

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cape Blanco Lighthouse

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Sixes vicinity; westernmost part of Cape Blanco  N/A not for publication

city or town Sixes  vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Curry code 015 zip code 97476

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James H. Smith August 21, 1992  
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Joseph F. Conroy - Deputy Asst. Dir. 2/5/93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Department of Transportation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	<u>for</u> Signature of the Keeper <u>Antoinette Allee</u>	Date of Action <u>4/21/93</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
3		structures
		objects
4		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Lighthouse Stations of Oregon MPS

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Lighthouse Station  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Lighthouse Station  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style  
(Stick Style workroom, altered)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
walls brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof metal  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Cape Blanco Lighthouse is sited on a high promontory on the westernmost rampart of Oregon, projecting one and one-half miles from the general trend of the coast. The lighthouse beacon is perched 245 feet above the mean sea level in the center of the bare tableland of the cape. The lighthouse is accessed by Cape Blanco Highway which winds around the low hills of the surrounding Sixes River Valley. Sixes, Oregon is approximately six miles east of the lighthouse reservation and the coastal town of Port Orford is around six miles south of the station along the coast. Cape Blanco, the oldest extant lighthouse in the state, is the southernmost light on the Oregon coast. The lighthouse is located 29 miles south of Cape Arago light station.

Cape Blanco is owned and operated by the United States Coast Guard and is an active aid to navigation. The light flashes in the following pattern: eclipse two seconds, light three seconds, eclipse two seconds, and light thirteen seconds. The beam can be seen for a distance of 22 miles. Cape Blanco State Park abuts the lighthouse reservation on the east. In 1990, a part of the reservation (15.4 acres) was transferred to the National Park Service and then to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The Coast Guard retained 32.3 acres of the parcel including the following structures: the original light tower and attached workroom, cisterns, garage, Loran transmitting antennas, radio beacon, and a finder calibration station.

The lighthouse tower with attached workroom, and three cisterns are the only significant structures remaining from the historic period. Newer non-contributing resources, constructed from the 1940s to the 1980s, were recently demolished when the Oregon State Parks took over management of a portion of the lighthouse reservation. Only a garage and duplex remain from the later building phase. Other non-contributing features include new aids to navigation which have been installed in recent years on the reservation: these structures are outside the nominated area.

### Resources No Longer Standing

Since 1870, numerous lighthouse buildings have erected and subsequently razed over the years at Cape Blanco station. All of the structures listed below were once integral parts of the lighthouse station. These resources are listed chronologically to provide an overview of the station's development.

A. *Keeper's Dwelling*, 1870: Sited approximately 100 feet south of the tower, the two and one-half story, T-shaped duplex was constructed of brick and had a daylight basement. Four corbelled chimneys surmounted the gable roof at either ends and a third corbelled chimney capped the rear ell. The six over six double hung wood sash windows were crowned with an arched lintel. A central wall gable on the front elevation was supported by brackets. The double entrance doors were sheltered by a shed roof which was supported by chamfered stickwork post. Brackets and cross bracing decorated the front porch. Prior to 1900, the porch was enclosed due to the harsh coastal weather. The residence displayed elements of the Stick Style, popular during the 1870s, and was painted white with green shutters. The keepers' residence is almost identical in plan and design to the residence constructed at Yaquina

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Head which was built two years after Cape Blanco's keeper's dwelling. Demolished, ca. 1967.

B. *Privies*, date unknown: Two privies were built in conjunction with the completion of the keeper's dwelling. They were located behind (south) the dwelling. Demolished, date unknown.

C. *Cisterns*, 1870: The cisterns were located directly south of the keeper's dwelling and was constructed to house water for residential use. Demolished, date unknown.

D. *Barn*, 1885: The one and one-half story barn measured approximately 46 feet by 24 feet and was located east of the tower. A gable roof with a front wall gable covered the exterior of the dwelling which was clad with weatherboard siding. Six over six double hung wood sash windows punctuated the front and side elevations. A loft door was located on the front of the building along with the entrance door. Demolished, date unknown.

E. *Woodshed*, prior to 1889: The wood shed, a rectangular wood frame building, was located adjacent the barn. Demolished, date unknown.

F. *Oil Houses*, 1890. The detached oil houses, constructed of galvanized iron plates over a wood frame, were located directly west and east of the light tower. Metal doors with projecting cornice moldings were the only opening in the buildings. In 1888, mineral oil (kerosene) replaced lard oil at the station. Because of the explosive nature of kerosene, separate oil houses were built on site as mandated by the federal government. Originally, the lard oil was stored in drums on shelves in the attached workroom building of the tower. The structures measured approximately 8 feet 8 inches by 12 feet 2 inches. Demolished, the east building demolished prior to 1939; west building, date unknown.

G. *Storage Shed*, 1892: A new storage shed replaced the original woodshed which was located northwest of the barn. The building was a wood frame structure, rectangular in plan. Demolished, date unknown.

H. *Washhouse*, 1895: A small rectangular washhouse was located directly south of the keeper's dwelling. Demolished, date unknown.

I. *Water Tank*, ca. 1898. Water tanks were constructed on either side of the barn. The elevated towers were anchored to concrete pads. The upper portions of the tanks were demolished ca. 1924.

J. *Keeper's Dwelling*, 1909: Another keeper's dwelling was constructed east of the original duplex. The one and one-half story residence was rectangular in plan with a rear ell projection which housed the bathroom. Hip dormers projected from the front and rear of the gable roof. The three dormer windows were decorated with diamond shape panes on the upper sash. A Palladian window with a central keystone flanked by two smaller double hung windows

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embellished the gable ends. The windows were a combination of two over two and one over one double hung wood sash. The dormers and gable ends were clad with wood shingle and the body of the house was covered with weatherboard siding. Classical columns supported the hip roof of the porch. The dwelling had a concrete foundation. The residence was designed in the Colonial Revival Style, popular after the turn of the century. Demolished, ca. 1970.

K. *Water Tank*, ca. 1924. A new water tank was constructed on top of the existing water tower framing and concrete platform. The new tank, 12 feet in diameter, was constructed of vertical boards, resting on a 16 feet square platform. Demolished, 1982.

