

# LOG

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# Point No Point Lighthouse: Oldest Sentinel on Puget Sound

By Elinor DeWire



**A 2012 restoration effort spearheaded by the U.S. Lighthouse Society, along with the Friends of Point No Point and Kitsap County, has returned much of Point No Point Light Station's former beauty. USLHS archive photo.**



oint No Point Lighthouse has served mariners diligently since January 1880. Though small in stature as lighthouses go, it looms large in our nation's history and bears the significant responsibility and noteworthy honor of welcoming ships to Puget Sound. The lighthouse not only marks a critical turn where Admiralty Inlet ends and Puget Sound begins, it also represents a period of rapid growth in commerce for the region. In a sense, the little sentinel was a harbinger of things to come, including the Northern Pacific Railroad and the expansive ports at Seattle and Tacoma.

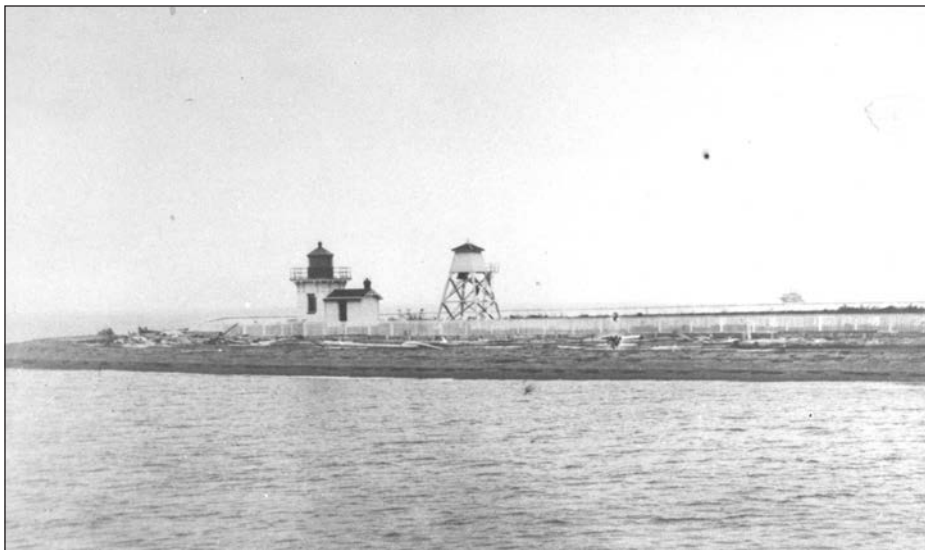
Point No Point's contradictory name can be blamed on its appearance from the water. The native S'Klallam called the point Hahdskus, or "the long nose." It was a favorite

fishing, hunting, and wood-gathering area for the S'Klallam. Several European explorers and fur traders passed the point in the 1700s and 1800s, but it was Lieutenant Charles Wilkes of the U.S. Exploring Expedition who bestowed the curious name. From the water in May 1841, he noticed the quarter-mile-long point tended to appear and disappear from view, depending on his position. Point No Point seemed an appropriate name.

Several lighthouses already were in service along the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Admiralty Inlet when the U.S. Lighthouse Board began researching sites for lighthouses on Puget Sound in 1872. Point No Point, at the entrance to the sound, and West Point, on the northern entrance to Elliott Bay, were considered prime locations. A sawmill and shipyard at Bainbridge Island

had established a lively trade midway between Point No Point and West Point 25 years earlier, and there was talk of building a naval shipyard in Bremerton. Lumbering, shipbuilding, fishing, and other enterprises were burgeoning in Puget Sound, and the port of Seattle was growing rapidly. An engineer for the U.S. Lighthouse Board noted that lighthouses at West Point and Point No Point would "open these waters to foreign as well as to home trade."

The board focused on Point No Point first. By 1876 funds had been appropriated by Congress and negotiations began with the James family who owned much of the land on the point. Francis and Mary James requested \$3,770 for two parcels of land, one 3.4-acre plot on the spit and another 6.96 acres to the south. Francis James had been a lighthouse keeper at Cape Flattery, a



One of the earliest known images of Point No Point Light Station, circa 1880, shows the tower and attached workroom and the fogbell in its wooden framework tower. Later, an oilhouse and fog signal room would be added. Photo courtesy of the Coast Guard Museum NW.

remote sentinel that stood on Tatoosh Island at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. He had been dismissed from that job after a gunfight at the lighthouse. It's likely Francis James knew the value of Point No Point as a potential site for another lighthouse and purchased it with the idea of selling it at a high price to the federal government. After much dickering and argument, the James' settled for \$1,000 for the combined 10.36 acres. The U.S. Lighthouse Board also purchased a 40-foot-wide easement between the two parcels and reserved an additional unclaimed 18 acres south of the spit for government use.

