CHAPTER IX

TILLAMOOK BAY STATIONS

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

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

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[209]Donovan and Kachel, E.5.

[210]Lewis A. McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names*, 6th ed. (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1992), 835.

[211]State of Oregon, *1991-92 Oregon Blue Book*, 352.

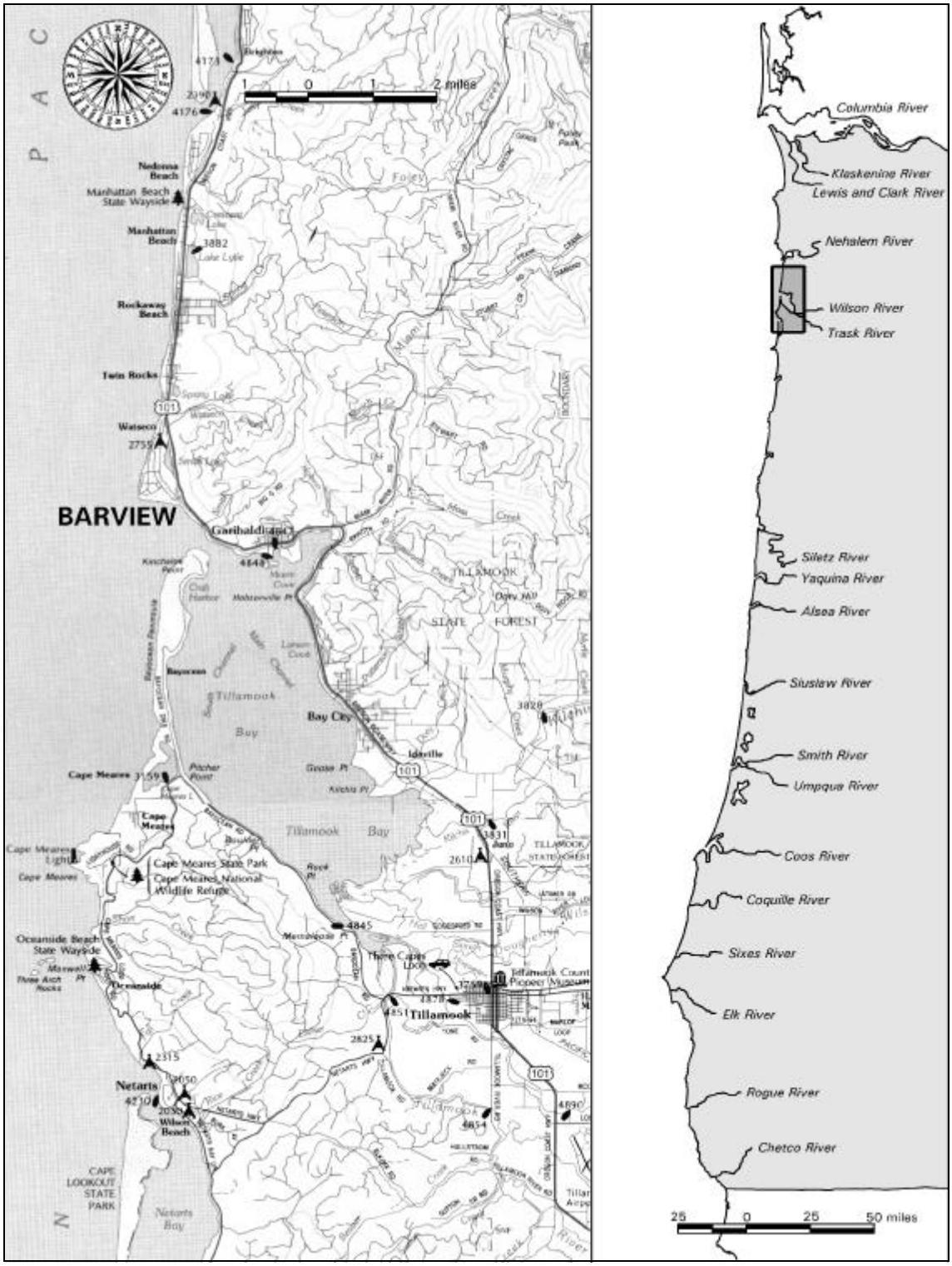

Figure 141. Location of Barview, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

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

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

Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station

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

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[212]Gibbs, *Oregon Seacoast Lighthouses,* 159-60.

[213]Congress, House, 51st Congress, 1st session, HR 4622, 1889.

[214]Congress, Senate, 58th Congress, 2nd session, S 2698, 1904.

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

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

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

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

[217]Ibid., 21 May 1908.

