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# Heceta House: A Historical



# and Architectural Survey

Studies in Cultural Resource Management No.3

Waldport Ranger District  
Waldport, Oregon



Forest Service - USDA  
Pacific Northwest Region  
Siuslaw National Forest





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HECETA HOUSE: A HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

By Stephanie Finucane  
Drawings By Jeannine Rowley

WALDPORT DISTRICT  
SIUSLAW NATIONAL FOREST  
REVISED FEBRUARY 6, 1980

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Section One: History	
I. Background and Construction	4
II. Early Days of Light Tending	17
III. An End to Isolation	44
IV. World War II and Beyond	56
V. Ghostly Headlines	68
Section Two: Grounds, Architecture, and Alterations	
I. Structures and Grounds	71
II. Alterations to Landscape	79
III. Architecture of Heceta House	86
IV. Remodeling	93
Appendix	
List of Keepers	102
Lighthouse Administration	104
Bibliography	105



## INTRODUCTION

Heceta House has stood high on a headland of the Oregon coast for almost 90 years. In that time, the house has played host to homesteaders, lighthouse keepers, school teachers, road workers, military patrols and travelers.

The headland of Heceta, located 13 miles north of Florence on Highway 101, has been used for Indian settlements, lighthouse reservation, post office and military base. At present, Lane Community College holds weekend classes at the head.

The historic value of the site was recognized in 1978 when it was included on the National Register of Historic Places. The house, garage, lighthouse tower and two oil houses at Heceta all were listed on the register. The Waldport Ranger District of the Siuslaw National Forest, owner of the house, was charged with administration and maintenance of that building. The lighthouse and oil houses are owned by the U.S. Coast Guard, and that agency is responsible for their upkeep.

This history, which was funded by the Forest Service, will be used by cultural resource personnel at the Waldport District in developing a restoration and maintenance program for the house.

A maintenance program is particularly important for Heceta House due to its location: it is constantly subjected to salt air, strong winds and rain.

Much of the early history of the headland has been lost. Only a few articles in books and newspapers remain to tell us of the building and "breaking in" period of the house. However, many former residents of Heceta are living, and they have provided photographs and information on the later history of the head.

In a strict sense, this is a history of the house itself: a history of when and why it was built, why some rooms were added and others razed. However, without the stories of those who made their home at Heceta House, this would be little more than a compilation of facts, figures and dates.

It is the memories of Heceta Head's former residents, as well as the memories of their friends and neighbors, that give life to this history. Their stories of agate hunting, abundant elk and salmon, barn dances, fourth of July picnics and USO movies are as much a part of the site as the house itself.

SECTION ONE: HISTORY

## I: BACKGROUND AND CONSTRUCTION

Heceta Head was named to commemorate one Don Bruno de Heceta, a Portugese credited with exploring much of the Northwest coast.

Historians generally agree that Heceta, a captain sailing for the Royal Navy of Spain, left for his exploration of the Pacific Northwest coast March 16, 1775. The captain launched his ship, Santiago, from San Blas, Mexico, carrying a year's provisions and 45 men.

He was joined in the expedition by Juan Francisco de las Bodega Y Quadra, who sailed the Sonora.

Heceta had orders to put in at the San Diego and Monterey missions, and then proceed north as far as 65°. The voyage was to be made in secrecy, and the captain was further commanded to "...land often, take possession, erect a cross and plant a bottle containing a record of the act of possession."<sup>1</sup>

On July 30, 1775, Heceta and Quadra separated, probably as a consequence of stormy weather. A short time later, Heceta turned homeward, short of his goal of 65°. His early return was prompted by concern for his sailors, many of whom were suffering from scurvy.

<sup>1</sup> Gordon Speck, Northwest Explorations (Portland: Bindords & Mort, 1970), p.81.



Heceta did discover the mouth of the Columbia during the expedition, but he was unable to sail over the rough waters of the bar for further exploration of the river.

For his part, Quadra managed to take the Sonora as far north as Sitka, Alaska.

Heceta sailed into Monterey, California August 29, 1775. Thirty-five of his men were taken from the ship, too ill to continue the trip home.

With the close of the expedition, Bruno Heceta's career seems to have ended as well, for Spain cancelled all further voyages of discovery in 1780.

In addition to the near-discovery of the Columbia, the explorer sighted the headland that now bears his name, where he commented on the shallow water some distance off shore.

Soundings made by the U.S. Coast Survey in 1862 confirmed the captain's conclusions about the shallow waters. George Davidson of the Coast Survey suggested the names Heceta Head and Heceta Bank, which were adopted by the government.

Spain was not the only country to encourage explorers to lay claim to Pacific Northwest territory. Russia, Britian and the United States vied for the land as well. Competition for shore bases was particularly fierce between England and Spain, but eventually led to a series of agreements whicheffectively knocked Spain from the contest. Russia was eliminated in 1825, when pressure from Britian forced the czar to sign treaties ceding claims to the Oregon-Washington territory.

Britian was prepared to allow the United States to own the territory south of the Columbia, but the British wanted sole control of the river.<sup>2</sup> However, the question of ownership was settled by the signing of a treaty of joint occupancy in 1818.

<sup>2</sup> Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion, A History Of The American Frontier (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 509.

The following years were marked by the westward movement of many Americans into the Oregon territory. Some wanted a share of the profitable sea otter trade with China; others set out to establish churches in the wilderness; and a few courageous farmers were lured by tales of the Willamette Valley. The emigration culminated in the "great migration" of 1843, in which 1,000 persons traveled from Independence, Missouri to the Willamette Valley.

The British were active in settlement of the territory as well, largely due to the efforts of Hudson's Bay Company, which established Fort Vancouver on the Columbia. However, the United States won control of Oregon, including the contested waterway. American ownership was based on exploration and extensive occupation. On August 13, 1848, the bill creating the Oregon Territory passed Congress.

Coastal ports rapidly were established in Oregon, but trade was hampered by the fact that there were no aids to navigation on the west coast. In 1849, Congress sent a survey team to locate sites for construction of lighthouses. As a result of the survey, a total of sixteen lighthouses were authorized for the Pacific coast. These were built between 1852 and 1858, but with the exception of one light station on the Umpqua River, they were constructed in California and Washington. However, Congress made further appropriations for lighthouses in Oregon in following years. Additional lighthouses were constructed at Cape Blanco; the Coquille River; Coos Bay; Newport; Tillamook Bay; Tillamook Rock; and Astoria.

The government largely ignored the Siuslaw River during this period. In fact, a map accompanying the annual report of the superintendent of the Coast Survey, dated 1851, shows no river between the Umpqua and the Alsea, where the Siuslaw should have been.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Alferd L. Lomax, "Siuslaw and Willamette Valleys, 1850-91," from Oregon Historical Quarterly, Volume 36 (Salem: Statesman Publishing, 1935), p. 223.

However, in 1877 a 300-ton vessel named the Alexander Duncan stopped at Florence, and the settlement was commercially recognized from that date. In the following years, pressure for improvement of navigational facilities on the river increased considerably.

Approximately 1888, Senator Mitchell and Congressman Binger Hermann introduced a bill to provide \$80,000 for construction of a light station at Heceta Head. The bill was approved by the Lighthouse Board<sup>4</sup> and passed the Senate February 25, 1889.

The appropriation was made not to encourage trade along the Siuslaw, but to provide illumination for a notorious dark spot on the coast.

A recommendation made by S. C. Rowas, Vice-Admiral of the Navy, confirms this:

It does not appear that a harbor light is needed by the sparse commerce of this river. But it is quite evident that a coast light is required to divide the dark space between the<sup>5</sup> two lights above mentioned [Cape Arago and Cape Foulweather].

After the appropriation was approved, work on the station proceeded rapidly. In 1890, a survey of the site was made; a line for a roadway leading to the nearest county road was staked out; and negotiations for purchase of the land were begun.

Although Heceta Head was not owned outright by a private party, it was included in a homestead claim filed by Welcome E. Warren and his wife, Dolly. The Warrens, originally from Whatcom County, Washington, had filed a claim for 164 acres in 1888, which included both Heceta Head and Cape Creek.

<sup>4</sup> See appendix for information concerning Lighthouse Board.

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence in Record Group No. 26 of the National Archives.

ROUTE OF  
PROPOSED WAGON-ROAD  
HECETA HEAD ORE.

Scale 1" = 1000'

33

4

9

P A C I F I C O C E A N

Cass Rocks



Because the couple had not received title to the land, Congress passed a special act allowing them to sell a portion of the homestead to the U.S. Government for lighthouse purposes.

Accordingly, the government reserved approximately 19 acres of Warren's claim in a presidential order signed by Benjamin Harrison on July 18, 1891.

The couple received \$750 for the land, plus an additional \$75 for the sale of water rights to a spring located above the proposed station.

In addition, the Department of Interior set aside a tract of 239.2 acres for lighthouse purposes. This public domain land was reserved by executive order dated May 19, 1891. The acreage was located south of Cape Creek and included the partially timbered, mountainous area between the creek and Sea Lion Caves. It did not adjoin the lighthouse site, but was doubtless set aside to avoid undesirable encroachments near the station.<sup>6</sup>

The Warrens also granted the government the right to construct a road through their property. The proposed route of the road is illustrated on the preceding page.

William A. Cox, owner of the ranch at the south end of the road, signed an "indenture" granting the government right-of-way through his property. Under terms of the indenture, the government agreed to "...place substantial gates in all the present fences where the said right-of-way shall pass through the present fences."<sup>7</sup>

According to the Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board, the 7-mile wagon road was completed April 12, 1892. Construction costs of the road were not mentioned.

<sup>6</sup> Because the land was never used by the Lighthouse Service, in 1941 the Siuslaw National Forest supervisor requested that it be transferred to the forest. The transfer was approved by the U. S. Coast Guard, which had taken over the Lighthouse Service, and by the Department of Interior. In 1943, the executive order of 1891 was officially revoked, and the land became part of the Siuslaw National Forest.

<sup>7</sup> Document contained in National Archives, Record Group No. 26.

The Heceta Head station was designed in the grand style. Plans included the tower, two oil houses, barn, single dwelling for the head keeper and duplex for two assistants. The architectural plans used for the Umpqua station were duplicated for Heceta Head, which no doubt saved valuable time.

In 1892, contracts for construction of the buildings were awarded and some of the work was begun. The lowest bid for metal work on the tower was \$5,000; the bid for construction of the tower and oil houses was \$13,700; and the bid for keepers' dwellings and barn was \$26,470.<sup>8</sup>

The reports of the Lighthouse Board do not include the names of the firms that received the contracts. However, records at the Oregon Historical Society show that the contract for barn and dwellings went to H. M. Montgomery & Co., a Portland based firm.

Montgomery worked on at least one other light station; his file at the historical society includes a bill for materials used for the Umpqua River Lighthouse barn.

At Heceta Head, Montgomery alone employed 56 men, including carpenters, laborers, one bookkeeper, five teamsters and a foreman by the name of Charles H. Page. Payroll records Page forwarded to Montgomery indicate the going rate for laborers was \$2 a day, while the highest paid carpenter took in \$4 a day. (Total payroll for the period from May 1 to June 1, 1892 was \$880.94.) Workers averaged 10 hours a day.

The company paid the lodging of some of the employees, among them, the bookeeper and Page. Again, the Warren family benefited from construction of the station, this time by taking in the workers. For the month of May alone, Montgomery ran up a bill of \$426.98 with the Warren "boarding house."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

Those not lucky enough to board with the Warrens bedded down in the tent pictured below.



Photograph dated summer, 1892. Duplex is near completion, though work on the single dwelling and tower had not begun. The tent pictured to the left of the duplex was canvas with wood frame.

Despite construction of the wagon road, transportation of materials was difficult at best and impossible at worst.

Lumber was shipped by mills in Florence and Mapleton to the mouth of the Siuslaw, and the rafts then were towed to Cape Cove. From there, they were hauled up the slope to the construction site. As an alternate method, lumber was bound in bundles, carried to the site by tug, thrown overboard near Cape Creek beach, and finally rescued when it floated to shore.

Not all lumber arrived safely, and other items for construction were lost to the seas as well. In one instance, a shipment of water pipe was placed on one of the rafts. It failed to arrive, though bills of lading showed it had been shipped. Workers were forced to conclude the pipe had fallen through shifting lumber.

Bricks and cement were shipped from San Francisco to Florence, reloaded on the tug Lillian, owned by Meyer and Kyle, and transported to the mouth of the Siuslaw. They then were hauled to the Cox ranch by team and wagon owned by

George Prescott. If weather was fair and the wagon road to the construction site was dry, the materials were easily hauled the remaining distance. But more likely than not, the road was made impassable by mud, and the bricks sat at the Cox ranch until conditions improved.

Delivery of bricks and cement was among the easier runs made by Prescott. As steamers were not licensed to carry explosives, the blasting materials had to be hauled over mountain roads from Florence. George Prescott was enlisted for the job.

According to one of Prescott's descendants, on one occasion the teamster was hauling dynamite when a young man by the name of Jack Bunch begged a ride to the Head.

"The road was real rough. When Jack found out George was hauling dynamite, he decided he'd rather walk."<sup>9</sup>

While the threat of exploding dynamite bothered Jack Bunch, it did not worry the sea lions lounging at the caves near Heceta Head. "Blasting at the lighthouse does not seem to scare the sea lions away," the Florence newspaper, The West, reported.<sup>10</sup>

Like many of the workers at Heceta Head, George Prescott was a local man. In fact, many residents of Waldport, Yachats and Florence have a grandfather, or great-grandfather who was involved with construction of the station.

Les Akerly, a native of Florence, claims his homesteader-father worked on the lighthouse, helped out at Meyer and Kyle's store, and took any carpentry jobs he was offered.

<sup>9</sup> Mrs. P. O. Carlson, correspondence dated October, 1979.

<sup>10</sup> The West, as quoted in The Siuslaw Pioneer (Florence, Oregon: 1955), p.6.



"Most homesteaders worked on farms in the winter, summer they went out to make a few extra dollars," Akerly explained.<sup>11</sup>

This was the experience of German immigrant Claus Ludeman, who homesteaded near Yachats. According to his daughter, the family sorely needed any extra money that could be earned.

You might wonder what people did for a living in those hazardous times and so far from supplies. For three years Papa helped build the Heceta Light House, tediously and skillfully applying his old world techniques doing the interior work, in the two keepers' houses, which boasted very impressive stairways.<sup>12</sup>

It is likely that foremen and highly skilled workers had to be "imported." Fortunately for these outsiders, a post office was established at Heceta Head February 19, 1891. Original location of the post office is not known. It is possible the Warren house was used until one of the keepers' dwellings was erected at the station.

By the close of 1892, the barn was completed, the foundations and framing of the keepers' houses were finished and metal work for the tower was delivered.

Windows, finished lumber and other accessories then began arriving by the lighthouse tender Columbine, which sailed out of Tongue Point, Oregon. The rock that forms the base of the tower was brought from the Clackamas River near Oregon City, loaded aboard the Columbine, transported to the mouth of the Siuslaw and finally hauled by Prescott to the head.

<sup>11</sup> Tape of private interview with Les Akerly conducted by Kim Stafford at Florence, Oregon, February, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> Anna Ludeman McMillin, as quoted by Marjorie H. Hays in The Land That Kept Its Promise (Newport, Oregon: Lincoln County Historical Society, 1976), p. 8.

The lens for the lighthouse was transported by the government steamer Manzanita and unloaded near the tower by means of surf boats. The unloading was no doubt a harrowing experience, for the British-made piece was extremely valuable. Cost of the lens is not listed in any government document, though the son of one head keeper places the price at around \$10,000.<sup>13</sup>

The hand-ground, "first-order"<sup>14</sup> lens is composed of eight panels made up of 640 prisms, each two inches thick. It is unusual that the lens was manufactured in England, as Fresnel lenses made in France had been used previously. Again, government documents do not explain this question.

The lens revolved once every eight minutes. The revolutions were controlled by a system of weights, called clockworks, which were wound by hand.

Heceta Head was to be recognized by a white light flashing once every minute. Such a pattern was important, as the following passage explains:

Marine disasters have occurred from the mistaking of one lighthouse for another and it is evidently important that lights be so distinguished that the navigator may recognize with certainty the light he sees. To this end lights<sup>15</sup> are known by their number, color, intensity or time of visibility.