By the summer of 1879, all land had been purchased, and on September 19 construction of the lighthouse, fogbell tower, and keepers' duplex dwelling began. Bad weather slowed the project, but by the end of December 1879, the light station was near completion. A report made to the U.S. Lighthouse Board described the site:

*The tower is a detached brick tower, and is placed 200 feet northeast of the dwelling, near the outer end of the spit. The bell, formerly used as a fog signal at the New Dungeness Light Station, was transferred in April to this station, and a frame tower was built for it a short distance south of the light-tower. To reclaim that portion of the interior of the salt marsh, which lies within the reservation, an earthen dike was thrown up along the dividing line from the western to the east-*

*ern beach, and a tide-gate near the center to drain off, during the ebb, any water that may make its way inside during the flood. From the drift-logs gathered from the beach, a low revetment, well founded, was built along the margin of the reservation, facing seaward, and made to envelop the frontage occupied by all the buildings. Its object is to protect the buildings against waves during the storms, and to prevent the deterioration of the crest of the beach.*

The spacious duplex dwelling was two



Keeper John S. Maggs. Courtesy of the Coast Guard Museum NW.

stories tall, with double fireplaces and a large attic. Cisterns filled by rainwater from the roof supplied water for the duplex, and behind it was a privy. The sprawling front porch faced north to provide a magnificent view of the Admiralty Inlet, as well as a pleasant breeze most days of the year. But the weather was anything but clement when the station's keepers arrived.

A dentist named John S. Maggs and his assistant keeper, Henry H. Edwards, came to the station in late December to take up duties as its first keepers. Maggs, a native of Pennsylvania, was a bit of a speculator. He had wavered between lighthouse keeping and dentistry for several years and owned land and several businesses in Seattle. In 1859 he had been a bachelor lightkeeper stationed at Cape Flattery Lighthouse. When his pay was cut, he quit the position and became a trader in Neah Bay at the Makah Indian Post. He probably knew Frances James, who also had been a keeper at Cape Flattery Lighthouse before buying land at Point No Point. Maggs may have gotten a tip from James about the position of principal keeper at the new lighthouse.

Since the lens for the lighthouse had not yet been delivered when Maggs and Edwards arrived at Point No Point, the two keepers hung a household kerosene lantern in the lighthouse as a temporary beacon. There were no windows in the lighthouse lantern; thus, the temporary kerosene lantern was extinguished frequently by wind. The keepers were watchful, though, and kept the light going. Maggs detailed the first month's difficulties in the lighthouse journal:

*January 2, 1880—Very disagreeable for keepers to attend to it [the kerosene lantern] and keep it going, as the tower had to be ascended from the outside by a common ladder. [sic]*

*January 4, 1880—Had to put canvas around outside of lantern to keep violent wind from blowing out light.*

The bad weather continued well over a month. Maggs noted that he had lived on Puget Sound for 22 years and never seen such bad weather.

It was February 5 before the plate glass for the lantern windows was installed. The lens pedestal was bolted to the floor of the lantern the next day. Maggs and Edwards "set a common house lamp on the pedestal" to serve mariners until the lens arrived. It



An aerial shot of Point No Point, date unknown, and Norwegian Point in the upper right, shows a sparsely populated area. Today the road to the lighthouse is lined with homes, many inhabited year-round. USLHS archive photo.

was unseasonably cold and blustery at this time. Maggs reported two feet of snow on the ground on February 7 when workmen installed an interior iron ladder below the lantern to replace the “common ladder.” The next day, the keepers had to vacate the dwelling so workmen could plaster the walls and paint.

On February 10, the lens and lard oil lamp finally were installed. The lens was a fixed, fifth-order Fresnel manufactured in Paris by L. Sautter, Lemonier et Cie. It produced a light of 250 candlepower, sufficient to cover the shipping lanes in and out of Puget Sound.

Maggs did not bring his wife, Caroline, and his children—Helen, age 4, and George, age 1—to the light station until February 26, after the dwelling’s interior work was complete and the bout of severe weather ended. Mrs. Maggs was pregnant when she arrived. The Maggs’ third child, Mollie, would be born at a neighbor’s home a few months later on July 21, 1880. Perhaps in preparation for the children’s arrival, Maggs bought a cow. The cow was delivered by the schooner *Granger*, captained by a friend of the keepers, Mr. Morse. The somewhat seasick and bawling bovine was lifted over the side of the schooner in a sling,

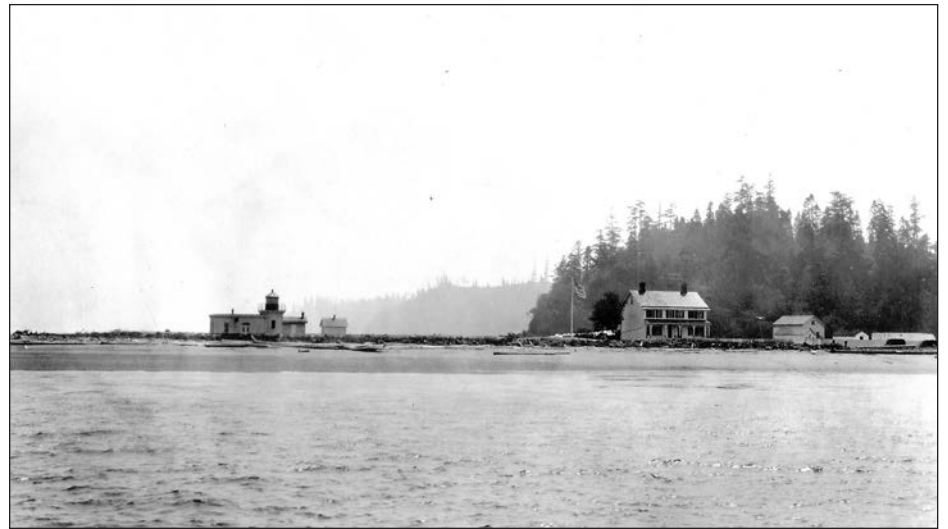
released in the water, and swam ashore. A small barn housed the cow and the keepers’ horse. There was a chicken coop, too, and a vegetable garden that first summer. No doubt the keepers fished and hunted. A journal entry on February 14, 1880, read: “Keeper killed a goose.”

