, and just visible in the background of Figure 167, was the first boathouse. Also built in 1917, the boathouse continued the features of the station house with a hipped gable roof, six-over-two windows, and triangular window in the gable (Figure 168). The structure was 23' wide by 39' 6" deep, two-bays wide, and was built on a concrete foundation. Unfortunately, the boathouse was built to accommodate a surfboat and lifeboat only and was located inconveniently high above the river. The 1921 *Annual Report* mentions that a wharf and approach were constructed on the river to the west of the station house. A small surfboat house, pitched to the angle of the shore, was built next to the wharf. In 1924, plans were drawn for a replacement boathouse with launchway at the river's edge (Figure 169). The boathouse was similar to the older boathouse with two bays and a hipped gable roof. It was larger at 26' wide by 49' deep to accommodate motor lifeboats. All of the boathouses were gone by 1967, though soon after, a large, utilitarian boathouse was erected on the water.

Northwest of the station house was a lookout tower on Cannery Hill (Figure 170). The eight-sided tower was raised only about 8' above the ground, as Cannery Hill offered sufficient elevation. Shingle-clad with an eight-sided roof, it is the earliest lookout in Oregon known to have a stove for heat. The diminutive tower has disappeared over time, made obsolete by a metal-framed lookout tower on the north jetty to the northwest.

During WWII, many buildings sprung up around the station compound to accommodate additional crew for the beach patrols. A standard, four-bay equipment

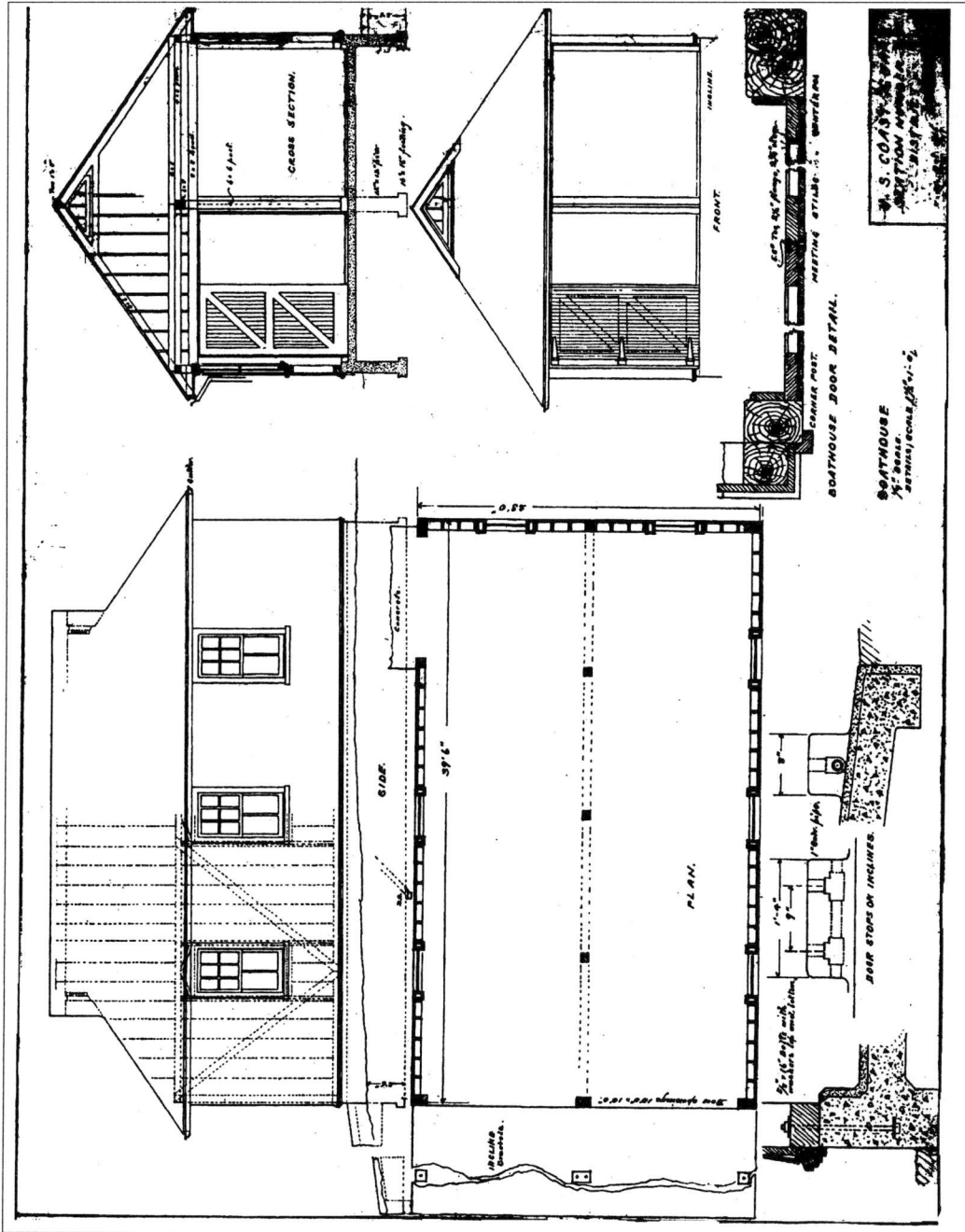


Figure 168. Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station, Boathouse Plan, October 1916. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit, Oakland, CA.

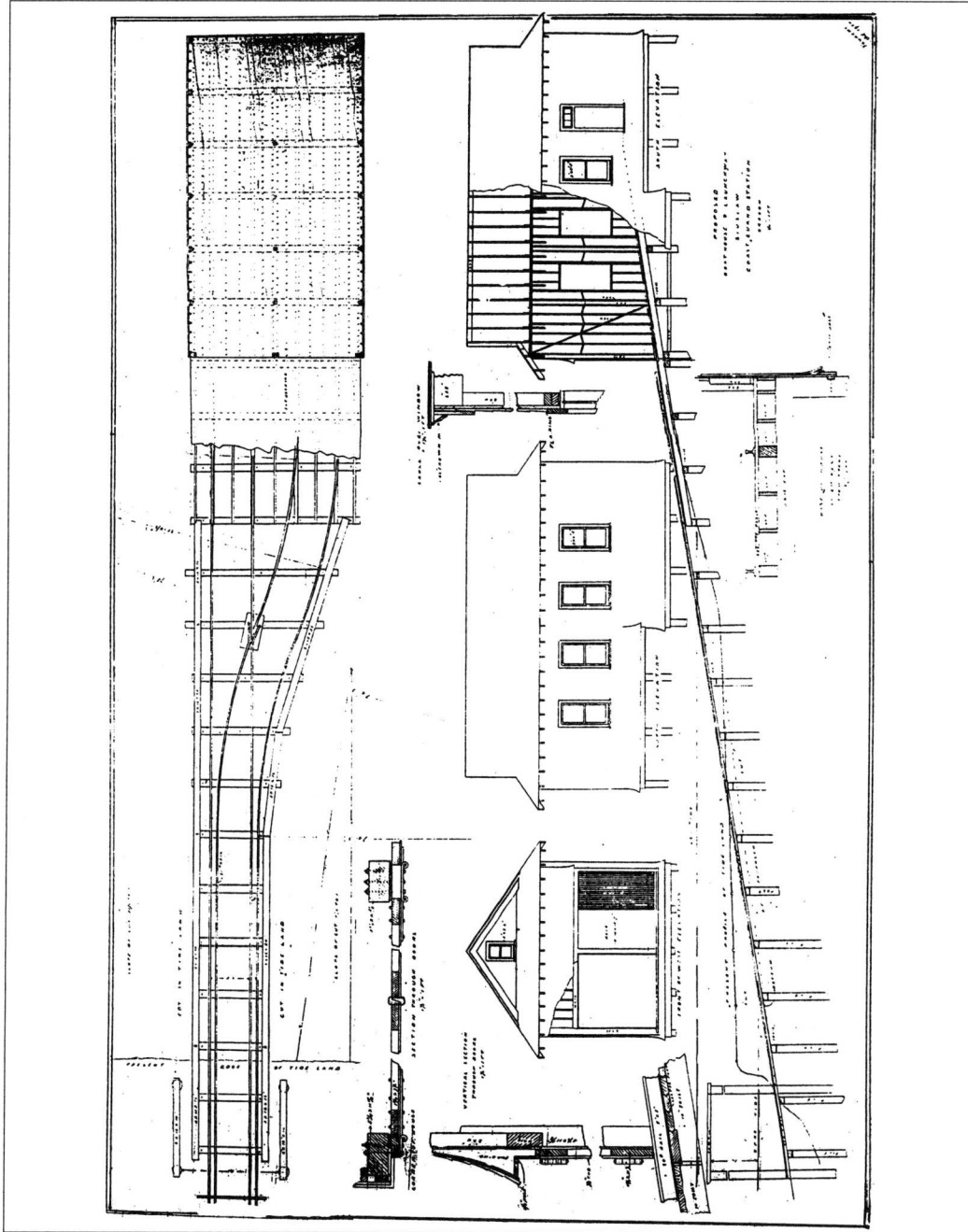


Figure 169. Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station, Second Boathouse Plan, October 1924. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#12-229).



Figure 170. Lookout at Cannery Hill, Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station, 1923. Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Siuslaw River File).

building was erected on the former drill field around 1940. Identical to those found at Point Adams and Coos Bay, it was built to serve as a garage for vehicles and small boats, plus have storage space for equipment in the attic. The plan of the building was approximately 50' wide by 30' deep and built on a concrete foundation. The equipment building has an incongruous Colonial Revival theme with its arched, multi-light windows in the dormers, eave returns at the gable ends, a lunette over the gable windows, and water table with cap. Each dormer was centered over a garage door that contained 10 lights over 15 panels. On the back side, there were four more dormers. On the north elevation was an entrance door sheltered by a small gable hood supported by elegant brackets. The building was clad in shingles and finished with classical corner boards.

### Preservation

Of all the pre-WWII station sites on the Oregon Coast, the Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station is the least intact. All that remains today is the four-bay equipment building erected circa 1940. There is no longer a lookout on Cannery Hill. Though Coast Guard personnel sometimes monitor the river mouth from the campground on Cannery Hill, there is no Coast Guard building on the site. A post-WWII tower near the north jetty serves their lookout needs today.

The four-bay equipment building is still in active use by Coast Guard personnel. The two end bays have been closed off, one is used as an office and the other as a parts room. The upstairs has been converted into a training room. However, the dormers and windows are all still intact and the old Coast Guard Station sign still stands over the overhead garage doors. The building should be retained, continue to be used, and not altered further.

## CHAPTER XI

## PORT ORFORD STATION

On the Southern Oregon Coast, Cape Blanco juts out into the Pacific creating the second westernmost point in the contiguous United States. It is thought that Martin de Aguilar sighted and named Cape Blanco in 1603; however, his travel itinerary already had the name “Cape Blanco” on it. There is no proof that Aguilar even reached the Oregon on his exploratory cruise up the coast from Acapulco. Heceta, Bodega, and Cook all sighted Cape Blanco in the 1770s. On 24 April 1792, George Vancouver observed Cape Blanco and renamed it Cape Orford, as its position and dark color “did not seem to intitle [sic] it to the appellation of cape Blanco.”<sup>244</sup> Vancouver named it Cape Orford after a friend, the Earl of Orford. However, the Cape Blanco label was persistent, and Cape Orford fell out of use, though the Orford name is still alive in the town of Port Orford (Figure 171).

Originally, Port Orford was called Ewing Harbor, named after a U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey ship, the *Ewing*. However, like Cape Orford, the name did not stick, and the name Port Orford prevailed.<sup>245</sup> The town of Port Orford had started life as two block houses built in defense against the local Indian population in 1851. It was a tenuous beginning for Port Orford, but with the discovery of gold in February 1852 in the

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<sup>244</sup>McArthur, 139-40.

<sup>245</sup>Ibid., 682.

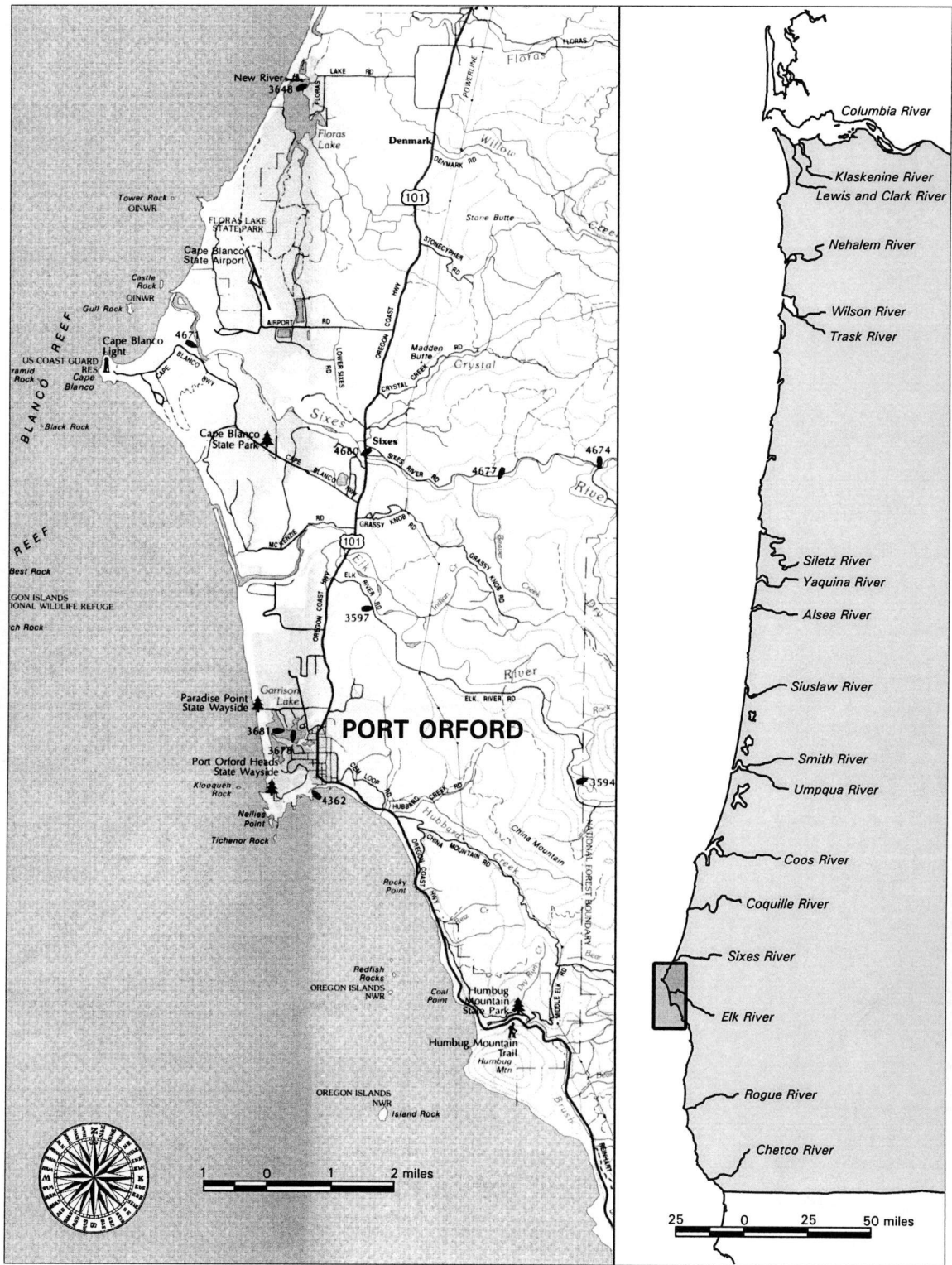


Figure 171. Location of Port Orford, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.



Rogue River Valley and then at the mouth of the Rogue River in the summer of 1853, Port Orford became a supplier of lumber for the miners. The first lumber mill was started in 1853-54. Through the 1850s, Port Orford was a thriving town. Herman Francis Reinhart called it “a lively town of about a thousand inhabitants” which had “a garrison and fort and some troops stationed there, and many stores and hotells [sic] and saloons, and there was lots of business done by miners. . . .”<sup>246</sup> The Port Orford post office was established on 27 March 1855.<sup>247</sup> As the town grew, the native populace fought back but were eventually suppressed and forced to relocate northward in 1856 to the Siletz Reservation. By the late 1850s, Asa M. Simpson had expanded his sawmill empire outward from Coos Bay to Port Orford.<sup>248</sup>

Through the Civil War, Port Orford continued to hang on. With the mines on the South Coast all but nonexistent, there was no prosperity for the town. In 1868, a fire destroyed Port Orford leaving only two homes and a barn standing. The town rebuilt, relying on sawmills, sheep ranches, and farms for income. Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote about the town’s isolated location, “Port Orford is a little hamlet on the wrong side of the mountain with no reason on earth for being there.”<sup>249</sup> Not until the completion of the Oregon Coast Highway in 1936 was Port Orford brought out of its landward isolation.