## Standing Resources

The extant stations buildings at Cape Blanco (the tower with attached workroom, and cisterns) are excellent examples of 19th and 20th century station structures. The resources are virtually intact on the exterior and retain integrity of setting and materials. There are five contributing features in the nominated area. The following is a discussion of the physical characteristics of the four contributing features:

### 1. Lighthouse Tower and Attached Workroom (1870) - Contributing Structure

*Lighthouse Tower.* The conical brick Cape Blanco lighthouse tower, completed in 1870, rises to a height of 245 feet above the mean sea level: the tower is approximately 59 feet high. Constructed of concrete, the foundation supports the 21 foot cylindrical random rubble base which is articulated by a projecting beltcourse on the top and bottom. The beltcourses are covered with a metal shell. The slightly battered, conical shaft of the tower is 41 feet high from the top of the base to the underside of the gallery. The outer walls are approximately one foot and ten inches thick and the inner walls vary from nine to seventeen inches. Three segmental arched four-pane windows pierce the shaft of the tower and are void of trim with the exception of a projecting sill. The window panes are recessed approximately one foot from the exterior surface of the shaft.

Four windows light the interior of watchroom at the top of the shaft. The slightly arched window heads are defined by heavy, raised boxed trim (sills project approximately 6 inches further than the window trim). A projecting metal clad beltcourse, at the window sill level, encircles the tower. A double row of dentils and corbelling embellishes the top of the tower under the gallery.

The shaft is surmounted by a cast iron gallery which projects slightly over the shaft. A simple iron railing with straight balusters encircles the lantern room. The lantern room is comprised of three tiers of windows separated by metal framework. Hand-holds, used as grips when performing maintenance work, are on the top two tiers of the exterior framing of the lantern room windows. The lantern room is capped with an iron plate conical roof. A ball vent and lightning rod cap the apex of the roof.

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The main features of the interior of the lighthouse tower are the staircase, watchroom, and the lantern room. An semi-circular iron staircase extends from the floor to the watchroom at the top of the shaft. Three landings are positioned at various intervals in the shaft. The semi-circular spiral staircase terminates at the watchroom which is lit by four, four-pane windows. A straight flight of stairs leads up to the lantern room above.

The lantern room is enclosed with three tiers of windows held in place by iron sashes. The eight-sided bullseye Second Order Fresnel lens is positioned in the center of the lantern room and is illuminated by a 1,000-watt quartz iodine bulb. The spider frame work above the lens is still intact but has a newer curtain rod. An emergency light has been installed in the interior of the lantern room: the majority of the other emergency lights were installed on the exterior of the gallery rail.

The tower is in fair-good condition. Deterioration of the iron components are most evident, especially the gallery railing. The tower has been stained with rust from the iron gallery. The major alteration to the tower has been the replacement of the original multi-pane windows in the shaft and watch tower.

*Workroom:* The one-story rectangular workroom, attached to the lighthouse tower, is covered with a moderately pitched, gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingle. The workroom measures approximately 15 feet 6 inches (east-west) by 23 feet (north-south) and is constructed of white-painted brick. A smaller, enclosed entrance portico with a gable roof is attached to the south elevation of the workroom. The portico is clad with painted wood shingles and a metal entrance door is on the east elevation.

Two segmental four over four double-hung windows, are located on both the east and west elevations. The windows are void of decorative details with the exception of a slightly projecting sill. Shutters once protected the windows which is evident by the hardware flanking the windows. A beltcourse extends around the bottom of the building above the brick foundation. Small vent holes covered with screening are located in the foundation.

The interior of the workroom is divided into two separate rooms: originally the north room functioned as the oil storage room and the southern room was the workroom. The segmental arched doorway to the workroom is a solid metal door. A three light transom surmounts the doorway which leads to the entrance portico. A stove pipe hole is located on the south wall of the oil room. The floors are concrete.

The workroom is in fair to good condition. Alterations to the building included removal of the central corbelled chimney, brackets and king truss on the gable end, and shutters. The entrance portico was reconstructed prior to 1936: the entrance door was moved to the west elevation and a window added to the south elevation of the portico. Currently, the door is on the east elevation.

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### 2. Cisterns (ca. 1895, ca. 1909) - Contributing Structures

Three cisterns are located south of the tower and once supplied the water to the keepers' dwellings. The southernmost cistern was associated with the dwelling constructed in 1909 and the other two were associated with the keeper's duplex. The cisterns have a concrete rim and metal cap.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Maritime Transportation

Culture: Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1870-1939

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1870

1895

1909

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Lieutenant R. A. Williamson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Supervising Engineer

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

U.S. Coast Guard - 13th District  
Seattle, Washington



Cape Blanco Lighthouse  
Name of Property

Curry County OR  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ca. 1.10

Cape Blanco, Oregon 1:24000

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	1	0
---	---	---

 Zone 

3	7	2	3	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

 Easting 

4	7	4	3	7	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Northing

3 

--	--	--

 Zone 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

2 

--	--	--

 Zone 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

4 

--	--	--

 Zone 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Donovan

organization Donovan and Associates date August 1991

street & number 111.5 Third Street telephone (503) 386-6755

city or town Hood River state Oregon zip code 97031

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name U.S. Coast Guard, Thirteenth District

street & number 915 Second Street telephone (206) 553-5864

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98174

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Cape Blanco Lighthouse, constructed in 1870, is the oldest and most westerly lighthouse on the Oregon coast. The Cape Blanco Lighthouse station meets the requirements for registration as defined by the multiple property submission "Lighthouse Stations of Oregon". The station's significance is evaluated in respect to its historic context; Maritime Transportation in Oregon, and its architecture. The station derives significance under Criterion A for association with Oregon's critical reliance on maritime transportation and the aids that made navigation possible during the states early development. The growth of commerce and subsequent settlements along the Oregon coast is also directly linked with the establishment of the lighthouse stations.

The Cape Blanco Lighthouse is an excellent example of its type and method of construction. The tower with attached workroom and cisterns are also significant under Criterion C. The well preserved tower represents the oldest tower on the Oregon coast. The station meets registration requirements for its property type. Although the remainder of the historic buildings have been demolished, the structures still retains integrity of setting. There are no non-contributing buildings or features in the nominated area.

The period of significance spans the years from 1870 to 1939. The year, 1870, marks the completion of the lighthouse; the end date, 1939, reflects the year the Lighthouse Bureau was superseded by the United States Coast Guard.