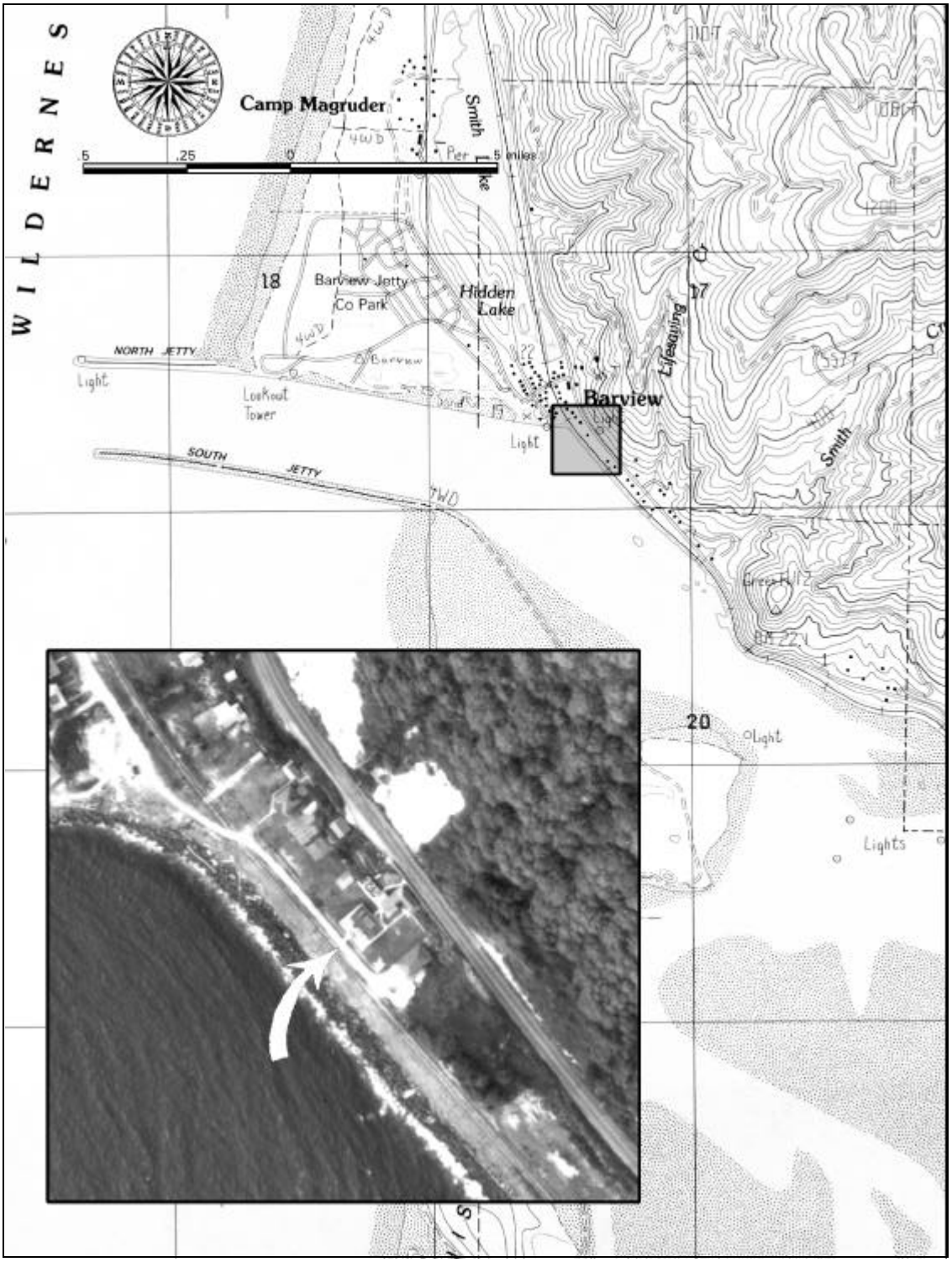

Figure 142. Aerial Photo of the Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station Area in 1939 Superimposed Over the Garibaldi, Oregon, USGS Map (1985 Revision).