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<sup>246</sup>Douthit, 9, 11, 38.

<sup>247</sup>McArthur, 682.

<sup>248</sup>Douthit, 9, 11.

<sup>249</sup>Ibid., 40.

The Cape Blanco headland is surrounded by dangerous reefs. Mariners have traditionally given the place a wide berth, though many wrecks have occurred there before and after a lighthouse was built. The U.S. Lighthouse Bureau allocated a lighthouse to the headland in 1867. Fifty acres were purchased initially on Cape Blanco, 245' above the ocean.<sup>250</sup> The first batch of bricks for the tower was fired in 1868.<sup>251</sup> The drawings for the Cape Blanco Lighthouse were signed by Robert S. Williamson, the same engineer who designed the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (1871). The lighthouse was illuminated on 20 December 1870, making it the third lighthouse on the Oregon Coast.<sup>252</sup>

Port Orford gave its name to one of the best cedars known, the Port Orford cedar. Port Orford cedar grows only in a region between Coos Bay and Eureka, California, with its locus at Port Orford. A boom for the wood product in the 1920s and 1930s brought Port Orford back to life. Much of the cedar was exported, going to Japan and China where the wood was highly revered.<sup>253</sup> It was found that Port Orford cedar was resistant to acid and made the perfect separator in automobile batteries. The new technology made the region one of the largest producers of battery separators in the world.<sup>254</sup> Today, the cedar is threatened with a root disease and is no longer an economic factor.

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<sup>250</sup>Stephen Dow Beckham, *Cape Blanco Lighthouse: Historical Investigations* (Coos Bay, OR: Bureau of Land Management, 1995), 10.

<sup>251</sup>Donovan and Kachel, 8.3.

<sup>252</sup>Gibbs, *Oregon's Seacoast Lighthouses*, 37.

<sup>253</sup>Douthit, 12, 60.

<sup>254</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.

### Port Orford Lifeboat Station

To attract more shipping and commerce, the town of Port Orford wanted a life-saving station. As early as 1889, Oregon Senator John H. Mitchell requested, “an appropriation for the establishment of a life-saving station and providing for a life-saving crew at Port Orford.”<sup>255</sup> Years went by with more requests accompanied by denials. Finally, an appropriation of \$83,500, contained in the Treasury and Post Office Department Appropriation Act of 1932, was made for “establishing and equipping a Coast Guard station at or near Port Orford. . . .”<sup>256</sup> Port Orford waited 43 years for a station, longer than any other Oregon coastal community that did receive a station.

In July 1933, the *Curry County Reporter* gossiped about construction at the site and noted that the keeper’s dwelling and boathouse were well underway.<sup>257</sup> The site chosen was a geographical feature known as “The Heads” (Figure 172) on the western edge of Port Orford. The prominent headland offered a wide view of the ocean and harbor at a vantage point 280’ above the water. On 1 July 1934, the station was commissioned and put into service (Figure 173).<sup>258</sup>

The station house built at Port Orford is known as a late Chatham-type (Figure 174). The original Chatham was designed by Victor Mendleheff in 1914 for the

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<sup>255</sup>Congress, Senate, 51st Congress, 1st session, S 629, 1889.

<sup>256</sup>Congress, Senate, 72nd Congress, 1st session, 1 July 1932.

<sup>257</sup>Peggy Corson, “C.G. Station Has Scenic Location,” *Curry County Reporter*, 13 July 1933.

<sup>258</sup>“Coast Guard Boats Arrive at Station,” *Curry County Reporter*, 5 July 1934.

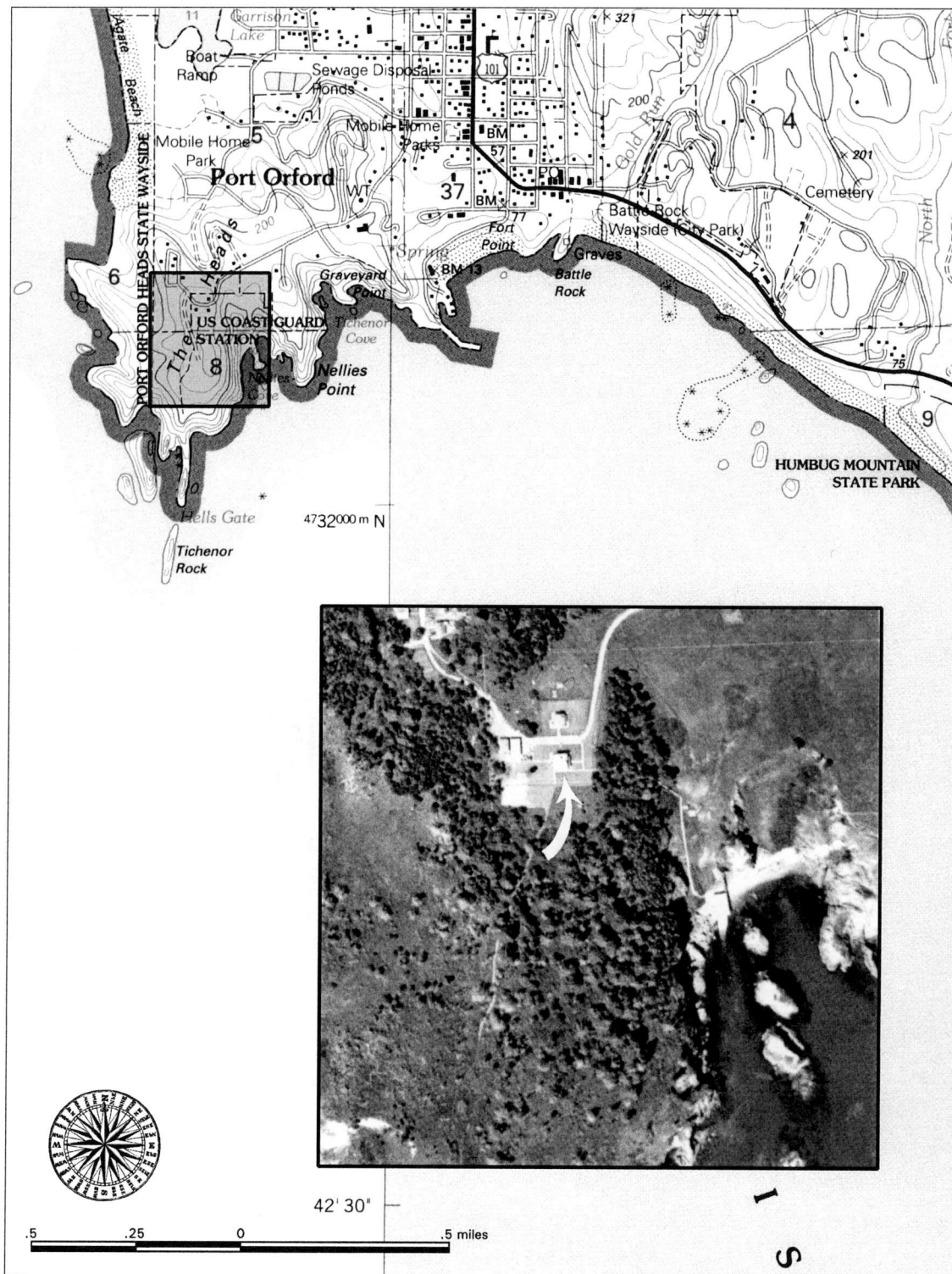


Figure 172. Aerial Photo of the Port Orford Station Area in 1939 Superimposed Over the Port Orford, Oregon, USGS Map (1996 Revision).



Figure 173. Port Orford Lifeboat Station, 1954. Source: National Archives (RG 26-DS Box 21 Folder 437).



Figure 174. Station House, Port Orford Lifeboat Station, Circa 1940. Source: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (Port Orford File).

life-saving station at Chatham, Massachusetts. It is not known who designed the Port Orford station, but the plans did not drift too far from the original Chatham design. At least 30 Chatham-type stations were built on both East and West Coasts marking the first time since the Marquette-type stations of a standard, nationwide architecture. Variations on the Chatham-type station continued to be constructed through the 1930s.<sup>259</sup> In the mid-1930s, the Coast Guard began to transition to the Roosevelt-type stations.

The station house was symmetrical, 45' wide and 30' deep, slightly larger than the early Chatham stations. The elevations were clad entirely in unpainted shingles pierced by six-over-six, double-hung windows. As had been the trend since 1900, Colonial Revival details became less prominent to the point where the symmetry of the front facade and classically detailed porch columns were the only Colonial elements remaining. The late Chatham-type station marks the bottom of this gradual decrease in ornament. With the Roosevelt-type station that follows the Chatham, there was a short-lived resurgence of Colonial decoration.

The Port Orford station house is elevated on a high concrete basement. The two-story building is capped with a hipped roof sporting two dormers. The front porch is nearly full-width with a concrete floor and metal pipe railing. The porch roof is hipped and supported by Classical, square posts. From the front porch there are two entries. One goes into the mess room and the other directly into the Officer in Charge's (OIC) office. Across the back of the building is the kitchen, spare bedroom, and OIC bedroom and bath (Figure 175). There is a back door in a vestibule off the kitchen. On the second

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<sup>259</sup>Wick York, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 8 April 2000.

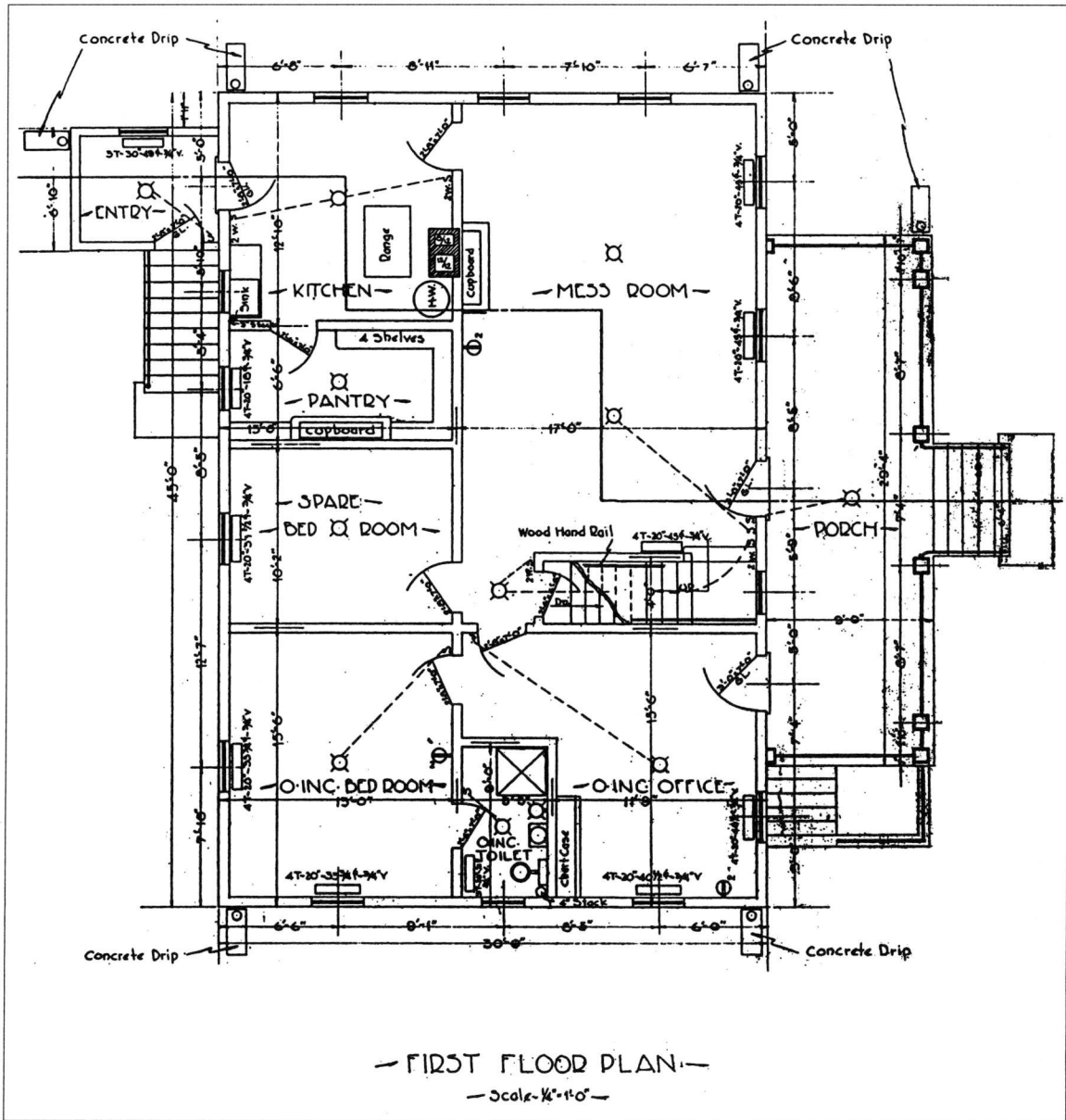


Figure 175. First Floor Plan, Port Orford Lifeboat Station. Source: State Historic Preservation Office (Port Orford File).



floor is a large bedroom, four smaller bedrooms, and one bathroom (Figure 176). The attic is accessed by a pull-down stair and used for storage. During WWII, the attic was used as bunk space. The basement has rooms for storage, laundry, provisions, storm clothes, and coal storage.

The keeper's house was built north of the station house. The building is 1-1/2 stories, topped with a gable roof and two large shed dormers (Figure 177). Like the station house, the structure is clad in shingles, pierced by six-over-six, double-hung windows. The plan is 34' wide by 27' deep with a living room, office, bedroom, kitchen, and toilet on the first floor. The second floor had two bedrooms, two large walk-in closets, and two store rooms. The basement has two fuel rooms and a laundry room.

To the west of the station house is a three-bay equipment building. Like the station house, it has a hipped roof and is clad in shingles. The building is 46' wide by 24' deep with a concrete floor. Each bay is closed by a paired door on large strap hinges. There are six, six-over-six, double-hung windows lighting the interior. Adjacent to the equipment building on the west side is a repair shop. Each end of the building holds two overhead doors. Three, six-over-six, double-hung windows are on the east and west walls.

