

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 15 1981
DATE ENTERED	FEB 25 1981

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

1 NAME *Point Conception Light Station*

HISTORIC
HUMQAO (CHUMASH INDIAN NAMEPLACE)

AND/OR COMMON
POINT CONCEPTION LIGHT STATION

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
U.S. COAST GUARD LIGHT STATION

CITY, TOWN
POINT CONCEPTION

STATE
CALIFORNIA

CODE
06

COUNTY
SANTA BARBARA

CODE
083

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
VICINITY OF SANTA BARBARA, *CA*, 1314

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. COAST GUARD

STREET & NUMBER
COMMANDER, ELEVENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT, 400 OCEANGATE

CITY, TOWN
LONG BEACH,

STATE
CALIFORNIA 90822

VICINITY OF LOS ANGELES,

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
COMMANDER (FLP) 11TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

STREET & NUMBER
400 OCEANGATE

CITY, TOWN
LONG BEACH,

STATE
CALIFORNIA 90822

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
LEWIS & LEWIS

DATE
1965

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
COMMANDER (FLP) 11TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
LONG BEACH

STATE
CALIFORNIA 90822

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

POINT CONCEPTION LIGHT STATION HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

Point Conception Light Station is a complex of buildings and associated facilities situated upon 29.6 acres of land located in Santa Barbara County.

The area surrounding the district is bordered by wind and sea eroded cliffs on the ocean side with ranchlands bordering the station on the inland side.

The broken terrain surrounding the district (Enclosure 11 through 14) is covered by rolling sandy mounds which flourish with iceplant and other types of wild vegetation, and is innodated with numerous archaeological sites.

The complex contains several buildings, including:

- (a) Keepers dwelling with light tower (Enclosure 1 & 2) located at the lowest point of the land mass protruding out to sea, consists of a white, rectangular, one-story, stuccoed brick structure with a peaked-shaped roof built in 1881. The light portion of the building is an attached circular structure which reaches a height of 52 feet above the ground, and still utilizes its original lens (Light List No. 24). All windows of the keepers quarters have been sealed up.
- (b) Coal house (Enclosure 4) located approximately fifty feet north-east of the lighthouse is a white, rectangular, one-story, one room, stuccoed brick structure with a peaked-shaped roof. It is used primarily for storage.
- (c) Family quarters (Enclosure 5) built in 1912 consists of a 1600 square foot, two-story, white stuccoed residence. It is uninhabitable at this time and has been boarded up. A 12 X 26 foot one-story wood-framed garage is located near the quarters and is used for storage and parking of automobiles.
- (d) Caretakers quarters (Enclosure 7) is located on the inland side of the upper knoll of the station shielded from the high winds and is a two-bedroom, one-story, white stuccoed structure with numerous paned windows. A caretaker now lives in the building and is responsible for the maintenance of the aids to navigation.
- (e) Three-car garage (Enclosure 6) located on the highest point of the station is a white, one-story, wood framed structure used for storage and automobile parking.

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(f) Power house (Enclosure 8) located on the knoll is a white, one-story brick stuccoed structure with flat roof. Commercial power is supplied by the local utility company while the Coast Guard maintains a back-up diesel generator.

(g) Water tank (Enclosure 9 & 10) located on the knoll was built in 1881 and is approximately 50 feet in height. It maintains a 10,000 gallon capacity by utilization of two separate holding tanks. The entire structure is constructed of redwood.

(h) Navigational aids within the nominated area include the fog horn and visual aid (Enclosure 1 & 2).

An intensive on-foot survey of the Coast Guard property resulted in the location of 12 discrete archaeological sites and several isolated chert flakes. Subsurface investigation might reveal that at least two pairs of sites, both consisting of archaeological deposits separated by less than 50 ft., are each only one site. No separate site numbers were assigned to the historic razed structures on the property, although site SBa-204 does include debris derived from a large Coast Guard residence building razed in the 1960's and presumably also the original 1854 light-house razed when the present lighthouse was built further out on the point in 1881.