### *Native Americans*

Registration of the Cape Blanco Lighthouse is not proposed on the basis of prehistoric archaeological values, either within or adjacent to boundaries of the nominated area. Archaeological features require evaluation under Criterion D. Because this is not an archaeological site nomination, and in accordance with instructions for completing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, "cultural affiliation" is not specified among the descriptors for data entry above. Nevertheless, to make the overall context for Cape Blanco Lighthouse complete, it is important to identify the Native American culture so long associated with the cape.

Cape Blanco, the farthest west point of land on the Oregon coast, is located in ancestral territory of the Rogue River Indians, an Athabascan-speaking family that claimed much of the Rogue River drainage and the Upper Umpqua to the north. The tribal sub-group that inhabited the watershed of the Sixes River, which has its outfall on the north side of the cape, has been named Sixes. The southern reach of the cape, where the Elk River flows into the Pacific, may have been claimed at times by the Tututni.

The time depth of the occupation at Cape Blanco is unknown. While there are archaeological features on the cape (35 CU 2), no intact sites are included in the nominated area of approximately 1.10 acres.

The discussion of Native American culture at Cape Blanco is provided by the State Historic Preservation Office and is based on the following sources: Judith A. Farmer and Kenneth L.

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Holmes, *An Historical Atlas of Early Oregon*, Portland: Historical Cartographic Publications, 1973; Stephen Dow Beckham, "Historical and Archaeological Resources of the Oregon Coastal Zones: A Resource Inventory to the Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Commission, September 1974; Jeff Zucker, ed., *Oregon Indians: Culture, History and Current Affairs; An Atlas and Introduction*, Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1983.

### *Cape Blanco*

Cape Blanco Lighthouse, constructed in 1870, is the oldest and most westerly lighthouse on the Oregon coast. Cape Blanco was one of the earliest geographic features named by an European explorer on the Pacific Northwest coast. Martin d'Anguilar, a Spanish explorer, is credited with naming Cape Blanco in 1603. Cape Blanco, or "white cape", was named for the chalk-like color of the rock. On a voyage in April 1792, Captain George Vancouver renamed the headland Cape Orford after a long-time friend, the Earl of Orford. Despite the effort by Vancouver to change the cape's name to Cape Orford, the name Cape Blanco persevered.

Nearly sixty years passed between Vancouver's voyage and next exploration of the cape. Captain William Tichenor, with his vessel the *Sea Gull*, discovered Port Orford harbor in 1851 on a journey from San Francisco to Portland. The harbor was located about 10 miles south of Cape Blanco. Tichenor officially claimed and recorded a section of land at the state surveyor's office in Oregon City. His claim encompassed the site around the present day town of Port Orford. On the journey back from San Francisco, Tichenor brought with him a group of settlers who were commissioned to build a road from the new settlement of Port Orford over the Cascades. This road would function as a communication line for the burgeoning gold mines in California and the Rogue River. The road was never realized due to conflicts with the Native American tribes in the area; the settlers returned to San Francisco.

As a result of the Native American uprisings, the area was chosen as the site of an early army fort, Fort Orford, constructed in 1851-52 under the supervision of Lieutenant Wyman. The fort was a logistical point of transfer for supplies shipped from Portland to San Francisco, and was built to establish a military presence in the remote coastal area.

In 1853, gold was discovered in the sandy beaches along a thirty mile strip of beach near Port Orford; this discovery changed the face of the small coastal settlement. Thousands of hungry gold seekers poured into the area in search of riches. Within a few weeks time, the small town had grown into a bustling seaport. Steam and sailing ships came to the port with passengers, mail and supplies to meet the demand of the growing community. By 1855, there were six hotels, nine retail stores, two meat markets, two drug stores, a bakery, a billiards parlor, saloons and residences, including hundreds of tents (*Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 1924, p. 321). The town was officially platted the same year by Reginald H. Smith. A hotel was established in the town in the late 1850s/early 1860s; the proprietor was known to place a large lantern in the window on the ocean side to help guide mariners into port. This was the first attempt to supply a navigational aid at the location.

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To meet the demand for building supplies, mills developed in the area. The vast resources of the forested land in the surrounding mountains were soon realized. This area became known for its beautiful stands of white cedar. The cedar, Port Orford Cedar, was exported throughout the world. Because of its proximity to California, Port Orford was also an early stopover for coastal steamers and mail ships travelling to and from San Francisco and Portland. Many shipwrecks occurred at the prominent headland because of the lack of a guiding light. Early government surveyors noted the need for a lighthouse along the Port Orford coast because of the prominent headland and the shipping and commerce which were developing around the port.

Appropriations were made for the a lighthouse in the mid-1860s. The land for the lighthouse reservation was purchased by the United States Government in 1867 and encompassed 47.7 acres. Construction on the lighthouse station was slated to begin in 1868, but was delayed due to the weather. As stated in a report to the lighthouse board

*The amount of rainfall at Cape Blanco is excessive, being equalled at only two other points in the United States, where records have been kept. Consequently any work, after the setting in of the rainy season, could only be prosecuted at very great disadvantage and resulting expense. Meanwhile, the Cape has been cleared of timber, which has the effect, it is said, to considerably diminish the amount of fog in that locality (Annual Report, 1869)*

The lighthouse tower, from the ground to the focal plane of the lens, was originally planned at a height of 18 feet. Because a bluff would obscure some of an 18 foot tower, the height was increased to 50 feet; the total height of the tower was 59 feet. The lighthouse was sited on a cliff, 245 feet above the ocean. The final plans for the lighthouse were signed by Army Corps of Engineers Major Robert S. Williamson. The Army Corps of Engineers, working in conjunction with United States Lighthouse Board, was usually active in the siting, designing and construction of the lighthouse stations until the first decade of the 20th Century. The Corps supplied the technical expertise necessary in the construction and maintenance of the lighthouses.

After Cape Blanco lighthouse was completed in 1870, the station was described as a

*Primary seacoast light, the lighthouse is situated on the highest part of Cape Orford from which heavy trees were cut when the building was erected. It is nearly 200 yards inside the western part of the cape (Pacific Coast Pilot, ca. 1875).*

To cut transportation expenses, a deal was made with a local settler in the area to manufacture bricks for the construction of the tower and the residence; this would save the freight charges of shipping the bricks from San Francisco. Two hundred thousand bricks were made locally for the construction, at a cost of \$25 per thousand. The first eight thousand bricks were made in the fall of 1868 and were of acceptable quality. The second batch, made in the spring of 1869, were rejected because of poor quality. The construction was supervised by Lieutenant R.A.