The boathouse had the most unusual siting of any Coast Guard boathouse in Oregon. Since the station was located high on the headland, the boathouse was 280' below on the water at Nellies Cove (Figure 178). The 532-step staircase used to reach the boathouse was known as "The Stairs of a Thousand Tears." The boathouse was 36' wide by 60' deep, two-bays, with a hipped roof. The building was clad in shingles and



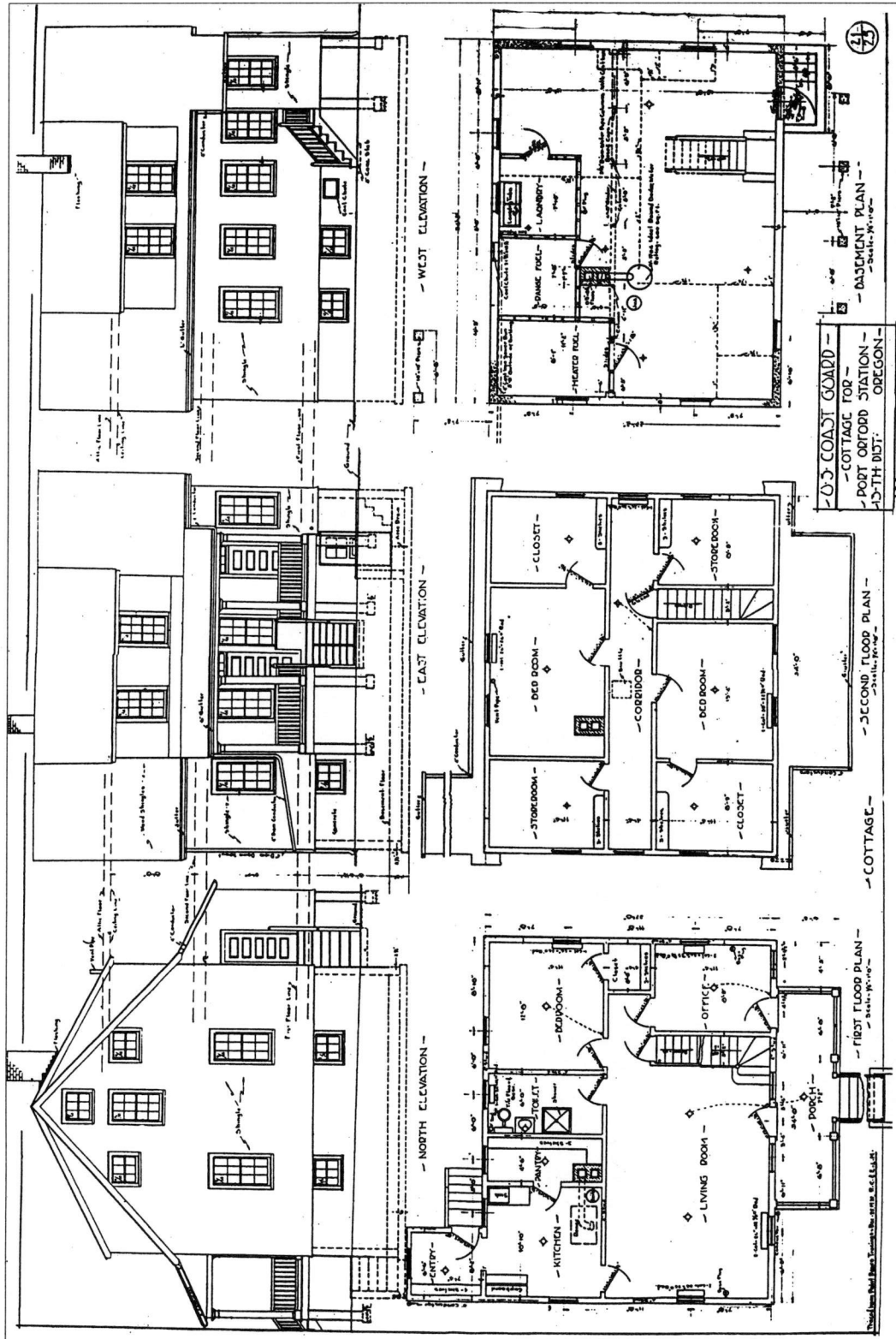


Figure 177. Keeper's Cottage, Port Orford Lifeboat Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#11-53).

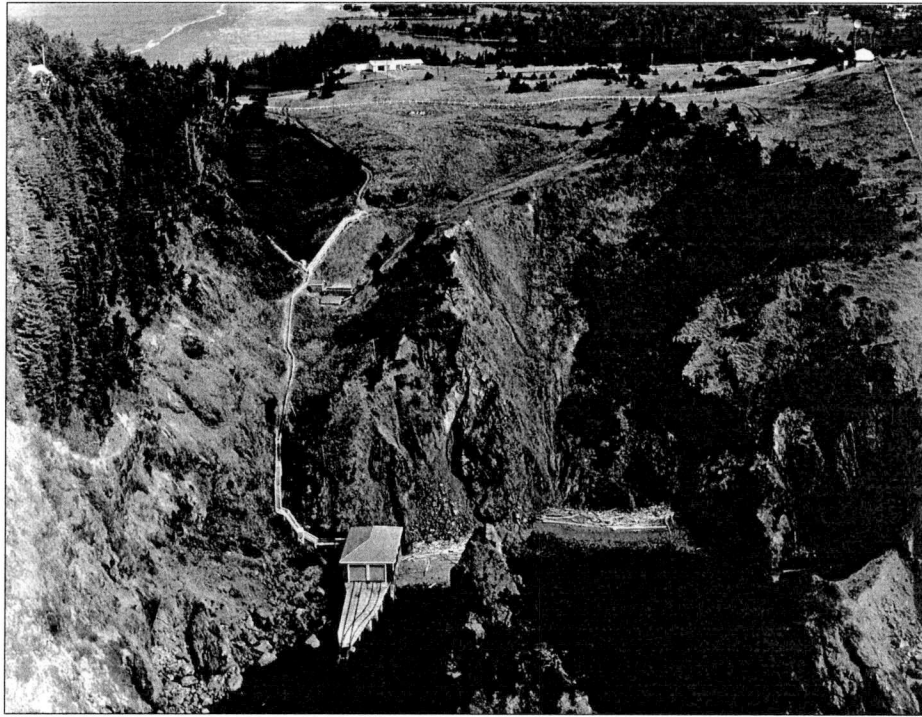


Figure 178. Boathouse in Nellies Cove, Port Orford Lifeboat Station, 1959. Source: National Archives (13CGD-081659-8).

punctuated by four, six-over-six, double-hung windows on either side and one on the rear of the building. The boathouse was entered from a door on the back. The boatroom doors were metal roll-ups. Rails left each boat bay and joined together in a single set leading down the launchway and into the water. Apparently a storm damaged the boathouse and launchway extensively in 1939. As a consequence, enormous concrete breakwaters were built to divide Nellies Cove in two and give more protection to the boathouse (Figure 179). The launchway was also rebuilt at this time using concrete caissons for pilings. Unfortunately, the boathouse burned down in the 1970s and all that remains are the concrete caissons and remnants of the launchway.



Figure 179. Boathouse Launchway and Breakwater Under Construction, 1939. Source: National Archives (RG 26-DS Box 21 Folder 437).

One third of the way down the staircase to the boathouse was a small pump house. It was used to pump water from a nearby spring up to the station's water tower. Next to the pump house was a concrete reservoir. The lookout tower was located at the end of The Heads. Historic photos indicate that this possibly was a standard 37' steel lookout tower. The watch room had a hipped roof. There was a radio equipment room at its base.

With the construction of the new Coast Guard facility at Bandon in 1939, the need for the services of the Port Orford Lifeboat Station decreased. Brookings received a Coast Guard station in 1964, further decreasing the need for the Port Orford station. In 1970, the Port Orford Lifeboat Station was decommissioned. Oregon State University

used the buildings as an extension campus from 1970 to 1976. The entire station complex was deeded to Oregon State Parks in 1976. Oregon State Parks in turn opened the site as the Port Orford Heads State Park.<sup>260</sup> In 1998, the standing elements of the station complex (five buildings and six structures) were added to the National Register of Historic Places.

### Preservation

All of the standing buildings of the Port Orford Lifeboat Station have high integrity. The station house is almost as it was when the Coast Guard left in 1970. The keeper's house is used as a caretaker's residence for the park and is nearly intact. The equipment building and repair shop have good integrity and are in good condition. All that remains of the lookout tower are four concrete pads. The tennis court is used as a parking lot for park visitors. The large concrete breakwaters are still in good condition. The water tower and signal flag tower were both lost, though their concrete anchors are still in the ground where they stood. The drill pole was found in the brush south of the former drill field. If it could be re-erected, it would be the only pre-WWII drill pole on the Oregon Coast.

The station house remains nearly unchanged since it was decommissioned in 1970. Hardware, cabinetry, and original signage all still exist. The Point Orford

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<sup>260</sup>Elizabeth Carter and Point Orford Heritage Society, *National Register Nomination for Port Orford Coast Guard Station* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, 1998), 8.12.

Heritage Society is just finishing up its first phase of rehabilitating the station house into a Coast Guard museum with a grand opening slated for 3 June 2000. A Coast Guard museum is the most compatible adaptive reuse of a Coast Guard station possible. The transformation of the station house into a museum devoted to the Coast Guard is highly compatible and appropriate.



## CHAPTER XII

## CONCLUSION

The spirit of the Coast Guard lives on in the tangible reminders of Oregon's past. Boats and buildings help to tell the history of the Coast Guard in Oregon. Without these remnants, the altruistic story is diminished and could even disappear entirely. Artifacts from the past have always been in danger of disintegrating. Public awareness has increased over the years, but so have destructive pressures from population growth, new technology, and age.

The era of consumerism has created a culture driven by replacement rather than maintenance. And without maintenance, the cause of historic preservation is lost. Therefore, the first level of treatment to historic structures is to simply maintain and repair what is there. By their definition in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties 1992*, maintenance and repair are termed "preservation." These *Standards* are quite detailed and are presented in full in Appendix C.

"Restoration" is the term used when a property is taken back to a specific period in time. All elements added to a structure after the specified time period are removed. For example, in the world of life-saving stations, if it was decided that the station should tell the story of the pre-motor age in life-saving, all additions made to the station in the motor age would be removed. Boathouse doorways would be returned to their original

size, signs of engine repair would be removed, and gasoline tanks would be eliminated. Materials and methods used in the restoration would be “in kind.” For example, if a rotted, full-dimension, exposed cedar rafter is being replaced, then the replacement should be a full-dimension cedar rafter.

“Rehabilitation,” or adaptive reuse, recognizes the fact that building use can change over time without seriously affecting its significant features. A boathouse can turn into a full-scale interpretive display; a station house can turn into a dorm for summer school students. Rehabilitation dictates that significant historical features remain intact. For example, if there is a chair rail surrounding a room and that chair rail is a significant feature of the room, then the chair rail should not be removed, damaged, or altered in any way.

“Reconstruction” is an accepted means of assisting in the telling of a site’s story. For example, if a station site has lost its boathouse and that boathouse is considered essential in describing the history of the station, the boathouse could be rebuilt. However, speculative reconstructions are not acceptable. If there are original plans, sufficient archaeological evidence, and/or photos and descriptions of the boathouse that make it clear what the boathouse once was, then the boathouse could be rebuilt. Reconstruction is, of course, the last resort. It is always easier and cheaper to maintain a building rather than repair, repair rather than restore, and restore rather than reconstruct.

There are other methods of retaining a historic structure not recognized by the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards*. Where the Coast Guard is concerned, moving a building is a viable means of saving the structure. The Coast Guard needs buildings to be

functional. If the building is not functional, the Coast Guard disposes of it. Sometimes the rescuing of a structure can involve moving it off of its original site.

“Recycling” is a final solution for a building. This is not a treatment as defined by the Secretary of the Interior, but recycling structures has happened throughout history. Recycling, as an alternative to rehabilitation, is one step away from outright demolition. Recycling can range from incorporating a Coast Guard building into a new building to dismembering a Coast Guard building and using the parts elsewhere. Either method is preferred as a last resort to outright destruction of the structure.

“Interpretation” is the act of telling the story of a building to the public. All historic Coast Guard buildings deserve interpretation, whether they are standing or not. Interpretation can be done through signage, written reports, brochures, docents, and living history. Interpretation gives the opportunity to those structures no longer standing to tell their story. It is a last resort when reconstruction is not viable. The Coast Guard has had an excellent rapport with the communities in which they operate. They have always fostered their public image, from their life-saving demonstrations at expositions in the past to their community service today. Interpretation can go a long way toward enhancing and continuing that image.

These treatment strategies are all applicable to at least some of the early Coast Guard stations along the Oregon Coast. Table 2 summarizes which treatments are applicable to what Oregon stations. The following pages take each treatment, define it further, and describe how each can be applied to the Oregon stations.

Table 2. Treatment Strategy for the Historic Structures at Each Oregon Station.

Station and Structures	Treatment				Interpret
	Preserve	Restore	Rehab	Reconst	
Cape Arago LSS at Lighthouse Island					✓
Cape Arago LSS at North Spit					
Coos Bay LBS at Charleston:					
Boathouse, Crew's Dwelling	✓				✓
Keeper's Dwelling					✓
Equipment Building	✓				
Point Adams LSS:					
Boathouse	✓	✓			✓
Point Adams LBS:					
Station House, Shop Bldg, Equipment Bldg	✓		✓		✓
Boardwalk, Signal Tower	✓				
Coquille River LSS:					
Lookout				✓	✓
Coquille River LBS	✓		✓		✓
Umpqua River LSS					
Umpqua River LBS:					
Station House, Equipment Bldg	✓		✓		✓
Lookout Tower	✓				
Yaquina Bay LSS at South Beach					✓
Yaquina Bay LSS at Yaquina Bay Lighthouse	✓		✓		✓
Yaquina Bay LBS:					
Station House, Keeper's Dwelling, Lookout	✓				✓
Tillamook LSS at Barview	✓	✓	✓		✓
Tillamook LBS at Garibaldi	✓				✓
Siuslaw River LBS:					
Equipment Building	✓				✓
Port Orford LBS:					
Crew's Quarters	✓	✓	✓		✓
Keeper's House, Pump House, Stairway	✓	✓			
Lookout Tower, Boathouse				✓	✓

### Maintenance

The most important aspect of preservation is maintenance. And to their credit, the Coast Guard has had a long tradition of maintaining their equipment and facilities to the nth degree (Figure 180). In their *Instructions for Coast Guard Stations 1916*, the manual details 50 points to the “Care and Preservation of Property” even before describing the maintenance of the boats themselves.<sup>261</sup> These “maintenance commandments” are listed in Appendix D and are as valuable today as they were in 1916.

In the *Instructions*, there is a reason why 60% of the text in the “Care and Preservation of Property” section is devoted to paint. Painting is one of the simplest and most cost effective means of preserving a structure (Figure 181). These stations were made of wood and subjected to some of the most abusive weather imaginable in the United States. The Oregon Coast does not have the ice problems that the Great Lakes and East Coast have, but Oregon does have a particularly harsh climate for wooden structures. The constant moisture and driving rains play havoc with unmaintained buildings. Other simple remedies, such as cleaning out gutters, adequate ventilation, and keeping plantings away from buildings, go a long way toward preserving a structure.

The two most important aspects to preservation are to retain as much of the original material as possible and to use the gentlest means possible when doing work on a

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<sup>261</sup>U.S. Coast Guard, *Instructions for United States Coast Guard Stations* (Washington: GPO, 1917), pp. 16-23.

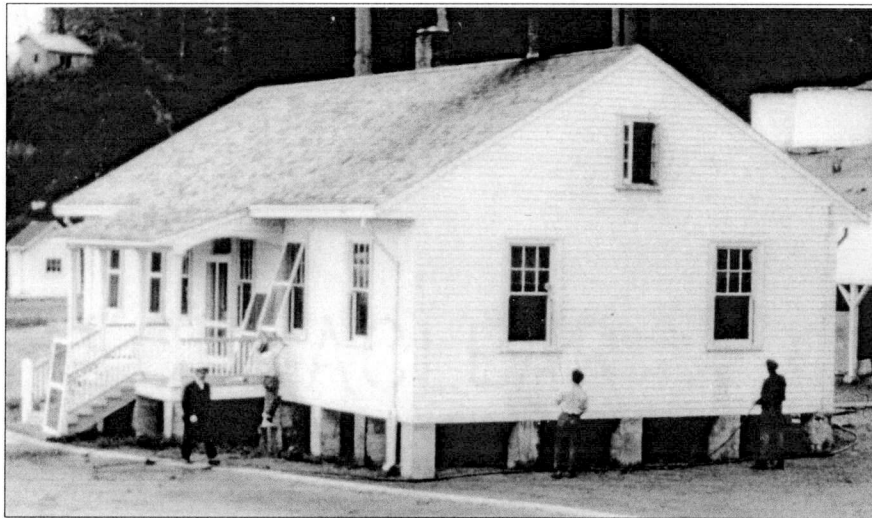


Figure 180. Removing Screens and Washing Windows, 1923.  
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (Coos Bay File).



Figure 181. Surfmen Painting the Boathouse Roof, Coquille  
River Life-Saving Station, Circa 1900. Source: Bandon  
Historical Society.

building. For example, if a wooden window sill is cracked, simply repair the sill with a fastener and marine glue. If the crack is severe, perhaps move up to an epoxy. The last step would be to restore the sill by splicing in a new piece of wood. The rule is to work from the least invasive method toward stronger means. Another example would be cleaning a building. Using water and a brush would be the gentlest means possible. If that was not enough, then add an appropriate cleaner to the water. The most invasive method would be cleaning with a power washer, acceptable on a low setting, held well-away from the building, and at a downward angle to the siding.

All of the surviving pre-1950 Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard structures deserve preservation. It is a simple case to make that maintaining a structure is less expensive than repairing a structure, and repairing is cheaper than rebuilding. With the notable exception of the Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Service station buildings, all of the existing Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard structures in Oregon are being used in some capacity, proving their worth every day. The literature available on preservation technology is growing annually. Currently, the most applicable resource is the *Historic Lighthouse Preservation Handbook* produced in 1997 by the National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and Department of Defense. The handbook is written specifically for lighthouse preservation; however, the document is very applicable to life-saving and lifeboat stations, particularly the chapter on wood. There is currently discussion within the National Park Service toward producing a handbook for the preservation of life-saving and lifeboat stations. The National Park Service produces a series entitled *Preservation Briefs*, each brief tackling a preservation technology issue. These briefs



cover in detail such topics as shingle roofs, wood windows, and accessibility issues. Proper execution of the work is as important as using the best available materials. These documents can guide someone doing restoration work or developing a preservation plan for a structure. Hiring a preservation consultant to develop a preservation plan for the station is a good first step toward preserving a station.