Site SBa-204 apparently once contained a substantial midden deposit and may have been the largest site on the property when it was completely intact, but it is now impossible to estimate from surface investigation alone what its size may have been. The other sites range from surface scatters of stone tools and chipping waste to midden deposits as much as 6 ft. in depth containing high to moderate densities of shellfish remains (mussel, Mytilus Californianus, is predominant, abalone, Haliotis spp., is in noticeable quantities) in grey or brown sandy soil matrix. Excepting SBa-204, all visible portions of sites are under 200 ft. in maximum dimension. Descriptions of each site follow.

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SBa-204 This site presumably covered the whole top of the tallest hill on the property as well as the complete slope to the east. It was apparently a substantial midden deposit, judging from the portions still visible in less disturbed portions along the eastern margins of the hill-top where it contains moderate densities of shellfish remains and is generally a darker brown color than surrounding dune sand. A low density of chert flakes was noted throughout the area of the site where the ground surface is exposed, and a very low flake density (1 flake per 100 square feet) appears to extend beyond the boundaries of the identifiable midden area 200 ft. to the north and 150 ft. northeast and east of the base of the hill. Also included as part of SBa-204 is a small midden deposit containing a moderate density of shellfish remains about 20 ft. wide and 50 ft. long on top of a narrow ridge 150 ft. ENE of the caretaker's residence. The ridge appears to have been formed by removal, with heavy equipment of a section of the northeastern side of the hill near its base. In other words, the ridge may have at one time been connected with the midden deposits on the hill. This midden deposit is 150 ft. ENE of the caretaker's residence.

Nearly all of this site has been heavily disturbed by construction of Coast Guard roads and buildings, involving extensive terracing of the hill. The extent of undisturbed deposits is unknown.

SBa-1594 This site is located 1000 ft. directly north of the top of the highest point of land of the property (where the machinery, water tower, and office buildings are located) and 200 ft. northwest of the spring and pumphouse. It is visible only as a stratum of midden eroding from the edge of the seacliff along a length of about 150 ft. and is covered by dune deposits two yards or more thick. The midden is a grey, compact sand containing very dense shellfish remains. Burned rock, flakes, bird and sea mammal bone were also noted.

SBa-1595 This site is located about 75 ft. north and northeast of the pumphouse and is 1000 ft. directly north of the highest point of land on the property. The western edge of the site is 100 ft. east of the seacliff edge. In all likelihood, this site is continuous with SBa-1594, located about 100 ft. to the northwest, the intervening area having been covered by dune deposits. The higher land immediately to the north affords the site some protection from the prevailing wind. The western portion of the site contains a grey, sandy midden soil with moderately dense shellfish remains. Burned rock, charcoal, a hammerstone, a chopper, and sea mammal and bird bones were noted. The eastern portion of the site narrows and the deposit becomes considerably lighter in color, and midden constituents become increasingly sparse.

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SBa-1596 This site is located 800 ft. north of the highest point of land on the property and 75 ft. south of the pumphouse. It extends from the seacliff edge east approximately 50 ft. and consists of two separate localities of midden. The most obvious of the two is a stratum of light brown, sandy midden exposed on the face of the sea cliff that is about 115 ft. long and perhaps as much as 6 ft. thick. The other is a disturbed locality of disturbed midden deposits on the other side of a narrow ridge of undisturbed deposits from the first. This second area contains scattered shellfish remains and chert flakes and appears to have been churned up by excavation by heavy equipment of borrow from an area including the site and the slope of the sand dune to the south. It appears, however, that only the top surface of the buried stratum may have been disturbed by this excavation.

SBa-1597 This site is located on the ENE side of a large dune in an area of erosion and slumping, 50 ft. west of a dirt road leading to the pumphouse. It consists of a litter of very recent historic trash overlying a very low density scatter of shellfish remains. No stone tools or waste flakes were observed, and the prehistoric component of this site is therefore somewhat in question, given the possibility of deposition of shellfish by historic occupants or marine birds.

SBa-1598 This site is located 350 ft. north of the highest point of land on the property where the office/machinery building and water tower are located. It is represented by an exposed stratum of brown, sandy shell midden about 2 ft. thick and 20 ft. long, and it presumably extends eastward under dune deposits for an unknown distance. Shellfish remains appear moderate to very dense, with burned rock and chert flakes noted. The stratum of midden is overlain by 10 or more feet of dune sand.

