FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

[redacted]

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

1. Name

historic Tillamook Rock Lighthouse

and/or common "Tilly"

2. Location SW of Seaside

street & number About 1.2 miles off Tillamook Head ___ not for publication

city, town Seaside vic. X vicinity of **congressional district** First

state Oregon **code** 41 **county** Clatsop **code** 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
X structure	___ both	X work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	X other: Columbarium

4. Owner of Property

name Mimi Morissette etal, Eternity at Sea Columbarium

street & number 714 SW 20th Place, Suite C

city, town Portland ___ vicinity of **state** Oregon 97205

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clatsop County Courthouse/Planning Division

street & number

city, town Astoria **state** Oregon 97103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oregon State Inventory of Hist. Prop. **has this property been determined elegible?** ___ yes X no

date 1970 ___ federal ___ state X county ___ local

depository for survey records Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

city, town 525 Trade Street SE, Salem **state** Oregon 97310

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse is situated on a concrete terrace atop a basalt islet 1.2 miles off Tillamook Head on the northern Oregon Coast. The focal plane of its lamp is nearly 145 feet above mean sea level. The complex consists of a two-story stone masonry lighthouse keepers' dwelling with a single-story fog signal wing centered on the west elevation, a cistern, a supply house below the terrace, and concrete stairs descending to a concrete pad, or wharf at the base of the rock. The square light tower rises above the center of the low hipped roof of the lighthouse and is encircled by an observation deck and railing and is surmounted by a conical-roofed lantern. The coursed ashlar exterior walls of the lighthouse are trimmed with rock-faced staggered quoins, and original round-arched door and window framements are similarly finished with rock-faced ashlar.

The 45-foot by 48-foot two-story keepers' house was divided into five interior living spaces, ar office, kitchen and dining area, and an eighth room used for additional food storage. Stairs led to a work and storage area in the upper story.

Through the center of the first level, running east and west, was the central hall which passed through the light tower foundation, which occupied in turn a 16 foot-square area at the center of the keepers' quarters. From this base the light tower projects skyward to a height of about 54 feet from the top of the rock to its peak, and nearly 145 feet above the ocean mean level.

Located off the westernmost wall of the keepers' quarters, and sharing a common wall with the keepers' quarters, is the 28-foot by 32-foot fog signal room which originally housed the steam boiler used to operate the fog signal as well as deisel generators which provided the sole power source to the light station.

The exterior walls of the structure are constructed of 14 inch-thick basalt stone blocks, as are the first thirty six feet of the walls supporting the light tower. The interior areas of the stone block walls are lined with red brick, thus making the total thickness about two feet in the main building and up to four feet at the corners of the tower base.

At the 36-foot level of the tower is a surrounding steel catwalk and railing. It is at this point that the tower changes from the sixteen foot square base construction to a 14-foot diameter, 8-foot high turret formed by two layers of brick totaling sixteen inches in thickness and comprising the foundation of the cylindrical steel and glass lantern room.

The roof of the tower is comprised of wedge-shaped steel plates forming an inverted cone topped by a steel sphere and lightning rod.

Surrounding the lantern room windows is a steel chain mesh storm guard which was added in 1935 after a severe storm caused damage to the original lantern and forced the replacement.

Within the tower is the most noteworthy interior architectural feature, a 77-step steel spiral staircase which winds it way along the interior walls of the tower from the first floor to the steel plate floor of the lantern room.

In 1898, following a number of storms in which the original steel plate roof supported by a series of wood joists and rafters was damaged, a new roof, constructed of 10 inch steel "I" beam supports and a 2-foot thickness of concrete, was added. At the same time what had been an attic storage area over the keepers' quarters was converted to a second story with a 6-foot ceiling clearance.

As originally designed, the main structure had tall round-arched windows as follows: two on either side of the main entrance centered in the east elevation, two in both the north and sout walls of the keepers' quarters, two in the western wall of the keepers' quarters on either side of the fog signal room, two in the southern wall of the fog signal room, one in the westernmost

wall, one alongside the secondary entrance to the building in the north wall of the fog signal room, one each in the east and west walls of the light tower, and four portholes spaced evenly around the turret portion of the light tower.

However, around the time the second story was added in 1898 the six windows with either a southern or western exposure were cemented in as further storm-proofing, with the two in the south wall of the keepers' quarters and the one in the west wall of the fog signal room being allowed 18-inch portholes as replacements. A porthole was added to the staircase room at the southwest corner of the keepers' quarters, and six small openings were made in the second story (three in the north wall, and three in the east).