### Restoration

Once a historic element has disappeared from a structure, it is gone forever. Fortunately, it can be replaced, though restoration is never preferred over simple maintenance and repair of a feature. For example, replacing a “witch’s hat” ventilator on a Fort Point-type boathouse is a fairly expensive procedure, whereas maintaining that ventilator is relatively inexpensive. Of course, removing the ventilator entirely and shingling over the hole is easier than maintaining, repairing, or restoring; however, the boathouse will have lost a distinctive feature that defines the boathouse. Everyone would agree that the building is much more extraordinary with the ventilator; however, a ventilator is more than just aesthetics, it serves the purpose of ventilating moisture out of the boathouse. Damp equipment takes much longer to dry and is susceptible to rot without proper ventilation. Many lighthouses have experienced significant moisture problems due to removal of elements that once ventilated the structure.

The most important part of a restoration is not to remove more original material than is absolutely necessary. If a floor joist is rotten only at the sill, do not replace the



Figure 182. Splicing Floor Joists at Block Island Life-Saving Station, Rhode Island, 1970. Source: Mystic Seaport (#70-8-364).

entire floor joist. Instead, splice on a new end with an in-kind material and save as much of the original fabric as possible (Figure 182).

Often restorations are not performed completely. A partial restoration can be performed because of time and/or cost issues. Another reason for a partial restoration is that a full restoration might remove an element that tells a significant story even if the story is one of a later time period. Often restorations are compromises. As long as the reasons are carefully considered and weighed, there is legitimacy in compromise. The overriding principal, however, is that whatever work is performed should be done well and should be well documented. The mind-set should be that whatever is removed will



Figure 183. Marking New Material, Block Island Life-Saving Station, Rhode Island, 1970. Source: Mystic Seaport (#70-9-213).

be lost forever and that there is no time like the present to record what is being done. Newly installed material should also be recorded with equal care so that later researchers can understand what was done. Any new construction material should be date stamped (Figure 183), and a written and visual record made.

A full restoration involves taking an entire property back to a certain period of time. In Oregon, an exceptionally deserving candidate for a full restoration is the Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. All three of its buildings stand intact in their original configuration, though their condition has deteriorated. Considering that this station represents three-fifths of the surviving Life-Saving Service structures in Oregon,

it is vital that these buildings are restored and not allowed to deteriorate further. The original plans still exist, and there are many historic photos of the buildings.

On a smaller scale, though still challenging, the 1889 boathouse at Point Adams is very deserving of a full restoration. The plans still exist for the boathouse, and there are several historic photographs of the building. There is a restored example at the Fort Point Life-Saving Station on San Francisco Bay within the Golden Gate Recreation Area to examine for details, and there is a similar boathouse at the Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station to peruse. The boatroom doors would have to be reconstructed, appropriate wooden windows would need to be fabricated, current fenestration would have to be removed, openings would have to be covered with appropriate siding, and the ventilator would have to be reconstructed. After the restoration, the boathouse could continue to store equipment for the National Marine Fisheries Service. The restoration would go a long way toward preserving the history of the Life-Saving Service in Oregon.

### Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is the treatment method of reusing a building for a new purpose while retaining its historic elements. Many buildings outlive their original purpose, such as a one-room schoolhouse or a life-saving station (Figure 184). Rehabilitation gives a historic building a new lease on life. Foremost, the new use should be compatible with the historic structure so that finishes, spaces, and historic features are impacted minimally. Unlike a restoration, significant features that have become historic over time, such as a radio room added onto a life-saving station, should be retained. New elements



Figure 184. Pamet River Lifeboat Station Adaptively Reused as a Youth Hostel, 1997. Source: Author.

that need to be added as part of the rehabilitation, such as bathrooms, should be carried out in a compatible manner but not to the point where they are mistaken for original. The new work should be differentiated so that the historic integrity of the building is maintained. Additions should also be made as reversible as possible so that later preservationists can undo the work if needed.

All of the Oregon stations in non-Coast Guard hands have undergone some form of adaptive reuse, some more successfully than others. The Tillamook Bay, Siuslaw River, and Yaquina Bay Lifeboat Stations are still in use by the Coast Guard for their original purpose. The Coos Bay Lifeboat Station has had its boathouse adaptively reused by the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology. The Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station was adapted into a home early in its history and is described in the previous section. The

Yaquina Bay Lighthouse has been adapted principally into a lighthouse museum. The four station sites that have been rehabilitated are the Point Adams, Umpqua River, Coquille River, and Port Orford Lifeboat Stations.

The boathouse at the Coos Bay Lifeboat Station (1915) underwent a rehabilitation in 1975. To make the structure useful to the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, it was converted into a lecture hall. While the structure was saved, it is far from a perfect adaptive reuse. The boatroom has kept its volume, the launchway was retained, and the side elevations remained unaltered; unfortunately, several other adaptations were handled insensitively. The boatroom doors were removed and substituted with glazing. Inexplicably, the east bay was sealed with a three-sided bay window. This glazing could have been inserted on the interior and the boatroom doors retained. There is no excuse for the bay window. The projection room should not have been built as its usefulness is precluded by its invasion into the boatroom space. A wing was added to the approach of the building to provide for bathrooms and a foyer. The wing displaces the boathouse's symmetry and integrates into the building to the point where it could be mistaken for original fabric; therefore, the wing violates two "laws" of rehabilitation. However, it should be remembered that the rehabilitation of the boathouse occurred early in the history of Oregon's preservation movement. The rehabilitation could have been better carried out, but at least the building has been saved and reused.

The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (1871) has been adaptively reused as a lighthouse museum. Oregon State Parks owns and maintains the structure and led the initial work in its rehabilitation. The ell on the rear was reconstructed from original plans, photos, and

archaeological evidence to house the modern restrooms. Shutters were reconstructed and the front porch restored. Recently, the lighthouse lantern room was restored. Other than under-representation in the interpretation of the Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard history at the lighthouse, the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is a good example of a rehabilitation.

The Point Adams Lifeboat Station (1938) has already been adaptively reused by the National Marine Fisheries Service. They use the station house for offices and keep marine equipment in the equipment building, shop building, and 1889 boathouse. Their nautical mission meshes well with the former function of the lifeboat station. The National Marine Fisheries Service is having little negative impact on the structures and is trying to keep them well-maintained. Recently, new cedar shingle roofs were installed on all of the buildings. However, it is vital that funding continues for the maintenance of the structures. Once maintenance slips, costs for repairs will only increase the final bill. The station is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, though the National Marine Fisheries Service would like to pursue a nomination.

The Umpqua River Lifeboat Station (1939) was adapted into a local history museum starting in 1976. The rehabilitation process provided the building with bathrooms and exterior access ramps in a sensitive manner. They also took the opportunity to restore portions of the exterior. Douglas County has been doing a good job maintaining the structure.

The Coquille River Lifeboat Station was rehabilitated into office space and a museum in 1991. The museum moved out in 1995, and there are only a few offices in it



today. The usage as a museum and offices is very compatible with the original station. The original station plan divided up the floor plan into a honeycomb of rooms on the first and second floors coupled with large spaces. The museum and offices have had little impact on the historic finishes and features. The Port of Bandon continues to maintain the building well.

The Port Orford Lifeboat Station is just finishing up its first phase of rehabilitation into a Coast Guard museum with a grand opening on 3 June 2000. Port Orford has the most compatible adaptive reuse of a Coast Guard station in Oregon. The transformation of the station house into a museum devoted to the Coast Guard is highly compatible and appropriate.

### Reconstruction

To serve interpretive purposes, reconstruction is acceptable to the Secretary of the Interior. However, speculative reconstructions are not allowed. Only where there is good documentary evidence should a reconstruction be undertaken. Life-saving and lifeboat stations can benefit greatly through reconstructions, as station sites were a complex of buildings in which all structures are needed to tell the entire story of the station. Most stations consist primarily of a station house, boathouse, equipment building, and lookout. Station buildings were connected by walkways, lined with fences, and usually had a bell stand from which to summon crewmen. Most had a signal flag tower and a flag pole. Many stations had auxiliary boathouses located far from the station in case they could not get a boat out of their primary boathouse. All of the



Figure 185. Nantucket Life Saving Museum, Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, 1997. Source: Author.

buildings and structures are important in telling the complete story of a station. Viewing all of the structures allows a visitor to completely immerse themselves in the story.

Several Oregon station sites would receive interpretive benefits from reconstructions, such as the lookout tower at Port Orford, the old lookout at Coquille Point, and the boathouse at Port Orford, just to name a few. It would be spectacular to see the old Cape Arago Life-Saving Station rebuilt on Lighthouse Island. However, reconstructions are expensive and take a lot of desire on the part of the supporters. There have been several reconstructions on the East Coast. The Nantucket Island Life-Saving Museum is in a recreation of a 1874-type station with “later” additions (Figure 185).

## Moving

One method of preservation used quite often during the history of the Coast Guard was the moving of a structure to a new site. Coast Guard buildings are built to specifications much greater than standard housing. Walls made with full-dimension 2" by 6" studs and solid, diagonal 1" by 6" sub-sheathing are standard. In fact, early life-saving stations were built to be moved as the sand shifted the distances from the station to the water. There are instances on record where stations have been carried inland by storm surges, in one case half a mile, without sustaining serious damage.<sup>262</sup>

In recent decades, stations have been moved in an effort to preserve them (Figure 186). Once a station is considered surplus by the Coast Guard, it is either mothballed, demolished, sold, given to other government agencies, or donated to nonprofit groups. Often the Coast Guard simply wants the land on which the old station rests for a new purpose. This is a legitimate need, and nonprofit groups should take advantage of it.

Loss of context is a serious issue to a moved structure (Figure 187). With early life-saving stations, context is less of an issue since they were built to move. As long as the station is near a beach with appropriate water access on a properly sized plot of land, the life-saving station will "feel" appropriate. Even life-saving stations not meant to move can be moved without too much turmoil. For example, the Old Harbor Life-Saving Station was barged from one end of Cape Cod to the other without much loss in site character (Figure 188).

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<sup>262</sup>Sumner I. Kimball, *Organization and Methods of the United States Life-Saving Service* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1912), p. 10.



Figure 186. Marine Helicopter Moving Halfway House at Mystic Seaport in 1968. Source: Curtis, *Moving Historic Buildings*.



Figure 187. Pointe Aux Barques Life-Saving Station (1875-76) in New Context at Huron City Museum, Huron City, Michigan, 1997. Source: Author.

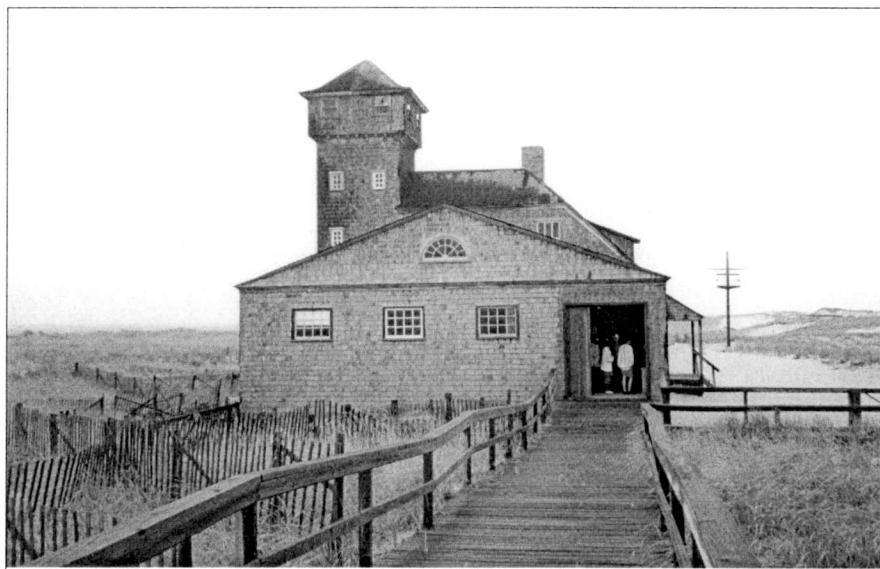


Figure 188. Old Harbor Life-Saving Station (1898) in New Context at Race Point, Massachusetts, 1997. Source: Author.

With lifeboat stations, however, context is very important. The lifeboat station's boathouse is a littoral structure and its orientation to the water is vital. The station houses, on the other hand, should be sited near the boathouse but can stand to be moved to some degree as long as there still is a visible relationship between the boathouse and the station buildings. Along the Oregon Coast, many of the station buildings are quite a distance from their boathouses. The Umpqua River Lifeboat Station had its station buildings nine-tenths of a mile away from its boathouse. The Port Orford Station's boathouse was 280' below the station house.

The only station on the Oregon Coast that might receive some benefit from relocation is the former Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station at Barview. Right now the station buildings are owned by Gary Newkirk. This is also the only privately held station on the Oregon Coast. The station house, boathouse, and workshop are all in their original locations. Unfortunately, an undersized sewer line for the town of Barview was installed through the property, and the line occasionally backs up onto the property and into the station buildings. As a consequence, the buildings are condemned for human habitation. The owner has been in a legal entanglement with the sewer district over the issue for a decade.

These buildings are extremely important in telling the story of the Life-Saving Service in Oregon since they comprise the last remaining life-saving station in the State. The station house is the only remaining example of a Petersons Point-type station in the nation. The loss of the station would strike a harsh blow to the tangible history of the Life-Saving Service in Oregon. If the sewer situation cannot be resolved or the buildings

continue to degrade, a last resort to the situation would be to move the structures.

Considering that the current Tillamook Bay site was already severely compromised by the north jetty installation in 1912-17 and beach erosion, moving the buildings would not compromise their context unalterably. These three structures are just too important to lose. As long as the buildings are reinstalled in the same configuration at a location on Tillamook Bay, they could continue to tell the history of life-saving on Tillamook Bay.

### Recycling

Recycling is not accepted as a preservation treatment by the Secretary's *Standards*. Recycling involves demolishing a building and reusing its parts. Old automobile restorationists have used this method for years, sacrificing one car for parts to keep another running. Altering a building to the point of unrecognizability would also be considered recycling (Figure 189). The Oregon Institute of Marine Biology (OIMB) has chosen an aggressive way of reusing two of their historic Coast Guard buildings. The former keeper's dwelling has been fully incorporated into the library on the OIMB campus (Figure 190). While this does not conform to the Secretary's *Standards*, it is a way of making use of an old building. By not demolishing the building, the owners of the building have left some room for physical interpretation of the structure. The remains of the building can serve as a jumping off point from which to interpret the early Coast Guard. For example, a plaque within the new OIMB library telling viewers what purpose the building formerly served could inspire people to delve deeper into learning more





Figure 189. Cahoons Hollow Life-Saving Station (1894) Rehabilitation, Cahoons Hollow, Massachusetts, 1997. Source: Author.



Figure 190. Keeper's Dwelling (1915) Enveloped, Coos Bay Lifeboat Station, 1999. Source: Author.

about the Coast Guard's story at Coos Bay. While not condoned by any preservationist, recycling cannot be ignored and should be confronted.

### Interpretation

Little meaning can be gathered from a site without interpretation. When a visitor is confronted with a historic structure and that structure's purpose is unclear to that individual, he or she will leave the site having learned nothing, or worse, leave the site with a dislike for historic structures. Take for example a wreck pole. It's simply a tall post with a platform and two arms sticking out. A viewer might think it is simply a souvenir from a shipwreck, there to mark the station site or to hang flags on. However, when coupled with a picture of it in use, or better, a video of a drill using the wreck pole, or even more ideally, a demonstration of how the wreck pole was used with live actors, the story of rescue operations can come alive (Figure 191). Several stations in America, such as Old Harbor Life-Saving Station at Race Point, Massachusetts, recreate Life-Saving Service beach apparatus drills with the wreck pole and breeches buoy. In Astoria, the Coast Guard performs a breeches buoy drill for the public once a year, though it is done through modern means rather than historically appropriate methods.