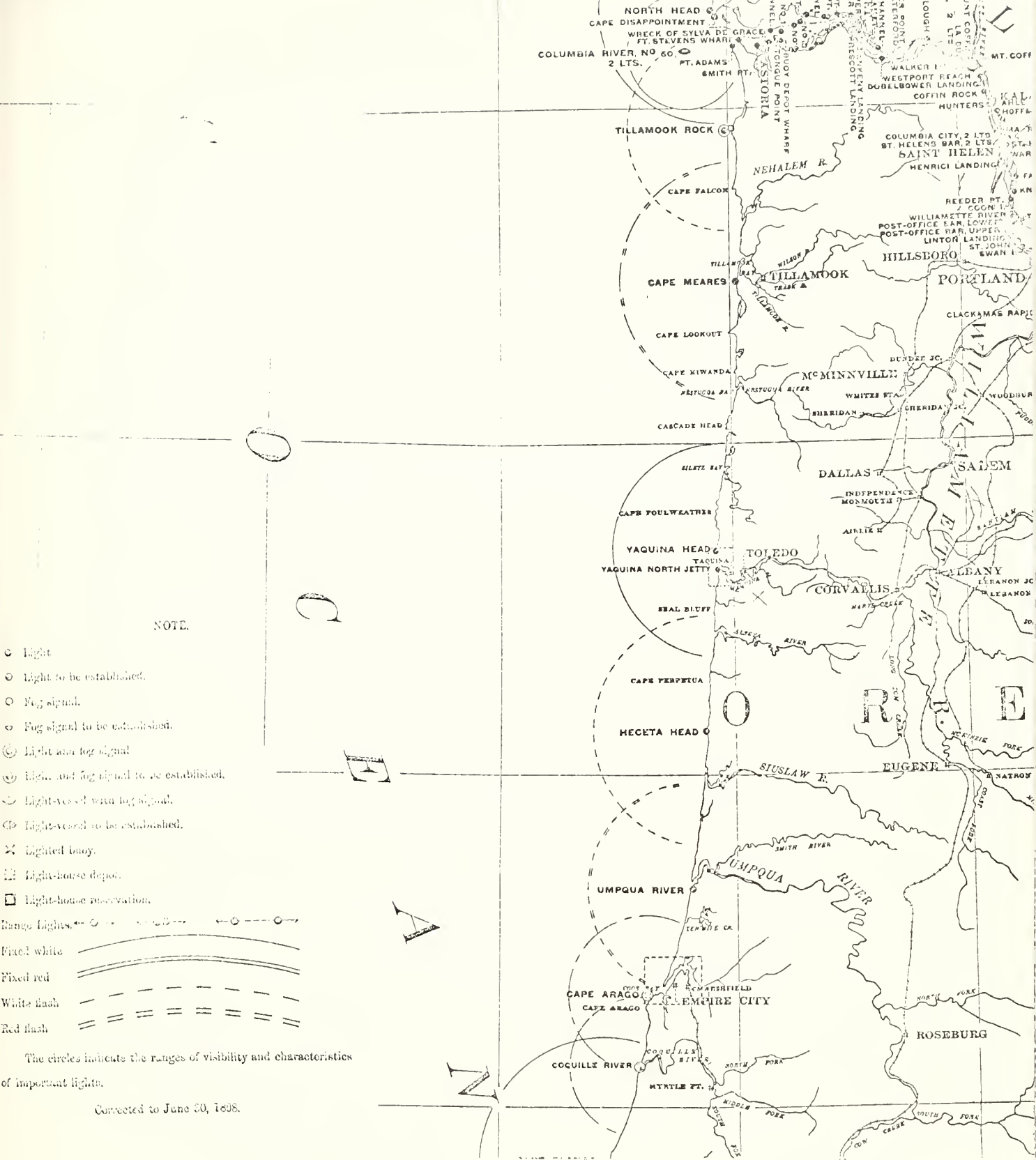
According to Annual Reports from the Lighthouse Board for 1893, the tower was completed August 31, 1893. The lens had arrived in October of 1892 and was set up in November. All other buildings were finished as well.

However, the lighthouse could not begin operating until the lamp for the tower arrived. There was a delay in receiving this shipment, which had to come from the general lighthouse depot at Staten Island, New York.

<sup>13</sup> Robert E. DeRoy, correspondence dated November 12, 1979.

<sup>14</sup> The order of a light is determined by the focal length of the lens, that is, the distance from the center of the light to the inner surface of the lens. A first-order lens has a 36-inch focal length.

<sup>15</sup> George R. Putnam, Lighthouses and Lightships of the United States (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1933), p. 194.



- NOTE.
- Light
  - Light to be established.
  - Fog signal.
  - Fog signal to be established.
  - ⊙ Light and fog signal
  - ⊙ Light and fog signal to be established.
  - ⊙ Light-vested with fog signal.
  - ⊙ Light-vested to be established.
  - × Lighted buoy.
  - ⊠ Light-house depot.
  - ⊠ Light-house reservation.
- Range lights. — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ —
- Fixed white —————
- Fixed red —————
- White flash - - - - -
- Red flash = = = = =

The circles indicate the ranges of visibility and characteristics of important lights.

Corrected to June 30, 1898.

Section of a map illustrating the light "patterns" of Oregon lighthouses.

The five-wick lamp finally arrived in February of 1894. Once placed inside the lens, it generated 80,000 candle power, visible 20 miles. The original lamp burned kerosene, or coal oil, as the keepers called it. Supplier of the oil was, in the words of one writer, "That gigantic monopoly, the Standard Oil Company..."<sup>16</sup>

Once the lamp was in place, the station was ready for operation. This event was awaited by mariners and the residents of Florence alike, as this quotation from The West indicates:

Mr. McCloud, who had charge of setting the lamps at Heceta Head, finished work and left for Portland. Now the beacon lamp is ready to have the match applied, and only waits the coming of the keepers, and an order from the board.

In March of 1894, Mr. R. D. Lang, who had acted as caretaker of the Heceta Head grounds and buildings, turned over the keys to the first head keeper, and on March 30, the long-awaited match was applied to the light.

<sup>16</sup> The West (Florence, Oregon, December 6, 1895), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> The West, as quoted in The Siuslaw Pioneer (Florence, Oregon; 1955), p. 6.

## II: EARLY DAYS OF LIGHT TENDING

Very little is known about the early keepers of the new Heceta light. The first head keeper, Andrew P. C. Hald, had previously served at the Cape Mears Lighthouse. His first assistant was Eugene M. Walters and his second assistant John M. Cowan. Of the three men, only Cowan was a native American; he was born in California. Hald was born in Denmark and Walters in France.

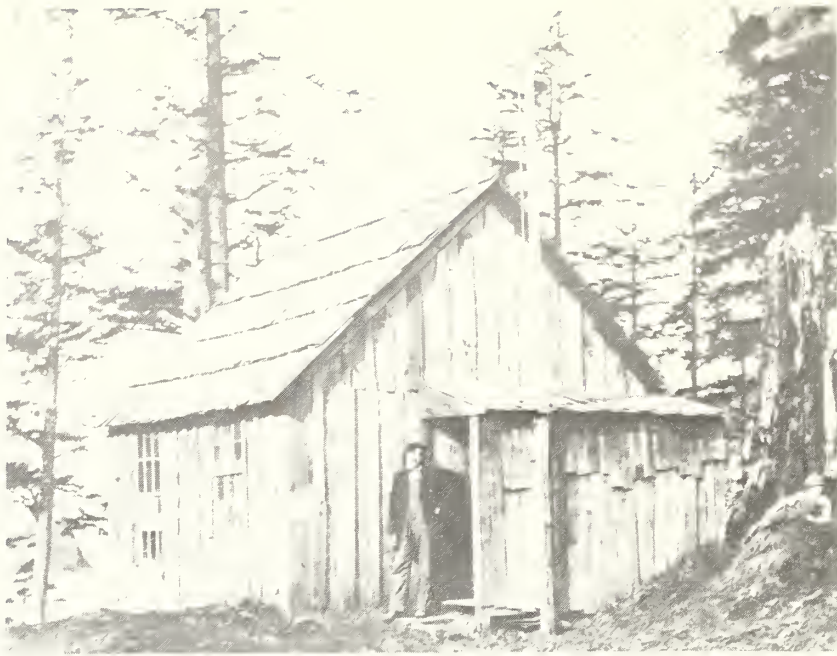
None of the original crew stayed long at Heceta Head. Between 1894 and 1904, all three positions turned over many times.<sup>1</sup>

The salaries of the light keepers were fixed by law in 1867, and the law was not changed for 50 years. The head keeper received \$800 annually, the first assistant \$600, and the second assistant \$550. Salaries included housing and firewood.

It is quite likely that the first keepers brought families to the station, as arrangements for a school were made as early as 1896. That year, the Warrens sold an acre of land for \$5 to the Directors of School District No. 149 of Lane County, Oregon.

The original schoolhouse, pictured on the following page, was of the shingled, one-room variety. Frank DeRoy, a later keeper, told his son that students left their books in kerosene cans to prevent them from being nibbled by rats. Whether this was fact, or a frightening bed-time story may never be known.

<sup>1</sup> See appendix for list of Heceta Head keepers.



HECETA HEAD SCHOOLHOUSE

Olaf L. Hansen was appointed first assistant to Heceta Head in September, 1896. He was transferred a few years later, but returned as head keeper in 1904. Hansen remained at that post until 1920.

During his tenure, Hansen established himself as postmaster and a member of the local school board and, most importantly, he brought a sense of stability to the Heceta light. He is survived by two daughters, who provided information about their father and about life at the station.

Hansen spent his boyhood in Porsgurn, Norway. He began a career as sailor at the age of 14. In later years, he located in San Francisco and sailed out of that city. From there, he moved north to Astoria and landed a job on the lighthouse tender, Manzanita. According to his daughters, this stint on the tender inspired him to enter the Lighthouse Service as a keeper.

He was appointed fourth assistant at the Tillamook Rock Station on December 26, 1894, at the established rate of \$550 per year. A promotion came just a year later, when Hansen was made third assistant at Tillamook.

In February of the following year, he was transferred to Cape Disappointment as second assistant, and in September of 1896 was made first assistant at Heceta Head. By that time, Hansen was bringing in \$600 annually.

The raise in pay undoubtedly was needed, for the 37-year-old Hansen came to Heceta Head a newlywed. His wife, Annie Martin, 32, hailed from West Virginia. She arrived in Oregon accompanied by one son from a first marriage.

The Hansen daughters never asked their parents how they met, but they have their own theory about the match.

How could a sailor from Astoria meet a woman from Huntington, West Virginia, who had a dressmaking shop, except by correspondence? They must have corresponded for some time, because he sent her a watch as a gift and she had a emerald engagement ring. We've always surmised that they answered some newspaper ad.<sup>2</sup>

During their first stay at the head, the Hansens began what proved to be a large family of one boy and five girls. Most of the children were born at the station, with the assistance of a midwife from Florence who went by the name of Grandma Morgan.

The couple filed a homestead claim at Mercer Lake during those first years. This presented a problem when Hansen was transferred to Puget Sound in 1902, where he remained until 1904.

During that time, Annie Hansen proved her resourcefulness by staying behind to prove up on the homestead. The family then included three small children, and the Hansen woman, described by neighbors as large and "raw boned," was aided only by her teenaged son from her first marriage.

On November 1, 1904, the family was reunited when Hansen returned to Heceta as head keeper. By 1904, the mustachioed Norwegian was making \$800 per year, which no doubt brought a sense of security to the 45-year-old Hansen.

<sup>2</sup> Thelma Hansen Coma and Mildred Hansen Wells, private interview held at Heceta Head, Oregon, October, 1979.



Keepers' houses as they appeared in early years of station.



Keepers and their families. From left, back row: Frank DeRoy; Paul Goodwin, teacher; Lilly Smith; William Smith; daughter, Bessie Smith; Olaf Hansen; Annie Hansen. Front row, from left: Gertrude Hansen; Willy Smith; Thelma, Irene, Adele, Mildred, and Howard Hansen.



As head keeper, Hansen had the same duties and shifts as his assistants, but he was charged with overseeing the station as well. In return for shouldering the responsibility, he received his raise in pay and the designation of head keeper, or captain. His family was entitled to live in the single residence nearest the lighthouse.

There were other, subtle distinctions that marked the various ranks. The second assistant lived on the east side of the duplex, farthest from the light, while the first assistant lived on the west side, just one step away from the captain.

Even existing light fixtures at one time reflected status. The "chandeliers" on the second assistant's side have four bulbs each; the fixtures on the first assistant's side are of the same design, but have five bulbs each. According to Hansen's daughters, the head keeper's house was illuminated by chandeliers with six bulbs.

The duties of lighthouse keepers were specifically laid out in a Lighthouse Service publication entitled Instructions and Directions to Light Keepers. The instructions included the following:

Commence lighting the lamp at sunset, so that the light may have its full effect by the time twilight ends.

Extinguish the lights punctually at sunrise...Hang and spread the lantern curtains immediately after the lights are extinguished, which precaution is necessary to prevent the sun's rays from melting the burner of the lamp.<sup>3</sup>

The clockworks which powered the revolving lense had to be wound manually every four hours. According to Hansen's daughters, the slow descent of the polished clockworks was an unforgettable sight.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Lighthouse Service, Instructions and Directions to Light Keepers (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1871), pp. 27 and 30.

They were beautiful, beautiful clockworks, all enclosed in glass. They dropped clear to the floor of the tower. Even the curtains around the lantern<sup>4</sup> were beautiful; they were made of the finest linen I've ever seen.

Despite the beauty of the tower, lighthouse duty still meant work for the keepers. The first shift began at sunset and ended at midnight and the second lasted from midnight to sunrise. One man was always off duty at night. The shifts were taken in turn, which gave each keeper a full night's sleep every third night.

Apparently, many of the keepers did not own reliable alarm clocks. A club was kept handy for rapping on walls sheltering sleeping keepers expected on duty.

The men were directed to remain at the tower throughout their shifts. Instructions were clear on this point, but there is some disagreement as to how carefully they were carried out. Visitors to Heceta House report noticing a mirror rigged up in one of the bedrooms, which would have allowed a keeper reclining in bed to monitor the light by checking the looking glass.

According to the Hansen sisters, their father demanded strict adherence to regulations. If there ever was a mirror, they insist it must have been mounted by "lazy ones" who came after Hansen's time.

Regardless of whether they served the full watch, the men insisted on certain comforts. The watchroom adjacent to the tower was kept heated by a wood stove, and a leather arm chair was kept invitingly near the heater. A small library was maintained in the watchroom, and one keeper purchased a telescope to facilitate star gazing.

Although the Heceta light was kept illuminated only at night, the keepers had plenty of daily duties. The working day began at nine a.m., though the man

<sup>4</sup> Thelma Hansen Coma and Mildred Hansen Wells, private interview held at Heceta Head, Oregon, October, 1979.

who had come off duty at sunrise was not required to complete morning chores. The routine at the tower included cleaning the glass of the lantern, polishing brass fittings, trimming wicks, filling the lamp reservoir and removing any spots from the glass.

In addition to this daily ritual, there often were painting or whitewashing assignments to tackle. The Lighthouse Service was very specific about the painting:

The whole interior of lighthouse lanterns is to be painted WHITE and must be kept clean, free from soot and grease and the white paint renewed as often as necessary.

Flat brushes are used for sashes, for varnishing, and for painting in lines or narrow spaces.

When the bristles of a brush get loose, drive a few thin wedges of wood inside<sup>5</sup> of the binding twine or thread, which will render the whole fast again.

Despite the seeming arduousness of these tasks, assistants under Hansen stayed with the job longer than their predecessors. From 1912 to 1918, Leroy Avery served as assistant; Frank DeRoy was appointed assistant in 1913 and was promoted to head keeper in 1920. Bob Bay assisted from 1918 to 1930; and Charlie Walters served from 1919 until 1930.

These keepers were, without exception, career Lighthouse Service men. After serving at Heceta Head, all were transferred (or requested transfers) to other light stations. However, other assistants tried lightkeeping for a time, then drifted on to other work. For example, Overton (Ovie) Dowell Jr. worked under Hansen in 1911, but could not deny he was a homesteader at heart. In 1912, he returned to his family's spread at Mercer Lake and never reentered the lighthouse service.

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Lighthouse Service, Instructions and Directions to Light Keepers (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1871), p. 119.



LeRoy Avery, second assistant, and his wife, Jenny. Avery wears regulation jacket and cap bearing Lighthouse Service insignia.



An unidentified keeper prepares for journey to a new assignment. Moving was not easy in those days-many families were transported by lighthouse tender, in which case all their possessions had to be crated and loaded on surf boats.

Some assistants did come and go without leaving records of their destinations.

In many cases, even their names were forgotten by the "regulars." Robert DeRoy, son of keeper DeRoy, recalls the steady stream of assistant keepers:

There was an exchange of several second assistant keepers while we were at Heceta Head. The ones I remember were a man named Hayward and his wife, they had no children that I remember; a family by the name of Walters, had a baby and a small girl; a single man by the name of Miller, who we kids used to call Miller by the Dee, which he didn't like much.

There was also a family by the name of Williams, who had two girls named Charlotte and Marion. Mr. Williams, his first name was Clayborn, was a rather heavy man, and smoked cigarettes a lot. He sort of wheezed most of the time when he breathed. I thought that this was real cool, and started to imitate him. My mother got worried and thought that I was coming down with something bad, until she found out<sup>6</sup> what it was all about. That was the end of my wheezing even until now.

Hansen's daughters vividly remember still another second assistant, Thomas E. Alexander, who was appointed in 1912.

There was one wierdo came in as an assistant here, Mr. Alexander. Mr. Alexander had a horse and one time he lassoed and threw that horse, tied his four legs together and sat on the hillside and threw rocks at that horse. We went and told our Dad, of course, what he had done. He reported it to headquarters, but he had to wait a week for the mail to go back and forth. Many times during that week, my dad and the other assistant would not go to the tower alone. They went up together because they were afraid of that man.<sup>7</sup>

Once the fateful report was received, it is not likely that Alexander remained on the Lighthouse Service payroll for long.

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. DeRoy, correspondence dated November, 1979.