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

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

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

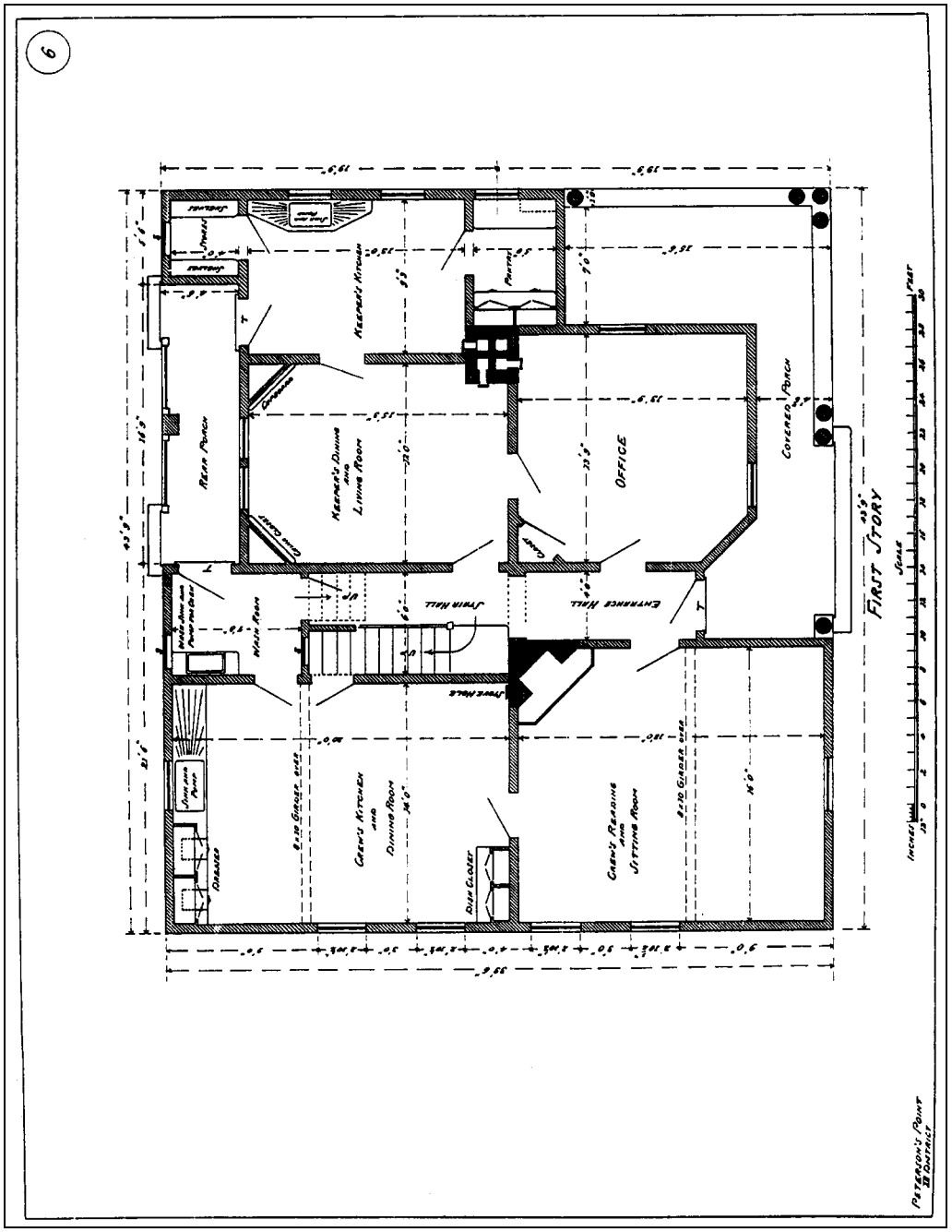

Figure 144. First Floor Plan, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#424).

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

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

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

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

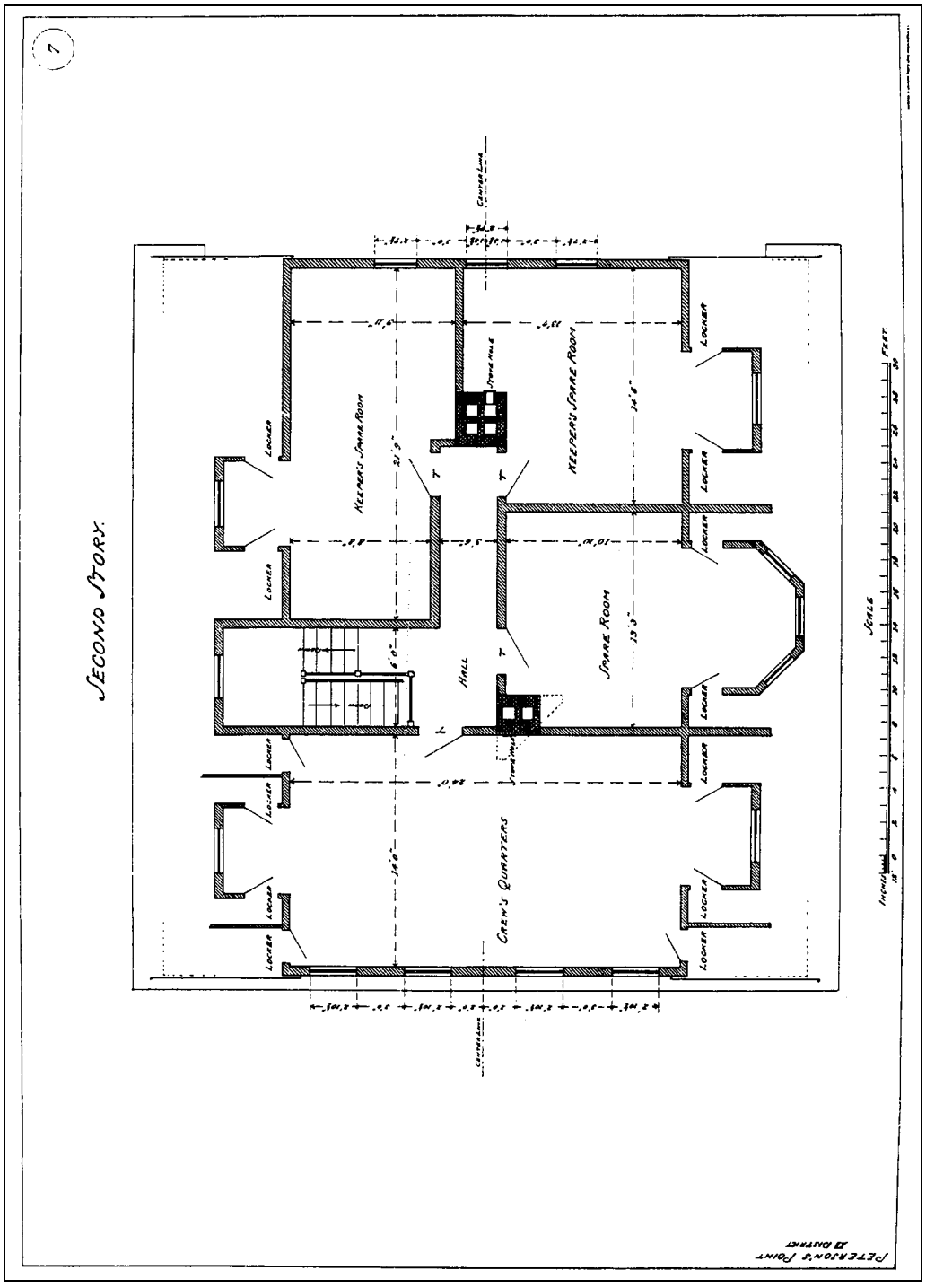

Figure 145. Second Floor Plan, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#425).