Considered one of the best examples of interpretation of the Life-Saving Service is the Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station (1901) at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore near Empire, Michigan. The former station has been restored by the National Park Service. It is a model for the proper restoration and interpretation of a life-saving station or lifeboat station. The station is a Marquette-type similar to the four Marquette-

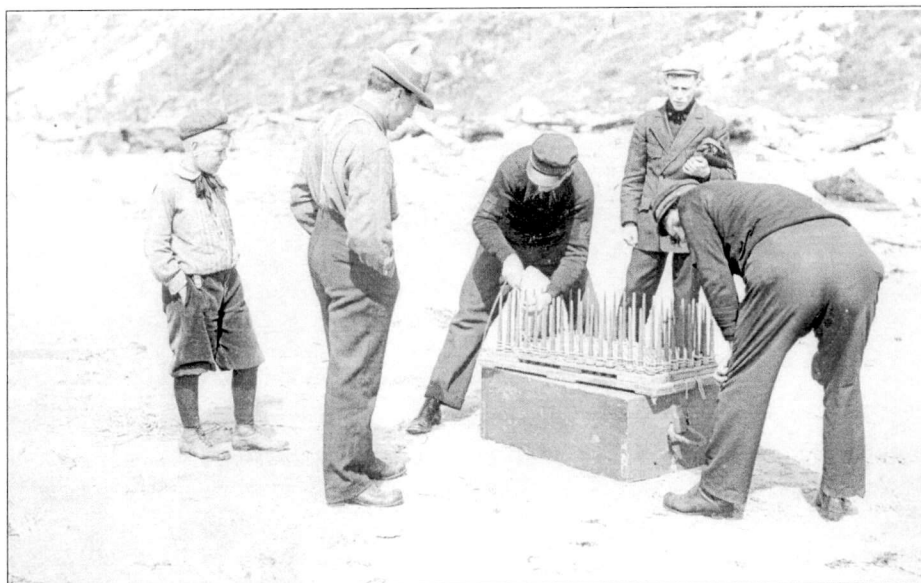


Figure 191. Faking Shot Line at Yaquina Bay, Circa 1910. Source: Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS #2265).

type Life-Saving Service stations built in Oregon that are no longer standing (Figure 192). The station house is set up with non-permanent, interpretive displays on the first floor (Figure 193). Existing cabinetry is used to display life-saving items (Figure 194). The second floor is set up as a house museum to give the visitor an idea of what it was like to be a surfman (Figure 195). The Fort Point-type boathouse stands nearby (Figure 196). The station has been moved to its present location though it still retains its original orientation and relationship with Lake Michigan. Inside the boathouse are a surfboat, lifeboat, lifecar, and beach apparatus cart just as they would have been housed 100 years earlier (Figure 197). Items are displayed in proper fashion, though not in quantities that would have originally occupied the boathouse. The displays are interpreted by trained docents rather than signage.



Figure 192. Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station (1901), 1997. Source: Author.

In Oregon, some small interpretive displays are presented at the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station and the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse. Interpretation used to be in place at the Coquille River Lifeboat Station, but it was removed when the Bandon Historical Museum moved to their new location. The Port Orford Lifeboat Station is the location that is providing the most interpretation of the Coast Guard in Oregon. The former Port Orford Lifeboat Station is a museum in its infancy with its grand opening slated for 3 June 2000. With time, hopefully, the Port Orford Lifeboat Station will evolve into a museum on par with Sleeping Bear Point.

With less impact, but nonetheless useful in keeping the history alive, is interpretive signage. As pointed out earlier, this could be a possibility at the overlook to the former Cape Arago Life-Saving Station and in the former keeper's dwelling at the



Figure 193. Keeper's Office Interpretation, Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.



Figure 194. Kitchen Cabinet Interpretation, Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.

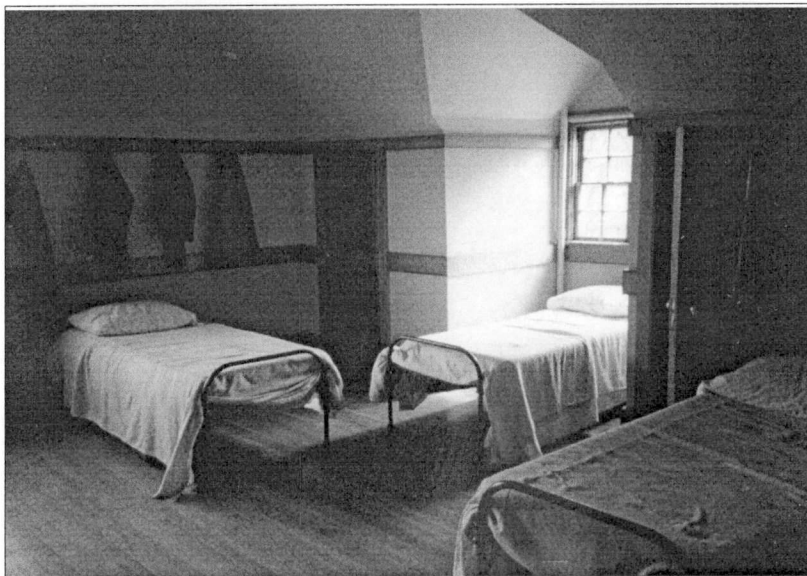


Figure 195. Crew's Quarters Interpretation, Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.



Figure 196. Boathouse (1901), Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.

Coos Bay Lifeboat Station. Both of these beg a photographically-etched metal plate with a historic image and descriptive text to give a sense of what is now lost. Other locations that still stand would also benefit from interpretive signage. The boathouse at the Coos Bay Lifeboat Station is now a lecture hall, a place visited by many people every year, yet it has no historic photos displayed. As shown in Chapter IV, there are some very good images of the station available from the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters for the price of printing.

### Summary

Oregon's lifeboat stations are second to none in the United States. Point Adams, Tillamook Bay, Umpqua River, Coquille River, and Port Orford are five lifeboat stations



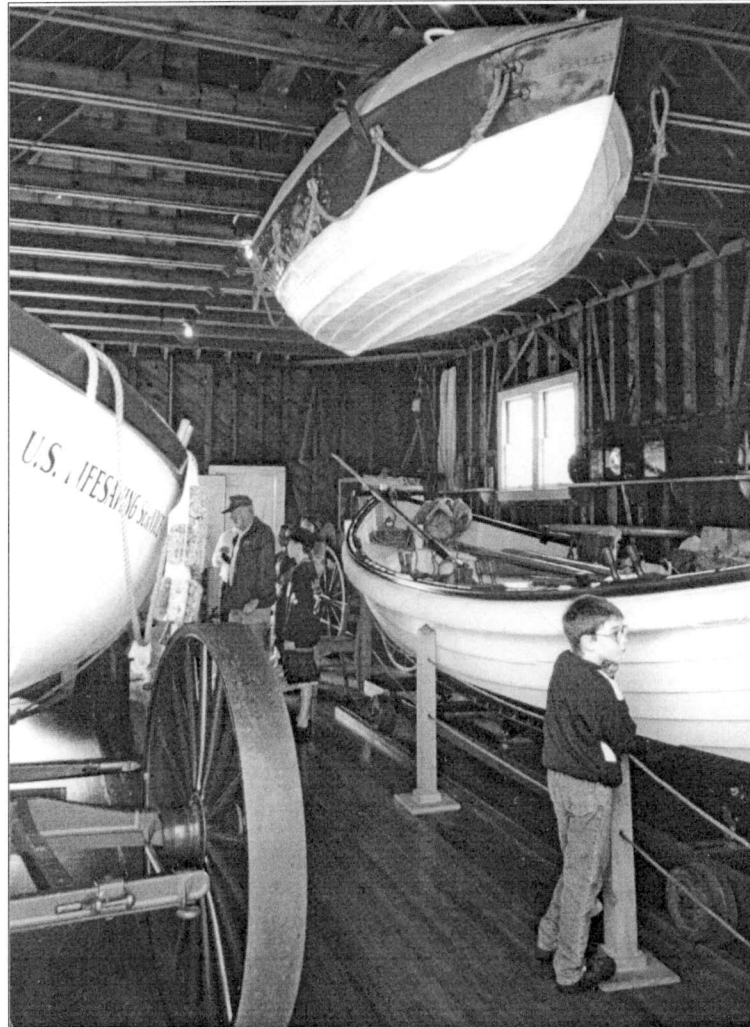


Figure 197. Boatroom Interpretation, Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station, 1997. Source: Author.

that when taken as a group, are unsurpassed in America. In few states other than Oregon can a visitor experience a lifeboat station with most of its auxiliary features and support structures intact.<sup>263</sup> Having all of the buildings and structures helps to tell the complete story of a station.

All of Oregon's stations still standing require at least one of the preservation treatments as defined by the Secretary's *Standards*. All of the stations deserve interpretation; however, several of Oregon's stations are thought to be nationally significant. The lifeboat stations at Point Adams (1938), Umpqua River (1939), and Port Orford (1934) are missing only their boathouses; otherwise, each station is extremely intact. Coquille River Lifeboat Station (1939) stands completely whole. Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station (1942) is an intact, operating Coast Guard station. Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station (1907) is the only remaining life-saving station left in Oregon. Within a 1-1/2 mile stretch of Tillamook Bay, the entire story of the Life-Saving Service and Coast Guard can be told in one setting. Hopefully, with appropriate preservation management, all of Oregon's stations will be able to continue to tell their individual and collective stories.

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<sup>263</sup>Ralph Shanks, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR 28 May 2000.

## APPENDIX A

WRECK OF THE *CZARINA*, 12 JANUARY 1910

Account of the wreck of the *Czarina* taken in its entirety from the *1910 Annual Reports of United States Life-saving Service*, 59-65:

*Wreck of the steamer "Czarina," January 12, 1910.*

## COOS BAY STATION.

Not in a quarter of a century has there occurred within the scope of the service such an appalling marine casualty as the wreck of the steamer *Czarina* at the mouth of Coos Bay, Oreg., January 12, 1910.

The *Czarina* was a 1,045-ton vessel owned by the Southern Pacific Co., of San Francisco. She was valued at \$100,000. When the disaster chronicled here took place she was on her way from Marshfield, Oreg., to San Francisco with a cargo of coal, lumber, and cement. About 40,000 feet of the lumber was stowed on her decks. She carried a crew of 23 men all told, and 1 passenger, whose names are given by the agent of the company as follows: Charles J. Duggan (captain), James Hughes, Benjamin F. Hedges, S. A. Ellefsen, Harry H. Kintzel, Charles Bostrom, Adam Rokka, Mindor Olsen, Charles Curran, Andrew Ahlstedt, Rhinehold Hagener, John McNicholas, Henry Young, John H. Robinson, Charles A. Thompson, Thomas Bilboa, Angelo Puntas, Columbus Otera, August Valaderis, Jose Martinez, Nicholas A. Quiroga, Joe de Sota, Joe Piles, and Harold B. Millis (passenger). But 1 of the entire 24 — Harry H. Kintzel, first assistant engineer — survived the disaster.

It may be stated for the information of the reader that Coos Bay is a sinuous body of water approximately half a mile wide and something like a dozen miles long. Beginning at the ocean entrance, it runs easterly for three-fourths of a mile, turns in a northerly direction and keeps nearly parallel with the coast for several miles, then swerves to the eastward again for half that distance and doubles back toward the south for 3 or 4 miles. At its head lies the town of Marshfield. In outline the bay is not unlike a dipper, with the bottom of the bowl lying toward the north. The peninsula of sand that separates it from the ocean is called the North spit. On the inner or bay shore of the spit is situated the Coos Bay Life-Saving Station, 2 miles above the entrance. Near the point of the spit, and overlooking the entrance, is the service observation tower and a house that shelters a boat and other equipment designed for the use of the life-saving crew in affording assistance to vessels that get into difficulty on the bar and in contiguous waters.

The *Czarina* left port at 11.15 a. m. The trip down the long, narrow bay was uneventful until she made the last turn in the channel and headed straight for the ocean. Then she began to ship water. It was very rough outside. In fact, the condition of the sea was such as to deter the prudent mariner from risking a passage over the bar — which the *Czarina* was about to attempt.

Capt. W. A. Magee, master of the harbor tug *Astoria*, was watching the *Czarina* as she steamed down the bay, his vantage point being a tower in Empire City, 4 miles above the entrance. He testifies that when she had worked her length beyond the black buoy, where the channel turns oceanward, she seemed suddenly to lose headway, stop, and move backward; then there came a momentary lull in the sea, and she went ahead again. To use an expression of the witness, she "seesawed" back and forth for several minutes in the manner described, then swung her head well to the northward, as if she intended to try for a less difficult passage to starboard. Shortly, however, she swung around to the southwest and went unsteadily forward until she brought up on the South spit. Then she blew a distress signal.

Up to the time of striking the South spit she had shipped 61 breakers by actual count. When she sounded a signal Capt. Magee left the tower, got up steam on his tug, and started down to the bar with the intention of going to her assistance, but by the time he reached the bar she had drifted across it and was working up along the beach northward. He did not therefore attempt to go out. He explains his failure to do so in the following words:

The bar was too rough for us to attempt to cross. After seeing the position of the *Czarina* I knew that nothing could be done from the outside. A steam schooner was off about three-fourths of a mile from the wreck, standing by.

It would seem that the master of the *Astoria* expected that the steam schooner referred to by him would endeavor to assist the *Czarina*. This vessel, as shown by the evidence, did actually start in to the imperiled steamer, but put off again before getting near her. The schooner, it developed, was herself heavily loaded with lumber, and doubtless became apprehensive that the venture could not be undertaken without great danger to herself. It is also shown that on the following morning, while several of the *Czarina's* crew were still in her rigging, another vessel, the steamer *Nann Smith*, also attempted to approach her from the outside, but abandoned the enterprise on account of the danger involved. Had the *Astoria* risked the bar and gotten safely offshore, she might, at any time before the *Czarina* foundered, have been able to drift a line down to that vessel. At least such was the opinion expressed by the survivor, First Asst. Engineer Kintzel.

It is gathered from statements made by Kintzel that while the *Czarina* was being buffeted across the bar the boarding seas flooded her engine room and put out her fires, so that when she found herself in the quieter waters beyond she was entirely helpless. On the trip through the breakers the crew had been driven into the rigging, from which position they watched the seas play havoc with the deckload, carrying two of their lifeboats away and smashing another to pieces, thereby cutting off all chance of leaving ship even had an opportunity for launching a small craft presented itself.

Once outside, where the water was less turbulent, the vessel rode easier, and the turmoil on deck abated to such an extent that the crew left the rigging and threw over the anchor, the captain hoping by such action to keep offshore until help could reach them. But the fulfillment of this hope was denied, and the act mentioned without doubt operated ultimately to bring about the destruction of the vessel and the great loss of life that accompanied it. The *Czarina* drifted northward, and was soon in the breakers. Realizing what was in store for the crew should the progress of the vessel be interfered with before she came near enough to the beach for the life-saving crew to put a line over her, the captain ordered the anchor chain cut. Some of the sailors attempted to carry out this command, using a hacksaw, but before they could accomplish the task the seas drove them back into the rigging.

The anchor caught and brought the vessel up when she was still several hundred yards from the beach. Held thus, she had to take the full force of the ponderous breakers, and soon foundered, settling until her entire hull was submerged. The seas now completed the demolition of the deck load, sending it overboard to fill the breaker-swept space between ship and shore and menace the lives of both the sailors and those who would save them, and tossing it up against masts and rigging as if impatient to drive the hapless sailors from their refuge and complete the tragedy. As the rigging was sundered by the thrashing debris the chilled and exhausted men dropped off singly and in groups to their death in the wreckage alongside. Kintzel was swept overboard, about dark with the port rigging of the mainmast. Two or three of his shipmates went with him. He says he exchanged some words with them after finding himself in the water, but soon became separated from them in the gathering darkness. Kintzel was unable to tell much concerning the movements of any of the rest of the crew. His lack of information in this respect, however, is not surprising, as the situation on board was not conducive to accurate observation. He himself had on a life preserver. He was of the opinion that some of the others had them on also. For upward of two hours he was washed about in the furious surf, beaten by wreckage and smothered in the spume of the breakers. Once he was swept almost to the beach, but his strength was too far spent to fight the outward pull of the undertow, and he was carried back to the vessel again. There he managed to get hold of a heavy plank, to which he clung even after consciousness left him. His tenacity eventually saved him, for the plank was swept toward the beach, and a surfman wading out in the dangerous waters with a line tied to his waist discovered him and dragged him ashore.

