

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 675148

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RECEIVED APR 11 1979
DATE ENTERED JUL 5 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Klipsan Beach Life Saving Station

AND/OR COMMON The Barracks

LOCATION

W A 103
STREET & NUMBER State Highway 103 and Klipsan Beach Approach Road

CITY, TOWN Klipsan Beach
VICINITY OF 3rd-The Honorable Don L. Bonker

STATE Washington CODE 53 COUNTY Pacific CODE 049

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Ms. Barbara Campbell and Ms. Elizabeth Barbo, See Continuation Sheet

STREET & NUMBER Box 435

CITY, TOWN Ocean Park VICINITY OF Washington STATE 98640

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Pacific County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Cowlitz and Memorial Drive

CITY, TOWN South Bend Washington STATE 98586

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Pacific County Cultural Resource Survey

DATE 1978
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Historic Planner, Pacific County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN South Bend Washington STATE 98586

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The buildings and grounds of Klipsan Beach Life Saving Station are located on the Long Beach Peninsula of Pacific County. The surrounding village is known as Klipsan Beach. The station site consists of two acres. It is bordered to the north by the Klipsan Beach Approach Road (or 225th Street); to the east by SR 103; and to the south and west by private property. Historically the eastern boundary was the Ilwaco Railroad and Navigation Company right-of-way (1889-1930), and the western boundary was the primary beach dune. The beach dune was breached for boathouse access to the Pacific Ocean when the compound was first built. Today decades of sand accretion along the shoreline has created a new primary dune approximately 500 feet west of the old one. Driveways on the north, east, and west sides give access to the property. There is no remnant of the original picket fence and main gate which defined the perimeter of the site.

The grass covered compound is attractively landscaped with flowering shrubs, a small vegetable garden, and a variety of evergreens. There are nine buildings among the trees. All are single detached units. Seven of the structures are historically linked to the operation of the station between 1891 and 1947. Two were built by the Life Saving Service in 1891 and five were built by its successors the Coast Guard and Navy between 1921 and 1931. The two remaining buildings were built by private owners in the early 1970's.

The Klipsan Beach Station was originally outfitted by the 12th U.S. Life Saving District between May 20 and October 27, 1891. The first buildings were erected by F.W. Ritten and Company, a construction firm from Seattle. Ritten used locally sawed lumber and referred to standard building plans drawn by Charles Schlaar. In the possession of the National Archives is a bill to the superintendent showing that the first buildings to be constructed were the barracks, the boathouse, an equipment storage building and a flag staff platform. Of these buildings only the barracks, boathouse, and flag platform remain. The equipment storage building was torn down in 1967. Drawings from the National Archives dated May 23, 1905, show that the station crew constructed incidental structures such as a wooden lookout tower, 13'6" high with a 10'x10' house on top, a cistern and tank, several privy buildings, an alarm bell, a wood and wash house building, and a series of wood walkways joining the buildings. All of these improvements are gone. Cement replaced the wood walkways. Indoor plumbing replaced the cistern and privies.

The main building in the compound is referred to as the Barracks. It was built to house the station keeper, seven surfmen, and the mess hall and kitchen on the first floor. A locker room was located on the second floor. The front elevation of this one-and-a-half story wood frame structure faces east and is approximately 130 feet from the west line of SR 103. The rear elevation faces the Pacific Ocean directly west. The building is rectangular in shape and has a gabled roof with a triangular shaped dormer on both the front and rear slopes. Two single stack brick chimney's are located on either side of the dormer on the front slope. The roof is covered with cedar shakes. The gables and dormers are covered with cedar shingles in a fish scale pattern. The exterior walls were originally clad in fir drop siding. Vertical, board and batten now covers the rear and south side of the building. The lower story front windows are double hung and have transom panels. Several windows are four sashed with mullion between. The upper story windows are double hung, do not have transoms, and are smaller on the dormers. The front entrance has an open porch with railing and fancy trim. The rear entrance has a closed storm porch with three small windows.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891, 1921, 1928-1931 BUILDER/ARCHITECT F.W.Ritten and Co. and Matthews Bros