<sup>7</sup> Mildred Hansen Wells, private interview held at Heceta Head, Oregon, October, 1979.

Mail to headquarters may have been slow, but the keepers did have recourse to the telephone. Lines were installed from Florence approximately 1910. According to reports, there were about 16 parties on the line, and more than a few were reputed to eavesdrop on a conversation.

Technology brought another major change to the station in 1910. The original, kerosene burning lamp in the tower was replaced by a gas bunsen burner. But perhaps the most welcomed alteration occurred in 1916, when the installation of indoor plumbing eliminated the need for outside privies. The families had looked forward to the indoor rest rooms for some time. The bathroom fixtures sat in the barn collecting dust for more than a year before they were finally placed in the rear wings.

The local transportation network did not improve much during Hansen's captaincy. A trip to Florence, just 13 miles down the coast, entailed an all day journey by team and wagon. Some Heceta Head families made the arduous trek only a few times a year, though keeper DeRoy sometimes donned a knapsack and hiked the distance to Florence to secure some much needed item.

Despite the difficulty of travel, keepers were not totally isolated from Florence. Charles Stonefield, who lived with his family at Cape Creek, regularly hauled supplies for lighthouse residents.

Stonefield had purchased Warren's homestead for \$500 in 1902. (The fate of the Warrens is not known.) The hearty German immigrant purchased additional land from homesteaders who lived up the hill from Warren. In this way, he fell heir to a large and livable house, the Cobb place, which became the first Stonefield family home.



The Cobb house, located on the hill behind Cape Cove, provided housing for the Stonefield clan. It doubled as the Heceta Head schoolhouse for a time.



Three generations of Stonefields: from left, Rufus; George; Rosie; Frederick; Charles; Vernon; Annie; and Stilnah.

Charles rode into Florence about two or three times a month with his wagon and team of Clydesdales, Duchie and Princess.

He had the choice of following an inland or beach route. The inland road, which wound above the present highway, was close to impassable in wet weather. Then, Stonefield followed the beach from Berry Creek to Heceta Beach. At Heceta Beach, a ramp led to the road and from there on it was a straight shot to town. There were disadvantages to this route as well: Sutton Creek had to be forded and beach travelers needed to pay close heed to the tides. However, Stilnah Stonefield Smallwood, Charles' granddaughter, remembers that trips to Florence were something of an occasion.

It took pretty much all day to get to Florence. We'd leave in the morning and when we got down there in the sandhills, we'd have a picnic. There were oats for the horses and we all sat out on the ground. We stayed in Florence overnight. Granddad had a livery stable with a room off it where we slept. If there was a big fair, we stayed three or four days.

In addition to carrying supplies for the lighthouse personnel, Charles Stonefield had the government contract for supplying wood to the Heceta Head families. Each family was allotted eight cords per year which was "cut into stove wood lengths by a buck saw, at the keeper's pleasure or displeasure, whichever the case may have been."<sup>9</sup>

The enterprising Stonefields engaged in other financial endeavours. They raised cattle, which were driven to Cushman for auction, and grazed sheep on the hill in back of the light station. (This practice gave the hill its name: Sheep Hill.) The sheared wool was stuffed into 10-foot bags and shipped to Portland. Charles sold cream by the five-gallon can and son Rufus went into the skunk raising business for a time.

<sup>8</sup> Stilnah Stonefield Smallwood, private interview held at Waldport, Oregon, September, 1979.

<sup>9</sup> Robert E. DeRoy, correspondence dated November, 1979.



When the Cobb place became too cramped for the growing family, Charles and Annie built a second house closer to the creek. Annie opened the new house to boarders and in this way, Heceta Head became established as a half-way point for travelers journeying from Florence to Yachats. The Stonefields did not have a monopoly on financial enterprises. At least two lighthouse residents set themselves up in business. Mrs. Hansen collected agates at what Heceta residents called Devil's Churn. (The churn was located below the station. The name passed out of existence when Devil's Churn near Cape Perpetua became popular.) The agates were sold at the A. L. Thomas shop in Newport.



LeRoy Bay, Bob Bay's son, peddled a different sort of ware; he trapped moles and sold the pelts to a furrier in Portland. Of course, young LeRoy could not devote all his energies to his business; he had school to attend and chores to perform.

The original, shingled schoolhouse apparently outlived its usefulness. The Cobb place served as classroom for a time but, by 1916, a new school was built close to the creek. Like its predecessor, the new school had only one classroom, though two adjacent rooms served as library and wood shed. A wood-burning stove sat in the center of the classroom, and a "two-holer" behind the building completed the conveniences.

The schoolroom windows provided a good view of the creek, and, during salmon season, students kept at least one eye on the outdoors at all times. At the sight of a salmon run, the entire class jumped up, grabbed spears kept near the door, and raced for the creek.

This was whether school was in session or not. It probably did not go over too well with the teacher, but was not considered a serious offence, as our parents were glad to get any extra food they could. They generally smoked the salmon we did not consume at the time.

Unfortunately for the students, there was more to school than salmon fishing. Before they could be awarded an eighth grade diploma, a series of state exams had to be passed. The tests covered geography, hygiene, English, history, science, spelling and math. They were given to eighth-graders in May, but if any students failed, they were allowed to retake the exams in June. If they failed a second time, they had to remain in school the following year in order to graduate.

As most students did not go on to high school, it was not essential that they graduate. However, many parents insisted their children bring home an eighth-grade diploma.

10 Ibid.



"New" schoolhouse near the beach.



Class of 1916: front row, from left, Vernon Stonefield; Rachel Avery; Stilnah Stonefield; second row, Ted Avery; Fred Stonefield; Mildred Hansen; unidentified; Adelle Hansen; third row, Gertrude and Thelma Hansen; Raymond Bay; Howard and Irene Hansen; fourth row, unidentified; and teacher, Miss Ballard.

The majority of teachers were young women fresh from college. They boarded with the Stonefields in early years. Later, a small house was built near the school to accommodate them, but it was destroyed by fire. Once again, the Stonefields provided bed and board.

A school board, composed primarily of light keepers, administered the Heceta Head School District. In 1916, Olaf Hansen, Charles Stonefield and Roy Avery belonged to the board.

By 1926, teacher's salaries were up to \$90 a month. The salaries were paid in warrants, which could be cashed in immediately or, if the employee was well-fixed for the month, could be held to draw interest.

In addition to attending school, children of the station helped with housekeeping duties. They polished the brass in the tower, dusted furniture and woodwork in the houses and tended animals.

However, the bulk of the housework fell to the women. The wives refereed the rows of the children; scrubbed laundry on wash boards; hung it on lines to dry; smoothed clothing with heavy, cast irons heated on the woodburning stoves; and cooked daily meals.



Keeper Hansen's son, Howard (left), relaxes in kitchen of Tillamook Rock Station. The kitchens at Heceta Head were of similar design and had the same type of stove, pump, and sink cabinet.

The Heceta Head women were fanatical window washers and cupboard cleaners, for the constant threat of a visit from lighthouse inspectors hung over their heads. These inspectors paid a surprise visit to the station once a year. They not only toured the tower and inspected lighthouse machinery, they also entered the houses and eyed cupboards, window sills and wood work. The more fastidious inspectors donned white gloves and ran their fingers atop sills and doors.

Despite such stringent checks, few women were reprimanded for their housekeeping, although one was "cited" for a dirty laundry room because she had been sorting clothes into piles when the inspector came in, unannounced.

Lighthouse Service publications do not offer any justification for such intrusion into keepers' private homes. However, light keeper and inspector Robert Stevenson, grandfather of author Robert Louis Stevenson, gave the following explanation, which was doubtless subscribed to by lighthouse officials the world over:

I hold it as a fixed maxim that, when a man or a family put on a slovenly appearance in their houses, stairs, and lanterns, I always find their reflectors, burners, windows, and light in general, ill attended to; and, therefore, I must insist on cleanliness throughout. <sup>11</sup>

Mercifully, the keepers sometimes received "tips" that inspectors were on their way, probably from keepers at nearby stations.

Lighthouse tending and housekeeping were primary occupations, but the families spent their spare hours tending vegetable gardens, raising chickens, milking cows and caring for horses. They planted on the hillside above the beach, and often extended the gardens as far as the sand.

In the pre-highway days, these occupations were more than pastimes, they were vital to survival. In fact, the Heceta Head community endeavoured to be as self-sufficient as possible, for links with nearby towns were not strong.

<sup>11</sup> George R. Putnam, Lighthouses and Lightships of the United States (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1933), pp. 246-247.

The lighthouse residents survived their semi-isolation well. The women sewed most of the families' clothing, and Rufus Stonefield, who was skilled at cobbling, made shoes. What could not be produced by hand was ordered through the "Monkey Wards" and "Sears and Sawbuck" catalogs, as the keepers called them.

A medicine chest and doctor's manual were provided by the Lighthouse Service, and spiritual well-being was attended to by traveling preachers.

Keepers set off on frequent hunting and fishing forays in order to supplement the vegetables and dairy products from the station. However, according to the Stonefields, Forest Service rangers sometimes interfered with the ambitious designs of hunters.

In those days, the forest service men were the same as the police. If you had illegal deer meat or illegal fish they'd arrest you. Even back then, there was deer season and fishing season, though there was no elk season till '41.

But we had deer and fish all year 'round, because when a forest service man left Florence, folks would call to the first place down the road and warn that he was on his way. When he left the first place, those folks would call the next house and say he'd just passed. Out there at Berry Creek to the lighthouse it's three miles. <sup>12</sup>When he passed there, they'd call ahead and say he'd just passed.

On at least one occasion, the system did not work. George Stonefield recalls that a ranger from Mapleton stopped in when the family was feasting on undersized trout. Because the ranger was a family friend, he remarked that the trout must have shrunk, and let things go at that.

The mail carrier also could be considered an "intruder", but he was decidedly more welcome than the rangers. Although the Heceta Head post office was established in 1891, regular service was not instituted for some time. Turnover of mail carriers was high, for the Florence-Yachats run was one of the more treacherous of the coastal routes. Because the inland roads were often impassable, carriers traveled by horse and wagon on the hard packed sand a few feet out in the ocean.

<sup>12</sup> George Stonefield, private interview held at Florence, Oregon, October, 1979.

Cape Perpetua presented a highly dangerous obstacle to the mailmen, as carrier Guy Hays describes: "...we [horse and man] practically crawled on our bellies to keep from being swept into the crashing surf below."<sup>13</sup>

Rufus Stonefield, Charles' son, served a three-year stint as carrier. According to his children, high winds often forced Rufus to crawl around the Cape while holding onto his horse's tail.

Despite such hardships, there was a decided benefit to the job: every woman along the route had a treat for the carrier, be it coffee and cake, cookies, or a full meal. While visiting the families, the "mailman" took orders for everything from sewing thread to nails, which he purchased in Florence and dropped off on his return to Yachats.

Salary for the Florence-Yachats route is recorded at \$180 per year, which seems astonishingly low. However, mail was delivered only once a week, which gave the carriers time to pursue other occupations. In later years, service was increased to three times a week and carriers' salaries rose accordingly.

Keeper Hansen was postmaster of the Heceta office, which was contained in the basement of the single dwelling. One farmer, Ben Bunch, met his future wife while coming after letters. Sixteen-year-old Thelma Hansen and Bunch were married at the head keeper's house. The Hansen girl's marriage was not the only one celebrated at the light station. In 1929, assistant Bay's daughter, who was also named Thelma, was married in the first assistant's house.

The occasional weddings were just one type of entertainment put on by the Heceta Head community. Beach parties, Fourth of July picnics, barn dances and card parties at the Stonefields all helped break the monotony of light tending.

The annual fair at Florence provided a distraction of major proportions. Heceta Head women baked pies and cakes and put up pickles for judging, while the keepers laid plans to visit the pool hall in Florence's hotel.

<sup>13</sup> As quoted by Eve Muss, "The Beachfront Mailman," Oregon Journal (Portland), October, 1975, p. 13.



Heceta Head picnic, circa 1910. Hansen appears in uniform.



Lighthouse children spent every spare moment on beach. Keeper DeRoy's wife, Jenny, is seated on log.



Another annual event set off an even greater upheaval at the station. Everyone within hiking distance congregated at the headland to witness the landing of the lighthouse tender, Rose. The major supplies of the station, such as paint, kerosene and tools, were transported from the Tongue Point depot on the Rose. Once the tender arrived at the head, shipments for the lighthouse were rowed ashore on surf boats. Robert DeRoy's son remembers the occasions well:

The tender would stand off at a safe distance from shore and lower one of the whale boats. The tenders did not carry any power boats in those days. The crew would load the boat row it through the surf, which could be rather hairy with a heavily loaded boat, and off-load it with the keepers' help onto the beach. They always picked the best weather they could for this.<sup>14</sup>

The crew of the Rose often invited Stilnah Stonefield, Charles Stonefield's granddaughter to come aboard. She enjoyed sunbathing on the immaculate deck, but invariably returned home with a painful sunburn.



The tender Rose.

<sup>14</sup> Robert E. DeRoy correspondence dated November, 1979.

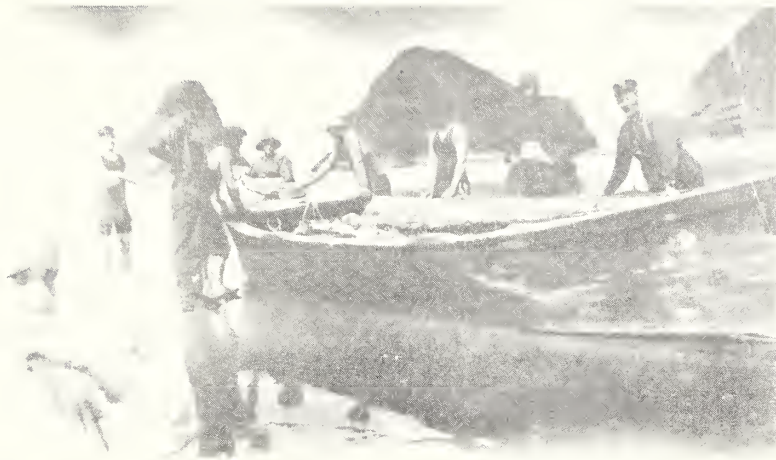
Most days, the families had to make due with simpler entertainments, such as reading and walking the beach. Photography was a great hobby of DeRoy's, but this had disastrous consequences for Ovie Dowell.

On one occasion, a whale washed up on the beach near the station. DeRoy quickly set up his tripod and heavy view camera, posed atop the whale "muscle-man" style, and instructed his wife to take the picture. Some days later, Dowell's girlfriend was coming from Florence for a visit, and the assistant asked DeRoy if he could borrow the camera while she was there. DeRoy agreed, and Ovie's friend arrived on schedule in her crinolines and petticoats. Dowell took her to the beach and, not wanting to be outdone by DeRoy, requested she take his picture astride the whale.

Unfortunately, the whale had decomposed since DeRoy had used it. When Ovie climbed atop, the belly caved in and the keeper found himself mired in whale flesh. Once down, Dowell couldn't get up, and he called on his girlfriend for help. She slithered over the whale, soiling her finery in the process, and, with the scent of rotted whale still clinging to her clothing, she returned to Florence.

The more daring Heceta Head residents sometimes descended down to Sea Lion Caves by rope. However, they did not engage in a sport popular at the time: sea lion killing. The State of Oregon payed a bounty of approximately \$5 to \$10 dollars for every sea lion scalp brought in by a hunter. Numerous out-of-towners found their way to the caves near Heceta Head, where sea lion hunting was outstanding. The following article from the Florence weekly describes one hunting expedition that took place in 1919:

A party of sea lion hunters from Seattle who came down the coast with a small boat arrived here about a week ago. Last Saturday they went by land to the sea lion caves and slaughtered many of the animals.



Heceta Head photography: keepers unload supplies for the station.



A favorite shot of Heceta Head photographers showed the station through the "needle's eye", which was destroyed by erosion years ago.

The men climbed down over the rocks and entered the cave where the sea lions have made their home for ages, and found animals of all sizes, from those only a few weeks old to full grown monsters weighing a ton or more.

The hunters shot about 300 lions in all and secured their scalps, on which a bounty is paid by the State.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the variety of diversions at the head, time often passed slowly for the keepers and their families, and the residents sometimes took to quarreling among themselves. However, for the most part, relations among the families were good. They often shared meals and entertainments, as well as chores.

The Hansens were transferred to Washington's Willapa Bay Light Station in 1920. Moving was no easy matter for any family, and was a particularly difficult chore for the Hansens, who had accumulated 16 years worth of memorabilia. Charles Stonefield transported the family to Florence in his wagon. There, the Hansens boarded the tender Rose, which conveyed them to their new assignment.

Hansen served as head keeper at Willapa Bay for ten years. He then retired, after 36 years of continuous duty with the lighthouse service.

The same tender that transported the Hansens from Heceta Head brought in the new head keeper, Frank DeRoy. He had first come to the head as second assistant approximately 1913. He served there until 1917, when he was promoted to first assistant at the new Lime Kiln station on the Puget Sound. In 1920, he was transferred back to Heceta to take over for Hansen.

