

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received **AUG 16 1983**

date entered

Received OHP 4/20/82

**1. Name**

Final

historic Crescent City Lighthouse

and/or common Battery Point Lighthouse

**2. Location**

street & number <sup>1st St.</sup> Battery Point Island ~~end of A Street~~ n/a not for publication

city, town Crescent City n/a vicinity of

state California code 06 county Del Norte code 015

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name County of Del Norte

street & number Court House - H Street

city, town Crescent City N/A vicinity of state California 95531

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Del Norte County Court House

street & number H Street - Court House Building

city, town Crescent City state California

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California title has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1973  federal  state  county  local

University Art Galleries  
depository for survey records University of California

city, town Santa Barbara state CA

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>    N/A    </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Crescent City Lighthouse occupies a small island several hundred feet offshore at Crescent City, accessible from the mainland at low tide. The complex includes the 1856 lighthouse, 3 water tanks and two small outbuildings. The lighthouse was typical of the design used for the first lighthouses built on the West Coast of the United States: essentially a Cape Cod dwelling with a tower rising through the center of it. The lighthouse is a four room, story and a half structure with basement, made of granite. Attached to the rear is a wooden lean-to that served the keepers as a kitchen. Subsequent additions include a woodshed on the north end and an enclosed entrance porch. Integrity overall, however, still remains high.

The main structure, built according to the Light House Service specifications in 1856, is a one and half story stone building with basement, tower in the middle, spiral stairs, and fireplaces on each end. The building is symmetrical, with four windows flanking the central entrance, recessed into the 2' thick stone walls. Old records show that the granite for the lighthouse was shipped in; timber was milled locally in Crescent City. The structure was originally white with red roof, green shutters and a black lantern. In 1880 the color of the dwelling was changed to light buff and the tower was painted white.

The central tower is 77 feet above mean high water and contained<sup>a</sup> Fourth Order Fresnel Lens.<sup>1</sup> In 1881 mineral oil lamps replaced lard oil lamps and three years later the fourth order constant level lamp was replaced by a Haines mineral oil lamp. New fourth order lamps were installed in 1898. In 1907, the lens was replaced with a new four panel fourth order fixture and the characteristic changed from flashing white every 90 seconds to flashing white every 15 seconds. In July 1939, the U. S. Coast Guard took over the Crescent City Lighthouse, from the defunct lighthouse service. An automatic light was installed in July 1953 and on November 1 of the same year the government officially leased the lighthouse to Del Norte County. On December 10, 1982, Battery Point Lighthouse became a private aid to navigation and now its 1,000 watt beacon shines nightly, guiding sailors and fishermen to port.

In addition to the 1856 lighthouse, the property includes 3 watertanks (1904), an oil house (1907), and a boat house added at a later date. The buildings are in good repair being maintained by the County of Del Norte and the Del Norte County Historical Society

<sup>1</sup> Augustin Jean Fresnel is credited with the development of the revolutionary light-house optics. He succeeded in obtaining circularly polarized light by means of a rhomb of glass, known as "Fresnel's rhomb," having acute angles of 54 degrees and obtuse angles of 126 degrees. The "order" denoted the size of the lens, the first order being the largest and decreasing in size.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1856 **Builder/Architect** United States Lighthouse Service

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Built on an island and lighted in 1856, the Crescent City Lighthouse was the 11th lighthouse built on the West Coast. It continued in service for over 100 years, and now serves as a museum. A notable surviving example of the earliest design for West Coast lighthouses, it is a tangible link with the early maritime history of the northern California coast. It is one of the oldest original lighthouses still standing on the West Coast, and the oldest on the north coast of California.

Crescent City began as an isolated town along the north coast of California in the 1850's. The rugged mountains and unbridged rivers surrounding this coastal community hindered the rapid development of an adequate land transportation system. The town's future depended on its harbor, a crescent shaped port, for a reliable access to the sea. Demands for improving the harbor including the construction of a lighthouse near the port's entrance were brought to the attention of the California legislature. On January 31, 1855, a concurrent resolution was passed urging the state's representatives in Congress to exert their energies in securing passage of an appropriation for the construction of lighthouses at Trinidad and Crescent City. On March 3, 1855, \$15,000 was appropriated by Congress for the Crescent City Lighthouse.

In 1856 construction of the lighthouse was begun on Battery Point islet, a rocky point of land accessible by foot from the mainland during periods of low tide. The Light House Service constructed a Cape Cod dwelling with a tower rising through the center. The light could be seen 14½ miles at sea, and was a significant navigational aid to ships traveling up and down the Pacific Coast for more than 100 years. As part of a series of Pacific Coast lighthouses it was a signal to ships at sea, providing bearings, as well as a warning, to ships. In addition it served to mark the entrance to the small harbor at Crescent City, which was especially important as a point of entry to the gold fields of Southern Oregon during the 1850's.

The building is also important for its architectural value. Built only 6 years after California's statehood, it is an important example of the early architecture of the state. The design of the building illustrates the diffusion of building types from the East to the cultural landscape of California during the early years of American settlement. It is one of the oldest lighthouses on the Pacific Coast and survives as a notable example of its type and period.

