

WEATHER FORECAST

Monterey Bay Area—Fog night and morning and fair afternoon Saturday. Westerly wind afternoons. Little temperature change. Sunday fair, warmer. Yesterday's Temp. (Airport) High 57, Low 51.

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NEWS Comments

That Ear-Splitting Foghorn

We are mindful of the perils of the sea and in favor of all practical steps to make maritime operations safer. But we doubt that in the prevention of shipwrecks it is necessary to turn a part of the land population into nervous wrecks.

We refer, of course, to the new foghorn on Point Pinos, whose shrilly lugubrious blasts may be splitting your eardrums and torturing your whole body now.

The present horn was installed some three months ago. Since then residents of Asilomar and the western part of Pacific Grove have had little rest and even in other parts of the Peninsula the noise has been annoying.

Within a mile or so of the horn people are aroused several times during the night and rise in the morning in no condition for work. Infants are awakened during the day. Motel operators report guests coming for a week and leaving after the first night.

Unless something is done to abate the fiendish howling, residents may move, real estate values in that section may drop and we shall have a blighted area on our hands, depreciated by noise.

If readers living elsewhere on the Peninsula don't believe the situation at Point Pinos is that serious, we suggest that they spend a night near the fog horn and try to sleep.

Complaints to the Coast Guard have so far failed to bring any remedies. Several adjustments have been made in frequency, but the sound on land has been made less irritating.

There certainly should be technical means of muffling the noise downward, despite the Coast Guard's brush-off statements that can't be done.

If it really can't be done, and the frequency cannot be so arranged to sound effective warnings at sea without raising havoc on land, then how about moving the horn from its present location

Peninsula Diary

Pt Pinos Lighthouse

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By MAYO HAYES O'DONNELL

The Point Pinos Lighthouse is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, so it is fitting that we should today recite a bit of the past history of this well known reservation on the historic point of the peninsula.

The original 23 acres of the Point Pinos reservation was purchased by the United States government about 1852. The land was part of the Rancho Punta de Los Pinos of 2,666 acres, granted to Jose Maria Armenta in 1833 by Mexico and later confirmed by the United States to Henry De Gaw in 1863. The Pacific Improvement Co. bought part of the land from David Jacks and sold 67 acres of it to the Lighthouse service to be added to the original 23 acres.

For 100 years a beacon of light has flashed nightly from the Point Pinos Lighthouse as a guide and warning to the many ships sailing off the rocky California coast.

Through the cooperation of the Monterey Public Library Reference Department, the California there, and the lighthouse keepers, we have been able to gather an interesting history of

the lighthouse which is familiar to all visitors to the Monterey Peninsula.

Before the lighthouse was erected, the point of land had a long history of which we know very little, and Indian arrowheads found there are the only remaining evidence of the earliest inhabitants. First seen by white men in 1602, it was named the Point of Pines by its discoverer, Sebastian Vizcaino. The building of the lighthouse was ordered by Thomas Corwin, secretary of the treasury in 1852 and completed two years later. The lighthouse was constructed of local stone; the dirt around the building was brought from Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay.

The heavy lenses, prisms, and mechanism controlling the shutter were made in France by Henri Lapaute, a Parisian craftsman. Although this was not the first lighthouse established on the California coast—beacons had been placed on Point Loma, the Fallaron Islands, and Alcatraz Island in 1852—it is the only lighthouse which still uses the original granite building and the original lenses and prisms. The only major change in the structure was

made in 1939, when a new keeper's cottage was built.

The light which has burned continually through the years, has changed with the times. The first beam was equipped with a sperm oil lantern in which the oil was forced up from its tank to the light by a rude piston operated by gravity. A shutter moved by a falling weight mechanism rotated around the light, blanking it out during the eclipse period. Some years later kerosene was substituted, and in 1915 the light was electrified. Now a mere 500-watt lamp is used, but through a focal plane 92 feet high the lens throws out a 23,000-candlepower beam which is visible 15 miles out to sea. The bulb now turns off and on to give the Point Pinos characteristic flash of 20 seconds followed by a 10-second eclipse, but the old shutter mechanism and gasoline lanterns have been kept in readiness through the years.

The fog signal too has been altered in recent years, an air diaphragm horn being substituted for the siren signal. The two fog horns are turned on by the keepers whenever visibility is less than five miles.

In 1939, in the interest of National Defense, the U.S. Lighthouse Service was consolidated with the U.S. Coast Guard, and now as men of the Lighthouse Service are retired they are replaced by enlisted men of the Coast Guard. The first of a long line of highly efficient lighthouse keepers was Charles Layton, who served from 1853 to 1855. Upon his death his wife, Charlotte, took his place. Layton had come to California with Col. J. D. Steverson's regiment in 1847. In 1855 he was fatally wounded while with a sheriff's posse attempting to capture Anastacio Garcia, a noted outlaw.

Another woman keeper of the Point Pinos Lighthouse was Mrs. M. E. Fish. Other keepers have been Capt. Allen Luce, 1871; Dick Williams, 1914; Peter Nelson, 1921; and Thomas Hen-