SBa-1599 This site is 650 ft. directly east of the highest point of land on the property (where the machinery/ office building and water tower are located) and 750 ft. directly south of the road entrance to the property. It is about 75 ft. northeast of the seacliff edge and consists of a very light scatter of shellfish remains, chert flakes, and a sandstone pestle (not collected). Since the density of cultural debris is so low, the boundaries of the site are uncertain. It may be that the eastern margin of the site was disturbed by heavy equipment that was used to remove soil from a large area east of the site.

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SBa-1600 This site is located on a terrace along the northeastern margin of a large dune on both sides of the road leading to the pumphouse, and overlooks a small swail to the northeast. It is 120 ft. from the intersection of the dirt and asphalt roads leading to the Coast Guard buildings. The site consists of a low density of shellfish remains and chert flakes. There is no obvious soil discoloration and the depth is unknown.

SBa-1601 This site, located along a 30 ft. side of the west road leading to the pumphouse, is 175 ft. southeast of the pumphouse and 675 ft. north of the caretaker's residence. It consists of a very sparse scatter (several flakes noted) of chert and quartzite flakes that have become exposed in the roadcut. No shellfish remains nor soil discoloration were in association.

SBa-1602 This site is adjacent to the south side of the road entrance to the Coast Guard buildings just inside the fence defining the Coast Guard property boundary. It consists of a scatter of chert flakes and a point tip in a wind-deflated area approximately 100 ft. in diameter. No shellfish remains or soil discoloration were observed.

SBa-1603 This site is located 925 ft. SSE of the road entrance to the Coast Guard property on the edge of the seacliff. It is observable as two sections separated by a horizontal distance of 5 ft. consisting of a midden deposit buried under 3 to 6 ft. of sand dune overburden. The midden stratum, about 2 ft. thick, contains a moderate density of shellfish remains and is a dark brown color in contrast to the light brown sand above and below. Sea mammal bones were noted, and chert flakes appear to be restricted to the interface between the midden stratum and the overlying dune deposits. The two sections are 15 ft. and 3 ft. long respectively. The extent north and under the dune deposits of the sections is uncertain.

SBa-1604 This site is situated 530 ft. directly south of the road entrance to the Coast Guard property and just south of a paved road constructed by the U.S. Air Force. Portions of the site appear to be wind-deflated, which has resulted in the exposure of a medium brown, sandy midden with a light density of shellfish remains. A scatter of chert flakes, a chert core, burned animal bone, and a fragment of a bone artifact were also noted. The area of the site is 100 by 160 ft., although the observable midden deposits were noted in an area of about 20 ft. in diameter. The southern and eastern margins of the site may have been disturbed by the apparent removal, by heavy equipment, of the sandy soil from the shale substrate.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

POINT CONCEPTION LIGHT STATION HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Ancient mariners affixed the name "California's Cape Horn" to bold Point Conception. Its sinister appearance reminded old salts of that internationally known bastion of rock at the bitter end of South America. Like Cape Horn, the waters about it are fickle in character. The wind-whipped seas driving in from the Pacific snub their noses against its seagrit walls and explode, there being no outcrops to break the impact.

Point Conception was one of those landmarks that old Spanish navigators searched for on returning from the Phillipines. It is little wonder that the point was chosen as the site for one of the early U.S. government lighthouses. A guiding light has shown from its awesome climes for a century and a quarter. But that goes back to the day a contract for this and other lighthouses was penned with two Baltimore Irishmen, Francis A. Gibbons and Francis X. Kelly. They booked passage on the bark ORIOLE, and were more than four months at sea before arriving in San Francisco with their cargo of building materials. One of their most difficult assignments was to construct a lighthouse at isolated Point Conception.

These poineering craftsmen, despite many difficulties, managed to complete the lighthouse, including a story and a half dwelling situated on the crest of the Point, by midsummer 1854. But before the contractors were paid, the government inspector, Major Bache, had to place his stamp of approval on the project. Then the sparks flew. On the official's arrival he vented his wrath on the builders for what he termed "inferior workmanship."