In 1953, the lighthouse was automated, and leased to the County of Del Norte. The light continued to operate until approximately 1965 when it was replaced by a light installed at the end of the new harbor jetty. In 1969 the federal government formally transferred the property to the County for "historical monument purposes". It was subsequently leased to the Del Norte County Historical Society, which maintains the property as a museum. Recently the light was reactivated and now serves as a private aid to navigation.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Smith, Esther R. The First Crescent City Lighthouse. Crescent City, CA 1956
2. Shanks, Janetta Thompson and Ralph Jr., Lighthouses and Lifeboats on the Redwood Coast. San Anselmo, CA 1978.
3. Holland, F. R. Jr., America's Lighthouses: Their Illustrated History Since 1716. Brattleboro Vermont, Stephen Greene Press, 1972.
4. Gibbs, Jim. West Coast Lighthouses. Superior Publishing Company, Seattle, 1974.

Acreage of nominated property 3/4 acre

Quadrangle name Sister Rocks, CA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Island off shore at Battery Point, Crescent City, CA, being an island except at low tide, the center of said island being located at approximately latitude 40° 44' 40" North, longitude 124° 12' 07" west. Boundaries encompass the entire island containing the historic lighthouse complex. Assessor's Parcel #118-020-18

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith A. Knitter, President (OHP staff revision 6/83)

organization Del Norte County Historical Society date April 1982

street & number 577 H Street telephone 707-464-3922

city or town Crescent City state California 95531

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *K. M. Gell*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date August 9, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in FR

National Register

date 9/15/83

*for Allores Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

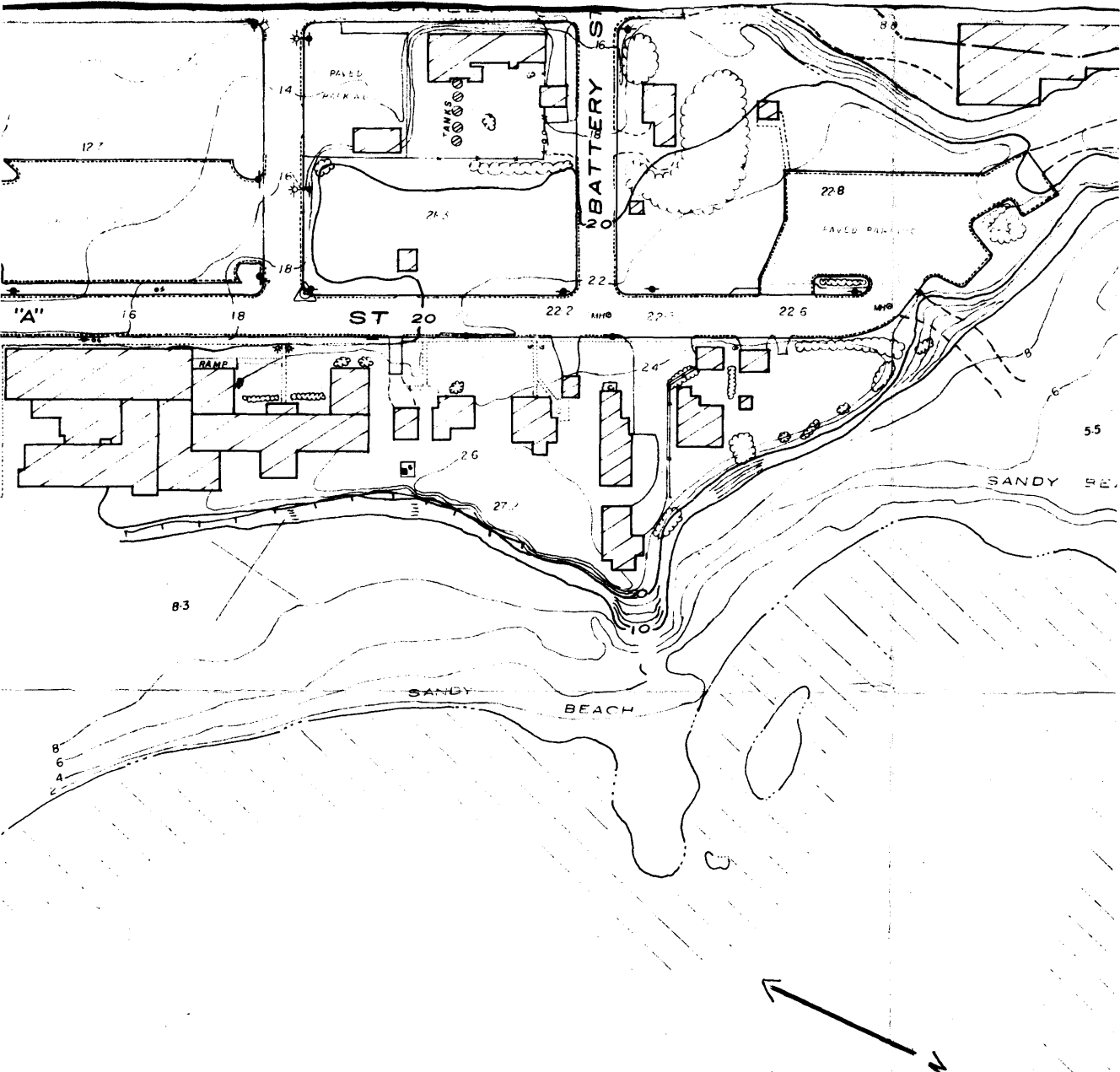
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RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

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State Historical Landmark No. 951  
October 4, 1982 State  
State Office of Historic Preservation  
P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento, CA 95811



Battery Point Light House  
 Battery Point  
 Crescent City, Calif.

1" to 100'

195600