The 1,200-pound fogbell was mounted

in a wooden framework tower about 100 feet south of the lighthouse. It went into service April 28, 1880, and sounded a single *bong* every 30 seconds when in use. A fogbell striking apparatus, possibly made by Gamewell or Stevens, was installed in the tower to operate the bell. It was similar to a cuckoo clock with a clockwork mechanism and weights suspended in the wooden bell tower to power the metal hammer that struck the bell. When in use during foggy periods, the keepers were required to wind up the weights every 45 minutes.

The bell had been cast in 1855 at J. Bernhard Foundry in Philadelphia and shipped around Cape Horn to the West Coast for use in New Dungeness Lighthouse, completed in 1857 on the tip of a long sand spit at Sequim. The bell was deemed “almost, if not quite, useless” at that site, probably due to prevailing winds stifling its sound. When New Dungeness received a steam fog whistle in 1873, the bell was removed and placed in storage until the light station at Point No Point opened. Perhaps the government thought the bell would work better at Point No Point, but it was problematic there as well and would eventually be replaced by Daboll fog trumpets in 1899.

The light station had a boatway for a New Bedford whaler, which the keepers used to get to Port Ludlow for mail and sundry supplies. The trip could only be done when the weather was calm. In May 1880, a trail was



This 1925 picture of Point No Point Light Station reveals changes. The fog signal room and one of the lighthouse’s twin Daboll trumpets is in view, as well as the oilhouse. The spacious duplex keepers’ dwelling is on the right, along with the barn and the boathouse. Courtesy of Coast Guard Museum NW.

cut from the light station to Port Gamble, four miles away. This allowed the keepers to go on horseback to fetch mail and purchase a few supplies at the lumber center there. The horseback trail was a much safer trip than by boat.

Also in May, Assistant Keeper Henry Edwards left Point No Point and was replaced by N.L. Rogers.

The lighthouse tender *Shubrick* visited Point No Point several times in 1880 to bring the lighthouse inspector and to deliver supplies—primarily fuel for the lamp, replacement lamp wicks, and other items for the lighthouse. Basic staples also were delivered for the families, such as flour, sugar, beans, rice, salt beef, and molasses. The inspector reported on September 7 that he found the light station “in very good condition.”

Even with the light station operating as needed, there were mishaps. The sloop *Fanny* went aground on the beach by the lighthouse in a severe wind storm on December 1. Five days later she was refloated. An earthquake rattled the light station at 5:45 p.m. on December 7, but there was no damage.

By this time there were other troubles. The lighthouse families had begun to squabble. Keeper Maggs documented a month-long discontent with Assistant Keeper Rogers' performance. Rogers was derelict in his duties and insubordinate, Maggs said. On December 16, the district inspector arrived to investigate. Apparently, Maggs' claims were legitimate, as on December 31, 1880, Rogers was dismissed and an assistant keeper named Abram H. Manning replaced him.

In 1881 the marshy area around the light station was graded and covered with soil. An inspection had found the area unhealthy. Some of the unsanitary conditions arose because of tribal fishing on the point and the discarding of fish heads and guts. Also at this time, a dike that protected the east and south sides of the property was raised in height. This change occurred as a result of a strong February storm with an astronomical high tide that had spilled over the dike.

By June there was trouble again. The Maggs' and Mannings were not getting along. Keeper Maggs wrote angrily on June 6, 1881, that the Manning family had “turned my horse out of the barn.” Later in June, Maggs noted that Assistant Keeper



**Keeper William Cary (served 1914-1937) and his family posed for a photo beside the lighthouse during World War I. Cary's wife and son (in uniform) stand beside him. Note the pet parrot on Cary's arm. Courtesy of the Coast Guard Museum NW.**

Manning ran the fogbell when unnecessary and had called him a “damned liar.”

Manning appeared to have tried to mollify Maggs for a few weeks with hard work, but by the end of June there was conflict again. On June 25, Maggs noted that Manning did not properly tend the lamp and drew a pocket knife on Maggs when rebuked about it. Maggs got his gun and went to fetch a neighbor for protection and as a witness to Manning's insubordination. When he returned, Manning had locked himself inside the lighthouse and was uttering threats. The situation worsened, and on June 28, Maggs telegraphed the district and requested help. Armed personnel were sent to the light station, and then Inspector Reiter arrived to investigate. He found Manning at fault and immediately dismissed the assistant.