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Klipsan Beach Life Saving Station is a significant reminder of late Nineteenth Century mariner attempts to battle the vagaries of Northwest Coast weather. For 58 years this installation stood watch over the transportation lanes near the Peninsula shore. In high velocity gales, dense fog and pounding surf, life saving crews from Klipsan recovered the drowning victims of many wrecks. It was no easy task and it took surfmen with strength and dedication. The motto of the service was Semper Paratus (Always Prepared) and in the name of humanity they were. The low pay, non-existent retirement benefits and perilous working conditions attest to it.

Living in a world of steadily advancing technology makes it difficult to imagine the emotions that shipwrecks aroused in our forefathers. Generations have now grown up along the shores without ever hearing the cry of: "Ship Ashore!" But at one time emotions did run high, and nowhere along the West Coast was it dreaded more than the area around the Columbia River known as the "graveyard of the Pacific".

The Klipsan Beach Life Saving Station, first known as the Ilwaco Beach station, was established in 1889. It was one of nineteen life saving stations which protected the West Coast from Nome, Alaska, to the Golden Gate. For nearly sixty years the Klipsan Beach station provided salvage help and navigational assistance to mariners. Lighthouses, beacons, and similar navigational aids have been used through all the ages of man as principal instruments to assist mariners in finding their way. Organized physical assistance for shipwrecked mariners didn't begin in our nation until 1785. The first associations took the form of volunteer lifesaving services. The Federal Government made no attempts to fund these associations until New Jersey Congressman William A. Newell (Washington Territorial Governor 1880-84) made an appeal to the House of Representatives in 1848. Congress provided funding that year but it was decades before it appropriated sufficient funds to build and operate an adequate number of stations on all coasts.

Lighthouses and beacons came to the West Coast with the expansion of the United States. The Life Saving Service, a non-military division of the Treasury Department, came to the coast in 1871. Plans were made for the first station on the Washington Territory shoreline in 1873. Cape Disappointment, at the mouth of the Columbia, was chosen because it was the historical scene of countless shipwrecks beginning with the arrival of the first whites. The station was finally built in 1877 and manned with a paid station keeper and a volunteer crew. Today the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Cape Disappointment stills carries on the traditions of its predecessor in newer quarters.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	0
ZONE	

4	1	9	1	9	0
EASTING					

5	1	4	6	0	0	0
NORTHING						

B

ZONE	

EASTING			

NORTHING				

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property nominated is a rectangular piece of land in Section 4 of Township 11 North, Range 11 West, Pacific County, Washington. It is bordered to the north by the Klipsan Beach Approach Road for 397.8 feet; to the east by SR 103 for 221 feet; to the west by private property for 220.5 feet; and to the south by private property for 392.3 feet. The Pacific Ocean is directly west of the property.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Larry J. Weathers, County Historic Preservation Officer

ORGANIZATION Pacific County DATE December 1978

STREET & NUMBER Box 66 TELEPHONE 875-5591

CITY OR TOWN South Bend STATE Washington 98586

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X 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 Jeanne M. Welch DATE 4/2/79

TITLE _____ DATE _____

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION <u>Charles R. Henry</u> ATTEST: <u>W. Ray Luce</u> KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <u>7.5.79</u> KEEPER ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE <u>July 3, 1979</u>
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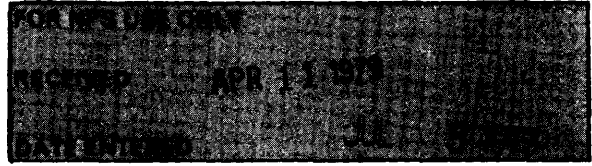
CONTINUATION SHEET