Pointing out that much of the motar had wasted away from between the bricks and that the wind had torn loose some of the gutter troughs, Bache demanded restitution. Additionally, the tower was to small to support the intended first order lighting appratus which had been ordered. No cure, no pay, so the contractors were forced to tear down the tower, enlarge its diameter setting it back five inches in order to get the front door open. Only after the alterations were made was the bill paid in full.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Blackburn, Thomas: December's Child. The University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975
- Grant, Campbell: "Eastern Costal Chumash," in Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 8, California; ed. by R.F. Heizer, pp. 509-519. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1978

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 29
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	73,2399	3,81,511,1,0	B	1,0	73,2700	3,81,49,4,9
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,0	73,2899	3,81,47,2,0	D	1,0	73,2360	3,81,45,90
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the district are the Pacific Ocean coastline at the mean high tide mark on the western and southern margins and the Coast Guard property line on the north and east margins. *(see site map)*

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: W. EVANS, CHIEF LOGISTICS & PROPERTY DATE: 12 July 1976

ORGANIZATION: Commander (flp) 11th Coast Guard District

STREET & NUMBER: 400 Oceangate TELEPHONE: FTS 984-9338 or (213) 590-2338

CITY OR TOWN: Long Beach STATE: California 90822

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

SEP 22 1977

YES NO NONE

WKM McCann
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE: Robert J. ... DATE: 10/28/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: 2/25/81

DATE: 2/25/81

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In the interim the appointed lighthouse keeper, George Parkinson, arrived at Point Conception only to find the lighting apparatus was yet to be installed. He found the building full of curious Indians who were using it as a base for their hunting activities. Fortunately they were not of a hostile nature or it may have been Parkinson's last stand. When he became insistent, the intruders reluctantly agreed to leave and the attendant settled down to his duties, without a light to maintain and without any stipend. He wrote his congressman to get action on both, and at the same time complained that his major concern was in "retrieving and nailing on pieces of the structure which the incessant winds keep blowing off."

After several frustrating weeks, on September 11, the schooner GENERAL PIERCE arrived with the lens, the oil lamp and appendages. Mother nature, in one of her rare good moods, smiled on the operation, affording an unusual spell of flat ocean permitting the lighterage of equipment through the surf-hazardous transport - even under the favorable conditions. A few fittings were lost and some damaged by exposure to salt water.

Bache was soon back on the scene as all available hands worked frantically to keep the target date for turning on the light - Christmas day 1855. Missing parts, however, cancelled that date and subsequently a notice appeared in the ALTA CALIFORNIA that, "The light will be postponed until February 1, 1856."

When the light up time came, shipowners, seafarers, and merchants were jubilant over the new lighthouse, and within a fortnight of Parkinson's lighting of the concentric wicks he got a testimonial from the skipper of the steamer GOLDEN GATE who had reported sighting, bright and clear, the beam from the lens an amazing 42 miles at sea.

This, however, was but brief consolidation to the unhappy keeper who often referred to his domicile as, "this dreadful promontory desolation." Nevertheless he pursued his duties and welcomed the very occasional visitors until 1875. In that year a section of the lighthouse settled and some very large cracks developed. Parkinson mended them the best he could but on subsequent visits, inspectors became alarmed with the deterioration, and seven years later funds were appropriated to build an entirely different lighthouse to seaward and almost 100 feet lower than the original structure.

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Further lending to this decision were the low hanging clouds which had often obscured the high light. The second lighthouse still stands today, a squat white tower displaying a massive lens and turned by a tiny 1 1/2 horsepower electric motor.

The lamps at Conception went through several changes of illuminants before electricity took over - sperm (whale) oil, colza, lard, and finally kerosene in 1888. Then an incandescent oil vapor light was installed after the turn of the century. Weights cranked up by hand were used to turn the lens.

The need for a powerful light at Point Conception is obvious. A vast ships graveyard exists between bold Point Conception and lesser Point Arguello. Though it is well stocked with ships and men, the light has prevented many tragedies. In olden times when there were no radar or radiobeacon facilities the light was of little use in blinding rains and foggy mists.

Despite the population growth of California, Point Conception is still wild country. The wind is usually blowing hard and the land is rough, but in season wild flowers, enhance the lonely lighthouse which sits solitary on timeless Conception.