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Williamson, an Army Corps of Engineers officer. The tower and residence were completed in 1870 at a cost of around \$100,000.

Cape Blanco lens was classified as a First Order seacoast lens according the Lighthouse Board's correspondence upon its illumination. The lens, however, was somewhat smaller in size than the standard First Order lens. Measuring approximately six feet eight inches high and four feet eight inches in diameter, the lens more closely matched the standard dimensions of a Second Order lens (six feet one inch high by four feet seven inches in diameter), measuring six feet one inch high and four feet seven inches in diameter. The lens was manufactured by Henry Le Pautre of Paris at a cost of \$20,000. Producing 45,765 candlepower, the original five wick oil-fueled lamp was visible for a distance of 22 miles. The massive lens was shipped to the site and hoisted up the cliff face to its new home atop the Cape Blanco lighthouse.

The fuel for the kerosene and later the Bunsen lamp (installed in 1910) was furnished by a 70 pound pressure tank which was located in the watchroom, the deck below the lantern room. A weight fitted snugly in the tank on top of the kerosene and acted like a piston to force the oil up into the lamp at a even flow. The flow was gauged by the size of the weight . The lens cage was rotated by ball bearings sealed in a bath of oil powered by a motor.

The exposed site of lighthouse caused damage, requiring frequent repairs to the station buildings. In 1879, weather damaged necessitated the re-shingling of the roof of the residence. All the shutters were made solid to prevent damage to the window glass during sand and wind storms. On January 9, 1880, a tornado type gale damaged many of the station buildings. Materials were shipped to the station for repairs in February; the fence and several of the outbuildings were damaged during the storm. The need for constant repairs to the barn motivated the keepers to move the barn to a more sheltered location in 1890.

A wagon road connecting the station to Port Orford was a constant source of trouble for the keepers. Completed in 1884, the road extended across the beach for one-half the distance of the roadway; the portion of the road along the beach could only be used during low tide. The mouth of the Elk River was a constant source of trouble along the road; dangerous quicksand was often a hazard to the traveler. A request was written to the Lighthouse Board in 1884 stating the need for appropriations for the purchase of land that circumvented the beach route. The request stated:

*The present road from the lighthouse to Cape Orford, the nearest post-office, is along the ocean beach for about half the distance. Elk River empties into the ocean on the beach, producing quicksand. The beach cannot be traveled except at low tide, and the ascent at either end is difficult and dangerous. A request for the purchase of this right of \$2,000 was needed.*

In 1886, the new 7,000 foot road was completed, linking the station with the county road leading to Port Orford. The same year, an official topographic survey was conducted at the station; the reservation was subsequently enclosed with barbed-wire fence with a board on top to exclude cattle and sheep from the station. Erosion of the banks and cliffs was also a problem at the station. The

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
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keepers were kept busy planting new grasses or transplanting native vegetation to help stabilize the constantly shifting banks.

The lamp in the lantern room was converted to kerosene fuel in 1889. By federal regulation, the kerosene had to be kept in a "fireproof" building away from the lighthouse tower. The oil houses were shipped to the site in 1889 and erected in 1890. A board walkway connected the two oil houses with the light tower. Other station buildings included the brick keeper's duplex, painted white with green shutters (1870), a barn (1885), wood shed (1889), storage shed (1892), a washhouse (1895) and a keeper's cottage (1909). Requests for a new keeper's dwelling started in 1897: the residence was finally approved and built in 1909.

Cape Blanco had many keepers during its pre-automation period. The first keeper of the light was H. Burnap who staffed the station until 1874, when C.W. Terry was appointed keeper. James Langlois, appointed as an assistant keeper to the lighthouse in 1875, put in 42 years of service at the station. He became synonymous with the station and was head keeper from 1883 until 1912. In 1903, Mrs. Mabel Bretheron assisted Mr. Langlois as the second assistant lighthouse keeper; Bretheron was thought to be the first women assigned to a primary seacoast lighthouse in Oregon.

The station was primarily self-sufficient. A large garden, located northeast of the tower by the original barn, supplied the station with produce. Station animals were used as a source of transportation as well as food. A fish pond was located directly east of the tower and provided the station attendants and their families with fresh fish.

Despite the strong beam of the tower, many shipwrecks occurred along the shores of Cape Blanco. The *Victoria* struck an off shore reef in 1883, a loss of \$120,000. The *Alaskan*, a steamer, sank in 1889 in the rough seas around the Cape, killing 31 of the 47 people on board. On December 18, 1919, the *J.A. Chanslor* was wrecked along the rocks; only three crew members survived the wreck (Gibbs, 1986: 109).

The light tower was electrified in ca. 1936, decreasing the demand for the number of keepers. Although the lighthouse did not take as much tending upon the installation of electricity, the station remained an active aid to navigation. In 1939, a series of radio towers were erected south of the light tower; the station became a vital part of the new radio navigational systems. During World War II, a navy observation deck was built at the southern end of the cape as a lookout post for sighting enemy vessels. The foundation of the building is still intact. In the 1950s, more long range radio signal equipment was installed and buildings were erected at the station. Some of the structures built during the 1950s included a barracks, a signal and power building, a garage and storage building, a transmitter, a four-plex, and a power building. The station continued to expand in the 1960s with the addition of a rheostat building, additional barracks, radio towers, a masonry garage and water treatment building, a duplex and pump house.

In 1990, part of the original lighthouse reservation (15.4 acres) was transferred to the National Parks Service. The federal agency subsequently decided a portion of the land to the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department for use as a state park. The acreage is now part of the 1,895 acre

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Cape Blanco State Park. In an effort to return the land and station to its original state prior to the transfer, many of the station buildings constructed from the 1950s to the 1980s were torn down . Only a few buildings remain on the site: a garage and duplex, an electronics building and radio signal equipment, including several antennas and microwave antennas. The lighthouse tower is still owned and maintained by the Coast Guard as a functioning aid to navigation. The tower, attached workroom and cisterns are the only intact features from the historic period.

Note: For more detailed descriptions of the historic context, the various governmental agencies involved in the siting, construction and management of the lighthouse stations, please see the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property nomination entitled, "Lighthouse Stations of Oregon" completed in August 1991.