A temporary assistant served with Maggs until July 1881 when Neil Henley arrived to take up the assistant keeper's duties. Though Henley was terse in the station logbook, he and Maggs seemed to have gotten along. Henley took sick the following year, possibly from the outbreak of scarlet fever that had assailed the community. The Maggs daughter, Helen, died of the disease on May 1, 1882. She was not quite six years old. For many days after the child's death, as Keeper Maggs grieved for his little girl and Assistant Keeper Henley lay sick, there were short, obligatory entries in the logbook. Henley recovered. By October Maggs' grief

had eased a bit, and he was writing more in the logbook.

Damage to the fifth-order French lens occurred December 23, 1882, when a lamp chimney shattered and a flying piece of it cracked one of the prisms. It would suffer other damage over the years, including being chipped by tools and cracks caused by wind vibrating the lantern. A forest fire in 1883 did not damage the light station, but nearby trees and bridges were destroyed and smoke veiled the light station.

In 1884 the fire damage was cleaned up, bridges were repaired, and the vital trail to Port Gamble was reopened. Workers also built a picket fence around the buildings and the dike to protect these areas from the keepers livestock.

On April 2, 1884, Maggs penned in the logbook: “Anxiously expecting the arrival of new keeper to relieve me.” Maggs, it seemed, had grown disenchanted with lighthouse keeping and decided to return to his dental practice. Later that day William H. Jakins signed in. Like Maggs, he was a florid writer with excellent penmanship, but less educated than Maggs, he had poor spelling.

By this time, a small settlement had been established behind the light station and along the shore to Norwegian Point. Hans Zachariasen, for whom the town of Hansville is named, was among the first white settlers. They, along with the lightkeepers, were challenged in those early years by flooding caused by windblown high tides.

In 1885 the dike, fence, and boatway had to be repaired after winter flooding. In January 1885, another flood again caused damage. The dike was fortified and enlarged to “505-foot long...12-feet wide at the base, 2-feet at the top, and raised to such a height as to be an average of 5-feet elevation above its site.” The boatway was extended, and the barn was moved back from the shore 50 feet.

The lighthouse tender *Manzanita* began servicing the lighthouse in these years, bringing supplies and the inspector. A mail steamer brought emergency items, such as medicine for Keeper Jakins, who became ill in February 1888. The handwriting in the logbook at this time changed and was probably that of Mrs. Jakins. Her husband grew worse and on March 9 she wrote: “Mr. Jakins past away [sic] at 6 A.M.” A month later, Inspector U. Sebree arrived and wrote in the logbook: “Inspected station at 10:30 A.M. Found it in good order—Mrs. Jakins in charge of station.” Possibly Mrs. Jakins had help from Maggs who lived near the light station.

Mrs. Jakins continued as interim lightkeeper until May 17, 1888, when Edward Scannell and his wife, Mary, arrived to take over the lighthouse duties. They would remain for 26 years, the longest of any of Point No Point's keepers. Scannell was paid \$800 a year as principal keeper in 1888. His assistant, John Q. Latta, was paid \$600 annually. The Scannells made many improvements to the quarters and grounds and became much-loved members of the community. Mary Scannell would become the Hansville postmistress in 1893, with the town's first post office at the light station.

Keeper Scannell detailed his work and changes at the light station in the logbook, noting that he was forced to make many repairs, including replacing rotten boards in the plank boardwalks between the buildings. His predecessor's illness likely allowed some chores to go undone. Carpet was installed in the parlor of the Scannell's house in May 1888. The keepers planted a large vegetable garden and had livestock. The light station was much like a small farm at this time—one that not only provided subsistence for the lightkeepers but also a beacon and bell for mariners.

On April 26, 1889, Scannell wrote in the logbook that an engineer had arrived at the light station to select a site for a new fog sig-

nal. The bell, though melodious and much-loved by local residents, was inadequate for this important point at the entrance to Puget Sound. The U.S. Lighthouse Board had determined that a Daboll steam trumpet system would better serve mariners, but it took several years for funding to be allocated.

In 1898 a fog signal room of approximately 500 square feet was added to the east side of the lighthouse. Fastened to the concrete floor were two Hornsby-Akroyd kerosene engines that powered a compressor to produce the steam for the signature blast of sound. Two black trumpets jutted through the north and south walls of the fog signal room. They sounded in unison a 3-second blast, were silent for 3 seconds, then sounded another 3-second blast, followed by 21 seconds of silence. Cost for the new fog signal, which commenced service in 1900, was \$6,000. It was soon discovered that the station's water supply for cooling the engines would be inadequate in summer, so two redwood 1,000-gallon tanks were constructed in 1901 and 1905 and connected to a rainwater roof catchment system. They were removed after World War I when another source of water became available from a small dam on the hilltop south of the lighthouse.

While Scannell was industrious and kept the light station shipshape, he appeared not to like writing in the logbook. There are long stretches of time with the same simple daily

entry: “general routine of station duty.” He reported the more notable events, however, such as a heavy snowstorm on February 22, 1891, and, later that year in August, the rebuilding of a new boatway and strengthening of the breakwater. In November 1891, he wrote that an earthquake shook the station and “stopped clocks for 8 seconds.” In the late summer of 1892, Scannell noted that smoke veiled the light station, possibly from forest fires.