According to his son, DeRoy had been a seafaring man most of his life. His wife, Jenny Gustafson, immigrated from Sweden as a child and spent her teenage

<sup>15</sup> The West (Florence), July 4, 1919, p.1.

years in Oakland, California. As her son relates, it was something of a culture shock for Jenny when she first came to Heceta Head as a newlywed in 1914:

I remember my mother telling when she was on her way from Florence to Heceta Head for the first time. It was raining and they were bouncing along the road along the bluff in Charlie Stonefields farm wagon, and she was feeling very blue, when suddenly the sun came out, and shone on the lighthouse station, and her spirits lit up, and she welcomed her new home.<sup>16</sup>

Keeper DeRoy and his wife both instituted changes at the light station.

These are best described by their son:

After father returned to Heceta as keeper in charge, he and the assistants set to work in putting the station in top shape. This took several years, as all the old, built-up paint was burned off and scraped down to the bare wood and metal inside and out. In some places, the paint had been put on coat after coat without properly preparing the surfaces, until it had not dried properly and hung like plastic icicles from the iron handrails in the tower.

The lighthouse service had a policy of awarding the best-kept station a gold star as an incentive for keepers to maintain the stations in good condition. I don't know if the Heceta Head station had ever received the award, anyway, the station was a long way from top shape when my father took charge.

Soon after my father transferred to the Columbia River station, Heceta Head received the coveted gold star. This didn't do much for father's ego, but soon afterward, he received a letter from the district superintendent explaining that it was due to the efforts of my father and his assistants that the award was granted, and not because of the new<sup>17</sup> incoming keeper in charge. This sort of set things right with him.

While the keeper concentrated on improving the tower, his wife turned her energies to the single dwelling she had inherited with her husband's promotion. Jenny could not abide the stark white walls of the house, which she painted over with pastel shades. She also prevailed on her husband to purchase some blue and white checked linoleum for the kitchen and bathroom.

<sup>16</sup> Robert E. DeRoy, correspondence dated November, 1979.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



Frank and Jenny DeRoy



Jenny DeRoy poses in one of the rooms she redecorated.

Suprisingly, the inspector did not object to the redecorating. In fact, he encouraged the couple to make other improvements. However, the family did not remain at the head long enough to continue the work. The head keeper requested a transfer to the Warrior Rock station on the Columbia in order to provide better schooling for his son. The request was granted, and in 1925, the DeRoys left Heceta Head.

Their departure marked the end of the "pioneer days" of the station. Electricity, highway construction and automobiles were to drastically change Heceta Head in the years to come.

### III: AN END TO ISOLATION

DeRoy was replaced by veteran light keeper Clifford B. "Cap" Hermann, who had received his first lighthouse appointment in 1905. Cap had a number of assignments under his belt: Tatoosh Island, Lime Kiln, Cape Arago and isolated Destruction Island. (At the last station, it was reported that the only residents other than the keepers and their families "...were a cow and the lowly mole.")<sup>1</sup>

Hermann arrived at Heceta Head in September of 1925 in time to witness the first in a series of milestones.

In 1926, Cy Cooper became the first mail carrier to complete the dreaded Florence-Yachats run by automobile. Cy drove a stripped, 1918 Model-T Ford with 13 forward and 8 reverse gears. It was said he started shifting at Yachats and didn't stop until he reached Florence.

The coastal route Cooper serviced had changed considerably since the days carriers bellied their way around Cape Perpetua. The Heceta Head post office was discontinued July 5, 1922 and moved to Roosevelt Beach. Reasons for the move are not documented. The number of families along the route had increased to 45.

<sup>1</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), February 10, 1950. p. 1.



Actually, Cooper's Model-T was not an uncommon sight at Heceta Head. The Bays had purchased a Chevrolet in the early twenties, and an increasing number of tourists were making the light station a stopping point on their Sunday drives. However, Charles Stonefield, along with his team and wagon, often was enlisted to rescue automobiles that had bogged down in sand or mud.

Cy Cooper did not always fare well with his mail truck either, as this notice from the Florence newspaper indicates:

From the far western end of Lane County a call for aid came to the office of Supervisor R. S. Shelly of the Siuslaw National Forest. The request was from the mail carrier who every other day makes the trip between Florence and Yachats. "I get stuck several times every trip," said the carrier. "Can't you help fix up some of the worst mud holes?" Mr. Shelly sent a message to the ranger in that district to spend a little money on maintenance work on the road, and a few of the mud holes were eliminated.<sup>2</sup>

If the misadventures of Cy Cooper did not give lighthouse folk enough to talk about, a romance brewing at the Stonefields did. In 1926, a new teacher by the name of Trell Kemp came to Heceta Head, and, as one former resident succinctly put it, "Trell fell in love with Fred Stonefield, and they got married."<sup>3</sup>

1930 saw the departure of two of the head's "old timers," Bob Bay and Charlie Walters. Bay, who had served as first assistant for 12 years, was transferred to Smith Island, Washington. Second assistant Walters was reassigned to Bandon.

One Florence resident vividly recalls the going-away party thrown for Walters. Home brew had to be smuggled in, as Prohibition was still on the books. Of course, Hermann could never have allowed liquor at his station. This problem was avoided by keeping Cap in the dark about the party.

<sup>2</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), April 25, 1929, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Emma Walters, private interview held at Portland, Oregon, November, 1979.

Walters had the midnight-to daylight shift the night of the party, but he had plenty of help with the job. All the men at the party went up in the tower with him.<sup>4</sup> We walked on tiptoe, so we wouldn't wake up the captain and his wife.

Further excitement reached the head with the discovery of a supposed gold strike. The "Oar" provided some of the details:

C. M. Prather believes he has found a gold and silver bearing ledge at Heceta Head. It may be the mine which was discovered years ago and lost because of a huge slide. Mr. Prather is not experienced in mining and is seeking someone with knowledge of the game who will go in with him in the venture.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently C. M. Prather, whoever he may have been, never found a knowledgeable partner, for no further mention is made of the gold ledge.

Even rumors of a gold mine took back seat to the all-consuming, highly contagious passion that gripped the Oregon coast: highway fever.

By 1925, the Roosevelt Coast Military Highway<sup>6</sup> was completed with the exception of the 90 miles in the middle of the state. This apparent abandonment of Lane County prompted one disgruntled reporter to write, "Within a short time Lane County will stand alone as the one section in Oregon which obstructs the free passage of tourists up and down the coast over the Roosevelt Highway."<sup>7</sup>

The anonymous writer did not have long to wait. By 1930, the Cape Perpetua section of the highway was underway, and survey work at Heceta Head had begun.

<sup>4</sup> Lary Grimshaw, telephone interview held October, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), July 18, 1930, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Following the start of World War I, support for a "military" highway that would connect the entire west coast grew rapidly. The Oregon legislature voted \$2.5 million for the coastal highway in a spirit of cooperation with the federal scheme for a major highway network. The highway was named for President Theodore Roosevelt. However, this name was later deemed inappropriate and in 1931, the state legislature officially changed it to Oregon Coast Highway.

<sup>7</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), April 19, 1929, p. 1.

Workers began trickling into Heceta that year, and by January of 1931, they had transformed Cape Creek into a crowded work camp. This caused Cap Hermann to remark that he was "virtually surrounded by road builders and the day for lonesomeness is passed."<sup>8</sup>

In April of 1931, John K. Holt, contractor for the majority of the Cape Creek bridge work, arrived with his foreman, engineer and two laborers. Holt came immediately after finishing the bridge at Grants Pass.

The Siuslaw Oar placed projected cost of the bridge at \$150,000. (Cost of the tunnel was not given.) When completed, the concrete and steel structure would include a main span 220 feet long, with several smaller spans.

Holt was responsible for the major span of the bridge, while the Clackamas Construction Company had a contract for 220 feet of smaller arches. Kern & Kibb were awarded the contract for the tunnel.

Holt alone employed between 35 and 50 men on his project. Those hired on by other companies brought the total of workmen closer to 90.

The majority of laborers earned 50 cents an hour for a 6-hour day. This rate was set by both the Federal Bureau of Roads and the State Highway Commission.

A number of local residents found work at the construction site. Among them were Fred Stonefield, who ran a compressor in the tunnel, and Charlie Walters' son, Mike, who worked on the survey crew.

Those men not within easy walking distance to Heceta Head set up camp at Cape Creek. This prompted one reporter to comment,

One must reach the Rufus Stonefield place before he gets a real vision of the magnitude of the job which engineers were so long in mapping out. There is a real village here of cabins and tents. Men, women and children, for there are several camps in one.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), January 30, 1931, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), June 12, 1931, p. 1.

With the arrival of the children of the workers, the ranks of the Heceta Head student body swelled to 60. The problem of overcrowding was further compounded when highway construction necessitated removing the existing schoolhouse.

A "town meeting" was called to discuss the problem, where it was decided to hire two teachers and erect a new schoolhouse. The school building was constructed in one day, with the help of 20 carpenters. Classes began on schedule September 25, 1931.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the crowded living conditions, camaraderie was high among the workers and their families. A supply station and mess hall catered to their needs, and the beach provided recreation.

For the most part, the road crew and the lighthouse families did not mix much. However, Charlie Walters' wife, Emma, supplied lunches for a few of the workmen, and made a small profit in the bargain.

Transportation of materials to the work site was not as difficult as it had been in the days of lighthouse construction. Pilings for the bridge were towed in rafts along the Siuslaw, just as lumber for the keepers' quarters had been, but other materials were produced at Cape Creek. According to the "Oar," the Ross Highway Lumber Company turned out 6,000 feet of lumber at the Cape daily. A rock crushing plant established at the site produced much of the rock used in surfacing the 14 miles from Berry Creek to the northern boundary of Lane County.

Workers may not have been hampered by lack of materials, but they were slowed by accidents. The worst of these occurred at Cape Perpetua in July of 1930. Blasting set off a rock slide which fatally struck one workman in the head, and buried another under 15 feet of earth. The bodies were found after a 48-hour search by the entire road crew.

<sup>10</sup> No further references are made to the school in any publication. Whether the building was torn down, or simply deteriorated is not known.

Slides also were reported during construction of the Cape Creek section of highway. One that occurred 600 feet south of the tunnel was said to have sent between two and three thousand yards of earth tumbling down the 115-foot slope above the road bed. At least half the mass reportedly fell into the ocean.

Luckily, no serious injuries were recorded as a result of slides at Cape Creek. However, one employee of the Cape sawmill lost his hand when it came in contact with a blade.

Public interest in the highway remained intense throughout the entire construction period. Sightseers flocked to Heceta Head, though the staff of the "Oar" did their best to discourage the practice. One disgruntled reporter commented,

It is suprising how many visitors make the trip up the coast as far as the lighthouse. It is a wonderful trip all right, but the big force of trucks which are doing duty on highway construction make the trip irritating to the visitor and sometimes inconvenient to the<sup>11</sup> truck drivers. These men are busy and do not want to be held up.

In addition to warning travelers away from the busy truck drivers, the "Oar" writers did an admirable job of keeping their readers informed of progress on the bridge. Articles on the subject appeared on the front page of every weekly edition. One of the more descriptive reports reads:

The noise around this bridge building is the first thing that impresses. There are ninety men working on it and each one of them does something that makes a noise, to say nothing of the power saws, the moving cables, the rock crusher and-the elements. But of all the noise that is made you scarcely ever hear a human voice. Nobody hollers. Holt is so quiet that you have to have good ears.....

You can't help but wonder how in the dickens the great state of Oregon wants to make an expenditure like this to cross a little creek which isn't more than knee deep. Great arches up there a hundred feet above the little valley. An architectural beauty which would adorn the metropolis of Paris or any other place,<sup>12</sup> and now being built along side of Rufus Stonefield's cattle ranch.

<sup>11</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), June 12, 1931, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), November 7, 1931, p. 1.



Test hole for the Cape Creek Tunnel.



Workers' cabins at Cape Creek.

In December of 1931, the tunnel was completed and that work camp abandoned. The bridge was scheduled for completion by November of 1931, but when November came, engineers were expressing doubts that it would be finished before May of 1932. That prediction proved a bit pessimistic, as the final completion date reported by the "Oar" was March 31, 1932.

The opening of the Cape Creek-Florence link in the Oregon Coast Highway system had tremendous consequences for Heceta Head residents. Easy access to the markets of Florence made the raising of vegetables, chickens and milk cows unnecessary. At the same time, more visitors than ever found their way to the lighthouse, and tour guiding became an unofficial duty of the keepers. In fact, a visitors' book was provided especially for the signatures of guests.

For the light keepers, the tourists provided a welcomed break from the tedium of brass polishing and white-washing. However, not everyone hailed the increased flow of traffic, least of all the Stonefields. One of Charles' grandsons described the effect this way:

Soon as that highway got built there were people everywhere-- couldn't believe it. Interfered with us and our fishing and hunting. See, before there was just that old road. In the wintertime it wasn't passable unless you rode horseback. We could hunt and fish whenever we wanted, catch as much as we wanted, use a net and anything else. As soon as the highway was built and people started coming through, that kind of put the skids to that.

The highway also spelled an end to the Heceta Head school. After the workers left with their families, few school-aged children remained in the area. The Hermanns had no children, and the youngest Stonefields had long since graduated. It eventually became more practical to transport the few remaining students to Florence, rather than maintain a schoolhouse and teacher at Heceta.

<sup>13</sup> George Stonefield, private interview held at Florence, Oregon, October, 1979.

Just two years after the highway was completed, another change hit Heceta Head full force: electric power was installed at the station. A combination garage and power plant were constructed in October, 1934, under the supervision of the chief electrician from the Portland Lighthouse Service office. On-off lighting, electric washing machines and irons were not the only conveniences made possible by the power plant, certain operations at the light tower were automated as well.

The bunsen-type lamp in the lens was replaced by an electric bulb. A 500-watt bulb increased the candle power to 1,000,000, visible 21 miles. The manually operated clockworks which powered the revolving lens were converted to an electrical system, and motors placed the beacon on a new flash system. (A white light went off every ten seconds, rather than every minute.)

Elimination of the task of winding the clockworks may have seemed a boon to the keepers, but it soon became apparent that increasing automation would change the nature of light tending.

Initially, three keepers were maintained at the station, despite the decreased work load. Hermann and his wife remained in the single residence, although assistant keepers changed often after the departure of Bay and Walters.

Albert Johnson replaced one of the pair, probably second assistant Walters. He served until 1932, when he was transferred to Puget Sound. Johnson returned to Heceta Head in 1936, replacing a Fred Sargeant as first assistant. Bill Schumacher served as second assistant for a time, but he resigned from the service in the late thirties and was never replaced. Following the departure of the Schumachers, the Hermanns moved into the duplex, leaving the single residence vacant.



Ostensibly, the position of third assistant was eliminated because the electrically powered tower did not require as much attention as it did in the days of bunsen lamps and clockworks. Also, the more stringent regulations of the Lighthouse Service had been relaxed. Inspections still were held, but the days of the white gloves were gone.

A change in the administration of navigational aids also may have been a factor in the reduction of the station's work force. In 1939, the Lighthouse Service was transferred from the Department of Commerce to the U. S. Coast Guard.

When the change was implemented, the Coast Guard gave all Lighthouse Service personnel the opportunity to enter the Guard or remain working in a civilian capacity. According to Coast Guard historian Robert L. Scheina, between 20 and 30 percent of lighthouse personnel simply quit. However, most of those who resigned worked on tenders or in tender depots. Because Schumacher left close to this period of transition, it may have been viewed as a good time to reduce operating costs by phasing out his position altogether.

With the elimination of the third keeper, the single house was no longer essential. For undocumented reasons, Coast Guard officials decided to tear down the residence.

In 1940, Rufus Johnson of Mapleton secured the contract for razing the head keeper's house. In exchange for his labor and an additional payment of \$10, he was given ownership of all salvagable materials. Johnson's 15-year-old son, Wayne, helped in the work. Wayne recalls that the place was stripped before his father arrived on the scene. All the furniture, the stained glass window and the light fixtures had been removed.

The Johnsons had no easy time disassembling the house. According to Wayne, simply removing the nails took a supreme effort. The elder Johnson used the salvaged lumber to build a store in Mapleton, which is now the Alphabet Cafe. Flooring in the house was installed in the Walt Huntington home in Mapleton.

Wayne Johnson cannot offer any explanation for the demolition of the house, but another long time resident of the Florence area, Bertha Good, discussed the removal of the house with the commander of the Florence Coast Guard station, Joe Bernhardt. He claimed photographs of the area had been taken from enemy Japanese submarines. According to the commander, the house was torn down in the hope that it would alter the Heceta Head landscape enough to prevent Japanese from recognizing the station.

Keeper Johnson's wife, Hazel, never heard the theory about Japanese photography. She was told the house was razed due to problems with termites and dry rot.

However, historian Scheina doubts all these explanations:

I have never seen a house torn down because personnel were cut down. That's just not a pattern. Also, during the entire war, only two Japanese subs were ever seen on the west coast, so the story about the photography does not sound correct. The Coast Guard, then and today, is an extremely frugal organization. <sup>14</sup>I can't believe they would tear anything down without very good reason.

Whatever the reason, the house was demolished and the site planted in lawn. Unfortunately, the residence was gone before it had outlived its usefulness. As war with Japan became more and more inevitable, Coast Guard personnel began trickling, then streaming into the station. The keepers' house could have provided quarters for at least a few of the men. No doubt, the decision to remove it was regretted more than once during the coming years.