The *Czarina* passed the life-saving station, outward bound, about 1 p. m. Knowing the condition of the bar, Keeper Clarence W. Boice, in charge of the station, was surprised to see her going out, and ascended the station lookout to watch her. His account of her movements after she reached the black buoy where the channel swings toward the ocean is substantially the same as that given by Capt. Magee, of the tug *Astoria*, who had been watching her from a tower in Empire city. When the keeper saw her swing out of the channel and veer toward the south spit he felt sure she would meet with disaster. He accordingly manned the lifeboat and pulled down the channel to the entrance. By that time the *Czarina* had worked across the bar and was drifting northward off the ocean beach. The station crew landed on the inside near the end of the north spit. Their movements from this time on are set forth by Keeper Boice as follows:

I could see that the *Czarina* was just above the north spit. Realizing that I could not reach her with the lifeboat on account of the rough bar, I called all my crew out of the boat, enlisted the services of two fishermen who were on their scow boat where we landed, and we all ran to the bar boathouse, where I gave the No. 1 surfman orders to get out the beach apparatus cart, and myself went into the bar lookout to observe the action of the vessel. No. 1 got the beach cart out and started along the beach.

I noticed that the vessel had anchored just outside the break on the beach. I judged from the trend of her chain that she had let out lots of cable, and I thought there was a possibility of her holding on, so I phoned from the lookout tower to Mr. Shine at Empire requesting him to wire Supt. Varney at San Francisco that the *Czarina* was anchored just outside the breakers, apparently in trouble, and for him to communicate with the revenue cutter *Manning* to come to her assistance. I then asked Mr. Shine to notify the manager of the company to which the *Czarina* belonged.

At this time, however, I could see that the ship was drifting to the northward about parallel with the breakers. I remained in the lookout about 20 minutes. I then went down and joined my crew with the beach cart, overtaking them about a quarter of a mile up the

beach. We followed along watching the ship slowly dragging, but she shortly brought up, the waves began to break over her bow, then over the body of the vessel, and she swung stern to the beach and came in some. At this time there were probably three lines of breakers outside the ship and a succession of breakers from the ship to the beach. We stopped with the beach cart abreast of her. I remained by the cart and sent No. 1 with some of the crew, and 30 or 40 people whom I had asked to assist us, to the bar boathouse to bring up the surfboat.

They got back in a few minutes with the surfboat. By this time the vessel had foundered and the seas were breaking all over her. I now had the beach cart taken down close to the surf, and just as we were ready to remove the gear the sea came in around the cart and I had to move it back up the beach a little. The Lyle gun was put in as close to the surf as possible, and a No. 4 line 700 yards long was sent out with a 6-ounce charge of powder. There was no wind, and the line went straight out, but fell 200 yards short. While the crew were hauling in the No. 4 line a No. 7 line 600 yards long was sent out with a 6-ounce charge. This shot fell considerably shorter than the first. By this time the vessel had settled so much that if a line had fallen across her the crew could not have left the rigging to secure it, as the seas were breaking over her continually and there was no stay between the masts on which a line might catch. Some of the men had been already swept from the rigging. I judged the distance to the vessel to be about 900 yards, and seeing that it was impossible to reach her with the beach apparatus, we manned the surfboat and attempted to launch it. The surf was so heavy, however, that we could not get off. I was knocked down by a sea while we were trying to get the boat off the wagon, which had been run down into the water. The lumber that had formed the vessel's deck load was coming in by this time so thick that we could not have gone through it even had we succeeded in getting away from the beach in the boat.

By this time the smokestack had fallen, and the tops of both masts had broken off, and several of the crew had been knocked off the rigging. When we saw that nothing could be done to save the men we scattered along the beach to watch for any who might be washed ashore on lumber or wreckage. About dark the lower part of the port main rigging carried away and several of the crew went with it. As darkness came on we could see five or six men still clinging to the rigging. Fires were now lighted and the beach was patrolled throughout the night by the station crew, some of whom waded into the surf as far as they dared go with heaving lines fastened to their waists. About 9 p. m. a man was seen in the surf holding to a piece of wreckage. He was hauled out and found to be breathing. We carried him to a fire, and after two hours' work restored him so that he could be conveyed to a marine hospital, where he fully recovered.

At daylight of the 13th the mainmast was still standing, and there were still several men in the rigging. The surf still continued as high as on the previous day, and it was impossible to launch a boat. The vessel had settled so that the water was half way up the mainmast, and the seas continued to break heavily where she was. The men in the rigging gradually went, and by 10 a. m. they had all disappeared.

At 1.30 p.m. of the 13th Keeper Johnson of the Coquille River Life-Saving Station, some 15 or 20 miles south of the scene of the wreck, reported to Keeper Boice with five surf men. This crew remained on the beach until the morning of the 14th and assisted in the work of the patrol. At 9 a. m. of the 14th a body was picked up 2 miles north of the wreck, and on the 17th another body was recovered 8 miles to the northward.



The officer who conducted the inquiry into the circumstances of this disaster expresses the opinion in his report that "no blame should attach to the service, nor to the keeper, nor to any member of the Coos Bay Life-Saving Station, for the deplorable loss of life" that occurred. In support of this conclusion he recites the obstacles that stood in the way of successful wreck operations as follows:

The vessel was no doubt anchored for the purpose of holding her outside the break, and it is evident that the anchor would not hold her, but allowed her to drift until she brought up in a place where she was exposed to the heaviest break, and where no assistance could be rendered from the outside, and at too great a distance from the shore to permit a line to be put on board by means of the beach apparatus. The heavy seas breaking over the vessel prevented those remaining on board and who had taken to the rigging, from getting to the deck and slipping the anchor so that she would go in where a line could be sent on board. She was heavily laden with coal and cement and with a deckload of lumber. She foundered in a few minutes after she brought up, and the lumber from the deckload filled the water. The surf on the beach was so heavy that it was impossible to launch a boat. The vessel was too far from the beach and too low in the water to afford any lee for launching a boat. The floating lumber coming ashore made it extremely hazardous for those venturing into the water in the hope of finding those who might come ashore from the wreck. The heavy seas did not abate in time to permit a boat to be launched the next day for the purpose of trying to save those remaining on board.

The situation, as set forth above, is fully borne out by the sworn testimony of persons who were present on the beach and participated in such efforts as were made to establish communication with the wreck. The citizens of the locality, however, many of whom witnessed the work of the life-saving crew, did not regard Keeper Boice's generalship as equal to the exigencies of the occasion. Their criticism of his management of the affair found expression in letters to the department from individuals, and in petitions from local commercial bodies — the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce and the commissioners of the port of Coos Bay — charging him with failure to exert every effort to effect the rescue of those aboard the *Czarina*, alleging incapacity as a commanding officer, and asking for a thorough investigation of his conduct. Specific charges against the keeper were finally presented by the secretary of the port of Coos Bay by letter of March 18, 1910, who promised to furnish a list of witnesses and extend to any investigating officer "every assistance in bringing out the truth."

The complaint embodied 10 formal charges, 7 of which contained specific allegations of dereliction at the wreck under discussion; one (the sixth) charged him with failure to drill his crew regularly in the handling of the surfboat, as required by the regulations of the service; and two alleged neglect of duty and incompetency upon two former occasions of disaster to vessels. These two are omitted here, however, as they have no direct bearing upon the case under notice. It may be stated, nevertheless, that they were fully gone into by the investigating officer, and were duly considered by the department as affecting the fitness of the accused to continue in command of a life-saving crew.

The specifications relating to the *Czarina*, and that charging the keeper with failure to practice regularly with the surfboat, are as follows:

1. That the said keeper failed in accordance with regulations (sec. 241) to telephone adjacent stations for assistance.



2. That said keeper, under regulations (sec. 245), failed to use an extraordinary charge of powder in shooting the Lyle gun, and desisted from said shooting entirely after two attempts.

3. That said attempts with the Lyle gun were made at a time when the tide was about three-quarters high, while at low water the gun could have been placed 100 yards nearer the wreck; but no attempt was made at low water.

4. That said keeper, in accordance with regulations (sec. 252), failed to make an attempt to launch the surfboat.

5. That said keeper made no attempt to bring the lifeboat to the scene of the wreck, although men were present who would have volunteered in so doing.

6. That the keeper had failed for a long time before said wreck to cause his crew to drill in the surf; that is, to launch the surfboat from the beach into the surf.

7. That at the time of said wreck the keeper permitted the wives of the crew to be on the beach in the presence of their husbands.

8. That said keeper at the time of said wreck displayed no executive ability, and gave evidence to all present of being either incompetent to hold his position or too cowardly to perform his duties.

The request for an investigation was duly complied with, Lieut. W. W. Joynes, United States Revenue-Cutter Service, assistant inspector of the seventh life-saving district, with headquarters at Elizabeth City, N. C., being assigned to the work of conducting the inquiry. That officer arrived in Marshfield, Oreg., April 28, 1910, and began the examination of witnesses May 3, the intervening time having been spent in conference with citizens interested in the prosecution of the charges against the keeper, in visiting the scene of the wreck, and in examining the service boats and equipment. The sessions extended over a period of several days, being concluded May 7. Both the prosecution and the defense were represented by counsel, the former presenting 13 witnesses and the latter 9. Every opportunity was afforded both parties to introduce any witness desired, so that all might feel fully satisfied with the proceedings. For the same reason counsel were indulged in the matter of examination.

Charges 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 were admitted by the keeper. The third charge was not proven, there being considerable divergence of opinion in the testimony of witnesses as to the distance the Lyle gun might have been placed nearer the wreck. The investigating officer did not think it could have been set out more than 50 yards beyond the spot from which it was actually fired.

Charge 7 is considered unimportant, as it was not shown that the presence of women on the beach in any way interfered with the work of the life-saving crew.

The eighth charge is a general allegation of professional unfitness on the part of the keeper, as evidenced by his alleged failure to do certain things indicated in charges 1 to 7. The views of the investigating officer in relation to this charge, and which really constitute his findings in the case, are as follows:

In my opinion the keeper rested too positively upon his own estimate of conditions and eventualities, as shown in not summoning assistance from other stations because he thought the vessel would not last; in concluding, simply on his own judgment, that the wreck could not be reached with the gun; and in making no actual attempt to launch a boat. Yet in regard to these matters he probably had had[sic] as much experience and possessed as good judgment as anyone else present. Failing in his efforts with the gun and boat, he appears to have assumed a passive attitude, simply awaiting the termination of the tragedy. There was nothing else to do, as he looked at it.

It is difficult to express an opinion in this matter. I can conceive, from an extensive experience on this coast (for some time in this immediate vicinity), what a difficult problem confronted the keeper. I venture the opinion that this, his second important wreck and his first serious one as a keeper, confused him by its awfulness, so that, having done all that in his judgment was possible, he stopped at a loss what else to do. I believe that no human power could have succeeded in rescuing the men in the rigging of the *Czarina*. Nevertheless, I think the keeper should have made further attempts with both gun and boat. His failure to do so indicates a certain degree of incompetency; but neither has it been shown, nor do I believe, that there is anything of the coward in the make-up of Capt. Boice.

Lieut. Joynes comments as follows upon the bearing of Capt. Boice during the progress of the investigation and upon the difficulties of his position as keeper:

I wish to direct attention to the testimony of Keeper Boice — his assumption of all the responsibility. His bearing throughout the investigation was such as to command the admiration of all who heard his declarations — frank, sincere, and straightforward, and beyond doubt strictly truthful. He is a young man 31 years of age, having been only two years a keeper and in charge of a hard station, with a large, dangerous area under his supervision.

Capt. Boice had previously served in the crew of the Coquille River (Oreg.) Life-Saving Station as the No. 1 man, in which position his ability as a surfman, his intelligence, and his fidelity to duty had attracted the attention of his superiors. Therefore, when a vacancy occurred in the keepership of the Coos Bay station, he was recommended by the officers of the thirteenth life-saving district as the best-qualified man available for the place. His case appears to have been one of those sometimes met with, in which an admirable soldier fails as a commander. Notwithstanding his superior professional qualifications, it was of course out of the question to retain him in command of a life-saving station after his failure to measure up to the demands of the distressing occurrence here described. His resignation as keeper was accordingly accepted. He was granted permission, however, to reenter the service as a surfman at the station where his services previous to his promotion to a keepership had been exceptionally creditable.

## APPENDIX B

WRECK OF THE *ROSECRANS*, 7 JANUARY 1913

Account of the wreck of the *Rosecrans* taken from the *1913 Annual Report of United States Life-saving Service*, 66-74:

*Wreck of Steamer "Rosecrans" January 7, 1913.*

## CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT AND POINT ADAMS STATIONS.

Shortly after 5 o'clock on the morning of January 7, 1913, during the prevalence of a heavy gale with thick weather, the 2,976-ton Associated Oil Co.'s steamer *Rosecrans*, bound from Monterey, Cal., to Portland, Oreg., with a cargo of 19,000 barrels of crude oil, stranded on Peacock Spit, at the entrance to the Columbia River. The vessel and her cargo, valued at \$260,000, were totally destroyed, and 33 of the 36 persons composing her crew perished before assistance could reach them. Two members of the crew—John Slinning, quartermaster, and Brick Lundmark, carpenter—were rescued from the steamer's rigging by the Point Adams life-saving crew several hours after she stranded. The other survivor[sic], Quartermaster Fred W. Peters, drifted ashore on a plank after he had been more than five hours in the water. The names of the lost are given by the owners of the *Rosecrans* as follows: L. F. Johnson, captain; Thos. Mullins, Hans Tonder, and C. R. Palmer, first, second, and third mate, respectively; R. M. Grundell, chief engineer; J. A. McPherson, J. L. Adams, and Norman Fife first, second, and third assistant engineer, respectively; L. A. Prudhont, wireless operator; Milton Elletson, electrician; F. Armstrong and Henry Hendrickson, quartermasters; F. Wilson, steward; Pete Uren, Hjalamar Reistad, Severin Gjosen, Wm. Harden, Chris Murphy, Steve O'Hare, J. McGlinchy, C. Smith J. Olsen, S. Cagna, Pete Hareide, F. Mihan, Knut Larsen, Richard Hannan, James Yeates, Chas. Alt, D. Bryant, H.G. Cross, and Angus McDonald. It appears that still another person was lost, but his name is not in the list furnished by the owners.

The *Rosecrans* left Monterey, Cal., on the afternoon of January 4. Her voyage up the coast was uneventful until the night of the 6th, as she neared the mouth of the Columbia River. On the evening of the date mentioned the wireless operator at Astoria, Oreg., received a message from her master, stating that she would be off the bar on the following morning. As shown by the testimony of the three survivors it was the intention of Capt. Johnson to cross in over the bar at daybreak of the 7th, when the tidal conditions would be more favorable.

Quartermaster Slinning testifies that the steamer passed Tillamook Rock Light "a little before 4 a.m. of the 7th." She was then 14 or 24 miles offshore, steering north 8° west under slow bell. A southerly gale, with a velocity of 60 or 70 miles an hour, accompanied by a heavy following sea, prevailed. The weather was thick and rainy, but light beacons were occasionally visible. Quartermaster Peters testifies that when he came on deck about 4 a.m. to relieve Slinning, he saw

a white light well off the starboard bow which was taken to be the Cape Disappointment Light. Another light visible one-half point on the starboard bow was thought to be the North Head Light. The Columbia River Lightship was not seen at all. It is shown that during the latter part of the night Third Officer C.R. Palmer was on the bridge, and that the master remained below except for a brief interval shortly after 4 a.m., when he came on deck to exchange a few words with Palmer. The steamer held to the course set by the captain—north 80 west—until she stranded at 5.15 a.m.

As to the responsibility for the disaster, the officer of the department who investigated the case has the following to say:

No other conclusion can be reached by me than that the disaster resulted from poor judgment and carelessness on the part of those who were responsible for the navigation and safety of the *Rosecrans*. The vessel must have passed the Tillamook Rock Light earlier than 3.30 a.m., as it is unreasonable to think that she could have covered 19 nautical miles in the next hour and 40 minutes under slow bell. If the course steered is correct, unless the compass was greatly in error the light abeam must have been much more than 21 miles distant, otherwise the vessel would have stranded on Clatsop Beach.

Quartermaster Peters states that when he came on deck at 4 a. m. two lights were visible—one white light well off to starboard bow, which was taken for the Cape Disappointment Light, and North Head Light, visible one-half point on the starboard bow. As the *Rosecrans* at that time was probably at least 7 miles from Peacock Spit (this being determined by the combined speed of the vessel, which was perhaps 3 or 4 knots, and the current setting to the northward with the same velocity), it seems probable that the white light visible broad off the starboard bow was Desdemona Shoals Light. North Head Light, surrounded by mist, was probably not seen at all.