The community of Hansville was very much a part of the daily life for Point No Point keepers by the 1890s. A one-room schoolhouse was built near the lighthouse in 1895—a short walk for the lighthouse keepers' kids. Maggs returned to the lighthouse many times between his departure in 1884 and his death in 1900. Keepers Jakins and Scannell both mentioned his visits. He is believed to have lived in a small house a few hundred feet west of the light station. After his death in 1900, his widow continued to live in the “Maggs House.” Maggs' descendants still live in the Hansville area today.

The Puget Sound region was growing by leaps and bounds after 1900. The U.S. Lighthouse Board had many new lighthouses being built and planned. It was decided a critical lighthouse like Point No Point needed a stronger optic, so the original fifth-order lens was removed in 1914 and sent to the new lighthouse under construction at Point Robinson on Vashon-Maury Island. A more powerful, six-panel, fourth-order group flashing light was installed at Point



Many of Point No Point's keepers hunted, fished, and gardened to augment the food staples provided by the government. Keeper and Mrs. Cary (far left and far right) stand in their garden, circa 1916. Courtesy of the Coast Guard Museum NW.



The crack in the bulls-eye of the Fresnel lens was caused by the fire in 1923. The lens is still in place in the lantern though not in use. Photo by the author.

No Point. This new lens had been created by modifying a spare lens at the Lighthouse Service Depot in Tompkinville, New York. It was then shipped to Puget Sound, along with an incandescent oil vapor lamp using kerosene under pressure. Because kerosene is such a volatile fuel, the government did not want cans of it stored in the lighthouse. A corrugated metal oil house for storing the kerosene was built behind the lighthouse.

By this time, Scannell had handed over the lighthouse keys to William H. Cary. The Carys were well-liked members of the community and would remain at the light station for 23 years. Every spring they planted a huge garden on the south side of the lighthouse. They had a comical pet parrot that sat on the keeper's shoulder. Mrs. Cary supplemented the family income by giving piano lessons.

A fire in the lighthouse lantern in 1923 started as a result of a hole forming in the vaporizer tube of the lamp, which allowed

it to flare up and build heat. Cary reported that the fire cracked the bulls-eye and several prisms in one lens panel. It also damaged three lantern windows and scorched the roof of the cupola. Fault was placed on the defective vaporizer tube, and Cary was not held responsible for the accident. Repairs were made to the lamp, but the lens—unaffected in terms of its ability to focus and intensify the light—was not repaired. Even so, the event underscored the danger of kerosene under pressure and augured changes to come at the lighthouse.

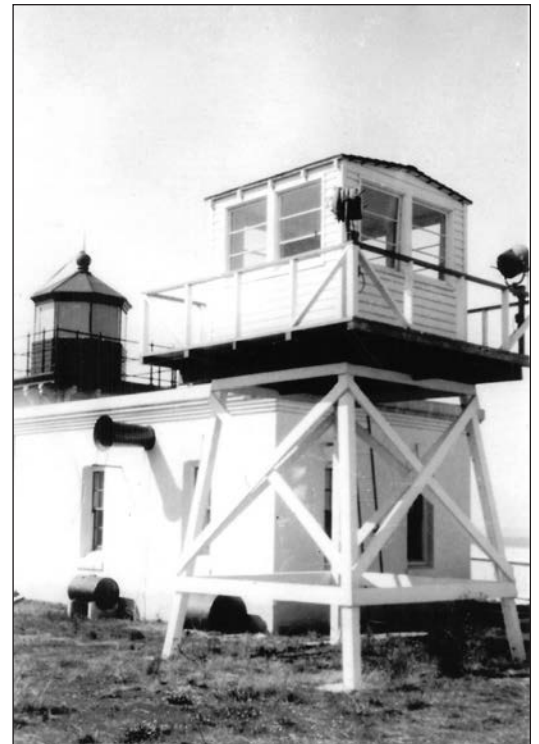
The U.S. Lighthouse Board had been dissolved in 1910 and replaced by the U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses, a progressive and penurious civilian organization in the Department of Commerce. Thus, Cary saw many changes in his years as keeper, including the adoption of a pension system for lighthouse keepers and electrification of the light station in 1930. Automation loomed in the future, a time when the lighthouse would ultimately require only one lightkeeper, and eventually no keeper when the light and fog signal became self-sufficient.

H. Gilbert Fulkerson was Cary's assistant in 1930. His son, Gil, was 6 at the time. He remembers the idyllic life at Point No Point, especially summer vacations from school and the good fishing in the creeks running down to the strait, where he caught cutthroat trout. As he got older, he also used his family's skiff to go halibut and salmon fishing off the point. His mother canned the salmon. Gil

recalled that his father spent an inordinate amount of time painting. The white picket fence surrounding the light station was constantly being painted from end to end and back again.

In May 1930, lightning struck the lighthouse and traveled through the lantern, down the lens pedestal, and through the oil and air tubing to the ground. Eight feet of oil supply tubing was damaged and had to be replaced. When electricity came to the light station later that year, a new electric lamp powered by a 150-watt bulb was installed inside the fourth-order lens. It produced a 17,000-candlepower light. A backup generator was installed in the lighthouse in case commercial power failed. In 1932 a 300-watt bulb was installed, more than doubling the candlepower. About the same time, the U.S. Weather Bureau set up a weather station on the roof of the duplex dwelling and installed a telephone. Mrs. Cary gathered weather information and phoned it to the weather office in Seattle.