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- Mr. and Mrs. Ken Cornell, North Shore Blvd., Fox Island, WA 98333 ✓
- Mr. and Mrs. Jack Whitmore, 305 Hoge Bldg., Seattle, WA 98104 ✓
- Mr. and Mrs. William Buck, Box 106, Ocean Park, WA 98640 ✓
- Mr. Stuart Haywood, 2811-64th St. NW., Gig Harbor, WA 98335 ✓

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Several alterations to the exterior of the Barracks occurred between 1964 and the early 1970's. An open, projecting balcony was added to the rear slope of the roof. A small metal smoke stack projects from the roof of the balcony. A first floor addition with three double hung windows was attached to the south side of the building. A wooden bridge connecting the upper story of the Barracks to an adjacent duplex was added to the north side. Two new doors and four fixed windows replaced the double hung windows on the rear exterior wall. Except for the new board and batten exterior wall, all materials used in the remodeling were taken from buildings in the compound which were torn down.

The Barracks is presently used as a boutique and residence by the owners. Interior remodeling has been mostly restricted to the upper level turning it into living quarters. The original interior walls, vertical strips of lath covered with plaster, have been covered with panelling upstairs, and wallpaper in some rooms downstairs. Uncovered lath still shows inside the main hall closet. The original sash pulleys and brass hardware are still found on the windows. Some of the brass fittings have the date "1871" stamped on the backs and are illustrated with designs of Chinese origin.

The boathouse is the second building built in 1891. This one-and-a-half story wood frame structure is rectangular in shape and smaller than the Barracks. The front elevation faces the dunes and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The rear elevation faces the Barracks to the east. The bellcast hipped roof is topped with a cupola and weather vane. Wood shingles cover the roof and exterior walls, double hung windows are located on the south exterior wall, two sets of wooden double doors are attached to the building with large cast iron hinges on the front elevation, and there is a smaller double door with the same style hinge on the rear elevation. The north elevation has a double door with a platform porch. Above the door a homemade sign reads "Station #309". This was the number given the station in 1915 by the Coast Guard.

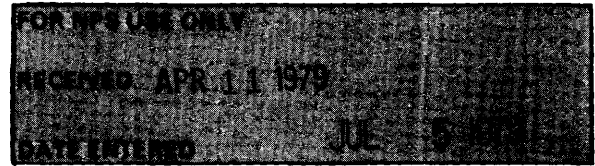
Several alterations to the boathouse occurred in the early 1970's. Several windows were replaced with aluminum framed sliding glass. A small metal smokestack was added to the north slope of the roof. The original diagonal, beaded sheathing in the front and rear door panels has been replaced with glass. The boat ramps on the front and rear elevations were replaced with patio style platforms.

The boathouse was originally built to hold the surfboats employed by the rescue crews. A team of horses drew the wooden boat carriage through the front doors and the horses were withdrawn through the opposing doors. Remodeling of the interior, as well as the exterior, has converted the boathouse into a summer cottage.

A second building phase in the compound occurred between 1921-1931. This phase was constructed under the orders of the U.S. Coast Guard, successor of the Life Saving Service. Thedford Leston Matthews and Zhetley Vesper "Zip" Matthews were the carpenters. The Matthews brothers were sons of Sedgewick Adelbert Matthews, an early peninsula carpenter

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and builder of the State Registered S. A. Matthews House in Ocean Park. Their work included the construction of an enlisted men's quarters, a new storage building, a Chief Petty Officers quarters, a radio tower and powerhouse, and a tractor garage.

The enlisted quarters and new storage building were both built by the Matthews Brothers in 1921. They are located in the southwestern quarter of the compound, with the storage building behind the quarters. The front elevations of both buildings face west. Both are one story, gabled buildings. The enlisted quarters is "L" shaped as the result of remodeling in 1949, and the storage building is rectangular. Exterior walls are cedar dropsiding. Original windows on both buildings have double hung sashes and vary in size. All doors on the two buildings face the ocean. A sliding glass patio door and platform porch were added to the enlisted quarters in later remodeling. A brick chimney on the enlisted quarters is attached to the exterior wall on the south elevation.

