

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

of the
**CAPE BLANCO
 HERITAGE SOCIETY**



CBHS BOARD MEETINGS: Currently held at Point.B Studio at 10:00 AM on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.
PLEASE NOTE: Our meetings are open to everyone who would like to attend. We invite and encourage anyone interested in CBHS to participate!

Planning the Port Orford Lifeboat Station



L to R — Official USCG seal c1943; Port Orford Lifeboat Station aerial c1954; Old Coast Guard lookout tower once stood at end of Tower Trail.

PART TWO: This special two-part edition of “News of Note” was created in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Port Orford Lifeboat Station being open as a public museum. Part one is available online on [the CBHS website](http://theCBHSwebsite.com).

Our timeline is based on information from the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service and The Point Orford Heritage Society:

1915: By an act of Congress, the U.S. Life-Saving Service and U.S. Revenue Cutter services are combined to create the modern-day U.S. Coast Guard.

Feb. 1929: Third trip to Port Orford commissioned to “make a careful examination determining the suitability of the locality of a site for a Coast Guard station.” District Commander John Kelly and Field assistant Andre Fourchy are assigned, and determine that the station should be located at Nellies Cove.

Feb. 24, 1929: Correspondence from Acting Commandant B.M. Chiswell to U.S. Senator



B.M. Chiswell

Frederick Steiwar: The officers who visited the site are of the opinion that “...If a station is to be provided, it should be placed at Nellies Cove.” They continue that “... there are no funds available for the construction of this station. No appropriation since 1918, with one exception, has been made by Congress for the construction of Life-saving (Coast Guard) stations...”

1929: In 1929, there were 16 Coast Guard Stations authorized by law to be established, but no financial support for their construction. In the list of relative order that they would be constructed, Port Orford was third.

Winter 1931: Congress passes \$83,000.00 appropriation for construction of a station at Port Orford. “A six room bungalow for the Officer in Charge, and a two story dwelling for the crew should be built, on the level tract west of the cove ...”



Steiwar

Winter-Spring 1932: Drawings for the proposed buildings at Port Orford are being prepared; construction work to begin in April.

1932: Most of the year is spent negotiating deeds, easements, and clearing title discrepancies. Land acquired by the Coast Guard for use by the agency reverts to grantors on formal abandonment by the Coast Guard.

Confusing problems with multiple mortgages on the

McGraw tract were the subject of numerous letters in 1932. These problems posed some threat to the appropriation money, but were eventually resolved early in 1934.

Feb. 1934: Port Orford Station nearing completion. Construction began from plans that were reputedly traced in part from those used at Point Reyes station in northern California. Construction of the boathouse was tricky and the *Curry County Reporter* stated that “Owing to the steepness of the trail, all



[The steep trail to the boathouse.](#)

materials had to be conveyed to the site by means of a skyline.” It was said that one man got stranded on one of the rocks when they were building the breakwater and had to be rescued. The contractor in charge of the project was [Julius Yuhasz](#), who came from the Midwest and spent two years in Port Orford seeing the project to its completion. Ovid Olson assisted in the construction.



Yuhasz.

July 1, 1934: Port Orford station placed in commission at 8:00 a.m. Nil Nilsson was the appointed Officer-in-Charge with the original crew of Odell Flake, Roy Mills, Art Hinderlee, Sheldon Williams,

Leonard Stursa, Jack Ellis, Jim Holcumb, Oscar Hedman, Larry Eastman, Jim Dare, Earl Corlies and Don Douglas. The station was equipped with two motor boats, two pulling boats [and a crew of 13 men.](#)

1970: Port Orford Station declared as excess property by the U.S. Government and decommissioned. The station was moved to Chetco Harbor in Brookings, Oregon.

1970-1976: Oregon State University uses the site.

1976: Site is deeded to Oregon State Parks. Port Orford Heads State Park is created.

1995: Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department establishes a Memorandum of Agreement with the Point Orford Heritage Society.

1998: Entire site is listed on the National Register of Historic places. Oregon State Parks creates two new trails (*the Cove and Headland trails*).

1999: Point Orford Heritage Society acquires 36' motor lifeboat (#36498).

June 3, 2000: Port Orford Lifeboat Station museum opens. ⚓



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[SCENES OF YESTERDAY FROM THE LIFEBOAT STATION:](#) 1) Nine members of the original crew c1934. OIC Nils Nilsson is kneeling in the front row center; 2) Lifeboat #36498 docked in Gold Beach; 3) The OIC residence from the water tower circa 1960.

Become a MEMBER of the CAPE BLANCO HERITAGE SOCIETY



OUR MISSION: To provide interpretative and educational services for the Cape Blanco Light Station, Historic Hughes House and Ranch and the Port Orford Lifeboat Station. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax-deductible.

Mail this portion of the form with your check made out to:
Cape Blanco Heritage Society. P.O. Box 1132 Port Orford, Oregon 97465.

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