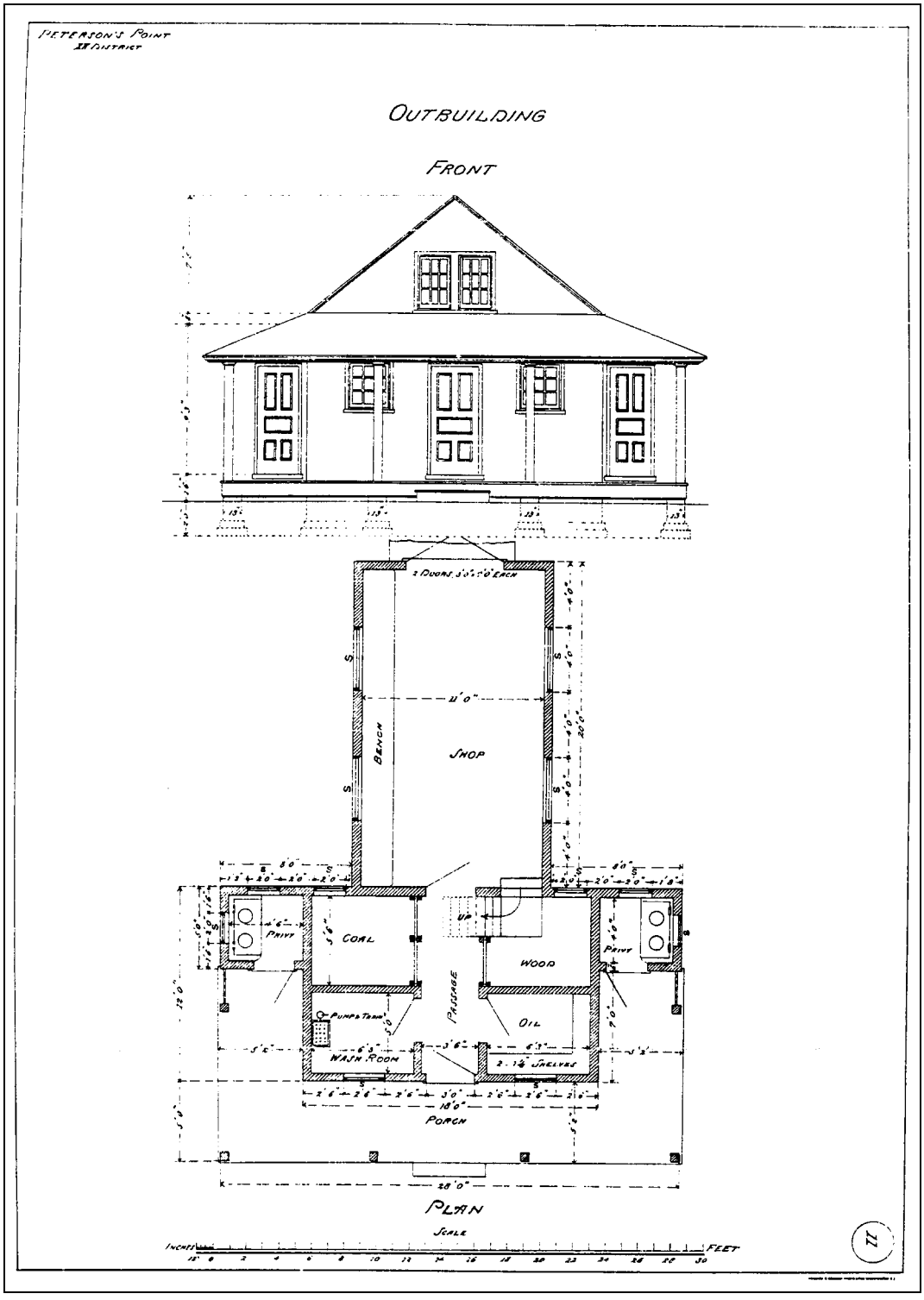

Figure 146. Floor Plan and Elevation, Shop Building, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#429).