The enlisted quarters was built for Navy radiomen who shared the compound with the Coast Guard from 1920 to the 1940's. Both buildings are now owned by the same owner. The enlisted quarters is being used as a summer cottage and the storage building is being remodeled.

The Chief Petty Officer Quarters was built in 1928. The front elevation of this one-and-a-half story wood frame structure faces east like the Barracks and is approximately the same footage from SR 103 as the Barracks. The dwelling is square shaped and has a gabled roof. One brick chimney stack stands off-center on the front slope of the roof. The roof is covered with a composition roof like the original.

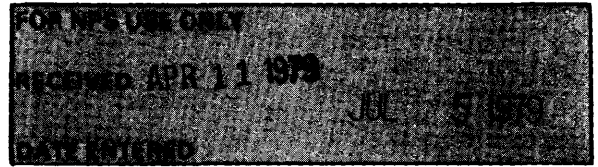
The exterior walls are clad with cedar dropsiding. Cedar skirting encloses the high pier foundation and crawl space. The front entrance has a closed porch with stairs and railing. Windows on the dwelling are all double hung and are smaller on the gables. The porch windows are single sashed and multi-paned. The front porch door has a transom above it and panes of glass on either side. The south side has a closed storm porch.

The Chief Petty Officer in charge of the Navy radiomen occupied this house when it was first built. The only exterior alteration to the Chief's Quarters has been the replacement of the kitchen window with a single pane of glass. The present owner of the quarters have made it their permanent residence.

The Matthews Brothers built the radio tower and powerhouse building in 1930-31 for the Navy Department. This building stood beside the lookout tower built in 1891. The radio tower was placed on the western border of the compound to allow north and south surveillance of the beach. The radio tower was built to house direction transmitting equipment and power generators for the compound. It is rectangular shaped and is an irregular three stories high. An open lookout box tops the third story. Portions of the roof are pyramidal shaped while other portions are flat. The first story exterior walls are made of concrete. The

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second, third and box platform stories are all constructed of wood with dropsiding exterior walls. An outside stairs with railing connects the ground level with the second story. An outside ladder connects the second story with the box platform. First story windows are large and multipaned with lugsills. The upper story windows are smaller versions of the lower story. The only entrance on the lower story is a double door with transom facing east. There is another entrance at the top of the stairs on the second story.

The radio tower and powerhouse is no longer used. It stands vacant with the lower story windows broken out and boarded up, the entrance door ajar, and the interior unkept. There are no plans for the restoration or remodeling of the tower.

The tractor garage was the last building constructed by the Matthews Brothers in 1931. It was built for the Coast Guard and contained a cleated tractor for pulling stranded vehicles out of the sand and surf. The garage is situated in the northwest section of the compound between the Boathouse and Klipsan Beach Approach Road. The garage doors open on to the road.

The garage is rectangular and gabled with a shingle roof. A small metal plumbing vent projects from the western slope of the roof. The exterior walls are covered with drop-siding. The eastern and western exterior walls both have one single sashed window with six panes a piece. The double garage doors have hinges similar to those on the boathouse, and the diagonally beaded sheathing panels are still in tact. The rear door is a smaller double leaf with plain trim.

The last two buildings on the compound grounds were built in the 1970's. The duplex was built by T.A. Bud Matthews, son of Thedford L. Matthews, in 1971. It is a square, two story, modern frame building with a low gabled roof. It sits on the site of the cistern, built in the 1890's, between the Barracks and the Klipsan Beach Approach Road.

The other building is a pre-fabricated, one story, metal storage building. It stands between, and forward of, the Barracks and Chief's Quarters.

The grounds of the former Klipsan Beach Station were always an integral part of the stations design and function. Unlike many government services the Life Saving Service remained primarily a local affair. The grounds housed the station crew and provided a place for the local residents to relax and picnic on a nice day. Today the two acre compound is divided into smaller tax lots and owned by several owners but they have maintained the park-like atmosphere of the tree shaded site. Despite several exterior remodeling jobs the compound is essentially as it was during its time as a United States Life Saving Station.