The U.S. Coast Guard Light Station at Point Conception is on a portion of the "Rancho Punta de la Conception", sometimes called "El Cojo", as patented by the United States to Anastacio Carrillo, his heirs and assigns, on the 10th day of June, A.D. 1880, and recorded in the County Recorder's Office of Santa Barbara County, State of California, on the 20th day of December, A.D. 1880.

In addition to the historical value of the light structure, Point Conception was once the site of an Indian camp. Numerous artifacts of archaeological significance have been found in the vicinity.

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Much of the significance of this site cluster derives from its distinct environmental context. First, the cluster occurs in an area of considerable sand dune development not characteristic of the coast immediately north or east of the point. This is especially evident from aerial photographs of the Point Conception area. Furthermore, the point appears to be relatively more unprotected from prevailing winds in comparison to the adjacent coastline, largely because the point juts out towards the southwest so as to receive the full brunt of the winds from the northwest. This factor, of course helps account for the dune development. The Point Conception locality, therefore, is rather inhospitable, and it is curious that there is so much evidence of aboriginal utilization as there is. The answer to the question of why there is evidence of relatively intense utilization, as reflected in several dense midden deposits, would probably provide clues to the most important factors determining site location along the California coastline.

The environmental position of the Point Conception site cluster is also unique in that it falls at the point of transition of quiet waters and protected coastline of the Santa Barbara Channel, and the rough exposed coast to the north. The environmental adaptations of prehistoric populations may correlate with this transition. Recent research at Vandenburg Air Force Base (Glassow, et al. 1976) has revealed that relatively high densities of sites, including many with small areas, are typical of the region north of Point Arguello. Conversely, fewer but larger sites, on the average, characterize the coastal zone along the Santa Barbara Channel. Having discovered densities and sizes of sites at Point Conception similar to those to the north may indicate that this is a zone not only of environmental transition, but of prehistoric cultural transition as well. Thus, the Point Conception site cluster is significant in that this possibility may be investigated.

The Point Conception site cluster also obtains significance from the fact that some of the cultural deposits underlie substantial dune deposits. Presumably, therefore, these deposits accumulated during a period of prehistory when the dunes were active. Considering that the dunes are now stabilized, environmental conditions must somehow have been different during that period. These buried deposits would undoubtedly provide clues to the nature of the environmental circumstances under which the dunes formed and would therefore shed light on environmental changes along this section of the coast through the course of prehistory. Similar dune deposits are found along the portions of west-facing coastline for some distance north of Point Conception, and some of these also cover archaeological sites (e.g. on Vandenburg Air Force Base and at Pismo Beach); however, the temporal and environmental relationships between these occurrences still must be worked out.

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Another area of significance concerns the ethnographic information indicating that Point Conception had religious significance to the Chumash Indians living in the area of Santa Barbara County at the time of European contact. John P. Harrington, an ethnographer working with the Chumash early in this century, obtained the following information from his Ynezeno Chumash informant, Maria Solares:

On the fifth day after death the soul returns to the grave to oversee the destruction of its property before leaving for Similaqsa. The soul first goes to Point Conception, which is a wild and stormy place. It was called humqaq, and there was no villiage there. In ancient times no one ever went nesr humqaq. They only went there to make sacrafices at a great sawil [shrine]. There is a place at humqaq below the cliff that can only be reached by rope, and there is a pool of water there like a basin, into which fresh water continually drips. And there in the stone can be seen footprints of women and children. There the spirit of the dead bathes and paints itself (Blackburn 1975: 98-99).

Thus, there was apparently a shrine area located at Point Conception, although there is no information as to exactly where this shrine was. Certainly our investigations were not intensive enough to encounter evidence of activities that would be presumably be carried out at a shrine. (Such evidence would include scatters of shell beads that were cast about during ceremonies.) Considering that shrine sites are extremely rare and difficult to locate, the Point Conception site cluster may provide relatively unique data on the nature of the Chumash shrines.

