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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property Point Cabrillo Light Station  
historic name Point Cabrillo Light Station  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

MAY 11 1990

2. Location  
street & number 45300 Lighthouse Road N/A  not for publication  
city, town Caspar  vicinity  
state CA code CA county Mendocino code 045 zip code 95460

3. Classification  
Ownership of Property:  private,  public-local,  public-State,  public-Federal  
Category of Property:  building(s),  district,  site,  structure,  object  
Number of Resources within Property:  
Contributing: 9  
Noncontributing: \_\_\_\_\_ buildings, \_\_\_\_\_ sites, \_\_\_\_\_ structures, \_\_\_\_\_ objects  
Total: 11

Name of related multiple property listing: Light Stations in California  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Kathryn Swales Signature of certifying official Date 11/5/90  
California Office of Historic Preservation State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Robert Lewis H.S.P.O. Signature of commenting or other official Date 7/19/91  
U.S. Department of Transportation State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Alvina Gynn entered in the National Register 9/3/91

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: water related.Domestic: Institutional housing.

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: water related.Domestic: Institutional housing.

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: LighthouseBungalow/Craftsman

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Wood: WeatherboardWood: Shingleroof Wood: Shakeother \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Point Cabrillo Light Station is an excellent example of a historically intact early 20th century light station. All of the original station buildings and structures are still remaining on the site (except for the barn). The architectural integrity of the individual buildings ranges from intact to nearly intact. There are no modern structures on the site to dilute the station's historical representation. The station consists of two contributing structures (tower/fog-signal building, water tank) and nine contributing buildings (carpenter's shop, oil house, three dwellings, three storage buildings and a pumphouse). The station is situated on a grassy mesa 60' above the ocean. The station's buildings are built in a straight line at a 90 degree angle to the sea with the tower/fog-signal building being the first in line back from the cliffs. Seen from a distance, the tower/fog-signal building resembles a typical North Coast, frame church and steeple. The residences grouped near the tower gives the impression of a small, rural village.

**1. LIGHTHOUSE TOWER/FOG-SIGNAL BUILDING (1909)--CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE:**

A wood-frame lighthouse tower attached to a one-story peaked-roof fog-signal building. The tower itself is a 47' high octagon structure attached on the east facade of the building. At the top of the tower, a cylindrical lantern room is capped with a copper conical roof and ball vent. The side of the lantern room is covered with iron plates and glass panels between diagonal iron muntins. A few of the glass panels have been replaced with plexiglass. The lantern room rests atop a railed octagonal platform that extends out approximately 2' from each side of the eight-sided tower located immediately below. The tower shaft is pierced by four 6/6 double-hung windows and the first-level entrance door. The attached fog-signal building contains two additional 6/6 double-hung windows on the front (east) facade and two more on the rear. Four identical windows are also found on the south side of the structure, and three on the north. An additional entrance door is found on the north facade and a set of double doors is found on the rear (west) side of the structure. Both the tower and the fog-signal building are sheathed in narrow, horizontal clapboard siding. Wood shingles cover the roof. Outstanding features include the decorative iron railing on the lantern room gallery and the massive "craftsman" brackets under the gable eaves and gallery platform. The architectural integrity of the structure is intact including the original 3rd order Fresnel lens. However, some modern navigational antennae have been tacked on to the top of the tower. The condition of the structure is very good. Some minor repairs and maintenance need to be performed, however.

**2. KEEPER'S QUARTERS (1909)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS:**

Three two-story wood-frame "Craftsman" style buildings built in a row at a right angle to the sea. Each house sits in the middle of its own fenced yard. The middle building was built as the

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Keeper's residence, and the two flanking buildings were designed as Assistant Keeper's residences. The Keeper's residence is somewhat larger than the other two, but they are all very similar in appearance. Each house is based on an L-shaped plan with a roofline containing prominent intersecting cross gables. The roof is covered in wood shingles, and massive craftsman-style brackets are found under the eaves. The second story facade is covered in wood shingles, painted white. The first story is covered in narrow, horizontal clapboard to match the lighthouse tower. It also is painted white. Shed-roof and hip-roof porches are found on the front and rear of each structure. Several of these appear to have been partially enclosed, probably not many years after the station's founding. No other changes appear to have been made on the buildings' exterior. Modifications have occurred on the interior, however, as the residences have been upgraded to modern living standards. The bulk of the woodwork, staircases, and fireplace details remain in place. Each building rests on a concrete foundation. The buildings are in very good condition.