Had the light last seen been North Head Light, the position of the vessel would have been such that the strong ebb tide at the mouth of the river would doubtless have carried her clear of Peacock Spit. She must have passed within 3 miles inside of Columbia River Lightship, which she should have sighted. Capt. Johnson should have remained on deck on approaching the Columbia River bar at night under such unfavorable weather conditions, and stood a course sufficiently broad to make the lightship and carry his vessel outside of danger. It is evident that the ship was far ahead of her reckoning, and that not sufficient allowance was made for the northerly set of the current, the velocity of which had been greatly increased by the southerly gale. Had the *Rosecrans*, after passing Tillamook Rock tight, headed off shore on port tack, with her engines just turning over, she would have drifted to the northward and been in a good position off the bar at daylight.

Peacock Spit takes its name from the U.S. sloop of war *Peacock*, which stranded on the shoal in 1841. The spit has claimed many a good ship. When a vessel grounds there she is either quickly pounded to pieces by the terrific breakers or swallowed up by yielding quicksands. The surf in that locality, always heavy, was extremely so on the morning of January 7.

The steamer struck at a point 14 miles from the shore, and about the same distance west by south of the Cape Disappointment Life-Saving Station. Immediately after the stranding, the master came on deck and gave orders to his wireless operator to flash an "S. O. S." call to the effect that the vessel was on the bar and breaking up. The message was repeated three or four times. Shortly afterwards the operator was instructed to shut off his current, the master being

fearful that the sparks from the apparatus might set the cargo on fire. The call was picked up by the operator at Astoria, who replied:

O.K. Will send help. About where are you?

To this the *Rosecrans* sent back the following:

Water has washed in the cabins—I can't stay much longer—hel—.

It is not shown that any signals other than those referred to were made aboard the *Rosecrans*. The survivors could not say whether the vessel carried any rockets, blue lights, or other means of making known the fact that they were in trouble. The steamer's whistle was not even blown, doubtless, however, for the very good reason that the engine room was flooded by the time the seriousness of the misfortune was realized. There were life preservers on board, but it appears that several of the sailors did not have them on when the time of need came. The vessel had four lifeboats, but all of them were carried away soon after the stranding. It is doubtful whether they would have shaped differently the outcome of the morning's events had the crew been able to launch them, as no small craft could have survived the smother of the seas breaking against and around the stricken steamer.

Immediately after the steamer grounded the signal was given to reverse the engines full speed, and put the helm hard over. Orders were also given to start the pumps, with the view of emptying some of the oil overboard and thus lightening ship. The vessel answered her helm and started to back, but the mountainous seas that piled down upon her the moment her progress was interrupted tore away her hatches and let a deluge below decks, which put out her fires and extinguished her lights, leaving her helpless and her crew in darkness.

After the engines stopped running the crew assembled below amidships to wait for daylight and the help which all felt assured their wireless call would bring. Just before dawn the foremast carried away and the ship broke in two abaft it. Notwithstanding the wreck and ruin that was taking place above deck, the crew remained under shelter until nearly 9 a.m., by which time the vessel had filled so full as to drive all hands into the open.

All that is known of the events that took place on board the *Rosecrans* is contained in the testimony of the three survivors taken at the official investigation of the disaster. Referring to his own experiences while engaged in the struggle to save himself, Quartermaster Peters, one of the three, says:

When I went on deck I tried to make the wheelhouse, where most of the crew were, and when I got forward of the stack I met Capt. Johnson. He was trying to get up to the wheelhouse, too, but his leg was broken, so we got him on the fiddley, under the overhang of the house. The seas were coming so strong that the after end of the house began to sag, so we had to get out of there. When I got out, a sea washed me to the rail. When the sea cleared I tried to make the rigging, but missed it and fell on the main deck. The next sea took me overboard. I noticed a plank a few feet away, and swam to it. I drifted over toward North Head Light, and thought I was safe until I saw the rocks and the breakers. I tried to swim clear of the rocks, and it seems the current started to take me out to sea. I then drifted up to the north'ard and the breakers got me and took me ashore. I lost my plank when I got into the breakers. I was obliged to cut adrift my life preserver, as it got over my head. I stayed on top of the breakers as best I could all the way in, and then crawled up on the driftwood away from the sea.



The place where Peters made land was Tioga Beach, 5 miles up the coast from the scene of the disaster. A gunner found him as he lay helpless on the strand, and with the assistance of others carried him to a near-by house, where he was given first-aid attention and medical treatment. Later the keeper of the Klipsan Beach Life-Saving Station, who had learned of his coining ashore, arrived, took him in charge, and continued to administer restorative treatment.

Quartermaster Slinning, another of the survivors, was also under shelter when the vessel struck. On gaining the deck he climbed up on the bridge. Referring to what happened to him he says:

There were a number of men besides myself on the bridge. As the big seas lifted the bridge and pilot house off, I first grabbed the exhaust pipe, held on to that for a while, then got around the after part of the smokestack. A sea struck me from there, and sent me over the rail. I held onto the rail until the sea had passed. Then another sea took me to the after rail, and I got up into the main rigging.

Slinning says he saw "quite a number" washed overboard. Two others beside himself—Carpenter Erick Lundmark and a member of the engine-room force named S. Cagna—succeeded in getting into the main rigging. After remaining aloft for several hours, Slinning and Lundmark were rescued by the Point Adams life-saving crew, as already stated. The other man succumbed before the rescuers arrived on the scene. While they were alongside the vessel his body dropped into the sea. It was recovered, but was afterwards lost when the Point Adams Station lifeboat broke adrift from the Columbia River Lightship, aboard which the life-saving crew had sought refuge.

Little or nothing is known relative to the experiences of any of the steamer's crew except the survivors, following the occurrence of the disaster. It would seem, however, that most, if not all, of them went overboard with the bridge and the pilot house.

Upon receipt of the "S. O. S." message from the *Rosecrans* the wireless operator at Astoria sent out a general distress call. Getting no response from any other station or any vessel, he called up the agent of the Puget Sound Tugboat Co. at Astoria and asked him to notify the life-saving stations at Cape Disappointment and Point Adams. He also communicated with the wireless operator at North Head, and asked him to notify the station first named. It is shown that the operator at the last-mentioned place tried repeatedly to communicate with the Cape Disappointment Station, but without avail, the telephone wires being out of order. The agent of the tugboat company succeeded, however, in getting word to the Point Adams Station.

Until 8.40 a.m.—3½ hours after the *Rosecrans* went on the shoals—no one on shore had any information as to the location of the vessel. At the time mentioned the surfman keeping the watch from the Cape Disappointment Station lookout tower, situated on the ocean side of the cape a quarter of a mile from the main station building, telephoned to Keeper Alfred Rimer of his station and informed him that a steamer was anchored in the breakers off McKenzie Head. The keeper immediately proceeded to the lookout to observe the vessel for himself, but could barely distinguish her though the thick mist that prevailed. Her bow at that time appeared to be slightly down, but she displayed no distress signals. The keeper promptly called up his station and gave instructions for the power life boat *Tenacious* to be made ready to go to sea. Several minutes later he and his men were on their way to the vessel.

The life-saving crew tried first to go directly around the cape, but found it impossible to stem the furious gale and the strong flooding tide. They thereupon turned back and went through the cutoff between Sand Island and the eastern end of Peacock Spit, but their attempt to reach the steamer by this route was likewise frustrated. Realizing after an hour's struggle the futility of

their efforts to make headway, Keeper Rimer hailed a tug, which it seems had learned of the vessel's plight and ventured out to investigate, and asked to be towed out over the bar. The master of the tug declined, however, to risk the fury of the waters at the river entrance. Nothing daunted, the boat crew renewed their apparently forlorn undertaking, and actually succeeded in crossing Republic Spit unassisted. But mechanical power was finally compelled to yield to the overwhelming force of the elements, and they reluctantly turned back to await the slacking of the tide. They reached their station at 11.30 a.m.

Soon after the return of the Cape Disappointment crew to their station, Keeper Oscar S. Wicklund, of the Point Adams Station (on the south side of the river entrance), arrived with his crew in the service power lifeboat *Dreadnaught*. It appears that the message from the agent of the Puget Sound Tugboat Co. to Keeper Wicklund, notifying him that the *Rosecrans* was in trouble on the bar, was received at the Point Adams Station at 5.30 a.m. The agent had also informed Keeper Wicklund that the tug *Tatoosh* was making ready to go to the steamer's assistance. Being told by the wireless operator at Astoria that the *Rosecrans* was probably in the breakers on Clatsop Spit, Keeper Wicklund sent a patrolman out to the beach to see if such was the case. He also telephoned to the jetty foreman on Point Adams, asking him to run an engine out on the jetty that extends seaward from the point and reconnoiter. This action taken, he ordered his men to get ready for sea.

The life-saving crew first proceeded to the mouth of the river, where the *Tatoosh*, bound on an errand similar to theirs, overtook them. The tug made a thorough exploration of the bar, but no trace of the vessel was to be seen. The search ended, the life-saving crew returned to their station, where they learned that the quest of the patrol and of the jetty foreman had been equally barren of results.

Keeper Wicklund now decided to run across the river and find out whether the Cape Disappointment crew had learned anything of the whereabouts of the *Rosecrans*, telephone communication with that station, as already indicated, having been temporarily interrupted. As he was about to leave the station he was informed by telephone from Fort Stevens that the steamer had run on Peacock Spit, not far from North Head. Deeming it advisable to unite the efforts of the two crews of surfmen, Keeper Wicklund therefore crossed over the river with all possible speed.

The experiences of the two parties of boatmen while attempting to reach the wreck and while endeavoring to rescue the 3 men, who alone of the 36 persons composing her crew could be seen in the rigging of the one mast that still remained standing, are graphically described by Keeper Wicklund in his report to the department and in his testimony given at the official investigation of the disaster.

It appears that immediately upon his arrival at the Cape Disappointment Station, Wicklund put off for the *Rosecrans* unaccompanied by the Cape Disappointment crew, several members of which were then out on the beach watching for any of the seamen who might come ashore. Concerning this attempt, the keeper has the following to say:

All that could he seen of the wreck was the mast sticking up with 3 men clinging to the rigging. I did not have much hope of reaching the vessel, but thought it would encourage those men in the rigging if they saw the lifeboat constantly trying to reach them. I made two attempts, but the boat was entirely submerged, and we were forced to return. I got out only a quarter of a mile from the cape.

When I got back to the Cape Disappointment Station, I talked the matter over with Capt. Rimer, and we agreed that we must reach the vessel if there was any way for us to do so. We concluded we would make another attempt right away, the tide having



slackened. We made up our minds that we would not quit trying as long as there was anyone left in the rigging.

Referring to the trip made by both crews to the wreck during the afternoon, Keeper Wicklund continues:

We left the station together about 12.30 p.m. Capt. Rimer's boat was about 200 yards ahead of mine, due to the fact that he was running at full speed. I slowed down a little against every sea to save my boat from destruction. While the wind had hauled a little to the southwest and moderated somewhat, it was still blowing a gale. The seas filled our boat constantly.

I observed the Cape Disappointment boat (the *Tenacious*) go out between the wreck and the shore, circle around the bow of the ship, and then rim to a position to southward of her. They seemed to be in trouble, as they lay in the same position for quite a while.

The wreck was lying headed west. I ran in as close as I dared toward the starboard quarter and signaled to the men in the rigging to jump, that being in my opinion the only way in which they could be rescued. I circled five times, and got as near the vessel as I dared each time, signaling to the sailors to jump, but they would not do it. As we got near the wreck the fifth time, a terrific sea struck our boat, turning it almost end over end and washing five members of the crew overboard, including myself. We all managed to hang onto the life rails and were hauled back into the boat—all except Surfman Pearson. When the boat righted itself he was more than 300 yards away from us. We had no difficulty, however, in picking him up. At this point we observed the Cape Disappointment crew signaling for assistance. We responded and found that they also had suffered a capsize, which had damaged their boat and stopped their engine. We towed them to the tug *Fearless*, which was standing by outside the breakers. We then returned to the wreck. Just as soon as we got within about 100 yards of the vessel one of the men jumped and was quickly rescued. This was Erich Lundmark, the ship's carpenter. Then another man—John Sunning—jumped and was rescued in the same manner. There was still another man in the rigging, but he was hanging on the ratlines and appeared to be dead. He fell shortly afterwards, struck an iron stanchion, and dropped into the sea. We picked up the body as it drifted toward us.

It was now about 4 o'clock. The sea was still high, and the tide running out strong. We had no chance to return to the harbor, so I shaped our course for the Columbia River Lightship, several miles seaward. We arrived there at 7.15 p.m.

On account of the heavy sea, we experienced considerable difficulty in getting aboard the lightship. We let the boat astern on 50 fathoms of 4-inch rope. The following morning the wind had increased instead of moderated, and the sea was mountain high. The life-saving crew, with the aid of the officers and the men of the lightship, tried three different times during the day to haul the boat alongside to get the remains of the sailor and free the boat of water, but the gale and sea made it impossible to do so without running the risk of killing some one. At 9 p.m. it was found that the boat had gone adrift.

The following day (January 9) the weather moderated sufficiently to permit us to be transferred to the tug *Oneonta*. The tug carried us to our station and took the two survivors to Astoria, where they were cared for by representatives of the wrecked vessel.

Keeper Wicklund expresses the opinion that if the exact location of the vessel could have been ascertained on the morning of the 7th when she struck the spit, the majority, if not all, of her crew might have been saved.

The two tug masters who assisted the life-saving crews upon the occasion of this disaster deserve high praise. The tug *Oneonta* (Charles E. Anderson, master) went out over the bar on the forenoon of the 7th and made an unsuccessful effort to locate the wreck. She went again in the evening of the day mentioned in search for the Point Adams Station crew, reported to be at sea disabled. This second trip of the tug took her clear to the lightship and back toward North Head. She burned blue lights and blew her whistle as she proceeded. Near midnight she turned back again toward the lightship and was rewarded by finding the crew safe aboard the vessel. She stood by all night, hoping to be able to take the life-savers off the next morning. When day came, however, it was still too rough to effect a transfer. She therefore went back to Astoria. On the afternoon of the 9th she again put to sea and brought the crew in.

The tug *Fearless* (E. D. Parsons, master) likewise made search for the *Rosecrans* on the morning of the disaster. She also went out on the afternoon of the same day and reached the locality of the wreck just as Keeper Wicklund was towing the Cape Disappointment lifeboat away from the vessel. Her coming was providential.

It appears that while Keeper Rimer was on his way to the scene of the disaster his boat, the *Tenacious*, sprang a bad leak and the engine became disabled. The engine could be kept running, but it was found impossible to regulate its speed. The crew, nevertheless, ran in near the wreck and tried to persuade the sailors in the rigging to jump. As in the case of the Point Adams crew (whose maneuvers while near the vessel have already been described), they were unable to remain long in a position suitable for effecting a rescue. While waiting 50 yards away from the wreck for a second favorable chance to swing in near the projecting mast they got into a run of tremendously heavy breakers. Their engine stopped and their boat, swept helplessly along, turned turtle. The keeper and two surfmen were washed out, and the boat had its steering, gear and rudder disabled. Telling of what now transpired, Keeper Rimer says:

After a few moments we all managed by the greatest effort to get on board again, but found the boat and engine room full of water. We, nevertheless, manned the oars and tried our best to get back to the wreck. But, notwithstanding our utmost efforts, we failed. As we were in a seething cauldron and unable to handle our boat with oars, I wigwagged to the Point Adams boat to tow us into quieter water, and Capt. Wicklund came and towed us to the tug *Fearless*. We tried to pump our boat out, but it was no use. Her bottom was all split up and her air compartments full of water.

When it was found that the Cape Disappointment boat was no longer serviceable, the *Fearless* started to tow her into the harbor on a 60-fathom 4-inch line. The tug had proceeded only a short distance, however, when Capt. Parsons became apprehensive that the *Tenacious*, which still contained the life-saving crew, would be unable to survive the passage over the bar. As the crew were all badly used up and unable to manage their practically wrecked craft, Surfman Allen of the Point Adams Station—who had been left on shore when his comrades put to sea, but had gone to the wreck aboard the *Fearless*—volunteered to leave the tug, get aboard the trailing power boat, and steer her through the breakers. Capt. Parsons declined to permit him to do so, however, and decided, moreover, to remove to his vessel every man in the boat. The wisdom of his action was shortly to be realized by all hands. While the tug was plowing her way bravely over the surf-swept bar, the towing line snapped. The power boat was no sooner adrift than the

seas caught her up and rolled her over and over. The tug did not dare swing around and attempt to pick her up.