Surrounding the lighthouse proper is a concrete walkway, originally lined by a steel cable and post guard rail. At the east side, the walkway widens into a platform or terrace about 70 feet deep and 70 feet wide.

Because the rock beneath the platform slopes away sharply, it was necessary to construct a stone block foundation of some height. In the space beneath the platform, cisterns for capturing and holding fresh rainwater were installed. Another cistern was built halfway above platform level parallel to the north wall at the easterly corner of the keepers' quarters.

Also built alongside the north wall of the building, was a privy constructed of brick and cement. The facility was eventually superseded by inside plumbing and a water closet located in the northwest corner of the fog signal room.

Beginning at the northeast corner of the afore-mentioned platform, a long flight of concrete stairs descends the gentlest slope of the rock to the 20-foot by 30-foot by 12-foot brick on concrete supply house located approximately 20 feet below the base of the lighthouse platform. The stairs then descend to a concrete slab located at the base of the rock. This lower platform was used as a loading platform in conjuntion with the derrick.

The derrick, used to load and unload both supplies and personnel during the lighthouse's active years, succumbed to gradual deterioration brought on by the salt water and years of neglect. All that remains of the mighty oak mast is a short stump to hold its place in the giant steel swivel, which is based in concrete and anchored with steel bolts in the native rock of the island.

Constructed of stone, brick, concrete, and steel, Tillamook Rock Lighthouse has, with the exception of its nonsupporting wood and plaster interior walls and floors, withstood the test of time quite admirably, showing no real signs of exterior decay. Exposed steel components, railings and tanks, for example, were rusted and in need of paint. Windows, long since shot out by passing boaters, are now filled in with concrete block. The building has been repainted. With routine maintenance hereafter, it should stand indefinitely.

The management of the Eternity at Sea Columbarium removed all perishable wooden interior walls, floors, beams, and other such interior components, sealed off all openings with masonry except the double door entrance located in the north wall of the fog signal room. An interior concrete platform was constructed to replace the original wooden floor. After interior partitioning was removed, the space was fitted with a honeycomb of sleeves to be filled with crematory urns.

Although all windows and doors are permanently sealed save one, they are on the exterior painted to appear from the nearest onshore viewpoint (Ecola State Park) as they did in their original form.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1879-1881 **Builder/Architect** Colonel G. L. Gillespie, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse is significant as Oregon's only offshore light and the fourth oldest of nine lighthouses now standing on the state's coastline. Its construction, completed in 1881, was an engineering feat involving hazardous landings of men and materials by derrick and breeches buoy from a lighthouse tender anchored off the rock. Its roof was replaced and extra loft added to the keepers' quarters in 1889, at which time openings on the heavy weather sides (south and west) were filled. Its period of service as an aid to navigation extended more than 75 years under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Treasury Light House Keeping Service and, from 1939 on, the U.S. Coast Guard. It was superseded by a whistle buoy and decomissioned in 1957. Two years later, it was surplused by the General Services Administration and passed into more than 20 years of disuse under successive private ownerships, during which time ambitious dreams of a novel gambling casino and other enterprises faded.

Between April and September, 1980, the lighthouse on its tiny island site -- a basalt outcrop--was refurbished by its present owner and its interior adapted as a columbarium, or repository for crematory remains. While the lighthouse is visible from nearby public beaches and from Ecola State Park on Tillamook Head, the only access to Tillamook Rock today is by helicopter. Deposits are made by the management of the new Eternity at Sea Columbarium a limited number of times a year as weather conditions permit. The lamp is in place in the lantern, but, under terms of the deed transferring title to private owners, the light may not be activated. Notwithstanding its change of use, the stone masonry lighthouse still embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type and possesses integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Of all the lighthouses built in the United States, Tillamook Rock Light is considered by many to be the most noteworthy. Its isolated and exposed position atop a solid basalt islet more than a mile offshore made it not only an extremely lonely post for its tenders, but also one of the most challenging. Since its powerful beam was first shown in 1881, it guided untold thousands of ships safely past one of the most hazardous sections of coastline on the continental United States and into the Columbia River shipping lanes, so prominent in the economic history of Oregon and the Northwest.

Constructed under the direction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the lighthouse was considered to be a significant architectural and engineering accomplishment. The fact that John R. Trewaves, a master mason with years of experience erecting lighthouses off the walls of England, was killed trying to complete the assigned task of surveying the rock prior to taking foremanship of the construction, is in itself a significant statement for the inventiveness of the men who were able to complete the job.