Significance to the Concern of Modern Native Americans: Although we can not speak for the local Chumash still living in the area, widespread newspaper publicity over the proposed liquified natural gas port at Cojo Bay has revealed that modern Chumash attach great religious significance to Point Conception. This viewpoint was also expressed by the Chumash representatives who accompanied the archaeological field party. This aspect of significance should be documented by consulting with the Chumash themselves.

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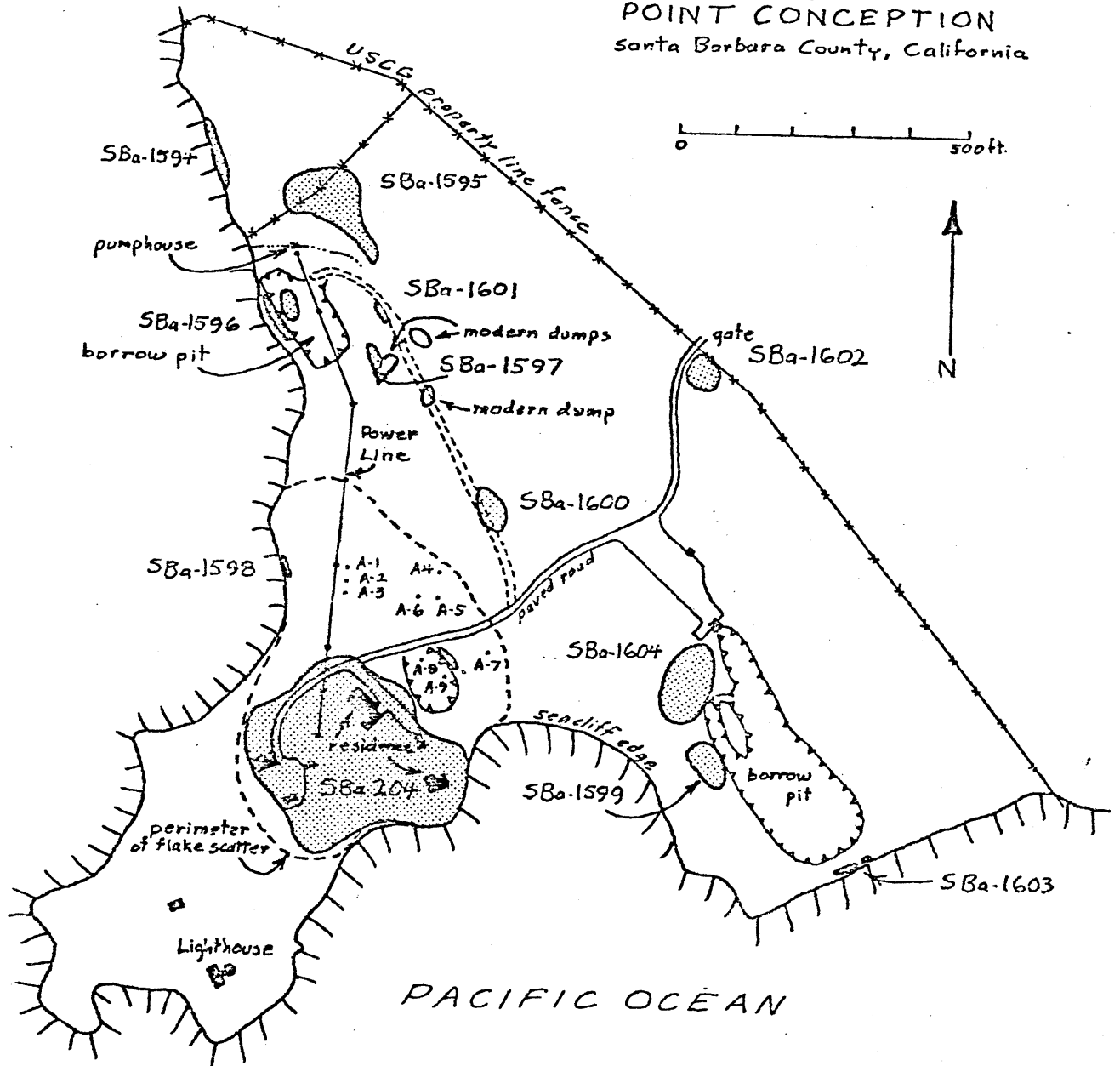
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