<sup>14</sup> Robert L. Scheina, telephone interview conducted November, 1979.

#### IV: WORLD WAR II AND BEYOND

Concern over a Japanese attack on the coast was voiced in the Florence "Oar" as early as 1935. A headline printed in July of that year read, "Hands are Tied on Coast if Japs Come." The article reported that the War Department had requested funds to map areas along the Oregon coast, and claimed this was "...the initial step toward extensive fortification of the Oregon coast line against foreign invasion."<sup>1</sup>

Despite early calls for military installations, it was not until after the attack on Pearl Harbor that a network of bases was established on the coast. The Heceta Head Light Station was among the spots chosen as a military post.

A story in the "Oar" printed December 26, 1941, read:

Four of the boys from the Coast Guard station have been transferred to the lighthouse.

To make living quarters for the new men, the Johnsons are vacating their residence and Mrs. Johnson and daughter Mary Lou will go to Astoria to spend the winter with her folks there.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Johnson remained at Heceta approximately one year, after which he was transferred to Tongue Point Station.

Soon after Johnson's departure, Coast Guardsmen began arriving en masse. One of the first to come was head cook Stanley Anderson. When he arrived in April of 1943, between 10 and 15 men were stationed at the base, but in the coming months, the number jumped to 75.

<sup>1</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), July 19, 1935, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), December 26, 1941, p. 1.

According to Anderson, the first arrivals were quartered in the east half of the duplex, while the Hermanns continued to occupy the other side. Sharing one bathroom with over a dozen men did not sit well with Anderson, but the housing squeeze was soon eliminated.

A barracks and mess hall were erected in the spot the head keeper's house once occupied. The enlisted men were assigned to the barracks, while their commander set up headquarters in the duplex.

The Heceta Head Guardsmen provided an important link in a chain of coastal patrols. They covered the beach as far north as Yachats and as far south as Heceta Beach. The patrol operated 24-hours a day, and dogs were taken along at all times.

Between 10 and 12 of the patrol dogs were kept at the station. According to Anderson, they were extremely vicious. One man was assigned to each dog, and the animals were kept constantly chained.

In addition to the beach patrol, a lookout station built above the lighthouse was manned around the clock.

The Guardsmen took over many of the lighthouse duties, which lightened Hermann's work load considerably. Anderson describes the keeper's status as that of an "honorary citizen"; he and his wife were the only civilians allowed to remain on the military base.

Anderson remembers Hermann as a "grandfatherly type." He certainly looked the part, for he was well into his sixties, and had a good-sized belly to attest to his wife's culinary skills. He often entertained the Guardsmen with tall tales of the sea and, naturally, of lighthouses.

The Hermanns remained the last testimony to the old way of life at the station. Stonefields still occupied Cape Creek, but the family had dwindled considerably. Charles died in 1927, and Annie in 1934. Rufus and Rosie remained, but their children had left the Cape.



Doghouses lined hillside.



"Cap" and Mrs. Hermann, as they appeared during the war.

Heceta Head was strictly off-limits to visitors during the war. Sentry posts were set up at the entrance to the driveway and at the house. However, families of the Guardsmen were allowed on base occasionally, and once a week, the USO faithfully appeared. The station wagon driven by USO volunteers was a type of traveling theatre: it carried movie screen, projector, and reels of film. Each week, the mess hall was transformed to a temporary movie house. While it may not have featured the latest films, it at least provided some recreation.

However, the men generally went off base for their entertainment. A Greyhound bus stopped by the station on the run to Florence. Anderson remembered those bus rides vividly:

It was hard because there was only one bus a day. It went down and the next day it went back, so we had to spend the night in Florence. If you think the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit is bad now, then<sup>3</sup>, they had a 35-mile-an-hour speed limit and that old bus used to lug.

As the outcome of the war became apparent, personnel were withdrawn gradually from the Heceta base. Anderson was transferred to Seattle in May of 1944, and by 1946, only one or two Guardsmen remained to help Hermann run the tower.

No news came out of Heceta during the next few years; it almost seems as if a curtain had been drawn around the station.

It was not until 1950 that the lighthouse again made the front page of the "Oar." The occasion was the retirement of Hermann; he served his last day at Heceta January 31, 1950. He retired at the age of 70, after 49 years of continuous lighthouse duty.

The veteran keeper and his wife moved to Tillamook, leaving S. H. Elder in charge of the light. Elder had been assistant since 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley Anderson, private interview held at Tigard, Oregon, October, 1979.

The new keeper did not remain long at Heceta Head. During the next few years, the Coast Guard transferred men in and out at an unprecedented rate. For that reason, records of keepers who served after Hermann are practically nonexistent.

In July of 1952, a newspaper article in the "Oar" announced that the lighthouse was again open to visitors. The story listed John A. Boyer, engineman second class, and Grant Allen, seaman, as keepers. The men occupied the duplex with their families.

Apparently, the "open house" tradition maintained before the war was back full force, for the "Oar" states, "In one day recently, 87 people signed the guest book, registering from all corners of the United States and several far away lands."<sup>4</sup>

Another tradition was reinstated which undoubtedly terrorized the wives of the keepers: the house was once again subject to strict inspection.

In 1957, the Heceta Light was placed under the care of a veteran, civilian light keeper. Oswald Allick had put in some twenty years at the Tillamook Rock Station. After that light was closed, he was given a choice of serving at any lighthouse along the coast. He picked Heceta Head, and along with his wife, Alice, he moved into the duplex formerly occupied by the likes of the Hermanns, DeRoys and Hansens.

The light station again disappeared from the news until 1963, when the tower was automated.

That year, a sensor was placed in the lighthouse which alerts the Coast Guard station at Florence when the light goes out. In that event, Guardsmen simply make the short trip up the coast and switch the tower to a back-up generator.

<sup>4</sup> The Siuslaw Oar (Florence, Oregon), July 11, 1952, p. 1.

Automation of the tower eliminated the need for keepers, and Allick found himself out of a job. He chose to retire the same day the station was switched to remote control: July 20, 1963.

The passing of the old-style station was lamented both by lighthouse buffs and diehard romantics. Their position is summed up well in the following passages:

Chalk another landmark off the map, mourn the passing of another lighthouse keeper.

Heceta Head light is about to join the unromantic, scientifically controlled robots now marking Oregon's western coastline that once were the subject of romantic tall tales.

After the light was automated, the Coast Guard found itself owner of a house without a keeper. Agency officials decided they had no further use for the house, and the residence and garage, along with 10.8 acres, were declared excess property. The Coast Guard retained the 2.2 acres where the tower and oil houses stand.

Coast Guard administrators determined the State of Oregon was a likely successor to the relinquished property. The state had established Devil's Elbow Park some years earlier, and because the park was near the lighthouse station, Coast Guard officials reasoned Heceta Head would be a logical extension of the state lands.

The first acquisition for Devil's Elbow was obtained in 1930, when the state purchased 22.8 acres south of Cape Creek. Laura T. and J. Hutchinson sold the land for \$2,000. Annie Stonefield made a gift of four acres to the state in 1931, and the Lighthouse Service donated an additional 7.5 acres in 1935. Three more tracts were purchased in 1939, bringing the total acreage of Devil's Elbow close to 97. (In 1974, the Stonefield family sold the state another 368 acres for \$186,000.)

<sup>5</sup> Maxine Buren, "Landmark Will Be Placed on Remote Control July 20," Oregon Statesman (Salem, Oregon), no date or page number.



The beach fronting Cape Cove was selected as the use area of the park, and picnic tables and a parking lot replaced the open space that had once been playground to Heceta Head children.

The Coast Guard granted the state a revocable license for the former keepers' quarters and the adjacent acreage. In exchange for use of the property, the state agreed to maintain the premises in a "presentable condition" at all times. The license, signed by the admiral of the Coast Guard, was signed August 29, 1963.

After the lease was negotiated, parks employee Ken Lucas moved into Heceta House with his family. He was assigned to maintain Devil's Elbow and Washburne State Parks, as well as the Heceta property. Lucas left in 1964, and was replaced by George Stankey. Stankey recalls that a Parks Division administrator by the name of H. M. Stevenson often visited the house, and developed some plans for renovations. However, he never had the opportunity to implement any of his plans, for questions surrounding title to the property put the state's continued occupation in doubt.

In 1965, the Coast Guard notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of its intention to relinquish custody of the light station. A section of the letter of intent reads as follows:

It is the opinion of the Coast Guard that the excess 10.8+ acres of land are not suitable for return to the Public Domain because of the improvements made thereon. It is recommended that the property, less reservations noted, be reported to the General Services Administration<sup>6</sup> for possible conveyance to the State of Oregon for park purposes.

BLM officials did not automatically concur with the Coast Guard judgement. They sent a note to the Forest Service describing the status of the property. John Brillhart, who was then employed with the Division of Lands in the Forest

<sup>6</sup> E. E. Griffin, correspondence written by direction of commandant of the Coast Guard, dated March 12, 1965, included in Region 6 files of the U. S. Forest Service.

Service, received the notification. According to Brillhart, he did some checking and discovered transfer of the Heceta Head land to the state would be illegal.

Because the property had been public domain prior to the establishment of the light station, Brillhart maintained the land should revert to the public domain, in which case it would become part of the Siuslaw National Forest. BLM agreed, and the former Coast Guard property was offered to the Forest Service.

Siuslaw Forest administrators were not immediately receptive to the idea of taking over the land, as the following memo penned by a recreation officer indicates:

The Forest Service has no plans to develop recreation facilities next to the State Park at Heceta Head. We believe the lands surplus to the Coast Guard's needs should, if possible, be made available by GSA [General Services Administration] to the State of Oregon.

However, forest supervisor Spencer T. Moore had other ideas:

I wish to strongly recommend that appropriate action be initiated whereby the lands will receive National Forest status and that the lands subsequently be made available for exchange to the State of Oregon. This will permit the Forest Service to receive an exchange value for the lands. As you are perhaps aware, we are currently attempting to prepare a mutually acceptable land exchange offer with the State of Oregon to acquire the Neptune State Park which will provide a needed expansion of the Cape Perpetua Recreation Park area. <sup>8</sup>

A public land order signed April 11, 1966 transferred the land in question to the Forest Service. The Coast Guard retained access rights to and from the lighthouse, in addition to easements for maintaining overhead power and telephone lines.

The lease the Coast Guard had granted the state was revoked, effective September, 1966. State Parks superintendent David Talbot attempted to retain

<sup>7</sup> Philip L. Heaton, memorandum dated October 29, 1965, included in Region 6 files of the U. S. Forest Service.

<sup>8</sup> Spencer T. Moore, memorandum dated November 4, 1965, included in Region 6 files of the U.S. Forest Service.

the right to use the property under a special use permit.<sup>9</sup> Forest Service administrators did not agree to the permit, hoping instead to effect an exchange for the desirable Neptune State Park. The following passages from a letter to Talbot indicate the Forest Service was open in its attempts to secure the Neptune land:

We do not believe a long term special use permit for the Heceta Head lands would be desirable from our standpoint or for the State Highway Department. [The Parks Department then was under the State Highway Department.]

As I have said before, we do agree that the Heceta Head property should most logically be State Parks property. Further we recommended this to the Bureau of Land when the property was declared surplus.

I am not sure that I have fully communicated to you the limitations on disposal of National Forest lands. The only method of disposal is by exchange.

I would again suggest that we get together and discuss this and other possibilities of exchange which might be beneficial to both the State and the Forest Service.<sup>10</sup>

Talbot, however, would have no part of an exchange scheme. In a telephone interview, he said he had tried to obtain a special use permit because he wanted to see the property protected, and he thought the Parks Division was in a good position to maintain the house. When the Forest Service refused to grant the permit, Talbot abandoned the idea of retaining the property.

"I'd thought it was silly [to deny the permit] and I bowed out."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Under the Granger-Thye Act of 1950, the Forest Service is allowed to lease federal properties through special use permits.

<sup>10</sup> Philip L. Heaton, correspondence dated August 11, 1966, contained in Region 6 files of the U. S. Forest Service.

<sup>11</sup> David Talbot, telephone interview held January, 1980.

According to Brillhart, the superintendent accused Forest Service officials of accepting ownership of Heceta only to increase their bargaining power for the Neptune Park. However, Brillhart maintains that legally, the property could have gone only to the Forest Service. Any advantages or disadvantages gained through acquisition of Heceta Head were purely secondary, he claims.<sup>12</sup>

After the Forest Service became official owner of the property, the duplex was rented to families employed on the Siuslaw Forest. Initially, the arrangement was satisfactory. but by 1970, the building had deteriorated to such an extent that it became difficult to find persons interested in renting it.

A list of maintenance requirements compiled in May of 1970 totalled \$16,350, and included painting the exterior; replacing certain doors, windows and siding; repairing the porch railing and posts; and rebuilding the water system.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the Lane County Health Department notified the Forest Service that sewage was running directly into the ocean, and required that a new sewer system be installed.

When conditions of the building were not immediately improved, community members became alarmed that the house would be allowed to deteriorate beyond repair.

Under the direction of Don Bowman of the Siuslaw Museum Association a "Friends of Heceta House" group was formed. Rumors that Bohemia Lumber Co. was interested in purchasing the site for a resort complex were particularly disturbing to the "Friends," who drew up a list of guidelines to be incorporated in Forest Service management plans for the house. The list included: public use of the house for environmental and educational purposes; public access to

<sup>12</sup> John Brillhart, telephone interview held January, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> Document contained in files of the Waldport Ranger District, Siuslaw National Forest.

the lighthouse trail; landscape and house to remain essentially unchanged; no extension of vehicular access and parking; and establishment of an advisory board to Forest Service personnel involved in maintenance of the house.<sup>14</sup>

Heceta House had become something of an albatross around the neck of the Forest Service. Forest administrators were anxious to grant a special use permit to an organization willing to comply with the requirements set forth by the Friends of Heceta House. There was some speculation about converting the house to a maritime museum, but interested groups did not have resources adequate for the undertaking.

Lane Community College (LCC) expressed an interest in leasing the property in order to provide classes with a coastal "field trip" site. The Forest Service approved the idea, and the proposal was brought before the LCC Board of Directors.

Catherine Lauris, member of the board, had a particular interest in the matter. "I wanted it [Heceta House] for historical reasons, and I wanted to preserve it for the general public because it had always belonged to the public. So we hashed it out, there was lobbying and debates and finally we said o.k., we'll sign a lease with the Forest Service."<sup>15</sup>

A ten-year lease was signed in 1970. Under the terms, rent would be paid in the form of repair and maintenance work on the interior of the house. The Forest Service agreed to care for the exterior. Also, LCC was required to hire a full-time caretaker to live in the duplex.

<sup>14</sup> Mrs. Robert S. Harris, correspondence dated August, 1970, contained in files of the Waldport Ranger District, Siuslaw National Forest.

<sup>15</sup> Catherine Lauris, private interview held at Eugene, Oregon, October, 1979.

Following a joint effort by the college and the Forest Service, the house was restored to livable conditions. Workers from Angell Job Corps painted the exterior, while the college refinished interior woodwork; repaired moldings; and replaced buckled floor boards with linoleum.

Caretakers turned over rapidly during the first years of LCC occupation, but in 1973, a couple from California by the name of Harry and Anne Tammem accepted the job. As of 1980, they still are employed as Heceta House caretakers.

The Tammens saw the popularity of the site increase dramatically. Instructors now reserve the house almost every weekend. Classes in virtually every discipline are held at Heceta Head: the coastal landscape is captured by art and photography students; architecture professors lecture on the design of the 19th century lightkeepers' house; and science students examine flora and fauna of the area.

In terms of the use situation, LCC occupation proved highly successful. However, the house continued to need major repair work, despite maintenance measures carried out by the Tammens. Help eventually came in the form of federal legislation.

An executive order signed in 1971 requires all federal agencies to nominate eligible properties under their jurisdiction to the National Register of Historic Places. This was not the first law effecting historic properties; legislation protecting cultural resources had been passed as far back as 1897. However, for the first time, federal law directly effected the Heceta Head property.

In accordance with the executive order, Lt. R. J. Williamson of the Coast Guard nominated the Heceta Head Lighthouse to the National Register. After consulting with the Forest Service, he included Heceta House in the nomination forms. The process of nomination was involved; Williamson began his research in 1974, and the property did not make the register until November of 1978.

Inclusion in the National Register has had a number of consequences. Besides officially recognizing the structure as a cultural resource, it has provided for the protection and maintenance of the property. As a result, preservation of the building is now a high priority item on the Waldport Ranger District.

## V: GHOSTLY HEADLINES

Despite the inclusion on the National Register, Heceta House gained public recognition not as a historic site, but as a "ghost house."

In November of 1975, a headline of The Siuslaw News read, "Lady of the Lighthouse Baffles Workmen."<sup>1</sup> The mysterious lady was no visitor in the usual sense; in fact, she could only be described as the station's "ghostly occupant."

Ghostly manifestations were reported shortly after the Tammens moved to Heceta Head. Initially, they noticed strange noises, but attributed them to a combination of squeaky floor boards, high winds and whistling chimneys. However, a series of unexplained events convinced the couple that no natural phenomena could be responsible for the commotion.