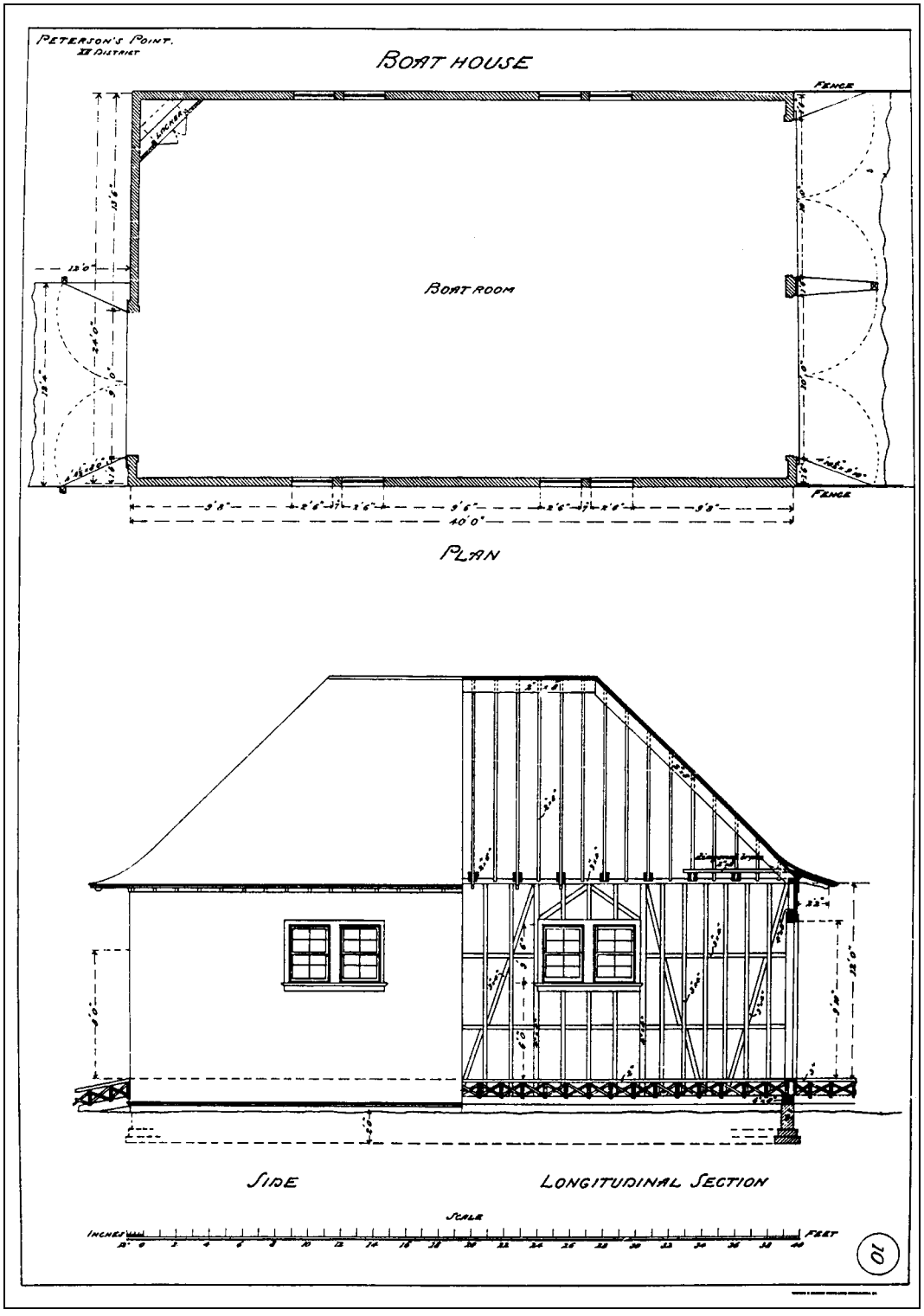

Figure 147. Plan and Section, Boathouse, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#428).

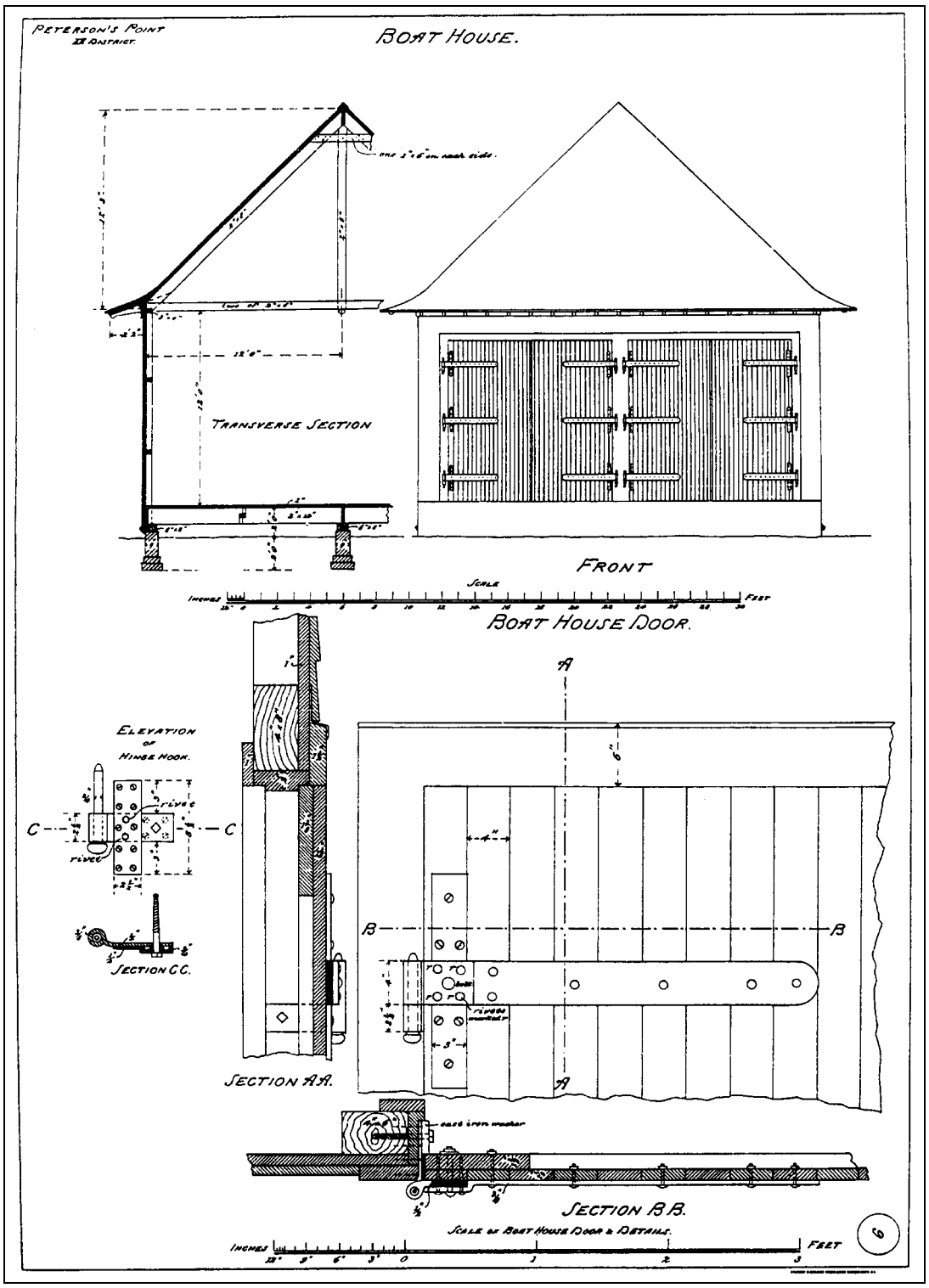

Figure 148. Boathouse Details, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#427).