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The next station on the Washington Coast was planned for Shoalwater Bay, now Willapa Bay, at North Cove in 1876. It was built and manned by a paid keeper and volunteer crew in 1877 also. Getting together a crew of volunteers on a stormy night to risk their lives in the breakers sometimes proved next to impossible. Many times the Keeper found himself with one loyal volunteer - "Lighthouse" Charley Ma-Tote from the nearby Shoalwater Indian Reservation. In 1884-85 crews were hired and paid a salary for both stations. The North Cove station no longer exists. Erosion of beach sand in the area made it necessary to transfer personnel to a new station at Tokeland.

Because loss of life and property from wrecks showed signs of increasing, not decreasing the Superintendent of the Life Saving Service for the 12th District (San Francisco) decided to establish a station between the North Cove and Cape Disappointment sites. In July 1899, a commission under instructions from the Treasury Department, surveyed the beach peninsula of Pacific County, W.T., for a new life saving station. They were instructed to find a suitable location that was also inexpensive.

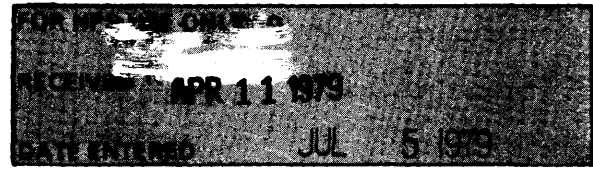
The commission settled on a piece of property approximately 14 miles north of Cape Disappointment and 12 miles south of the mouth of Willapa Bay. The area was known as Ilwaco Beach and the property belonged to a bachelor named Edwin G. Loomis. Edwin, and his younger brother Lewis, owned parcels of land throughout the peninsula. They were indefatigable promoters. Lewis was also the principal owner and president of the Ilwaco Railroad and Navigation Company. The tracks of his railroad ran along the eastern boundary of the property. The brothers pointed out how convenient the location would be for the new station and indicated that it was important that a decision be made immediately. In the commissioners report to Sumner I. Kimball, General Superintendent of the Service, Washington, D.C., dated October 16, 1889, they wrote:

"Mr. Loomis being at the time in precarious and failing health, and the property conveyed being valuable, and sought after by private parties, (an offer of Two Thousand-\$2000-dollars having been made therefore as a site for a hotel), at his suggestion, and in view of his physical condition, and the fact that in case of his demise the property would pass into hands involving reviewed negotiations and serious delays your commission assumed the responsibility of making the deed of record, and trust...under the circumstances may receive your approval."

The commissioners had purchased the two acre site from Loomis for \$350.00 in July of 1889. Edwin died on November 5, 1889.

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The chosen site was actually the most ideal in the area. Major consideration had been given to the frequency of wrecks in the immediate area and the good launching and landing position for surfboats. The main track of the railroad running along the border was an added incentive. Lewis Loomis generously proposed to place a side track extending along the northern boundary as well. This spur would run to the rear of the station where the boathouse would be located. A flatcar would be placed there so that the crew and boats from the station could be transported either north or south in cases of emergencies.

Between 1889-1892 the station was manned by volunteers from the local community. On stormy evenings a solitary volunteer watched over the beach. Downed ships were reported to Cape Disappointment by telegraph.

In 1891 preparations were finally made for a permanent station and a paid crew. F. W. Ritten and Company was contracted to build the necessary station buildings between May and October of that year. Volunteers manned the station until the end of the year. In November a British ship disintegrated on the sands near the Ilwaco Beach Station and seven men were lost. Manning of the station with a fulltime crew was expedited.

The Ilwaco Beach Life Saving Station was a patrol station manned by eight men, including the keeper of the station. Known as surfmen, crew members had to be able-bodied and experienced watermen. They also had to be under forty-five and able to read and write. The keeper, usually from the same area, was called "Captain" by the local residents.