The wreck of the *Rosecrans* will take its place as one of the most lamentable marine casualties in the history of the service. The work of the life-saving crews in attendance, while so meager in results, will likewise stand out conspicuously among the many fine examples of bravery and devotion to duty recorded in the annals of the establishment. Rarely have crews of the service worked against more distressing odds or exhibited a more indomitable spirit. The terrible situation they had to face in their efforts to save the pitiful remnant of the *Rosecrans*' crew may be imagined by a perusal, of the following answer made by Keeper Rimer to a question put by the investigating officer as to the state of the seas in and around the wreck:

The seas were confused, going in every direction. One time Capt. Wicklund's boat was headed into a sea which appeared to be 40 feet high. It struck the *Dreadnaught* broadside and I thought he was gone. I started to go to his assistance, but when I looked again I found he was all right.

It is gratifying to state that the services of the life-saving crews and of the masters of the tugs *Oneonta* and *Fearless* were properly recognized by the department. Keepers Rimer and Wicklund, and Captains Anderson and Parsons each received a congratulatory letter from the Secretary of the Treasury. Moreover, each member of the two life-saving crews who performed service at the wreck (16 persons in all) was awarded the gold life-saving medal (see "Awards of life-saving medals," p. 45) bestowed by the department in recognition of heroic daring exhibited in "saving or attempting to save life from the perils of the sea." The Legislature of Oregon, also, adopted a resolution commending by name each man who took part in the day's hazardous work.

Considering the difficulties and dangers experienced by the life-savers on this occasion, it seems little short of miraculous that they all escaped with their lives. Both crews, as it is shown, were upset in the breaker-swept area, yet no one suffered injury more serious than a few bruises and cuts.

Neither of the service power boats was ever recovered.

## APPENDIX C

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE  
TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The following are *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties 1992* as prepared by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service:

There are Standards for four distinct, but interrelated, approaches to the treatment of historic properties — Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction.

- *Preservation* focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time. (Protection and Stabilization have now been consolidated under this treatment.)
- *Rehabilitation* acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.
- *Restoration* is undertaken to depict a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.
- *Reconstruction* re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

In summary, the simplification and sharpened focus of these revised sets of treatment Standards is intended to assist users in making sound historic preservation decisions. Choosing an appropriate treatment for a historic property, whether preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction is critical. This choice always depends on a variety of factors, including the property's historical significance, physical condition, proposed use, and intended interpretation.

Preservation

*Preservation* is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the

limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

#### Standards for Preservation

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

#### Preservation as a Treatment

When the property's distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and thus convey the historic significance without extensive repair or replacement; when depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate; and when a continuing or new use does not require additions or extensive alterations, preservation may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for preservation should be developed.

## Rehabilitation

*Rehabilitation* is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

### Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.



### Rehabilitation as a Treatment

When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for rehabilitation should be developed.

### Restoration

*Restoration* is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

### Standards for Restorations

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.
2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and , where possible, materials.
7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.



8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

#### Restoration as a Treatment

When the property's design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; and when contemporary alterations and additions are not planned, restoration may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a particular period of time, i.e., the restoration period, should be selected and justified, and a documentation plan for restoration developed.

#### Reconstruction

*Reconstruction* is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

#### Standards for Reconstruction

Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.

4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

#### Reconstruction as a Treatment

When a contemporary depiction is required to understand and interpret a property's historic value (including the re-creation of missing components in a historic district or site); when no other property with the same associative value has survived; and when sufficient historical documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction, reconstruction may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for reconstruction should be developed.

## APPENDIX D

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COAST GUARD STATIONS 1916

The following is from *Instructions for United States Coast Guard Stations 1916*, under the section "Care and Preservation of Property," points 91 through 140, pages 16 through 23:

Care and Preservation of Property

91. No unauthorized changes shall be made in any building at a station.
92. The keeper shall each month make an examination of the foundations of all buildings, and shall see that sand is kept below the sills, joists, etc. He shall see that the skirting around the foundations is sound, promptly renewing any decayed boards.
93. He shall see that gutters and downspouts are kept clear of trash, leaves, or sand.
94. He shall see that the floors are kept clean and oiled at frequent intervals with the prescribed preparation.
95. He shall see that all sashes are kept in good operating condition, renewing sash cords when necessary.
96. He shall see that all locks, knobs, and hardware generally are set up snug, and shall not permit anything to get loose.
97. He shall frequently inspect the roofs for leaks, and make prompt repairs before damage occurs.
98. He shall see that barns and stables are kept in good sanitary condition and in good repair.
99. He shall see that boathouses, inclines, etc., are kept in thorough repair and clear of sand and other obstructions.
100. He shall see that all buildings not continuously in use are thoroughly aired at frequent intervals.
101. He shall see that the launchways are kept clear of sand and other obstructions, and that the launching carriages, boat wagons, etc., have all moving parts thoroughly clean and oiled.
102. The keeper shall immediately report to Headquarters the loss, theft or destruction of any article of value, giving the attendant circumstances and, if possible, the date when the article was received. Such articles shall not be reported by a board of survey, but entered as "lost," "destroyed," etc., with date of occurrence, in column of "Remarks" in the "Record of public property."
103. He shall cause each shot line, hawser, and whip to be carefully measured at least once each year and note the measurements, with the dates at which they were made, in the "Record of public property" opposite the names of the respective articles. All new lines of any kind shall be measured immediately after they are received and their respective lengths entered in the record.
104. He shall see that the screens furnished for windows and doors of the station and detached kitchen and pantry are kept in place and screened doors kept closed at all times when their use is

necessary. He shall use every effort to keep all living and sleeping quarters, kitchens, dining rooms, pantries, and food free from flies, mosquitoes, roaches, and vermin. He shall see that all screens for windows and doors fit properly and are kept in good repair, and shall make requisition for the material necessary therefore.

105. (1) When a field assistant forwards to Headquarters a recommendation for construction and repair work which he recommends be performed entirely by a station crew, he shall submit therewith a full and complete description of the proposed work and a schedule of materials required for the same, both in triplicate. In the absence of instructions to the contrary, the foregoing procedure will terminate the field assistant's connection with the matter.

(2) If the recommendation of the field assistant is approved by Headquarters, such description and schedule of materials will be forwarded to the district superintendent with instructions to secure proposals for materials in conformity with the requirements of the regulations.

(3) If any of these proposals is accepted by Headquarters, the district superintendent will be advised accordingly, and thereupon the keeper will be directed by the district superintendent to have the work performed by the station crew as soon as practicable after the materials have been properly delivered at the station.

106. When so requested by a field assistant, construction and repair, a keeper shall see that the members of his crew render such assistance as may be practicable to such field assistant in the prosecution of his work at the station, when it will not interfere with the regular station duties, wreck or rescue work, or with reasonable hours for rest.

107. He shall see that the beach apparatus and every part thereof is, after actual service or drill, thoroughly cleaned and free from sand and dirt and restored to its proper place in the house in readiness for instant use; that all metallic parts are dried and wiped with an oiled cloth and all lines and hawsers thoroughly dried at the first opportunity; that lanterns and torches are filled and trimmed, and that the proper number of signals, water lights, charges of powder, etc., are in their places.

108. When a station is placed out of commission, he shall see —

(a) That the station and everything belonging thereto is in the best possible condition as to cleanliness and for preservation.

(b) That the crew remove all their clothing, and personal effects, except the mattresses, pillows, and bedding of those members who intend to return when the station is next placed in commission, from the lockers and station premises and deliver the locker keys to him.

(c) That the mattresses, pillows, and bedding left are clean, protected from moths, inventoried, neatly stowed, and that a copy of the inventory is given to him and the other retained by the owner of the articles.

(d) That toilets and privies are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, and that the water supply for toilets not in use is drained and shut off, and that every precaution is taken to prevent water pipes freezing and bursting.

(e) That all refuse is burned, buried, or removed to a safe distance from the station.

(f) That all bright and exposed metal work of apparatus and working tools is free from rust, wiped off, and oiled; that all fire extinguishers are ready for use and placed where they will not freeze or deteriorate from cold, and that, where no danger from freezing exists, fire buckets and barrels are filled.

(g) That all water is drained from the water jackets and pipes of the engines of power boats dismantled or laid up and of hoisting and pumping engines and pumps, and that all boat bilges are clean and dry.

109. The hand signal torch shall be protected from moisture and excessive heat, as these are detrimental to the dry batteries and the operation of the torch. The fiber sleeve should be

interposed between the metal case and the contact spring when the torch is not in use in order to prevent draining the battery. The dry battery should be removed from the case as soon as the battery becomes exhausted in order to protect it from swelling in the case. Spare dry batteries should be kept in a moderately heated dry place.

### Painting Stations

121. The following paints will be used when needed for repainting the buildings at Coast Guard stations:

#### Outside

- (a) Outside white paint, mixed: For walls of buildings, including trim; also fences and flag poles. The walls of unpainted buildings and fences constructed of rough lumber should be whitewashed.
- (b) Green paint, mixed: For underside of porch roofs and for blinds.
- (c) Light lead-color paint, mixed: For porch floors and treads of outside steps and for repainting all painted floors in buildings.
- (d) Red roof paint, mixed: For roofs.

#### Inside

- (a) Inside white paint, mixed: For inside trim.
- (b) Regulation straw-color paint, mixed: For plastered and ceiled walls when painted.
- (c) Light green, paint (Navy No. 34), mixed: For plastered and ceiled walls when painted.
- (d) Varnish, hard-oil finish: For ceilings that are to be kept bright.
- (e) Floor oil: For all finished floors and treads of stairs not painted.

122. Buildings which have not been painted will not now be painted. Shingles on roofs and walls that have not been stained or painted will not now be stained or painted.

123. *Repainting.* — Repainting of entire buildings will not be done without permission from Headquarters, but touching up should be done when needed to keep the surfaces properly protected from the weather. When parts are dirty or dingy they shall not be painted for the purpose of giving a clean appearance so long as the old paint is sufficient to protect the parts. Such parts shall be scrubbed as often as necessary, and no paint shall be applied until the old paint is worn thin. This applies to the exterior of buildings as well as to the interior. In cases where the paint is at present excessively thick, cracked, peeling, or blistered it shall be scraped off and surfaces sandpapered before any more paint is applied. When a blowtorch is used care shall be taken regarding fire risks, and the torch must not be inverted while lighted.

124. *Shingles.* — Where shingles on buildings[sic] have been stained by the application of regular shingle stain the same treatment will be continued.

125. *Floor oil.* — Floor oil should be prepared in accordance with the following formula:

Formula.

Commercial grade paraffin oil, 2 gallons.

Kerosene oil, 1 gallon.

Mix and apply to floors.

This mixture will form a light oil which is readily absorbed by the pores of the wood. The oil can be applied by means of rags. In no case should this oil be applied to dirty floors. Before each application the floors should be thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed. For scrubbing the floors

preliminary to the application of the floor oil, a strong solution of soap powder may be used; otherwise soap may be used in the ordinary manner. No soda or cleaning materials should be used other than those above mentioned. After a floor has been thoroughly cleaned and allowed to dry, the floor oil should be applied. Only the amount of oil that the wood will absorb should be applied at one time. The floor should then be given a fair polish. It may then be kept clean by wiping up with a damp cloth. However, should the floor become so dirty that wiping up with a damp cloth does not remedy the condition, it may be scrubbed as above described and the oil treatment renewed. Clothes used for applying the floor oil should be burned after using and not left around so as to endanger the building by fire.

126. *Whitewash.* — Whitewash should be prepared as follows: Slake half a bushel of unslaked lime with boiling water, keeping it covered during the process; strain it and add a peck of salt dissolved in warm water; 3 pounds of ground rice put in boiling water and boiled to a thin paste; half a pound of powdered Spanish whiting and a pound of clear glue dissolved in warm water; mix these well together and let the mixture stand for several days. Keep the wash thus prepared in a kettle or portable furnace and when used put it on as hot as possible with painter's or whitewash brushes.

127. *Windows.* — All window sashes must be kept well puttied. When it is found that the old putty is cracked it should be entirely removed and sashes allowed to become perfectly dry, after which they will be primed with white-lead paint, and when paint has dried sufficiently to become sticky the sashes may then be reputtied, replaced, and paint and putty allowed to harden together. When putty becomes hard it may then be painted. In so doing care must be used not to get paint on the glass and make a ragged appearance.

128. *Gutters and down spouts.* — Gutters and down spouts shall be painted outside the same color as the adjacent parts of the buildings to which they are attached. The inside surface of gutters shall be painted with red roof paint.

129. *Scrubbing and cleaning.* — To clean painted woodwork or other painted surface, scrub with clean, fresh water and soap. If necessary, a small amount of sal soda, ammonia, or washing compound may be put in the water. After scrubbing, wipe off with clean water and cloth.

130. *Preparation of work for painting.* — Paint will not adhere to nor dry upon wood or metal which is not perfectly clean and entirely free from moisture, dust, soot, and grease. The surface to be painted must be thoroughly dry, and no painting should be done in rainy or foggy weather or just after a frost. Dust and soot must be removed by brushes and cloths and by washing with hot soft water and soap.

131. *Puttying.* — Before painting, all nail holes, cracks, etc., should be carefully puttied.

132. *Preparation of plastered walls for painting.* — The walls must be thoroughly dry and brushed free from all dust and loose particles of mortar. They should then be primed with two or three coats of linseed oil, and when they are dry the colored finishing coats should be put on.

133. *Washes.* — Before applying a new coat of wash, all loose or peeling sections of washes previously applied should be scraped off. Surfaces should be scraped when necessary to keep the wash from becoming excessively thick.

134. *Instructions for applying paint.* — Paint should be put on by strokes parallel with the grain of the wood. Long, smooth pieces like window and door casings should be finished by drawing the brush carefully along the whole length if practicable or by smoothing on to the painted surface as the work progresses, so that there may be no breaks in the lines. If the brush is held too obliquely to the work it will leave the paint in thick masses wherever it is first applied after being dipped into the pot, and the surface will be daubed but not painted. A second coat should not be put on until the one previously applied has become thoroughly dry and hard, which will never be the case so long as it is sticky in the least to the touch. Each coat should be of the same



thickness throughout, otherwise the work when completed will have an unfinished and slovenly appearance. Paint put on too thin after priming will crack in drying; if put on too thick, it will blister, wrinkle, and peel off. In using the brush where there is sufficient space, draw long strokes to extend the color in a smooth and uniform manner. Where the space is contracted or rough the paint should be laid on in dabs for the purpose of getting it into the recesses and places where the surface is unequal, and then carefully smoothed out.

135. *Care of paints.* — (1) Paints shall be kept in a dry place and driers or varnish in tins or bottles. The paint remaining in a partially empty keg, pail, or tin can should be covered with oil and a cover placed over the same. Paint shall never be left to dry or left exposed to the air or weather.

(2) When paint is opened for use it should be thoroughly stirred so that there is no thick paint remaining in the bottom of the can. The paint should be kept well stirred while it is being applied in order that it may be kept of uniform thickness. Should the paint in the pot become too thick while it is being applied it may be thinned by the addition of linseed oil and turpentine or petroleum spirits in proper quantities.

136. *Varnishing.* — In using varnish great care should be taken to have the surfaces quite clean, washing them if necessary. The cans should be kept corked, the brushes free from oil and dirt, and the work protected from dust or smoke. Varnish should be applied in very thin coats laid on in the direction of the fibers of the wood and sparingly at the angles. No second or subsequent coat of varnish should be applied until the previous one is permanently hard, otherwise the drying of the under coat will be stopped. The surface of natural wood which is to be varnished should be "filled" before the varnish is applied to prevent it from being wasted by sinking into the pores of the wood.

137. *Use and care of paint brushes.* — Large paint brushes should be used for priming and painting over large surfaces which require considerable quantities of paint. Small brushes should be similarly used for smaller surfaces. Separate brushes should be used for each color. If there is a shortage of brushes and it is desired to use them for a different color, wash them in linseed oil and turpentine and then with soap and water. The oil or turpentine used for washing should be saved for mixing paint of the same color. It is important to properly swell a new brush before putting it to use, but under no circumstances should it be put into water to soak, for this will cause the brush always to work flabby, and if the bristles are of fine grade the brush will twist out of shape. The best method of swelling the head of a brush that has dried out is to separate the bristles carefully and pour a tablespoonful of water on the brush end of the handle and then stand the brush with the bristles up until the water has been absorbed. This will swell the head and make it as firm as when made. Brushes which have been used must not be left to dry with the paint in them. They must be kept soft by immersing them in enough linseed oil to cover the bristles within one-half inch of the binding. Place sufficient linseed oil in a can, pail, or jar and hang or suspend the brushes in the oil, the bristles to be free of the bottom. Brushes standing in water with bristles and ferrules wholly immersed will soon be unfit for use. When through using brushes and they are to be laid away for some time, they should first be washed in turpentine, then with soap and water until all paint is removed, and then thoroughly dried.



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