3. OIL HOUSE (1910)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

A small flat-roofed, one-story, rectangular building made entirely of concrete with a fireproof iron door. Most oil houses in California resemble this one quite closely. Their unadorned, functional design reflects their utilitarian usage. This oil house does depart from most others, however, in that a small storeroom--complete with its own exterior door and window--has been included on the east side.

4. CARPENTER'S/BLACKSMITH SHOP (1909)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

A one-story single room, double bay frame building with a wood shake, hip roof. Two sets of metal double-doors are found on the front (south) facade. Two freestanding 6/6 double-hung windows are found on the east and west facades. The top 3/4 of the structure's sides are covered in wood shingles painted white. The lower 1/4 is covered in horizontal clapboards painted brown. The building appears to be in very good condition. Its shingle-sided construction places it stylistically with the other Craftsman style buildings on the site. Except for the original wooden double doors having been replaced by modern metal doors, the architectural integrity of the building is intact.

5. STORAGE BUILDINGS/GARAGES (1909)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS:

Three small one-room, one-story, hip roof storage buildings are located to the rear of each house. These are now being used as garages with the addition of garage doors. The sides are sheathed in wood shingle, tying the design in with the Craftsman style homes in the front. Except for the addition of the garage doors, the architectural integrity of the buildings appears intact.

6. PUMP HOUSE (1909)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

A small, one-room, one-story building with a hip roof. The sides are covered with the same narrow clapboards found on the lighthouse tower. The architectural integrity of the

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building appears intact, including the set of original five panel wooden double doors at the entrance. The building appears to be in very good condition.

7. WATER TANK (1909)--CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE:

A metal sided, cylindrical tank approximately 15' tall. A metal, conical roof with a decorative center spire covers the structure. It appears to be in very good condition.

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The Point Cabrillo Light Station contains a total of two contributing structures and nine contributing buildings.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Maritime History  
Transportation  
Architecture  
Commerce

Period of Significance

1909-1940

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Point Cabrillo Light Station meets the requirements for registration as defined in the multiple property submission "Light Stations in California." The station's significance is evaluated with respect to the historic context Maritime Transportation in California: 1840-1940. The station derives significance under Criteria A and C. Criteria A is satisfied by the association of the complex with California's critical reliance on maritime transportation and the aids that made navigation possible. Criteria C is met by the station's many original buildings remaining in a largely unaltered state. The station's craftsman style buildings with their massive timber brackets and exterior wood shingles, clearly reflect the association of the Point Cabrillo Light Station serving as the lighthouse of the north coast lumber fleet. When viewed together the buildings present an accurate portrayal of the design and construction of an early 20th century light station. There are no modern buildings existing in the complex to dilute the historical architectural representation.

The station fully meets registration requirements for its property type. It contains an intact lighthouse tower and associated historical buildings. The station, in fact, exceeds registration requirements. Its lighthouse tower/fog-signal building is architecturally intact including its original 3rd order Fresnel lens. The architectural integrity of each building is intact (or nearly intact) as well. All of the buildings existing on the site are from the original station. There are no modern buildings present. The only building from the original station no longer extant is the barn.

Point Cabrillo was the light of the smaller lumber schooners that served the many narrow "doghole" ports of the Mendocino coast. Prior to the construction of the Point Cabrillo Lighthouse in 1909, no light existed on the coast between Point Arena and Cape Mendocino--a distance of 115 miles. Unlike the larger ships in coastwise traffic, the schooners hugged the shoreline--often at great risk and peril. The timber-based economy of the region in the late 19th and early 20th century was totally dependent on the doghole ports and landings to transport the lumber that was building California. The lumber required to rebuild San Francisco after the 1906 quake further increased lumbering traffic along the Mendocino coast. After several decades of political pressure from lumber interests and Mendocino City business leaders, Congress authorized \$50,000 for a light station at Point Cabrillo in 1906. Its first beam of light shown on June 10, 1909. It is not without symbolism that the whole station (except for the fireproof oil bunker) was constructed entirely of wood. As the doghole ports and redwood coastal schooners gave way to the

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railroads and highways in the mid-twentieth century, the lighthouse continued to serve the needs of the commercial fishing fleet and the remaining coastal freight traffic.