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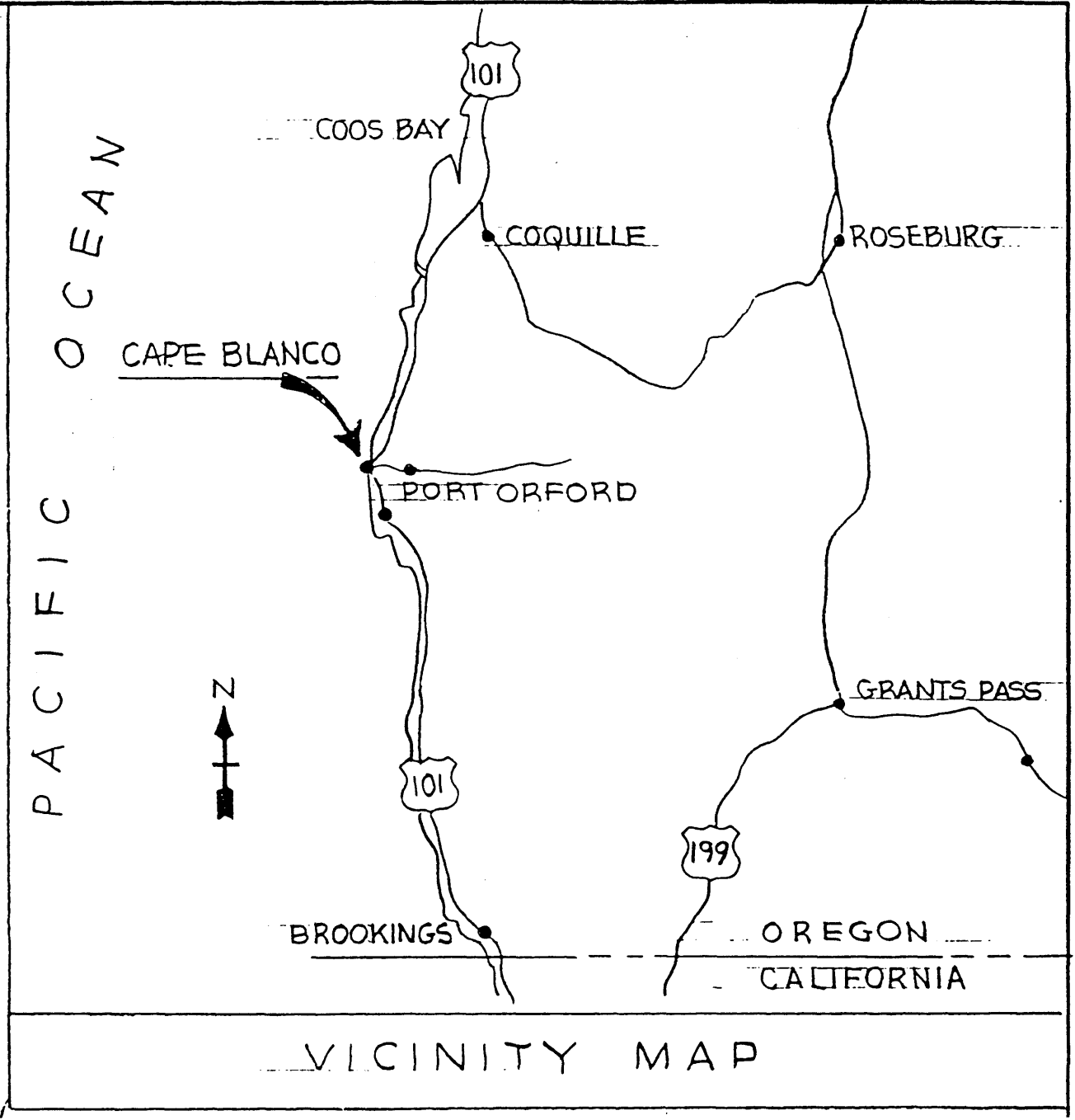
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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated area is located in T22S, R13W, Sec. 7 on a westerly point of Cape Blanco in the Sixes, Oregon vicinity. Slightly more than one acre in size, it is a rectangular area with a small flag to the south. The rectangular area measures approximately 200 feet by 240 feet. It is described as follows: commencing at point 1 (the middle of the southernmost cistern) to point 2, an East-West line is drawn due East for a distance of 5 feet; thence North a distance of 10 feet to point 3; thence due East for a distance of 130 feet to point 4; hence due North 240 feet to point 5; thence due West 200 feet to point 6; thence due South 240 feet to point 7; thence due East 60 feet to point 8; thence due South 10 feet to point 9; thence due East to the point of beginning.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated parcel of ca. 1.10 acres encompasses the area where historically the majority of the station buildings were located. A 1909 map indicated a fence around this portion of the reservation which included the tower, two dwellings, two oils houses and the cisterns. The nominated area includes the tower with attached workroom and cisterns, the only remaining features from the historic period.