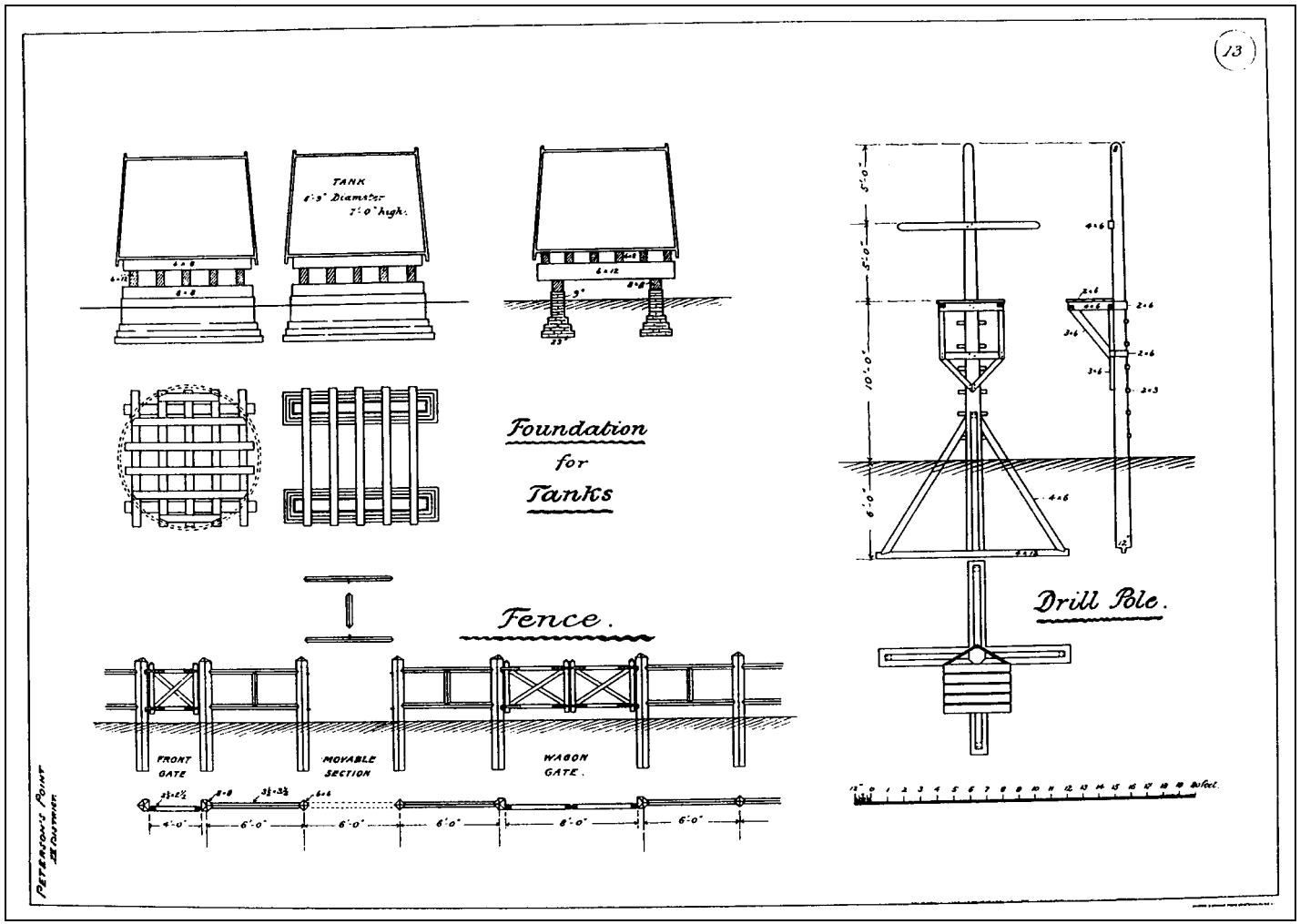

Figure 149. Auxiliary Structures, Tillamook Bay Life-Saving Station. Source: Nautical Research Centre (#431).

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

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

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[218]Stephen Dow Beckham, "U.S. Life Saving Station, Bar View, Oregon," *State of Oregon Inventory, Historic Sites and Buildings* (Salem, OR: Oregon State Highway Department, 1974).

[219]Photos, 1936 storm damage, Tillamook Bay File, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC.

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

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

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

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

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

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[220]Gary Newkirk, phone interview by author, transcript, Eugene, OR, 15 July 1997.

[221]Ibid.