The particular significance of the individual structures and buildings on the site are as follows:

## LIGHTHOUSE TOWER/FOG-SIGNAL STRUCTURE (1909)

The lighthouse tower/fog-signal structure is of significance as the principle element of the light station. The structure fully meets registration requirements of its property type; it is a substantial structure built to contain a Fresnel lens (in this case 3rd order) and its architectural integrity is complete (including the in-place lens). From a distance the structure resembles a country church with the lighthouse tower forming the "steeple" in the front central facade. A number of wood-frame lighthouses of this configuration were built in Washington and Oregon in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Point Cabrillo is the only one constructed in California, however. The structure's massive Craftsman brackets and all-frame construction make it an ideal design for this, the lighthouse of the north coast lumber fleet.

## KEEPER'S DWELLINGS (1909)

The three two-story Keeper's dwellings are significant as contributing elements of the light station. The center building is somewhat larger than the other two and it was reserved for the Head Keeper's family. They are all quite similar in appearance. The buildings in this group are an excellent example of the Craftsman style of residential design very popular in California in the early years of this century. Rustic architectural features such as massive exposed beams and brackets and exterior wood shingles make this style perfectly suited to the light station of the north coast fishing fleet. Throughout the first two decades of the 20th century a number of craftsman style Keeper's dwellings were erected in California--especially in the lumbering region along the north coast. Today, only these and the ones in Point Loma in San Diego remain.

These buildings meet registration requirements for their property type. The integrity of the structure is quite complete and most architectural features have been preserved. The buildings are in very good condition. Exterior modifications appear to be limited to portions of several porches having been closed in. These modifications appear to have been made not many years after the station's founding and do not detract from the historical appearance of the buildings. Modifications have occurred in the interior as the building has been brought up to modern living standards. Most of the features of historical interest--fireplaces, woodwork, windows, staircases, etc.--have been preserved.

## OIL HOUSE (1910)

The oil house is of significance as a contributing element of the light station. It meets requirements for registration of its property type. It is structurally similar to

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other California oil houses built in the early 20th century with the exception that in this case the interior has been partitioned off into a separate work room in addition to the oil storage compartment. The work room has its own entrance door and exterior window. The architectural integrity of the building appears to be intact and it is in very good condition.

CARPENTER'S SHOP/BLACKSMITH SHOP (1909)

This building is of significance as a contributing element of the light station complex. Many early California light stations--especially the more isolated ones--were required to perform their own repair and maintenance work, and blacksmith duties. As the function of this building type was one of the first to be made obsolete by modern conditions, it was frequently abandoned or remodeled for other purposes. Very few remain in California. The shop here and the one at Point Sur are the only two whose architectural and structural integrity are complete. The only modification to the Point Cabrillo shop has been the substitution of metal doors for wooden ones. The wood shingle siding of the exterior ties the design of the structure in with the other Craftsman buildings on the site. Altogether, this is a very handsome, well preserved, and unique structure. The condition of the building is very good.

STORAGE BUILDINGS/GARAGES (1909)

These buildings are of significance as a contributing element of the light station complex. Each residence was allocated its own storage building in the backyard for coal, wood, foodstuffs, or whatever. These were designed in the Craftsman style with exterior wood shingles to reflect the design of the residences. At some point, garage doors were added and the buildings are now used to store automobiles. Except for the garage doors the architectural integrity of the buildings is intact and they are in very good condition.

PUMP HOUSE (1909)

The pump house is significant as a contributing element of the light station complex. Its unadorned design reflects its utilitarian use. Its narrow horizontal siding matches the siding used on the tower/fog-signal building. The architectural integrity of the building is complete, including the original wood five-panel double doors.

WATER TANK (1909)

The water tank is significant as a contributing element of the light station complex. The architectural integrity of the structure is complete and it appears to be in very good condition. Water supply was critical in summer-dry California because the fog-signals were powered by steam.

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Since its establishment in 1875 this station has had continual importance and significance. Significance has not been shown to be exceptional in the last fifty years, however, although the light continues to play a role in maritime transportation and navigation.