At a card party one night, the Tammens and their two guests were turned ashen-faced by what they described as a high pitched scream. In other instances, cupboard doors definitely shut at night were open the next morning, and rat poison left in the attic was exchanged for a single silk stocking.

The Tammens weren't alone in sensing the presence of the supernatural. Two students who had been relaxing on the porch of Heceta House reported seeing something gray ascend the porch steps. They described "it" as long and flowing, almost like a puff of smoke.

<sup>1</sup> The Siuslaw News (Florence, Oregon), November 26, 1975, p. 1.



This evidence was culminated by the experiences of workmen who had been commissioned to undertake painting and repair projects at the house.

On a number of occasions, they noticed tools missing and padlocks mysteriously opened. However, they managed to concoct logical explanations for the occurrences, until tools and sandpaper began disappearing and later reappearing in the same spot.

One day, workman Jim Anderson was cleaning a window in the attic when he noticed strange reflections in the glass. He turned around and caught a glimpse of a gray haired, elderly woman dressed in an 1890's style gown. She peered at Anderson out of a wrinkled face. The worker wasted no time in vacating the premises.

Anderson refused to return to the site for some days. He finally built up the courage to finish the Heceta job, but adamantly rejected ideas of entering the attic.

The workman had not heard the last of his gray lady. While working on the exterior of the house, he accidentally broke an attic window. He repaired it from the outside, but the broken glass remained on the attic floor.

That night, the Tammens were awakened by scraping sounds coming from the attic. They commented that it sounded like glass being swept up by a broom, without having known about the broken window. The next morning, they found the glass swept into a neat pile.

The last incident permanently scared away the workers, but the Tammens were not deterred from remaining in the house. In fact, they maintain the ghost is friendly, and the trio have worked out a peaceful coexistence. To hear the Tammens talk, you might think the spirit was part of the family.

Identity of the ghost is a much speculated subject. She has a name, Rue, which was spelled out on a Ouija board. A long abandoned grave figures in two of the stories about Rue. According to keeper Hansen's daughters, a small cement slab was located on the point of land between the residence and lighthouse. The marker has since been overgrown, but it originally served as headstone on the grave of a baby girl, presumably the daughter of an early keeper.

Some reason that the ghost is the baby's mother, who has come back in search of her child, while other maintain Rue is the child herself, looking in vain for her mother.

SECTION TWO: GROUNDS, ARCHITECTURE, AND ALTERATIONS

## I: STRUCTURES AND GROUNDS

Nearly all Heceta Head residents left some mark on the property: Indians discarded shells; light keepers transformed a sandy beach to a thriving garden; small boys lost pocket knives and marbles for moles to unearth decades later; and Coast Guard enlistees hurriedly erected their living quarters.

Some of this evidence remains, but much is visible only in photographs. An overview of Heceta Head grounds and structures will serve to illustrate historical developments at the head, and will demonstrate the importance of preserving remaining structures.

Shell middens are the earliest evidence of occupation at Heceta Head. An archaeological survey conducted in 1975 located a number of middens, though most have been damaged by erosion and construction projects.<sup>1</sup>

In 1951, evidence of an Indian housepit at Devil's Elbow State Park was noted during a similar survey. However, the pit was not found in the 1975 study, possibly because construction of the Devil's Elbow State Park had destroyed any remains. Other than the reported housepit, the land at the head was left to itself until construction of the light station began.

The structures which originally comprised the Heceta Head station were noteworthy for both their style and sturdy construction.

<sup>1</sup> Locations of shell middens are listed in Units 3 & 4 of Resource Inventory: Alsea Planning Unit (USDA, Pacific Northwest Region, 1978), pp. 34 and 35.

The stuccoed brick lighthouse is composed of three sections: workroom, passageway and tower. The tower is, of course, the most imposing section. It features sandstone trim at the base, window enframements and cornice. The railing around the lantern is wrought iron. A winding, cast iron stairway leads from the base of the tower to the lantern. The staircase originally was illuminated by two large windows, one facing south and the other north. However, the windows have been bricked over to prevent vandals from shooting through them.

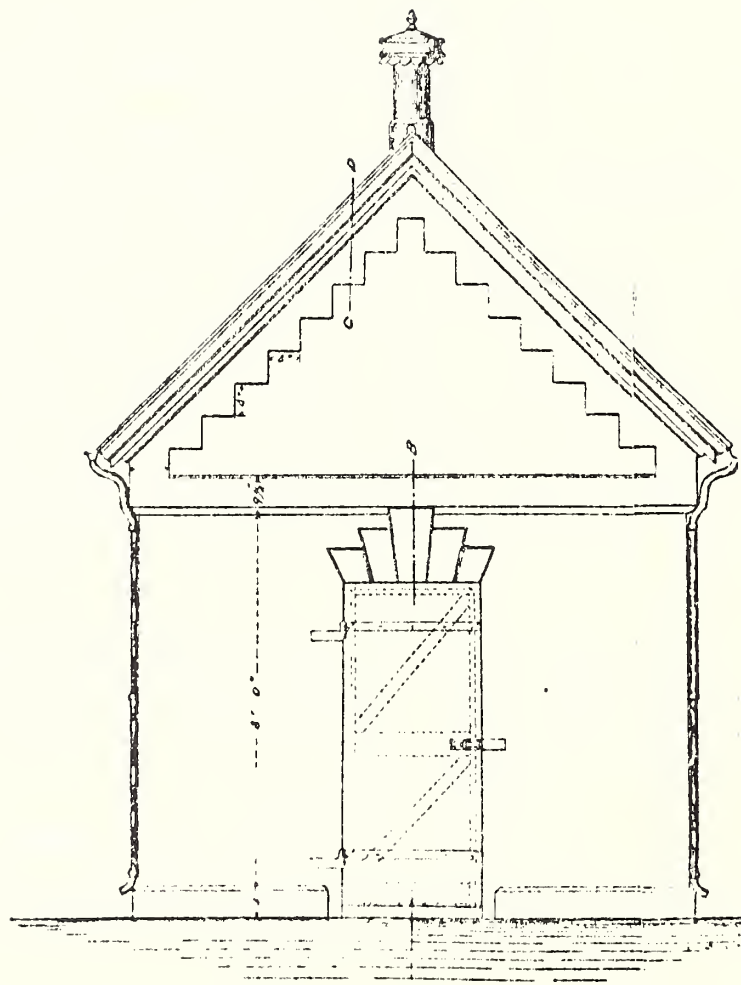
The windows of the passageway and workroom also have been sealed. Unfortunately, this detracted from the decorative effect achieved by the keystones above the windows. Other ornamental details added to the structure include the heavy brackets, or modillions, supporting the walkway around the lantern; the stone caps at the gable ends of the workroom; and the original, panelled door.

The walls of the lighthouse have always been painted white and the roofs of the workroom and passageway red. The dome of the lantern is now dark green, but that probably was not its original color.

According to Instructions and Directions to Light Keepers, the "...exterior of light-house laterns, balustrades, railings, ventilators, cowl, & c. are...to be either BLACK or RED."<sup>2</sup>

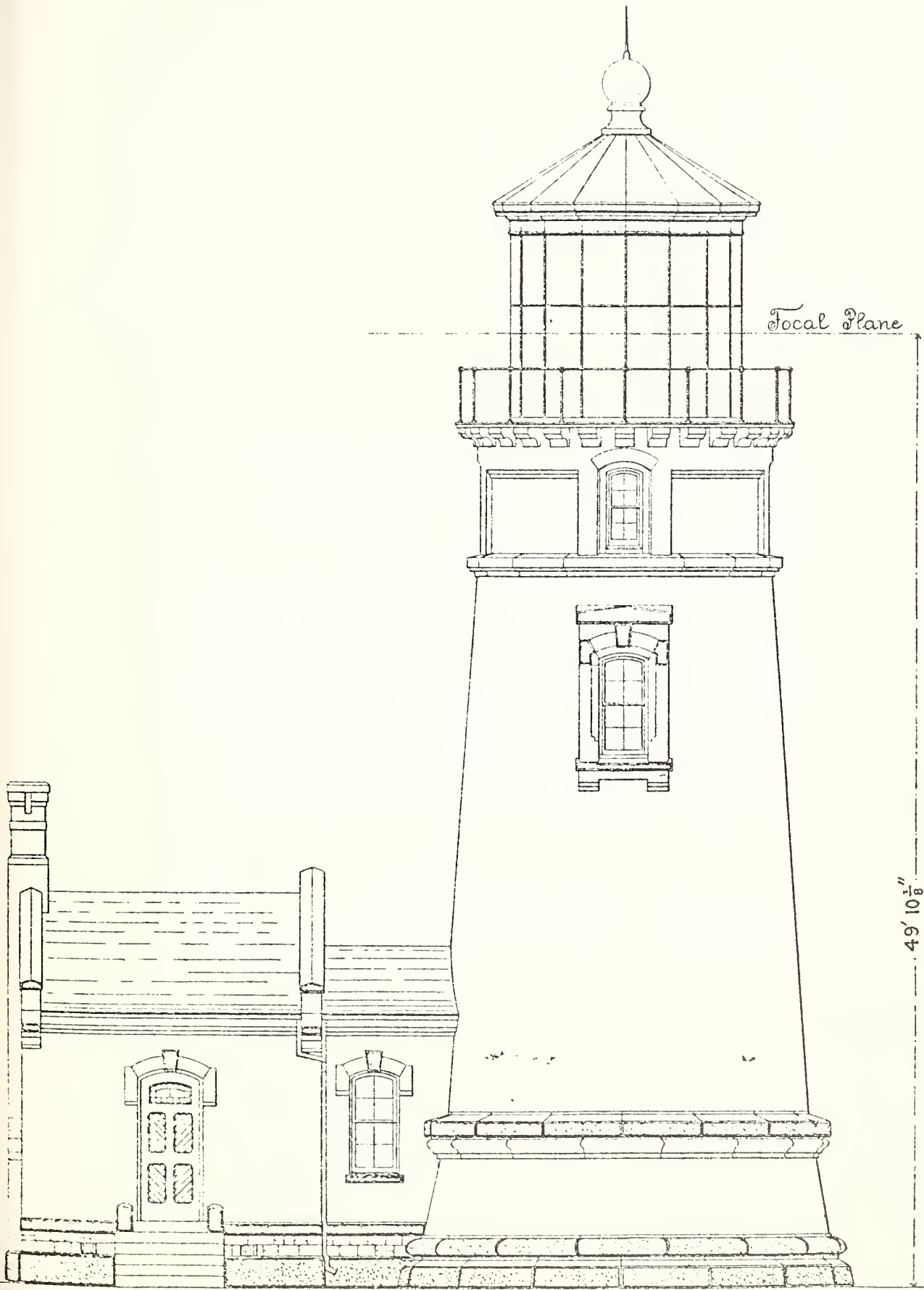
The two oil houses also are of brick masonry construction. Each contained one widow, which has since been sealed, and a metal door. The corbelled trim of the gables, illustrated in the following drawing, is the major decorative feature of the oil houses.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Lighthouse Service, Instructions and Directions to Light Keepers, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1871), p. 117.



— FRONT ELEVATION —

Copy of original plan for oil houses



Side Elevation

The dwellings may be described briefly as two and one-half story, wood framed buildings designed in the shape of a cross. Each had an open veranda located along the entire south elevation with short extensions on the east and west elevations. The foundations were brick covered with stucco. Single-story kitchen ells were attached at the rear of the buildings.

The three separate quarters were designed to be as similar as possible. An examination of the lines of the single dwelling illustrates how this duplication was achieved.



As shown in the photograph above, the porch roof on the east side of the single house had the same sloping line as the porch roof of the duplex. However, the west end of the gable roof did not slope to cover the roof.



A storage area was located below the sloping section of roof. This was illuminated by the same type of crescent window installed in the duplex.

As a result of this design, the occupants of the single dwelling had only one storage area and one crescent window, just as the occupants of each half of the duplex had only one storage area and one crescent window.

The wood barn also was designed to give "privacy and equality" to each of the three families. The interior was partitioned into separate sections. It included an upper hayloft, and a lower level of stalls.



Wing on west side of barn was used as a storage room and carpentry shop. Also note location of chicken house.

Due to the placement of the partitions, there was no central bay for wagon storage. However, an area of open space beneath the barn provided storage room for wagons.

The hayloft originally was divided into sections, but the keepers removed the partitions to provide a large area for barn dances.

Photographs of the barn and outbuildings reveal that attention was paid to details generally reserved for family dwellings. For example, the window trim and moldings of the barn and outhouses were painted a contrasting color. The same color scheme was followed on the houses.



The photograph above illustrates both the major structures and fences at the station. The post fence running across the hill behind the tower marked the end of the lighthouse reservation. A wooden boardwalk with attached handrail led from the barn to the tower. Wooden sidewalks also circled the houses. In addition to the picket fence surrounding the houses, a rail fence was built in front of the dwellings. Portions of the rail fence are visible above. This fence created an open space for animals to graze.

A post fence ran along the edge of the bluff. This fence, which is pictured below, was a necessary precaution as the wagon road wound along the edge of the cliff. Also note the section of picket fencing running from the site of the barn to the bluff's edge. This marked the border of the wagon road.



The photograph below shows the cut made for the wagon road. It also illustrates a short "staircase" near the woodpile that seemingly leads to nowhere.



The two steps have been the cause of much speculation. Robert DeRoy maintains they were carved out of some rock left over from construction of the base of the tower. He claims his father carved them and placed them near the road to help Mrs. DeRoy into the buckboard.

Others insist the steps were intended to aid ladies in mounting their horses. Many women rode sidesaddle at the time, and may have needed the boost.

The former story may be the more heartwarming, but it is not documented by photographs. An early photo that predates the coming of DeRoy distinctly shows the steps. Most likely, they were built while the station was under construction to aid equestrians and buckboard passengers alike.

Vegetation at the station was kept to a minimum. The lawn in front of the houses was well trimmed, and neat gardens lined the hillside beside the duplex. Grazing sheep kept the hill behind the tower cropped, though a line of trees was allowed to remain behind the houses and along the wagon road.

All the original features of the Heceta grounds are pictured in the preceding photographs, with the exception of the cisterns.

The cisterns, which collected rainwater from the roof, remain in good condition. There are three in all; one on either side of the duplex, and a third near the site of the former single dwelling. They have a capacity of 1,500 gallons and are 12 feet deep.

## II. ALTERATIONS TO LANDSCAPE

Alterations were made to the station almost as soon as it was completed. In 1895, a land slide behind the tower made it necessary to cut back the slope to prevent further sliding.

A flag pole was erected between the houses in 1914, and, in 1916, major changes were made which effected the appearance of both houses and grounds. The outhouses were razed; a sewer system consisting of a pipe over the bluff was installed; and the picket fence surrounding the house was changed to wire and post.

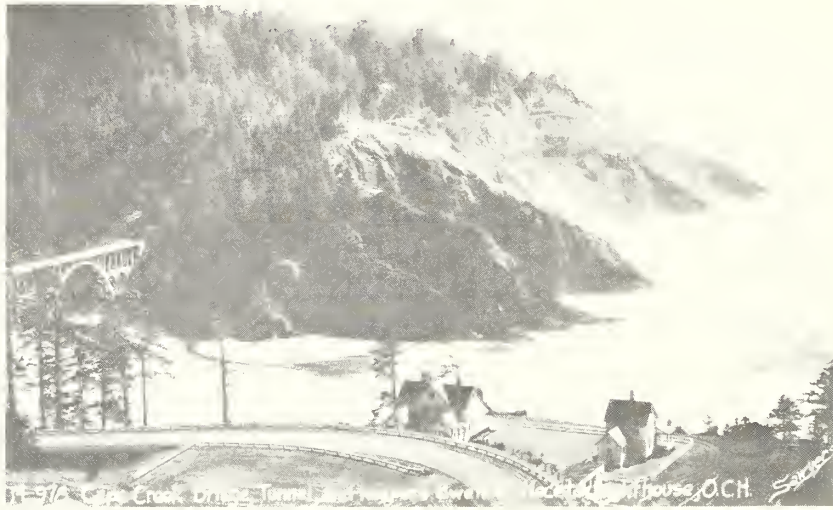
There is no record explaining why the original fence was replaced. Picket may have required too much maintenance, and wire was much in vogue at the time.

Approximately 1923, the wooden boardwalk to the lighthouse was replaced by a concrete sidewalk with a pipe handrail. The wooden walkways around the houses also were changed.

In 1930, preparations began for construction of the Heceta Head-Cape Creek section of the Roosevelt Highway.

Completion of the highway changed the nature of life on the coast, and it changed the Heceta Head station as well.

One site map shows the highway running through the station, taking the barn in its course. However, this map is inaccurate. It is true that the highway originally swung closer to the station, but the photograph below, taken between 1934 and 1939, shows that it still missed the barn site by a good distance.



A landslide that occurred in 1961 removed a chunk of road above the garage. The highway had to be moved 75 to 100 feet to the east, according to one of the workers who repaired it.<sup>1</sup>

The confusion over the fate of the barn may have resulted from the fact that the barn was razed in 1932, the same year the highway was completed. Once the road was finished, the keepers may have decided they had no further use for the barn. The ease of driving to Florence for dairy products made the raising of cows unnecessary and automobiles had replaced horses long before the road was built.

The switch from horse and wagon transportation to the automobile also signalled the decline of the wagon road below the keepers' quarters. A dirt road in front of the houses was established for automobile use.