In June of 1879, District Superintendent of Lighthouse Construction, John R. Wheeler, was able after numerous other attempts, to make a successful landing on the rock in order to survey its topography, prior to beginning construction. This landing party is considered to be the first ever to set foot on Tillamook Rock. However, unable to land his surveying equipment, Wheeler was forced to make his survey with only a tape measure.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED
BOUNDARY NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property about 1

Quadrangle name Vancouver, Washington, Oregon **Quadrangle scale** 1:250,000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	10	421000	5087350
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property nominated is a basaltic rock island in the Pacific Ocean about 1.2 miles west of Tillamook Head, Clatsop County, Oregon, and about 20 miles south of the Columbia River Bar. It is located in Section 11, T. 5N., R. 11W., W.M., and is listed as Clatsop County Assessor's Tax Lot 190.

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	Bruce D. McQuilken, Marketing Director
organization	Eternity at Sea Columbarium **date** June 10, 1980
street & number	714 SW 20th Place, Suite C **telephone** 503/220-0202
city or town	Portland **state** Oregon 97205

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

X national ___ state ___ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature ✓ Deputy

title Deputy SHPO **date** May 26, 1981

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register **date** 12/9/81

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration

GPO 938 835

United States Department of the Interior
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The difficult task of construction was begun in October of 1879 under the supervision of Charles A. Ballantyne. Against all odds, Ballantyne assembled a construction crew, kept them away from negative public opinion for twenty-six days until the weather allowed a landing attempt, transported them to the rock, and invented an ingenious method for transporting men and equipment from a ship anchored a safe distance off the rock to the construction site.

Experiencing great difficulty in landing initial supplies and men, it became obvious to Ballantyne that a method other than jumping from small boats to the rock would have to be employed. He answered the need by rigging a heavy rope between the top of the rock and the mast of a ship, and devising a traveler pulley mechanism to transport men and supplies from the ship to the island. This method was used during the initial construction and was later replaced with the huge derrick during the lighthouse's active years.

While the construction crew lived in makeshift quarters, braving the bitter winter elements, the top thirty feet of the rock was blasted off to create a level foundation. Finally on June 24, 1880, the construction of the massive derrick was complete, and the cornerstone of the lighthouse was laid in place. At that time, huge oblong basalt blocks, quarried from Mount Tabor in Portland, Oregon, were laid in place one by one, to form the walls of what was considered the sturdiest lighthouse ever built in the United States.

Construction continued until January 3, 1881, on which date the purpose of the undertaking became clear to the men involved. On that night in a dense fog, the British bark, Lupatia, like so many before her without navagational aid, ran aground on nearby Tillamook Head, taking with her the lives of the entire crew.

The tragedy so effected the construction crew that their efforts were redoubled. Only three weeks after the disaster, on January 21, 1881, 575 days after the beginning of construction, the original Fresnel lamp was placed in operation for the first time. Construction costs totaled the unheard-of sum of $123,493. It was the most expensive lighthouse ever built on the West Coast.

The completion of the task of construction was so lauded that, on the basis of this feat, Major G. L. Gillespie, Designer-Engineer of the project, was eventually promoted to Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers.

With the exception of the addition of a second story over the keepers' quarters and a sturdier than original concrete roof over all areas in 1898, the lighthouse remained very much as she was built for 76 years of service. Withstanding all the most destructive forces nature and the sea could subject it to, Tillamook Light provided safe passage for untold numbers of ships passing the perilous northern Oregon coastline in search of the Columbia River shipping lanes.

In 1939, Tillamook Light, as did all U.S. Lighthouses, came under the jurisdication of the U.S. Coast Guard. In a move to economize, Congress disbanded the civilian-operated U.S. Lighthouse Service. Afterward, Tillamook Light was manned by Coast Guard personnel except for its principal keepers, who remained civilian.

With the inception of less costly modern electronic equipment, lighthouses began to go out of use in the mid-20th century. Tillamook Rock Lighthouse was no exception. Replaced by a signal-sending electronic buoy, the lighthouse was decommissioned. The last log entry commissioned by the legendary civilian head keeper of twenty years, Oswald Allik, to Jim Gibbs, a former attendant of the lighthouse when serving the U.S. Coast Guard, read as

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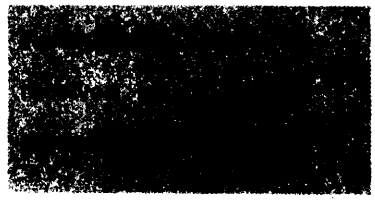


follows: "Farewell, Tillamook Rock Light Station. An era has ended with this final entry, and not without sentiment I return thee to the elements. You, one of the most notorious and yet most fascinating of the sea-swept sentinels in the world; long the friend of the tempest-tossed mariner. Through howling gale, thick fog and driving rain your beacon has been a star of hope and your foghorn a voice of encouragement. May the elements of nature be kind to you. For 77 [sic.] years you have beamed your light over desolate acres of ocean. Keepers have come and gone; men lived and died; but you were faithful to the end. May your sunset years be good years. Your purpose is now only a symbol, but the lives you have saved and the service you have rendered are worthy of the highest respect. A protector of life and property to all, may old timers, newcomers, and travelers along the way pause from the shore in memory of your humanitarian role. September 1, 1957."