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Mendocino Beacon, January 21, 1905, p. 1.  
Santa Rosa Press Democrat, November 21, 1988, B1.  
U.S. Lighthouse Board, Annual Report, various dates.  
Gibbs, Jim. West Coast Lighthouses. Seattle: 1974.  
Holland, F. Ross. Americas Lighthouses Their Illustrated History Since 1716.  
Brattleboro: 1972.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

National Archives R6 26

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 30.43 acres

UTM References

A 

1	0
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4	2	8	9	0	0
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4	3	5	5	6	2	5
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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

1	0
---	---

4	2	9	1	0	0
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4	3	5	5	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

1	0
---	---

4	2	9	2	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	3	5	5	6	0	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone      Easting      Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All that real property situate in the County of Mendocino, State of California, being a part of land which was acquired by the United States of America from David and Margaret Gordon by deed dated January 6, 1908 and as recorded in Liber 109 deeds pages 222 and 223 of Mendocino County Records which is described as follows:

Commencing at a point on high water mark

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Point Cabrillo Light Station encompasses the buildings and immediate setting historically associated with the complex.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jack Bookwalter  
organization Sonoma State University date October 6, 1989  
street & number 767 Southwood Dr. telephone (707) 526-3197  
city or town Santa Rosa state CA zip code 95407

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S.  $55^{\circ} 45'$  W. 72 feet distant from Point No. 1; (Point No. 1 is marked by a 2" diameter pipe surrounded by a mound of stone, and from it to a square church steeple at Caspar bears N.  $21^{\circ} 20'$  E; the west gable of J. Hansen's house bears N.  $35^{\circ} 03'$  E; the cross on Catholic Church, Mendocino, bears S.  $27^{\circ} 51'$  E), thence N.  $55^{\circ} 45'$  E. 72 feet to Point No 1; thence N.  $55^{\circ} 45'$  E. 839.8 feet to Point No. 2 (a 2" diameter galv. iron pipe 4 feet long surrounded by a mound of stone, from which a square church steeple at Caspar bears N.  $17^{\circ} 32'$  E; the west gable of D. Gordon's house bears N.  $70^{\circ} 10'$  E; the cross on Catholic Church, Mendocino, bears S.  $24^{\circ} 42'$  E.); thence North 960 feet to Point No. 3 (a 2" diameter galv. iron pipe 4 feet long surrounded by a mound of stone, from which a square church steeple at Caspar bears N.  $20^{\circ} 11'$  E; the west gable of D. Gordon's house bears S  $88^{\circ} 21'$  E; the cross on Catholic Church, Mendocino, bears S.  $23^{\circ} 16'$  E.); thence S.  $89^{\circ} 45'$  E. 2585 feet to Point No. 4 (a 2" diameter galv. iron pipe 4 feet long surrounded by a mound of stones on the westerly line of the Caspar-Mendocino County road, from which the S.W. corner of Marg. Brinzing's house bears N.  $45^{\circ} 23'$  E, 180 feet distant; N.W. corner of D. Gordon's barn bears S.  $32^{\circ} 08'$  E. 65 feet distant; N.W. corner D. Gordon's house bears S.  $66^{\circ} 09'$  W. 122 feet distant); thence N.  $19^{\circ} 08'$  E. 30 feet to Point No. 5 (a 2" diameter galv. iron pipe at the S.E. corner of T. Kearns's fence); thence N.  $89^{\circ} 45'$  W. 3806.3 feet along the line of T. Kearns's fence to Point No. 6 (a 2" diameter galv. iron pipe surrounded by a mound of stone, from which a square church steeple at Caspar bears N.  $31^{\circ} 05'$  E; the west gable of J. Hansen's house bears N.  $52^{\circ} 59'$  E; the cross on the Catholic Church, Mendocino, bears S.  $27^{\circ} 04'$  E); thence N.  $89^{\circ} 45'$  W. 25 feet to high water; thence by the meanders of high water southerly to the point beginning, including all detached rocks along the shore, containing 30.43 acres (more or less).

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Point Cabrillo Light Station  
45300 Lighthouse Road  
Caspar, CA  
Mendocino County

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

PT. CABRILLO  
SKETCH MAP  
Not to Scale