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

Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station

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

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

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

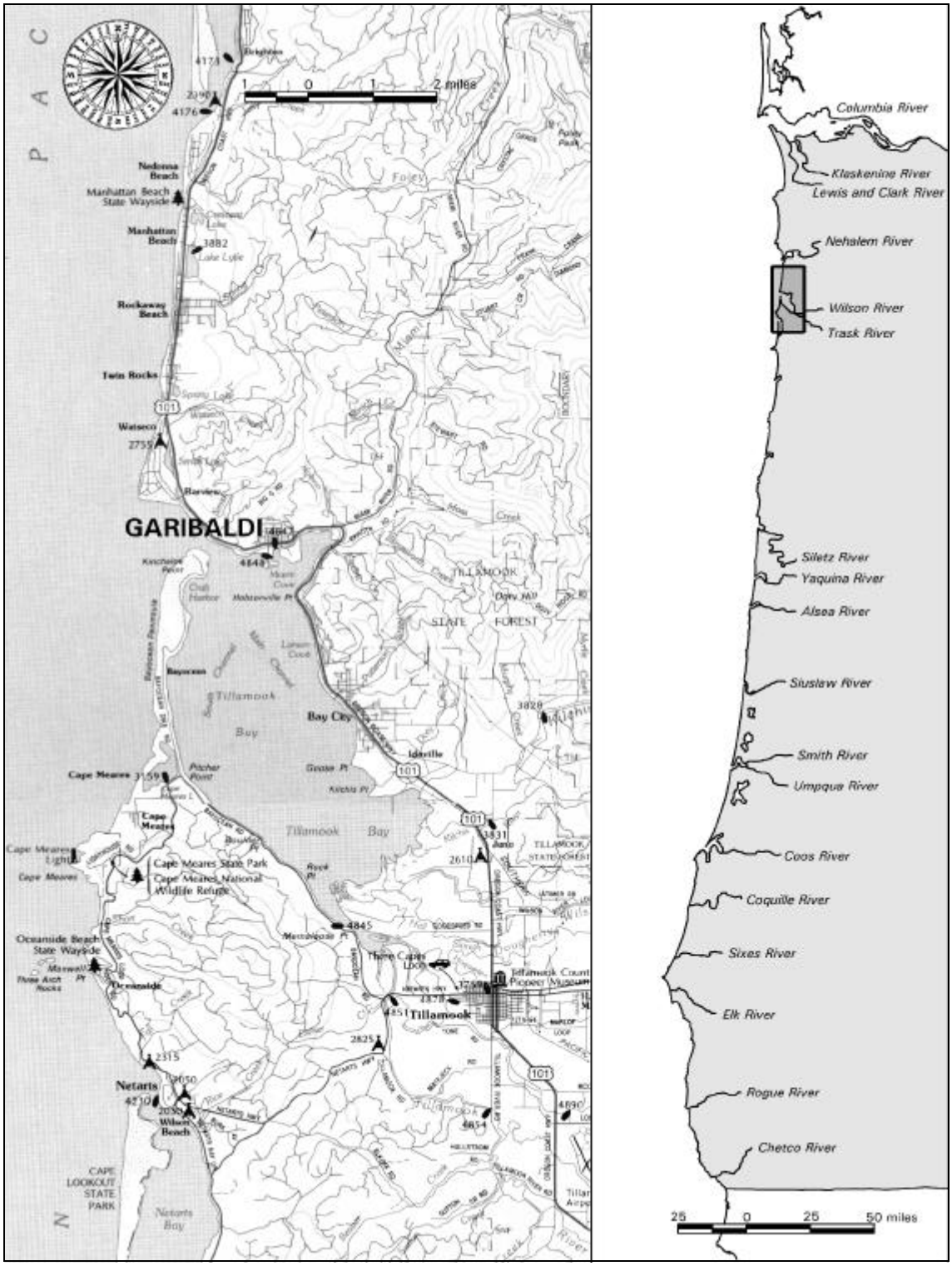

Figure 152. Location of Garibaldi, Oregon, as Shown on a 1996 DeLorme Topographic Map.