Besides the buildings and the crew, three basic pieces of equipment made up the backbone of the life saving stations: boats, beach apparatus and lookout tower. When appropriations were first made available in 1848, by Congress, a study of life saving techniques used by surfmen was made. Two basic methods were found in general use. One involved an oarsman in a life boat. The other was the use of beach apparatus like the Lyle gun, a small cannon, which shot a lifeline from the beach to the ship. The strong tides and sandy shoals on the East Coast were especially hazardous to small boats and the beach apparatus method was the best alternative. On the West Coast, however, the Jersey style surfboat and the selfbailing boat were more widely used. Although measuring twenty-six feet and weighing 900 lbs., they were light and easy to handle in the Pacific surf and they were better suited to the West Coast sea squalls. Service boats were manned by six surfmen with twelve-to-eighteen foot oars.

The Ilwaco Beach site was especially suited for its role as lookout and patrol station. Long Beach Peninsula is essentially flat. The beach is unbroken by promontories or rocks for approximately twelve miles in both north and south directions. The surf men stood tower watch in the daylight hours, except when foggy, and patrolled the beach three miles north of the station and three miles south - one man each way from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. On foggy days, not infrequently, watches stumbled upon the body of a dead person. More cheerful were the discoveries of ships' furnishings among the flotsam. When patrolling the beach the men carried a clock and a coston light lamp that would burn red for one

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minute when lighted. The light was used to show a vessel, in case of wreck, that it had been seen, and sometimes to warn off vessels when they got too near shore. When the lookout saw a vessel in distress, he reported to the station, and the keeper would ring the alarm bell. The crew then ran to the boathouse and prepared for the rescue. The beach wagon was pulled either by horses or by the surfmen themselves. By 1900 horses were trained to go into the surf with the wagon to launch or retrieve the boats. During World War I the surfmen patrolled the beaches on horseback.

Life saving surfmen were frequently called upon to perform services in the neighborhood of their station which they were not necessarily paid to do. The records show that they often rescued bathers; would-be suicides, persons who had fallen from docks, vessels, etc., and sometimes women assaulted on the beach. Persons in urgent need of medical or surgical attention were conveyed to places where such attention could be secured, and from time to time surfmen assisted in fighting local fires.

To save lives aboard a ship in distress, the crew drilled regularly to improve their time in launching the wagon-mounted gig. Each day except Sunday the surfmen drilled or cleaned equipment. Twice each week during the summer season the station had practice drills to which visitors were gladly welcomed to view the station and its equipment. Vacationers came from all towns along the beach by horse and buggy, railroad, bicycle and afoot to be entertained. A regular attraction of the Ilwaco railroads summer schedule was to stop once a week to watch the drills. In order to accomodate the crowds, boards were laid on flatcars for seats. Another specialty of the line, if a wreck drifted in, was to make a special stop so that passengers could walk up on the sand ridge and view it. For this, and other reasons, the railroad soon gained the nickname the "Irregular Rambling and Never-Get-There Railroad".

The station drills were usually performed in two stages. The first was the surfboat drill. The climax came when the men rowed their non-sinkable craft, over the tumbling breakers. By shifting their combined weight they turned the tossing, self-bailing boat completely over several times. The second phase was the shooting of the lifeline, and rigging the breeches buoy from atop a replica of a ship's mast anchored in the sand dunes. While the drills were underway an officer explained the finer points of life saving with an invitation to come back in the winter when shipwrecks were more likely to occur.

In 1912 the name of the Ilwaco Beach Life Saving Station was officially changed. Theodore Conick, Keeper of the station at the time, submitted the name "Klipsan" to the District office. Conick used the name which retired ship master Captain A. T. Stream had given to his townsite surrounding the station. Klipsan, or Klipsun, was an Indian word meaning "setting sun".