When Cary retired in 1937, Arthur Frey became the lighthouse keeper. He witnessed the transfer of lighthouses from the U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses to the U.S. Coast Guard,



The watchtower was used by the Coast Guard during WWII. Photo from 1940 courtesy of Robert E. Zimmerman.



In 1953, when this picture was taken, Point No Point's fog signal had been upgraded from Daboll trumpets to triple diaphragm horns, seen on top of the fog signal building. Note the drapes drawn around the lens to protect it during the daytime. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

which had formed in 1915 with the merging of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service and the U.S. Life-saving Service. President Franklin Roosevelt wanted to consolidate government agencies to save money and felt the Coast Guard was the best agency to manage lighthouses, but the handover had barely taken place when World War II began.

Frey continued to maintain the lighthouse and fog signal with his assistant, George H. McNelley. However, the keepers were joined by Coast Guard radio beacon operators and watchmen who kept an eye on the water from a small tower erected southeast of the lighthouse. The radio beacon antennas and guy wires stood to the south of the lighthouse. During the war, the light station was used for convalescing servicemen. Fifty-four men lived in the duplex attic, sleeping in hammocks hung wherever there was space. Movies were shown on the attic wall by the U.S.O. to entertain them.

McNelley replaced Frey in 1942 as lightkeeper. The Coast Guard discontinued the position of assistant keeper at this time, as one man could handle the duties and the station was already crowded enough with radio operators, watchmen, and convales-

cents. In 1943 McNelley was transferred and Charles Fleetwood "Pops" Walters arrived. His nickname, "Pops," was due to his premature white hair. He had contracted

malaria years before, and it turned his hair white. Walters was keeper of the light station until 1952.

Coast Guard keeper Harvey Bussart took over after Walters and served until 1956. During his tenure, the Daboll trumpet foghorns were removed and a set of triple diaphragm horns were installed on the roof of the fog signal building facing the water. In 1956 Kitsap County placed a stone memorial next to the lighthouse to commemorate the 1855 Treaty of Point No Point, signed by Governor Isaac Stevens and leaders of several local tribes.

As Point No Point Lighthouse moved into the second half of the 20th century, the Coast Guard upgraded infrastructure at the station and prepared it for automation. In the 1970s, piggyback ELG 300/02 electric foghorns were installed on a pole alongside the fog signal building with an emergency backup fog signal. A fog detector was mounted on the lantern gallery facing northeast. The beacon in the lantern was equipped with an automatic bulb changer and light sensor. These changes made the site ready for complete automation, which took place in 1977. Coast Guard personnel continued to occupy the duplex dwelling, though there were no lightkeeping duties to do beyond a little cleaning. The Coast Guard District 13 Aids to Navigation team



The rear of the lighthouse, circa 1955, shows the area where earlier keepers planted vegetable gardens. Note the new extension on the chimney over the work room. Photo courtesy of Barbara Neff.



visited the lighthouse twice a year to make sure the light and fog signal were operating properly on their own.

In the mid-1970s, a tall, steel Vessel Traffic Service tower was built west of the duplex quarters as part of the Coast Guard's modern radar surveillance network of the Salish Sea. The VTS tower remains on duty and works with others around the region to track ship movements and prevent maritime mishaps. Data from the tower is sent to Coast Guard Pier 36's monitoring station where it is disseminated to ships.

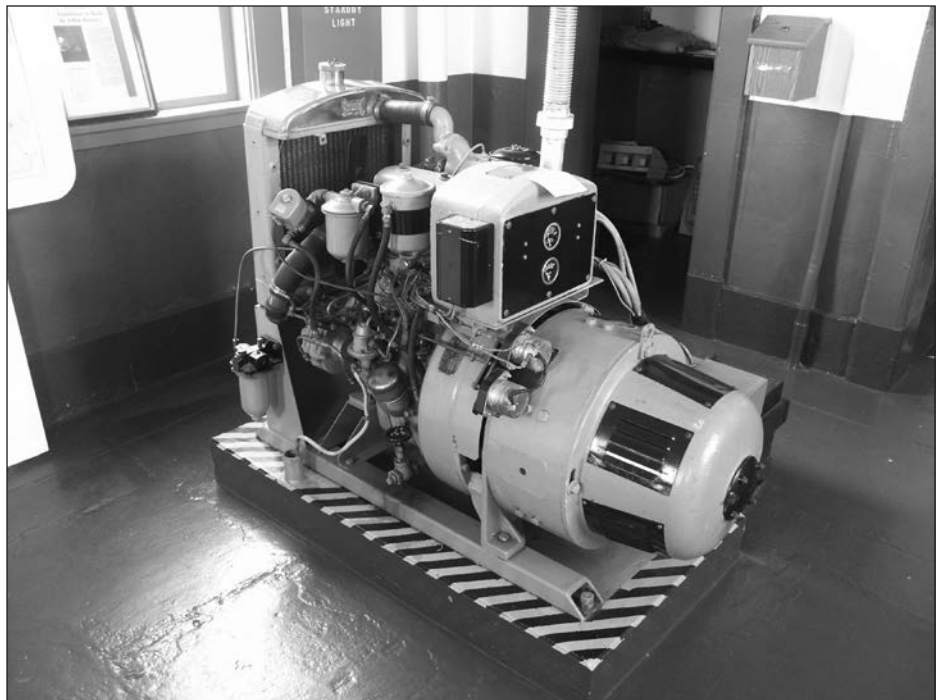
In 1979 the light station was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