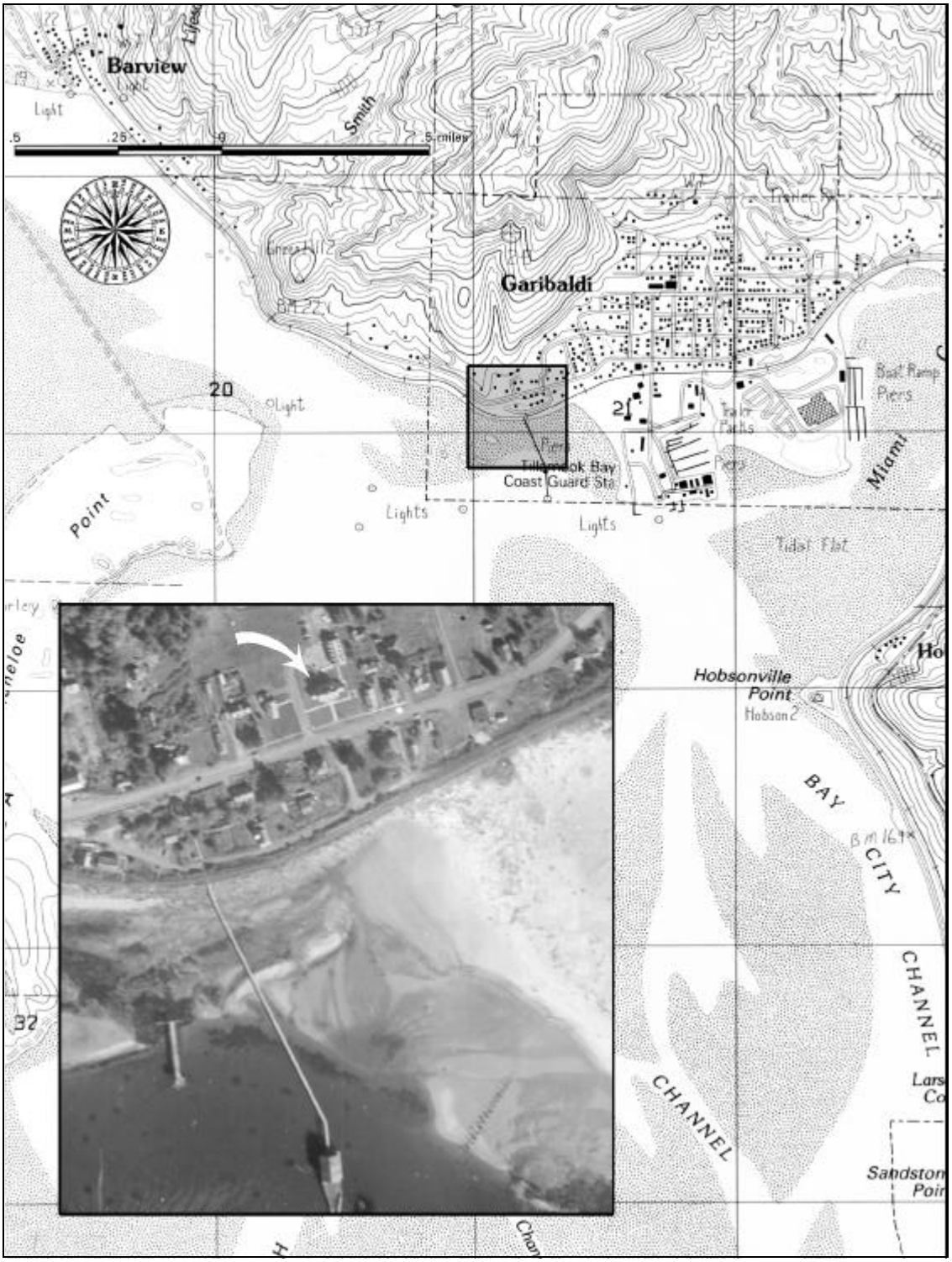

Figure 153. Aerial Photo of the Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station Area in 1939 Superimposed Over the Garibaldi, Oregon, USGS Map (1985 Revision).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

enlarged. Metal fire escapes have been attached to the exterior to provide alternate exits from the attic and second floor. On the front, the porch roof balustrade has been sympathetically replaced with a taller rail. Other than a kitchen and bathroom rehabilitation, the first floor layout changed little. On the second floor, the interior stair was sealed off and a kitchen built over it. A dining room and living room were created out of two of the original bedrooms. Washer and dryer alcoves were built and several room entries reoriented. However, six of the original lockers are still present.[223]

To the west of the station house is the Officer in Charge's (OIC) house. Built for an estimated $25,000, it is a two-story, gable-roofed structure that continues the Colonial

[223]Ibid.

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

Revival theme of the station house (Figure 156). It has double-hung, nine-over-nine windows with operable shutters. Bull's-eye windows light the attic. The front porch is covered by a flared, shed roof supported by slender columns connected by thin, diagonal spacers. Like the station house, the OIC house has flanking, one-story wings. The south wing was originally an open porch and has since been glazed in. The north wing was an attached garage, which has now been converted into living space.[224]

To the north of the station house is the five-bay equipment building. The building was constructed for approximately $20,000 on the same plans as the equipment building at the Umpqua River Lifeboat Station.[225] The building was approximately 62' wide by 30' deep and built on a concrete foundation. The equipment building continued the

[224]Ibid.

[225]Ibid.

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

A standard, 50' steel lookout tower was erected at the edge of the beach at the north jetty. It is the same as the lookouts built at Umpqua River and Yaquina Bay. The plan dated to 1935, though it is uncertain when the tower was actually built at Tillamook Bay. The steel tower was cross-braced with angled steel members. At the base was a 7' by 5' radio equipment building. Three flights of stairs led a crewman to the watch house through a trap door in the floor. The watch house was an 8' cube, sheathed in shingles, and capped with a pyramidal roof. Three of the walls had three windows each, and the fourth wall had two windows with a door to exit out onto the gallery. The lookout tower was removed and replaced by a modern lookout tower further out on the jetty. The concrete base for the 1930s lookout tower still stands.

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

Preservation

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

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

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

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[226]The Point Adams Life-Saving Station boathouse (1889) and the Yaquina Bay Life-Saving Station at the Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (1871) are the other two.

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

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

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

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

The Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station was listed on the National Register in 1993. Since the station is listed and owned by a government body, any exterior alterations to the station house, equipment building, or OIC house need to be approved by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. The rehabilitations that the station house went through in the 1980s are mostly confined to the rear elevation. None of the Roosevelt-type stations should have any alterations performed on their front elevation. The station house, OIC house, and equipment building should continue to be used and maintained, according to the Secretary's *Standards*.

The Coast Guard disposed of the 1935 boathouse in the 1970s, turning it over to the Port of Garibaldi. The Port has chosen to rehabilitate the structure into a commercial venture, in this case, a bait and tackle shop. Upstairs is an apartment. Though not being used for its highest and best use, the boathouse is being maintained and used. The public can walk out on the long walkway to the boathouse and around the outside to look at the launchway and the boats passing by. People fish and crab off of the walkway. The boathouse is the terminus for a walking trail from the old lumbermill site to the east. The structure is due to be closed for "renovation" until 2001.

The National Register Nomination for the lifeboat station should be expanded to include the boathouse, as the structure was integral to the function of the lifeboat station. The Tillamook Bay boathouse is the only one left in Oregon built on pilings offshore. With the original station house, keeper's house, boathouse, and equipment building, the Tillamook Bay Lifeboat Station is the most intact pre-1950 station in Oregon.