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As 1915 approached great changes were on the horizon for the Life Saving Service. Gas powered rescue boats began appearing on the scene. Progress came to the service and gasoline replaced the oar. Another change was that enlistment of qualified watermen with the youth, health, and zeal for the arduous routine of duty, was becoming impossible. Crews left when they found they could make more money doing other things in private and less hazardous pursuits.

An effort to consolidate the small U.S. Life Saving Service and the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service into one efficient maritime service finally resulted in their merger in 1915, forming the U.S. Coast Guard. The personnel and traditions of the U.S. Life Saving Service were carried over to the U.S. Coast Guard, but the name of the Klipsan station was again technically changed. The Coast Guard called the Klipsan Station #309.

Between 1915 and 1947, the year the station was abandoned, Klipsan Beach Station declined in relation to the advances of modern technology. As the sailing ships disappeared, the beach drills declined. Steam-powered vessels were less likely to be driven aground and motorized pleasure boats came into wide use.

During World War I more personnel were brought into the region, some to cut the remaining stands of white pine, and others to guard the beach. This meant the stations at Klipsan and Cape Disappointment were reinforced. But the war's end also brought a corresponding demilitarization.

During Prohibition days, the cargo of the bootlegging gas boat Alpha went aground north of the Klipsan station. Coastguardsmen from Klipsan endeavored to protect the cargo while waiting for the revenue officers to arrive from Tacoma. Not wanting to fire on their friends, they allowed many of the local "sea gulls", or beachcombers, to carry off quite a bit of the loot.

In the 1920's the U.S. Navy Department moved into the compound alongside the Coast Guard crew and ran the radio direction finding transmitter. This "compass" station caught and transmitted signals sent from passing ships. It allowed navigators to estimate their position and avoid danger. By World War II the invention of radar and Loran, a long range navigation aid, made the compass station obsolete and the Navy Department left the station. During this period the Coast Guard station continued to operate as a life saving facility, and the crew often rescued automobiles caught in the surf when owners wandered away digging clams. Eventually it became a training site for Coast Guard personnel who were transferred to other stations, as well as a rest and recreation compound for servicemen. Radar and Loran virtually ended shipwrecks in the Klipsan Beach area.

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At the end of the war the Treasury Department found that the Klipsan Beach station had outgrown its usefulness and made plans to close it. Steamships replacing "Windjammers", airplane patrols, and the electronic age combined to make it obsolete. On January 8, 1947, the last caretaker was removed and everything of value in the buildings was stripped, including the plumbing. The station was abandoned after 58 colorful years.

When the Treasury Department closed the station, plans were made to remove all the buildings. The land was to be returned to the descendents of the Loomis Family from whom it had been purchased. Many of the older buildings were already worthless hulks, and one was being used as a chicken coop. The demolitions never occurred. The rundown station was given to the Loomis family as it was.

On March 24, 1949, the Loomis family sold the two acre compound to T. L. Matthews, and his son T. A. "Bud" Matthews. The older Matthews had built several of the newer buildings in the 1920's. The Matthews family refurbished the floors and walls and rented some as summer cottages. In the mid-1960's Bud Matthews started the major remodeling projects. He used materials from some of the buildings being torn down to remodel those he left standing. He sold the buildings upon completion of the remodeling. Today, ownership of the compound is divided among five families.

Much of the popular literature of the late nineteenth century spoke of the life saving service in such phrases as "Heroes of the Surf" and "Storm Warriors". The Coast Guard service which replaced it deserves the same glowing terms, but the fact remains that an era is passed. The crack of the Lyle gun is no longer heard. It is replaced by the roaring of the helicopter. And gone is the drama of the Keeper standing erect in the stern of the surfboat, urging his crewmen to pull their plunging surfboat to the rescue. Gone also are the major wrecks near Klipsan Beach like the steamer Point Loma in February 1896; the Glenmorag in March, 1896; and the Potrimpos in December, 1896. The Klipsan Beach compound remains as evidence of an important link in Washington's system of coastal life saving installations.