In the early 1980s, Coast Guardsman David Peelman, who lived in the quarters but was not required to tend the lighthouse, enjoyed having a pool table in the fog signal room of the lighthouse. The room was no longer used for fog signaling, and there was plenty of space on the concrete floor. Peelman also maintained the grounds. He came back to the lighthouse for a visit in June 2005 and was pleased to see the lighthouse open to the public.



**The lighthouse is now in the midst of a Kitsap County park and is a prime site for kite-flyers of all ages. Photo circa 2000s by Rebecca Pirtle.**

James Teeter lived in the duplex in 1989 and kept the grounds in the late 1980s. He



**The generator that at one time fueled the fog signal now sits inside the lighthouse as an attraction for visitors. Photo by the author.**

recalled getting a call from the Coast Guard during a snowstorm in 1989 asking him to help a small boat in distress. The three people on board the boat were drifting toward Point No Point. Teeter watched for them to drift near the lighthouse and then waded into the water to get their boat ashore. They were given a place to sleep in the duplex until Teeter could get them on a ferry home the next day.

In the 1990s, Kitsap County expressed an interest in acquiring the lighthouse property for use as a park. In 1998 the lighthouse was made surplus and the county signed a 15-year lease with the Coast Guard to use the property as a public park. The duplex became quarters for members of the county sheriff's department. The county eventually opened the lighthouse for tours on summer weekends with a crew of trained docents. Meanwhile, the county also began acquiring land around the light station and developed a larger park with a public beach and trails.

Perhaps the most significant change at Point No Point Lighthouse in recent years has been the arrival of the U.S. Lighthouse Society. Originally headquartered in a San Francisco office building, the society began looking in 2006 for a lighthouse site to house its headquarters, archive, and library. The

society's executive director, Jeff Gales, fell in love with Point No Point Lighthouse on a tour of the site in 2006. Negotiations began between Kitsap County and the U.S. Lighthouse Society to rent the duplex quarters and provide stewardship for the site. The society headquarters began occupying the west side of the duplex in 2008 and shortly thereafter a vacation rental was established in the east side of the duplex to provide a stream of income for maintaining the light station and also as a means of giving the public more access to the historic property.

The county docents formed the non-profit Friends of Point No Point in 2008 and began raising money to create programs and displays, as well as keep the lighthouse open for tours. A partnership between the county, the society, and the friends has benefited the light station in many ways. Grants from various sources, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Washington Lighthouse License Plate Grant fund, have resulted in restoration of the lighthouse and quarters, as well as the oil house and old barn and workshop, now a gift shop and mini-museum.

In addition, after the classic fourth-order Fresnel lens was decommissioned in 2006 and replaced by a 250mm, acrylic beacon



The light station is dwarfed by Mount Rainier in this 2011 photograph. The mountain is actually 80 miles east of Point No Point. USLHS archive photo by Ashley Shogart.

mounted on the lantern railing, it was rumored the Coast Guard would remove the beautiful old fourth-order lens, which had served in the lantern for 92 years. The U.S. Lighthouse Society negotiated an agreement with the Coast Guard to keep the lens in situ to preserve the historic look and integrity of the lighthouse.

The electric foghorn was discontinued in 2009, as the Coast Guard felt fog signals not on ferry routes were no longer needed. The mournful cry of the horns was missed by some residents...but not all. The 1950s diaphragm horns are on display inside the lighthouse, on loan from the Coast Guard Museum Northwest. One of the defunct fog engines remains in the lighthouse too. Visitors are always fascinated with these artifacts and thrilled to be able to go inside the old lighthouse and

learn about its past. Docents especially enjoy bringing school children to the light station to learn about the importance of lighthouses, the point's relationship to the land and water, and the shoreline and wetland environment around Point No Point.

The daily presence of the U.S. Lighthouse Society ensures a watchful eye on the light station and a bright future as funds become available for continued restoration and interpretation. Kitsap County work crews and volunteers, and the Friends of Point No Point, are dedicated to preserving this treasure from Puget Sound's past. Point No Point Lighthouse is not only one of the oldest structures in Kitsap County, it's the only remaining, government-established lighthouse in the county. Even more, it remains in operation as a navigational aid and

is a cherished icon of the community. Working partnerships will continue to restore and preserve this site and keep it available for the public to enjoy.