PACIFIC OCEAN

CAPE BLANCO



COOS BAY

101

COQUILLE

ROSEBURG

101

PORT ORFORD

GRANTS PASS

199

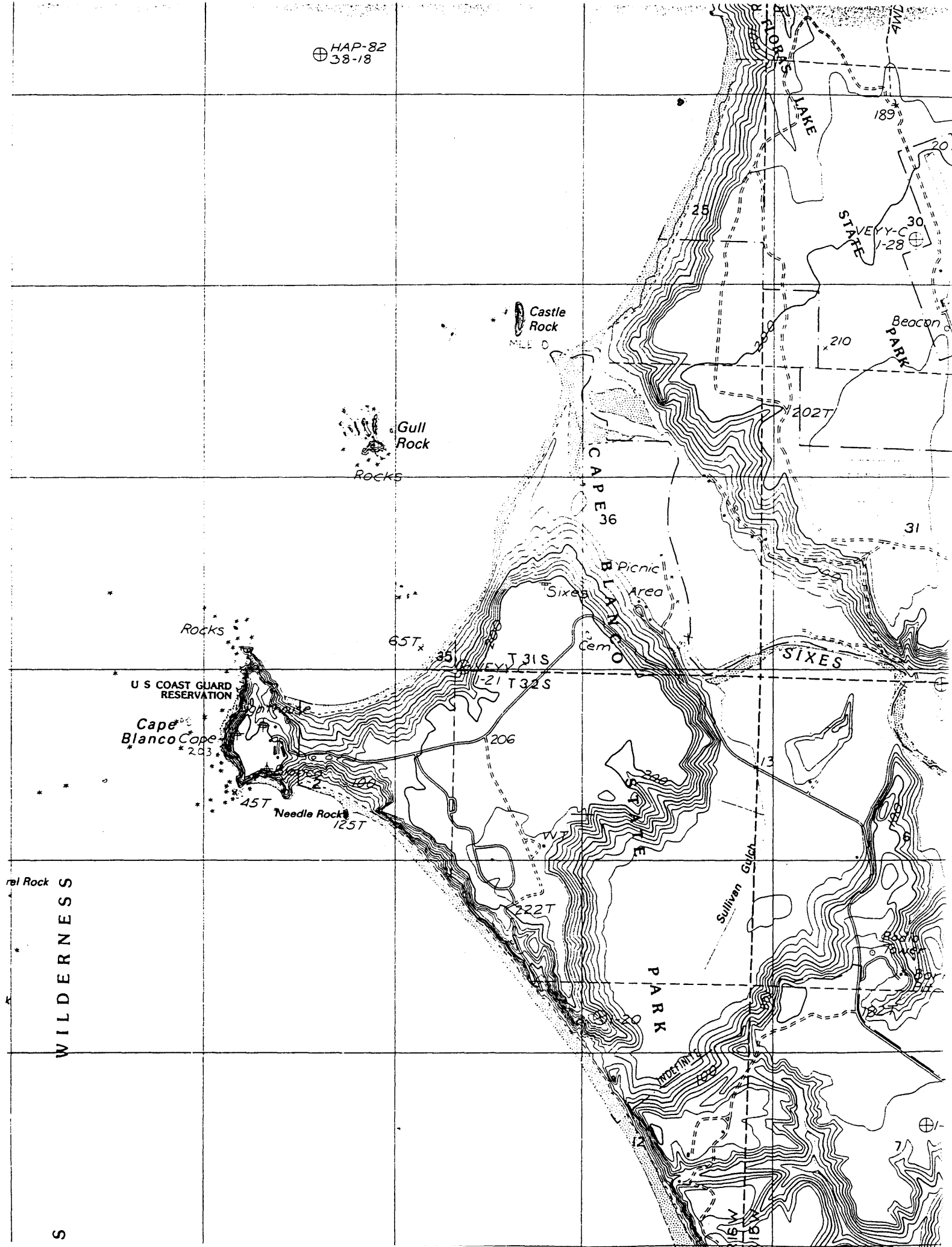
BROOKINGS

OREGON

CALIFORNIA

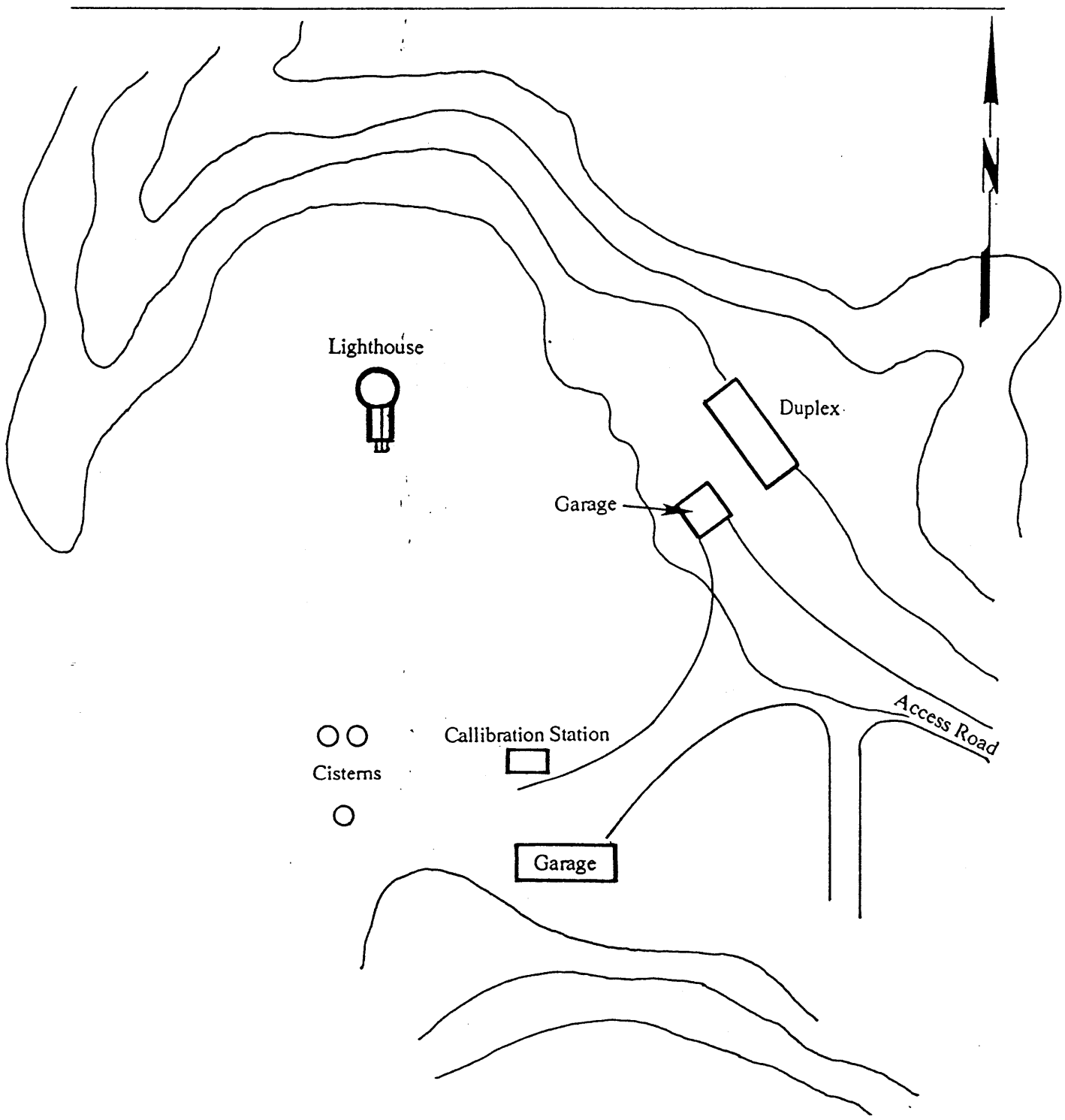
VICINITY MAP

HAP-82  
38-18



Wilderness  
Area

S



Lighthouse



Duplex

Garage



Callibration Station



Cisterns

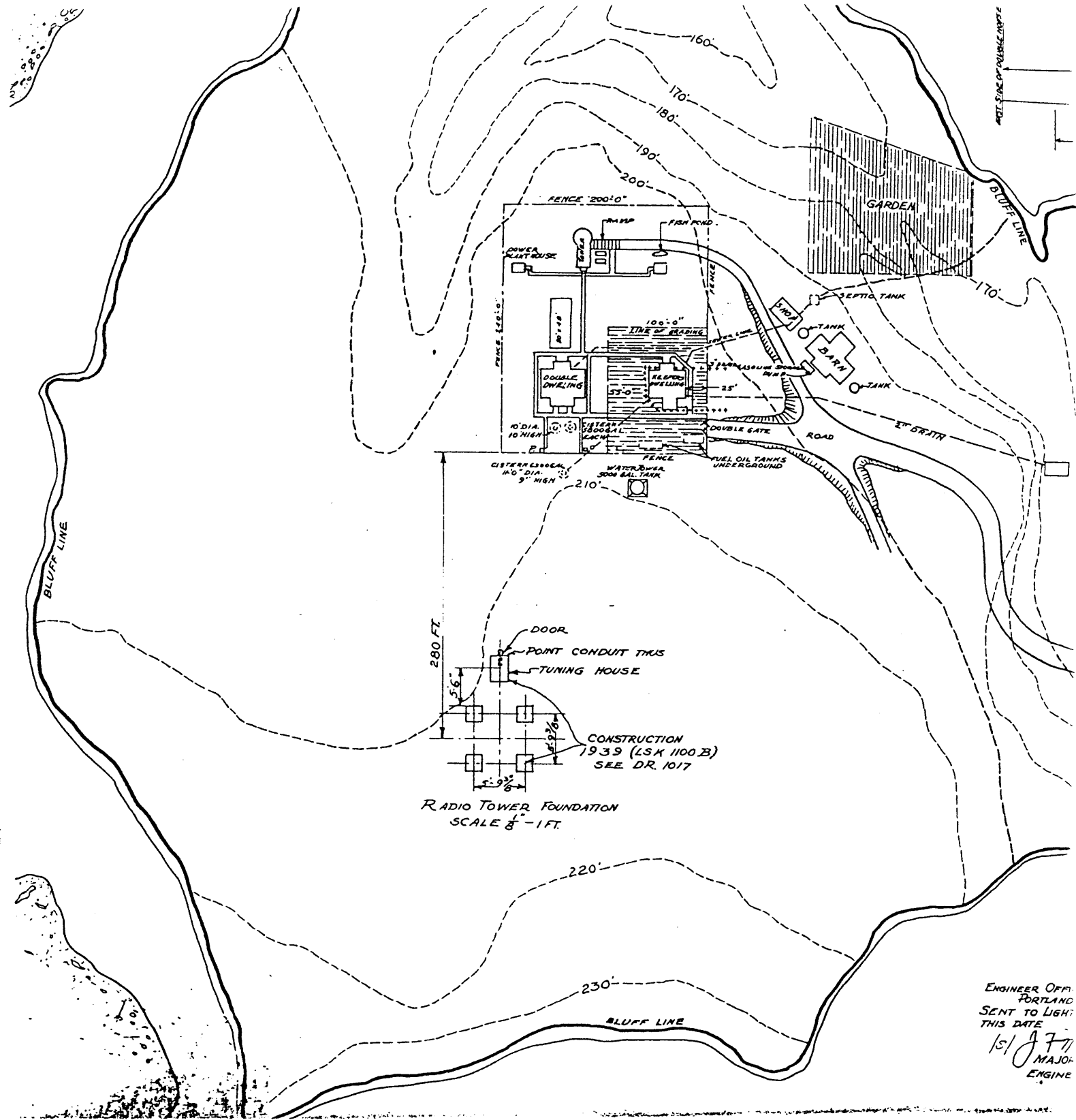


Garage



Access Road