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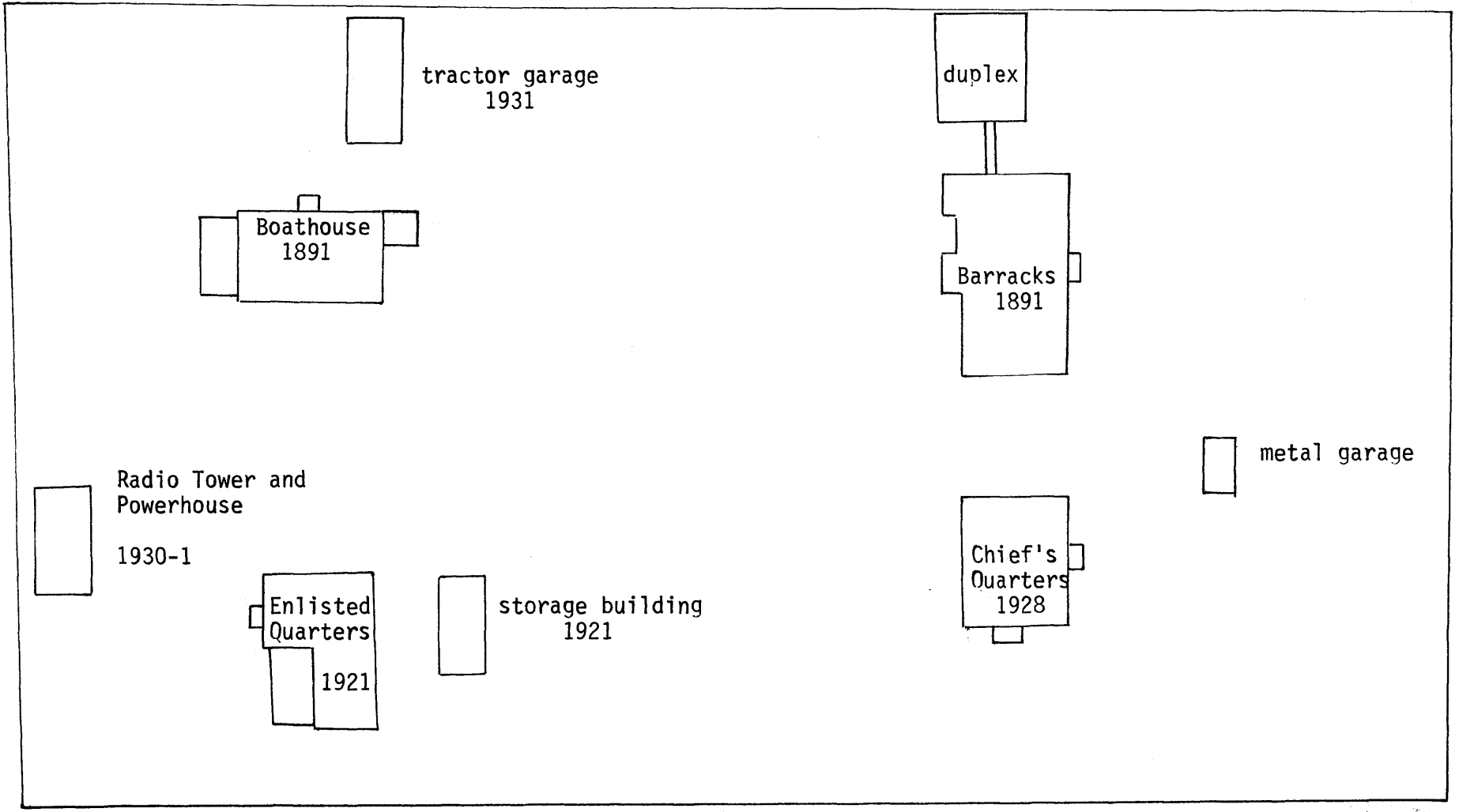
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KLIPAN BEACH LIFE SAVING STATION