In 1959, the General Services Administration put the lighthouse up for sale by sealed bid after the State of Oregon refused possession. It was purchased by a Las Vegas group called Academic Economic Coordinators for $5,600. This group did nothing with the lighthouse in seventeen years of ownership and finally sold it in 1973 to a Senior General Electric Executive, George Hupman, for $11,000.

Hupman's attempts to convert the lighthouse into a summer retreat proved fruitless and he eventually sold it in 1978 to Max M. Shillock, of Portland, Oregon, for $27,000.

In a scandal given statewide publicity, Shillock was accused of swindling a Eugene woman out of the money to purchase the lighthouse. In early 1980 the lighthouse reverted to her ownership, but was immediately purchased by Mimi Morissette for the purpose of restoration and conversion to a Columbarium at Sea. With acquistion cost of $50,000, Tillamook Rock Lighthouse was subsequently rehabilitated.

Records of the U.S. Coast Guard, 13th District, Seattle, Washington. (Blueprint for roof alteration done in 1889 found in lighthouse by work party on April 26, 1980).

Report upon the Construction of Tillamook Rock Light Station, Sea Coast of Oregon, by G.L. Gillespie, Major of Engineers and Bvt. Lieut. Col., U.S.A., Light-House Engineer, 13th District. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1881.

Putnam, George R., Sentinel of the Coasts: The Log of a Lighthouse Engineer (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1937), 358.

"Tillamook Rock Light Station," Proceedings of the Merchant Marine Council, United States Coast Guard, vol. 1, No. 7 (July 1944), 157.

Gibbs, James A., Jr., Sentinels of the North Pacific (Portland: Binfords and Mort, 1955) West Coast Lighthouses (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1974). Tillamook Light (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1979).

"Mystery Shrouds Rock Sale," Salem Capital Journal (March 11, 1969), 11.

"Lighthouse Off Tillamook is Sold," Salem Oregon Statesman (June 13, 1973).

"Coast Beacon Sold for $27,000," Portland Oregonian (February 1, 1978).

"Tillamook Lighthouse Moves to New Era of Service as Columbarium," Salem Statesman Journal (October 12, 1980), 4B.

"'Terrible Tilly' Transformed into Final Resting Place," Portland Oregonian (November 21, 1980), D5.

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Clatsop County, Oregon
Historical photo (date unknown)
taken when Lighthouse active PRR-1957
From: U.S. Coast Guard files
Seattle, Washington
Copy negative: Eternity at Sea Columbarium
714 S.W. 20th Place
Portland, Oregon 97205
Sea level view of east
north east exposure

1 OF 8

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Clatsop County, Oregon
Historical photo (date unknown)
taken when Lighthouse active PRE-1957
From: U.S. Coast Guard files
Seattle, Washington
Copy negative: Eternity at Sea Columbarium
714 S.W. 20th Place
Portland, Oregon 97205
Sea level view west south west exposure