*Elinor DeWire is the newest member of the U.S. Lighthouse Society Board of Directors. She blogs about lighthouses at [elinordewire.blogspot.com](http://elinordewire.blogspot.com).*

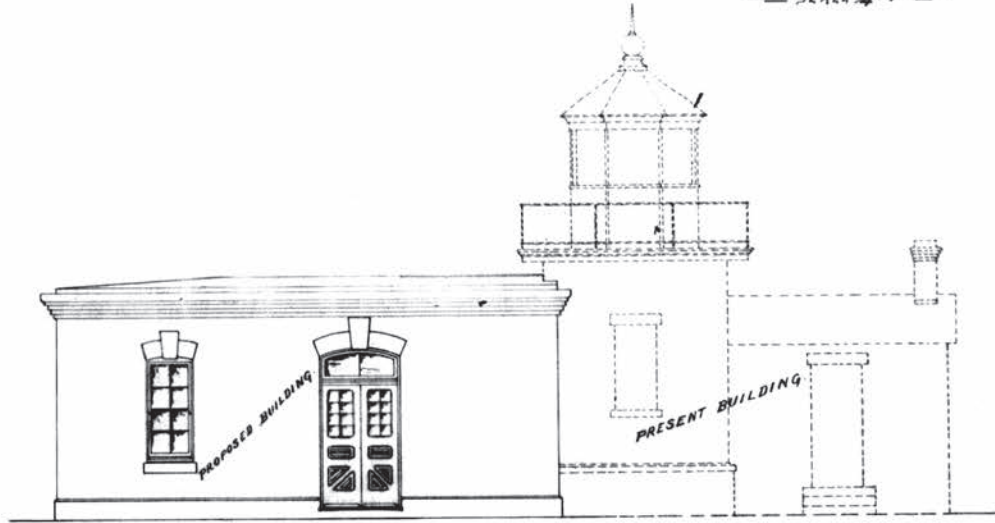


POINT NO POINT, WASH., LIGHT STATION.

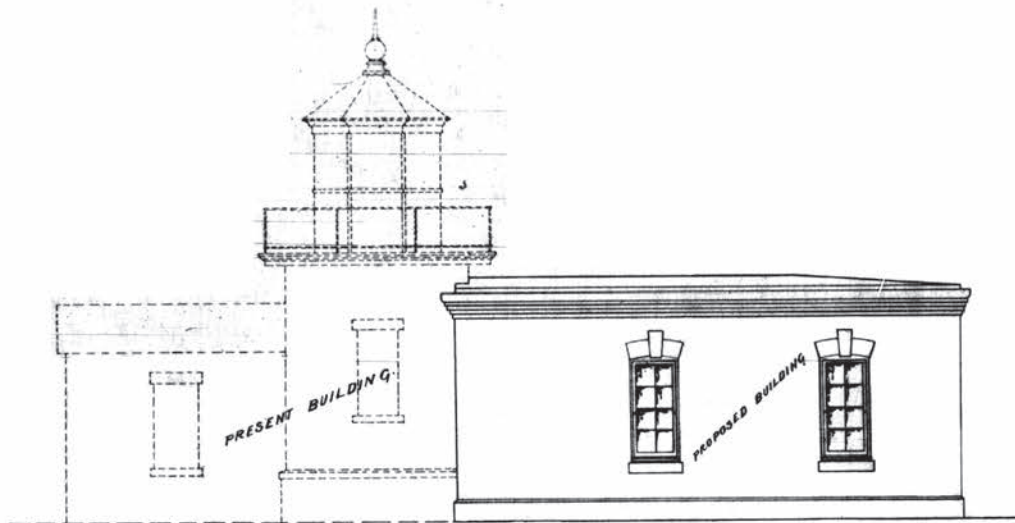
Plate 2.

PROPOSED  
FOG SIGNAL BUILDING

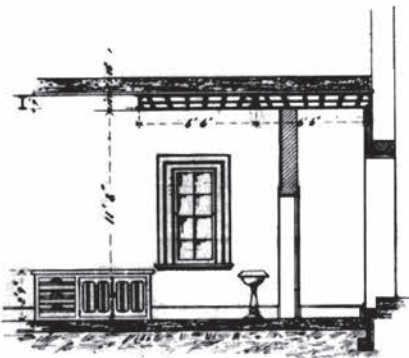
SCALE 1/4" = 1'



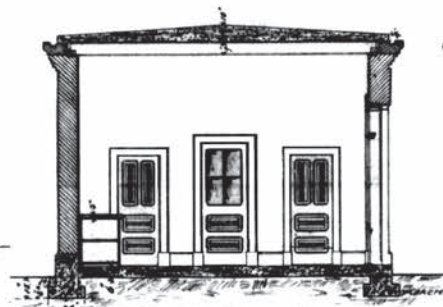
NORTH ELEVATION.



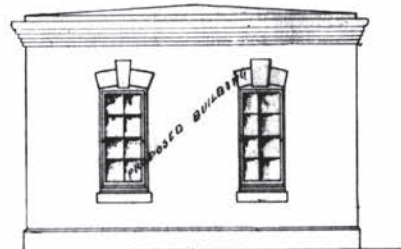
SOUTH ELEVATION.



PART LONGITUDINAL SECTION.



CROSS SECTION.



EAST ELEVATION.



SECTION THROUGH TILES AND BEAM.

U.S. GEO. SURV. 1898

13<sup>th</sup> Dist.

5 P with Engr's letter of 20 Aug. 98 -  
and 2 Sept - -