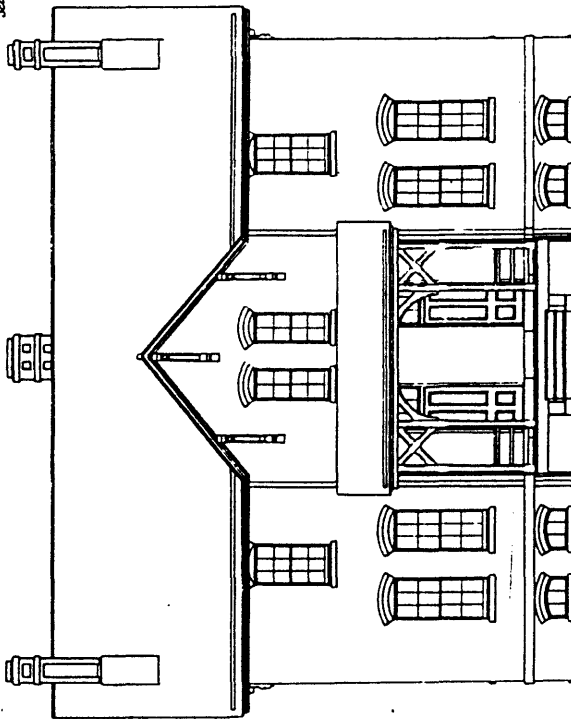


ENGINEER OFFICE  
 PORTLAND  
 SENT TO LIGHT  
 THIS DATE  
 15/ J.F.M.  
 MAJOR  
 ENGINEER

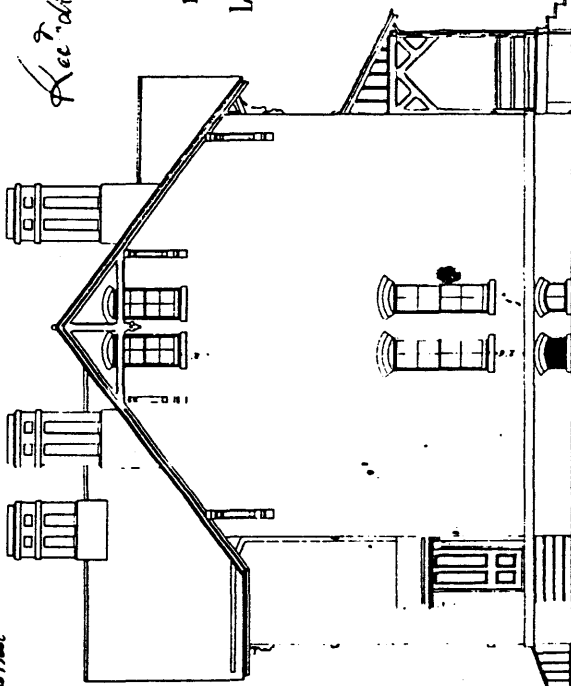
DISTRICT.		
B	CHANGES & INK TRACING	CY 4/23/44
A	REVISED	J.M.M.
CAPE BLANCO LIGHT STATION		
PLOT PLAN		W. LEICK
UNIVERSITY OF THE COAST		AS NOTED
		19 MARCH 1909
		2 2
LT. COMDR.	CONDR. CIVL. ENGINEER	1003.
CAPT. (C) ENGR. OFFICER		