2 OF 8

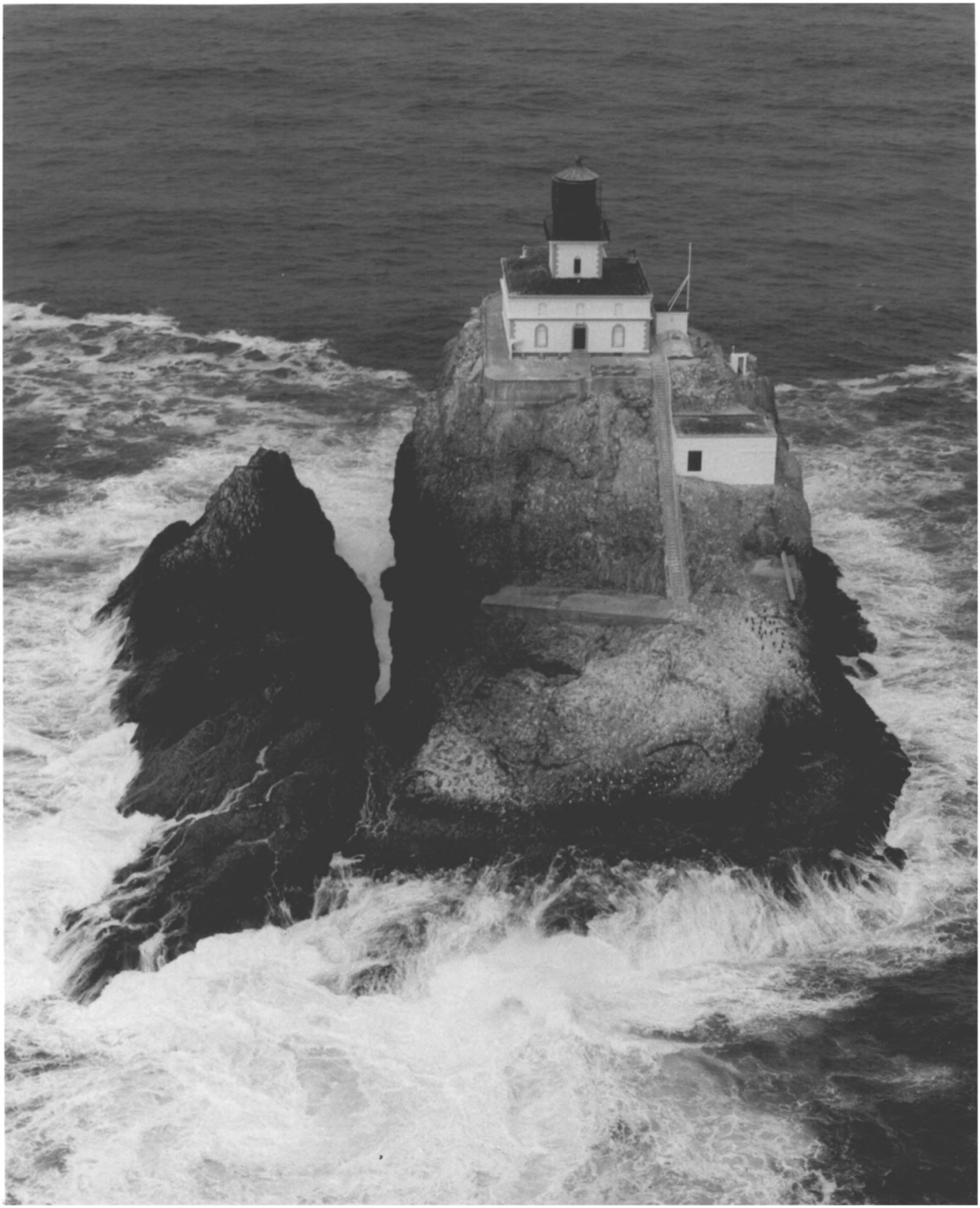
Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Seaside Vicinity
Clatsop County, Oregon

3 of 8
View of lighthouse before commencement of restoration.
Seaside photo, April 25, 1980
Seaside, Oregon

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Seaside Vicinity
Clatsop County, Oregon

4 of 8 (same as photo #2)
Historic view predating decommissioning in 1957.
U.S. Coast Guard - 13th District
Seattle, WA

Copy negative: Eternity at Sea
Columbarium
714 SW 20th Place
Portland, OR 97205



Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Seaside Vicinity
Clatsop County, Oregon

5 of 8
View of lighthouse after restoration.
Seaside Photo, August 20, 1980.
Seaside, Oregon
Looking westerly at East elevation.

#1

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Clatsop County, Oregon
Krohn & Ward, Spring 1979
Negative: Krohn & Ward
107 N. Hemlock
Cannon Beach, Oregon 97110
Aerial view of east south east exposure

6 OF 8

#2

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse, SEASIDE VICINITY
Clatsop County, Oregon
Krohn & Ward, Spring 1979
Negative: Krohn & Ward
107 N. Hemlock
Cannon Beach, Oregon 97110
Aerial view of south south west exposure

TILLAMOOK HEAD IN BACKGROUND
SEASIDE IS IN DISTANCE TO NORTH
7 OF 8 (LOOKING NORTHEASTERLY)

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse
Seaside Vicinity
Clatsop County, Oregon

DEC 9 1981

8 of 8
View of lighthouse after restoration. Looking southeasterly. Haystack Rock, Cannon Beach, and the Oregon Coast Range are in background.

Photo Art Commercial Studios, Inc.
Photo, 1980 -- Negative # 636903
900 SW 13th Avenue
Portland, OR 97205

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