<sup>1</sup> John Gunter, Oregon State Highways employee, telephone interview held November 19, 1979.



In 1934, the Lighthouse Service purchased roughly one-third of an acre for construction of a new water system. The Stonefields sold the land for \$50. The purchase price included the right to lay an underground pipeline to the station. Location of the site is listed on the preceding map as "proposed dam site."

The 1930's were a decade for change at Heceta Head. As mentioned in the previous section, electric power reached the station in 1934. A combination garage-power house was built behind the single dwelling that year. The garage still stands, though it is used only for storage.

In 1939, the rear wings of the duplex were removed and, approximately 1940, the single house was razed. Reduction of personnel due to the installation of electric power lines remains the best explanation for razing the house.

The 1940's also brought great changes to the station, though the alterations were of a temporary nature.

When Coast Guard troops began arriving in early 1943, two barracks were erected on the site of the former keeper's dwelling; the north barrack was the mess hall, and the south was the living quarter.

It is interesting to note that sanitation measures did not improve on the 1916 "pipe over the bluff" system. During the war, the sewage of 75 men was piped over the bluff, just as it had been in previous years.

A lookout tower was built above the lighthouse. A Coast Guard inventory sheet lists the cost of the lookout as \$75. Stanley Anderson, the cook stationed at Heceta Head during the war, says the 'tower' was little more than a small shelter that provided scant protection for the unfortunate on duty.



In addition to the other buildings, two sentry houses were built, one at the entrance to the driveway and another at the end of the driveway. Dog houses were erected on the hillside beside the duplex, and a fenced training area for the dogs was established at the location of the former chicken yard.



A few items at the station often are attributed to Coast Guard military personnel, but evidence does not support this belief.

One of these is the short, wood post behind the duplex. It is imbedded in cement, and presently serves as a bird feeder.

Early residents conclude that the post was put up by the Coast Guard. However, a photograph of Mrs. DeRoy, circa 1920, distinctly shows the Coast Guard post .



Mrs. DeRoy and unidentified member of the Coast Guard pose near post. Note the sentry station in the photograph on the right.

It is possible that the post was once part of a "call bell" system installed in 1895. The Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board for that year state, "...electric call-bell wires were set up and wires strung."<sup>2</sup> This theory is supported in part by the Hansen sisters, who remember an early telephone system that connected the keepers' houses with the tower. They claim the system never worked properly.

The post lines up exactly with the tower, so it is quite possible that some lines could have reached from the post to the lighthouse.

If it is true that the communications system did not work, the wires may have been removed by early keepers. The solitary post therefore would not have been noticed or even recognized by later residents.

<sup>2</sup> Annual Reports of the Lighthouse Board, 1895, as listed in Record Group No. 26, National Archives.

Two cables located on the trail to the beach also pose a mystery. It has been suggested that they were part of an underground communications system which connected wartime military posts along the coast, but, according to a Coast Guard inventory sheet, the telephone was the only communications system then in existence.

The barracks may have remained standing as late as 1950. However, a few white parking bumpers are the only evidence remaining today of the Heceta Head military base.

In recent years, few changes have been made to the grounds, though the duplex has undergone some remodelling. Nevertheless, the appearance of the site has altered considerably.

The fence that once marked the boundary of the wagon road has disappeared, and, for a time, the road disappeared under heavy brush. State Parks personnel rebuilt part of the trail in 1963, and Forest Service workers later extended the path. The trail now corresponds with the route of the old wagon road.

The fence that marked the boundary between government and Stonefield property has deteriorated, although some cedar posts still are standing.

However, the most dramatic changes have occurred as a result of the growth of vegetation. Salal and blackberry bushes have filled in the hillside once devoted to gardens and dog shelters, and the Sheep Hill that provided excellent grazing land has surrendered to Sitka spruce.

The growth of the trees had had the effect of placing a barrier between the house and tower, so the sense of a combined light station is lost. With the hill overgrown, it is hard to imagine that keepers could once easily monitor the beacon from their homes.

### III: ARCHITECTURE OF HECETA HOUSE

An architectural style known as Queen Anne inspired architects throughout the country between 1890 and 1900. The Oregon coast was not immune to the popular style, both the Umpqua and Heceta Head lighthouse keepers' residences embodied modest versions of the Queen Anne design. (The same plans were used for both the Umpqua and Heceta dwellings.)

Queen Anne was a misnomer, for the style had nothing to do with the British monarch. It is difficult to quickly define, for Queen Anne is a combination of many styles-Gothic, Classic, French, English, Chinese and Egyptian.<sup>1</sup> Because this mix resulted in buildings with a Victorian flavor, examples of the Queen Anne Style often are lumped under the heading, "Victorian architecture."

History professor Stephen Beckham describes the Queen Anne rage this way:

In the 1890's architecture went slightly beserk in the region [the Pacific Northwest]. Balance, proportion, and symmetry were out of style. The popular taste demanded ostentation and celebration. In this decade, the Queen Anne Style, a mishmash of virtually every possible building feature, ruled supreme. The region's abundant wood and the ever-present lathe and jigsaw enabled carpenters to range widely, in fact<sup>2</sup> to build as far as the owner's financial resources might permit.

<sup>1</sup> Wallace Kay Huntington, "Victorian Architecture," in Space, Style, and Structure: Building in Northwest America, ed. by Thomas Vaughan and Virginia Guest Ferriday (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974), p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Dow Beckham, Identifying and Assessing Historical Cultural Resources in the Pacific Northwest (United States Forest Service, 1978), p. 10.

At first glance, Heceta House looks simpler and more symmetrical than other houses of the period. For example, the shingled roof forms a simple cross. It is much less extravagant than roofs of typical Queen Anne Style, which featured towers, spires, balconies, dormers and tall chimneys to "complicate" the roof line. The home in the photograph below typifies the more elaborate Queen Anne Style.



Nevertheless, a number of important Queen Anne characteristics are present at Heceta House. Briefly, these are: contrasting horizontal layers, or elements; variety of textures and materials; irregular window treatment; extensive ornamentation; and contrasting colors.

Three different sidings were selected for the three floors of the house, creating distinct horizontal "layers." Ship-lap siding was used on the first floor; plain shingles on the second; and imbricated, or decorative, shingles on the attic floor.



Note the three different sidings creating an impression of separate, horizontal "layers."

These horizontal elements are further emphasized by the band of molding placed between the first and second floors and by the bellcast quality of the second floor shingles above the band. The second floor is separated from the attic by a slight projection with diminutive brackets.

This use of different sidings also is in keeping with another Queen Anne hallmark: richness of texture and variety of materials.

Originally, most windows in the house were four-over-four, double hung sash. There were a few notable exceptions: a decorative window composed of a clear pane surrounded by smaller panes of colored glass was located at each extension of the front porch;<sup>3</sup> crescent, or lunette, windows provided lighting for the

<sup>3</sup> Originally, there were short extensions of the front porch on both the east and west sides of the house.

storage areas beneath the sloping roof; and, in the east and west gable ends of the attic, pairs of eight-pane, casement windows were installed.

This use of a variety of window types is termed irregular window treatment, and is typical of Queen Anne structures.

The larger, side windows originally had exterior, louvered shutters. There may have been interior shutters also, as brackets which could have supported them remain near some of the windows.

Porches were all but obligatory for Victorian homes, and the Heceta dwelling was no exception. The front porch was accentuated by decorative millwork<sup>4</sup> which has since been removed.

The porch railing featured a baluster piece composed of a series of vertical, staggered rectangles. A band of millwork complementary to the baluster piece was located under the eaves of the porch roof. A series of wooden spindles and spools made up this decoration.



Close-up of baluster piece illustrating grooved hand rail and horizontal pieces. Spindle-spool ornament is visible in the background.

<sup>4</sup> The term millwork was used to refer to any massproduced products manufactured at wood-planing mills.

The millwork patterns used at Heceta apparently were popular, for they are pictured in photographs of other Oregon houses.<sup>5</sup> This duplication was not unusual, as such mass-produced items could be ordered from catalogs or pattern books. These pattern books made it possible for anyone to construct a mail order home, Victorian style.

Decorative touches did not end with the front porch. Panels featuring recessed sunbursts were added below the apex of the gabled roof on the east, west and south walls. Originally, a small band of the spindle-spool pattern used on the porch was repeated below the sunburst panel on the front of the house.

At one time, decorative panels also were located above each oriel window of the dormer. These were impressed with a pattern of scroll work, rather than the sunburst design.



Sunburst panel with attached spindle-spool decoration is illustrated above. Scroll work panels above oriel windows also are visible.

The exuberant aspect of the house was further dramatized by the use of contrasting colors for the exterior.

<sup>5</sup> One such photograph appears on page 297 of Space, Style, and Structure.



According to early residents, the exterior, including window trim and doors, was white, the roof red, and the floor boards of the porch battle-ship gray.<sup>6</sup> Bright blue exterior shutters provided a striking contrast to the white and red. The designer of the house no doubt deemed the red, white and blue color scheme appropriate for a government building.

After the shutters were removed, the contrasting element was preserved by a new paint scheme. Exterior moldings; the porch hand rails and posts (but not the millwork); window trim (but not the sashes); and the sun portion of the sunburst panels were painted a contrasting shade. It is difficult to determine their color from photos, but it does not appear to be as dark as the present green trim. It may have been a lighter green, blue, or even gray, which were all typical Queen Anne colors.



The contrasting shade of the window trim, sun panel, moldings, porch posts and porch railings are illustrated in this photograph.

<sup>6</sup> Thelma Hansen Coma and Mildred Hansen Wells, private interview held at Heceta Head, Oregon, October, 1979.

Two other features of the house carry out the Queen Anne design—the slightly corbelled, or projecting caps of the chimneys, and the high water table (the exterior ledge above the basement).

Structurally, the house is heavier and sturdier than many dwellings of the late 1800's and, certainly, is better constructed than most contemporary buildings. For example, an examination of the attic reveals two-by-six inch rafters and diagonal sheathing. The balloon frame system, which uses single studs that extend the full height of the frame, was used for some walls, and crossbridging was placed between floor joists. In short, the house was built to withstand a good many Oregon winters.

#### IV: REMODELING

The rich history of Heceta Head is reflected in part by the many changes made to the house.

The removal of the exterior shutters was the first alteration. Photographs indicate the shutters survived only ten years, at the most. Whether they were ripped off by strong winds or removed by the keepers remains open to conjecture.

Another early change was carried out for the sake of convenience. Approximately 1916, restroom facilities were added in the rear wings and outdoor "two-holers" were removed, undoubtedly to the great joy of the occupants. A primitive sewer system consisting of a pipe over the bluff also was installed in 1916.

Major changes did not occur again until 1939, which coincided with the year the Coast Guard gained jurisdiction over the Lighthouse Service.

That year, the rear wings were razed and new stoops, steps and wood canopys were built to provide rear entrances to the dwelling. (A drawing of the former wings is on the following page.)

There was substantial concern about the quality of the work, as indicated by the following instructions to the carpenters:

Raze and completely remove existing wings. Patch up opening to match existing finish. Trim [new stoop and steps] to match front porch newels and rails. Obtain rail and newel from single dwelling. Salvage shingles for new roof over door to match main roof.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Blueprints, "Alterations to Keepers' Double Dwelling at Heceta Head," from the Office of Superintendent of Lighthouses, January 17, 1939.

HECETA HEAD LIGHT STATION

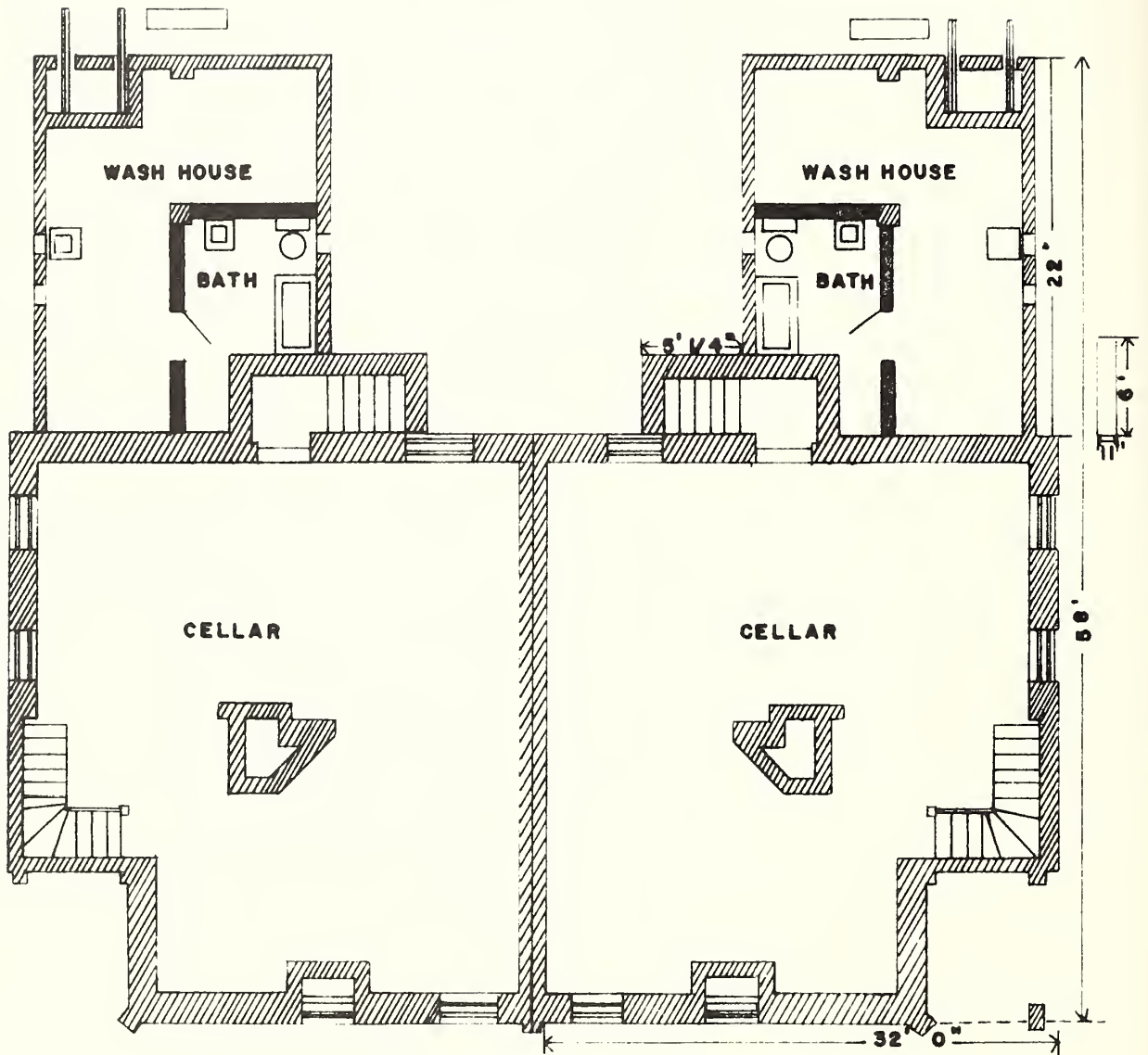
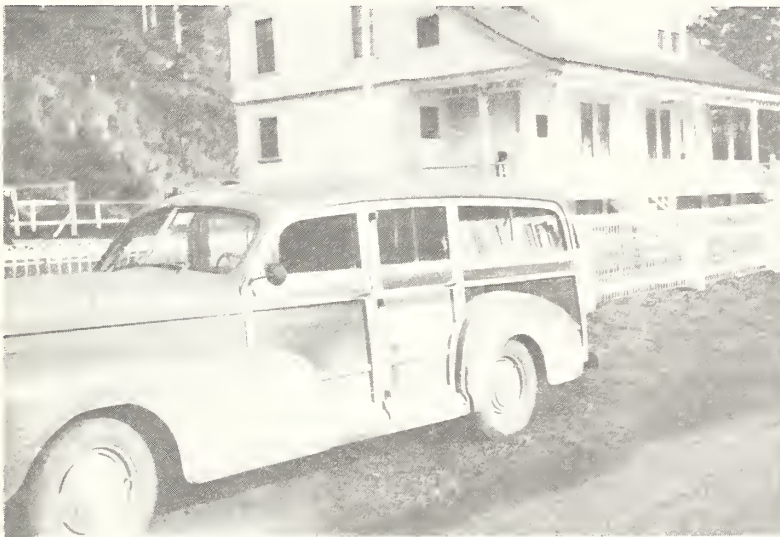


PLATE I CELLAR PLAN

1/8" = 1'

The restroom fixtures and kitchen sinks in the rear wings also were salvaged. Bathrooms were installed in the second floor storage rooms located under the sloping roof. The lunette windows of the store rooms were replaced by two-over-two, double hung sash windows. Most likely, the lunettes were removed because the remodeler did not believe they would provide enough light or ventilation for bathrooms.

The kitchen sinks formerly in the wings were relocated along the outer, side wall of each kitchen. One four-over-four window on each side had to be cut down to accommodate the sinks. This is illustrated in the blueprints but, according to the same plans, the other four-over-four window to the right of each sink was to remain intact. However, a 1943 photograph shows that these windows were removed completely, while the window above each sink was indeed reduced.