**ELEVATIONS**

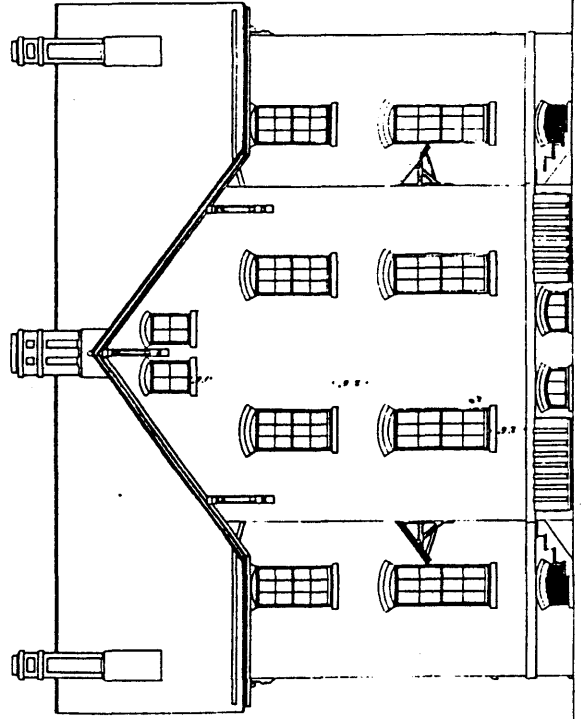
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FRONT



SIDE



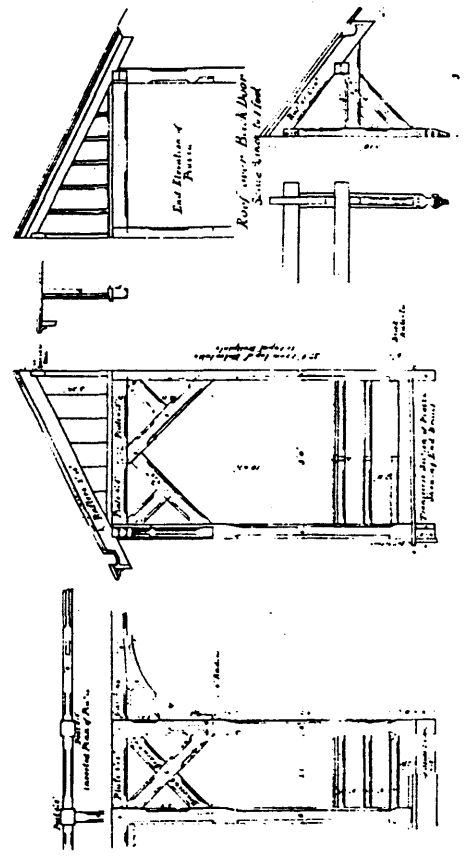
REAR

Double House for Lighthousekeepers  
See plan / 13  
SHEET 2.

13<sup>th</sup> LIGHTHOUSE DISTRICT  
LIGHTHOUSE DWELLING  
CAPE BLANCO,  
OREGON.

R. S. Richardson  
Arch. Engr. U.S.A.  
Aug. 7, 1900  
Byman 20.18.19.14.15.16.17.18.19.20.

Details of Front Piazza  
Scale 1 inch to 1 foot

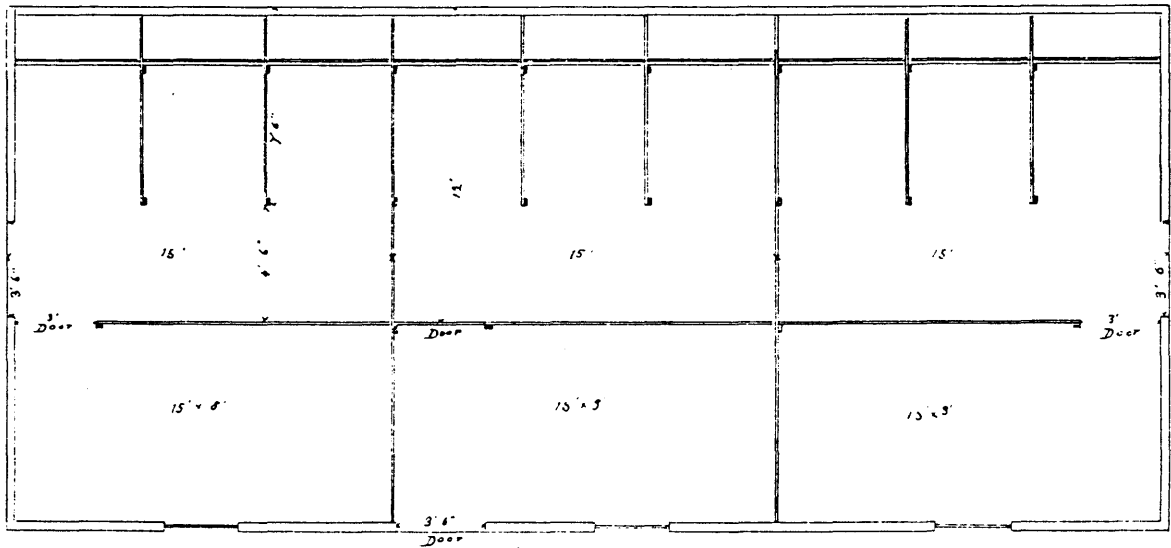


13<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
S.B. 16 Mar. '70.

Barn for Cape Blanco Light Station, Oregon



Front Elevation



Plan

Scale 1/4" = 1 foot

17-20-1