Note absence of second window on first floor, side wall.

In addition to the sinks, counters, drainboards and cases were installed along the outer, side walls. Perhaps the remodelers could not accommodate all the fixtures without removing one window completely, and the plans were changed accordingly.

The only other major structural change carried out in 1939 was the replacement of exterior, area way doors to the basement by new covers similar to trap doors. There are no drawings or photographs available of the new doors.

The house remained largely unchanged throughout the coming years, despite the fact that Heceta was transformed into a bustling military base during World War II. According to photographs taken during the war, only one change of note occurred since the 1939 remodeling: the spools were removed from the millwork beneath the eaves of the porch roof. However, the spindles remained to decorate the eaves, and the baluster piece was maintained in good condition throughout the war.

The next major remodeling plan was carried out in 1957, which indicates the Coast Guard had no idea that the light tower would be automated and the house vacated just six years later, in 1963.

In one major sweep, the rear entrances built in 1939 were torn down and new, side entrances to the kitchens erected. The present pipe railing, steps, stoops and corrugated plastic siding at the side entrances all date back to 1957.

When the rear entrances were removed, new, rear windows were installed. A pair of single-pane casement windows with wood frames replaced the former sash type windows at each side of the duplex. The kitchen windows near the side entrances also went from sash type to single-pane, casement windows.

As in 1939, the kitchen windows had to be changed to accommodate new fixtures. In 1957, double-sinks were installed below the rear windows, replacing the undoubtedly old-fashioned sinks which had at one time stood in the rear wings. Refrigerators and built-in ovens replaced the cabinets and cases that had lined the east and west walls. Eating counters and built-in ranges were installed against the opposite walls.

The bathrooms were modernized as well. New toilets, tubs and sinks replaced those originally from the rear wings and tile was laid above the tubs.

The one changed which compromised the symmetry of the house also was carried out in 1957. An office was added on the west side of the house, in the area which had been the front porch extension. The decorative, "stained glass" window was removed, or walled over, when the room was built.

A note on the blue print reads, "O. in C. Quarter only,"<sup>2</sup> which indicates an office was needed only in the half occupied by the Coast Guard's commanding officer.

The porch was further altered by the replacement of the railing. The new railing did not feature the decorative baluster piece. Most likely, the spindles above the railing were removed during the same period.

The present, exterior shelters over the basement steps also were erected in 1957, replacing the "trap door" covers built in 1939.



Photograph illustrates changes made in 1957 remodeling: new stoops with corrugated plastic siding were built; office was added at west porch extension; casement window was installed in outer office wall; and baluster piece was removed from porch railing.

The latest spate of remodeling was completed in 1970. That year, Lane Community College leased the building for use as a "weekend campus." A few structural changes had to be made to accommodate groups of students.

The dividing wall between the dining rooms was knocked down to provide space for a lecture room. Additional bathrooms were installed upstairs: the front bedroom on the east half was converted into two separate bathrooms, with two showers and two toilets in each. Access to one bathroom was made possible from the west half by removing a section of wall which had previously divided the duplex. (These changes are illustrated in the following sketches.)

The college's remodeling plans also called for the removal of the built-in range and oven from the kitchen on the west side. These were reinstalled in the east-side kitchen. Two dishwashers were purchased for the students' kitchen as well. (The west-side kitchen is used by caretakers, who have installed their own combination range-oven.)

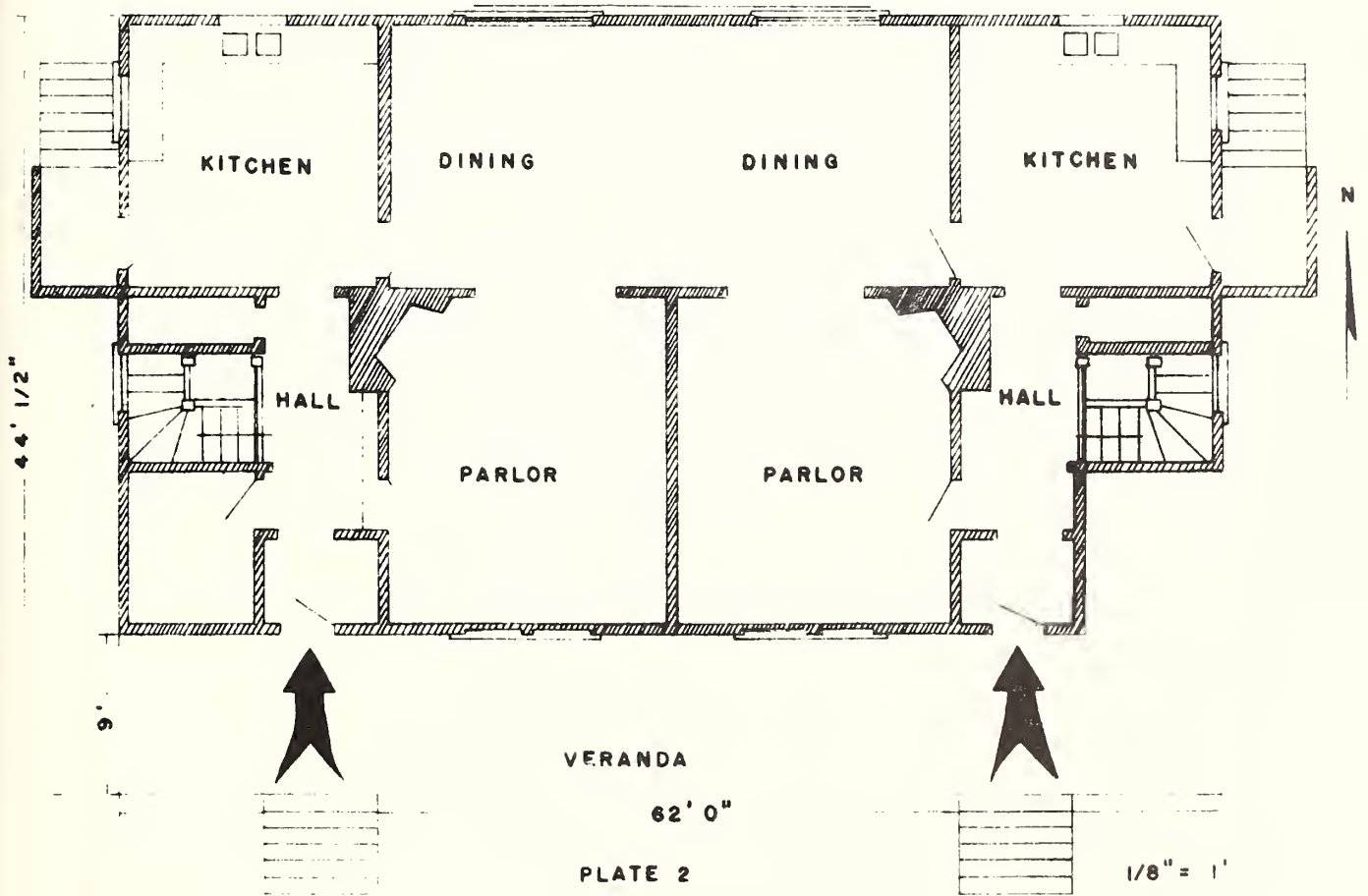
The college also did some repair and restorative work. For example, the moldings around some of the door frames were in need of replacement and rather than replace them with modern, thin molding, the college had the wide, grooved millwork specially duplicated. Extra molding was ordered for future use.

Linoleum was substituted for badly buckled floorboards in the front entryway on the east side. Additional linoleum was purchased in case the west entryway flooring should buckle as well.

Other changes have occurred which are not specifically mentioned in any remodeling plans. A pair of four-over-four oriel windows in the dormer was replaced by one-over-one windows, probably because matching windows were not available at the time, or were too expensive to duplicate.



HECETA HEAD LIGHT STATION 1979



HECETA HEAD LIGHT STATION 1979

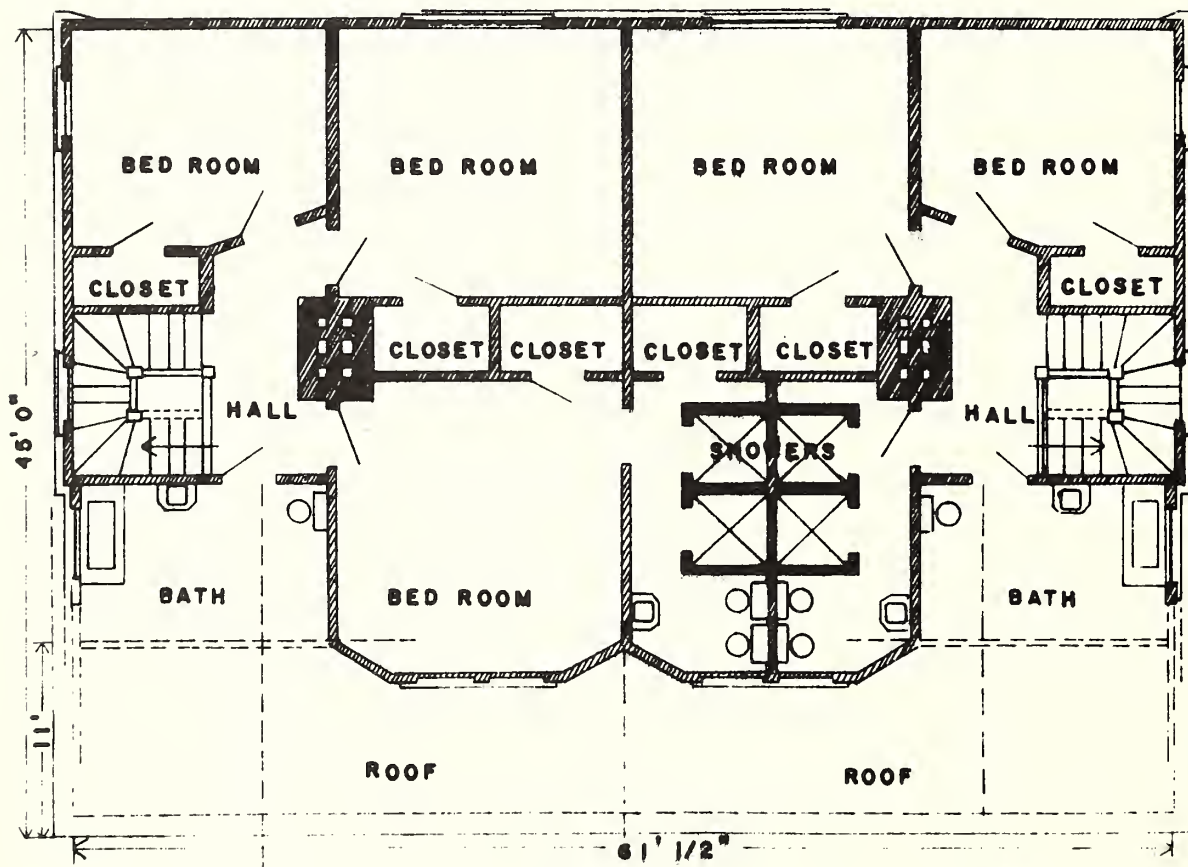


PLATE 3

1/8" = 1'

A number of decorative features have disappeared from the exterior. In addition to the removal of the porch baluster piece and spindle-spool millwork, spheres which originally topped each newel post of the front steps are missing. The spindle-spool section below the front sunburst panel is gone, as are the scroll work panels which used to be above each oriel window of the gabled dormer.

The present caretaker has made a number of minor modifications. He installed partitions in the basement in order to create separate rooms and sealed the sliding dining room doors on the west side in order to keep the classroom area open. (The sliding doors on the opposite side already were sealed or removed.) Finally, he removed deteriorating hearth tiles on the fireplace of the west side, cemented the hearth and circled it with a single layer of bricks.



APPENDIX

LIST OF KEEPERS\*

1894-1899 Andrew P. C. Hald - Head Keeper

1894 Eugene M. Walters - First Assistant  
John M. Cowan - Second Assistant

1895 William F. Kissell - First Assistant  
James F. Barker - First Assistant

1896 Harry Brant - First Assistant  
Olaf L. Hansen - First Assistant  
Isidore P. Fahy - Second Assistant

1897 Thomas J. Stitt - Second Assistant

1899-1900 Edward Durgan - Head Keeper

1899 Harold A. Salisbury - Second Assistant

1900-1904 Joseph Dunsen - Head Keeper

1903 Harold A. Salisbury - First Assistant  
William S. Denning - Second Assistant

1904-1920 Olaf L. Hansen - Head Keeper

1905 William Smith - First Assistant  
Jacob G. Telersen - Second Assistant

1906 Noah A. Clark - Second Assistant

1907 Charles E. Lauks - Second Assistant

1909 Overton Dowell Jr. - Second Assistant

1911 Thomas E. Alexander - Second Assistant

1912 LeRoy Avery - Second Assistant

1913 Frank DeRoy - First Assistant

1918 Bob Bay - First Assistant

1919 Charles Walters - Second Assistant

1920-1925 Frank DeRoy - Head Keeper

1925-1950 Clifford B. Hermann - Head Keeper

1930 Fred Sargent - First Assistant  
Albert H. Johnson - Second Assistant

1936 Albert H. Johnson - First Assistant  
Bill Schumacher - Second Assistant

1937 Position of second assistant eliminated

1943 Johnson transferred;  
Coast Guardsmen act as assistants

1950-1952 S. H. Elder - Head Keeper

1952-? John A. Boyer - Head Keeper

1952 Grant Allen - First Assistant

1957-1963 Oswald Allick - Head Keeper

\* Partial list based on documents in the National Archives; newspaper articles; private interviews; and correspondence. Only those keepers whose dates of service have been documented are included. A more complete list appears in the National Archives in Washington D.C. However, it is not available by mail. There are no records of those keepers who served after 1934, because the Coast Guard kept no permanent records of personnel at Heceta Head.

## LIGHTHOUSE ADMINISTRATION

At the first session of Congress in 1789, jurisdiction of navigational aids was placed under the Department of the Treasury. Lighthouse work was directed by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. However, in 1792, Hamilton placed the commissioner of the revenue in charge of lighthouses.

In the early days of lighthouse administration, high officials took great interest in matters of appointments and salaries of keepers. In fact, one note pertaining to the dismissal of a particular keeper was signed by President Jefferson.

The first system of administration proved inadequate and, in 1851, a Lighthouse Board was formed. It was composed of two officers of the Navy; two of the Engineer Corps; and two civilians with high scientific achievements. The Secretary of the Treasury was president of the board.

After establishment of the board, the nation was divided into lighthouse districts. The entire Pacific coast comprised the 12th. District. In 1867, the 12th. District was divided, and Oregon, Washington and the Alaska Territory became the 13th. District.

The Lighthouse Board remained under the Treasury Department until 1903, when it was transferred to the Department of Commerce. In 1910, the board was abolished altogether, and the Lighthouse Service was established.

The Lighthouse Service further reorganized the system of districts in 1910. Oregon and Washington became the 17th. District and Alaska the 16th.

The Department of Commerce retained jurisdiction over the Lighthouse Service until 1939, when the service was transferred to the U. S. Coast Guard.



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## Interviews

Les Akerly

Son of lighthouse station construction worker  
Florence, Oregon

Stanley Anderson

Guardman stationed at Heceta Head  
Tigard, Oregon

LeRoy Bay

Son of Keeper Bob Bay  
Coos Bay, Oregon

John Brillhart

Former Forest Service Employee, Division of Lands  
Portland, Oregon

Thelma Hansen Coma

Daughter of Keeper Olaf Hansen  
Seattle, Washington

Rod Dowell

Son of Keeper Ovie Dowell  
Florence, Oregon

Rachel Gainey

Niece of Keeper Ted Avery  
Salem, Oregon

Bertha Good

Neighbor of Coast Guard Commander Bernhardt  
Mapleton, Oregon

Larry Grimshaw

Friend of Keeper Charles Walters  
Florence, Oregon

Hazel Johnson  
Wife of Keeper Albert Johnson  
Aptos, California

Wayne Johnson  
Son of Rufus Johnson  
Mapleton, California

Catherine Lauris  
LCC Board Member  
Eugene, Oregon

Jim Lyne  
Former Recreation Specialist, Siuslaw National Forest  
Sun City, Arizona

Stilnah Stonefield Smallwood  
Granddaughter of Charles Stonefield  
Waldport, Oregon

Fred Stonefield  
Grandson of Charles Stonefield  
Florence, Oregon

George Stonefield  
Grandson of Charles Stonefield  
Florence, Oregon

Lutrell Kemp Stonefield  
Former teacher of Heceta Head School  
Florence, Oregon

David Talbot  
State Parks Superintendent  
Salem, Oregon

Anne and Harry Tammen  
Caretakers, Heceta House  
Heceta Head, Oregon

Emma Walters  
Wife of Keeper Charles Walters  
Portland, Oregon

Mike Walters  
Son of Keeper Charles Walters  
Portland, Oregon

Mildred Hansen Wells  
Daughter of Keeper Olaf Hansen  
Seattle, Washington

John Gunter  
Oregon State Highways Employee  
Florence, Oregon

Lt. R. J. Williamson, Coast Guard  
Compiler of National Register Nomination  
Seattle, Washington

Robert E. DeRoy  
Son of Keeper Frank DeRoy  
Vallejo, California

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