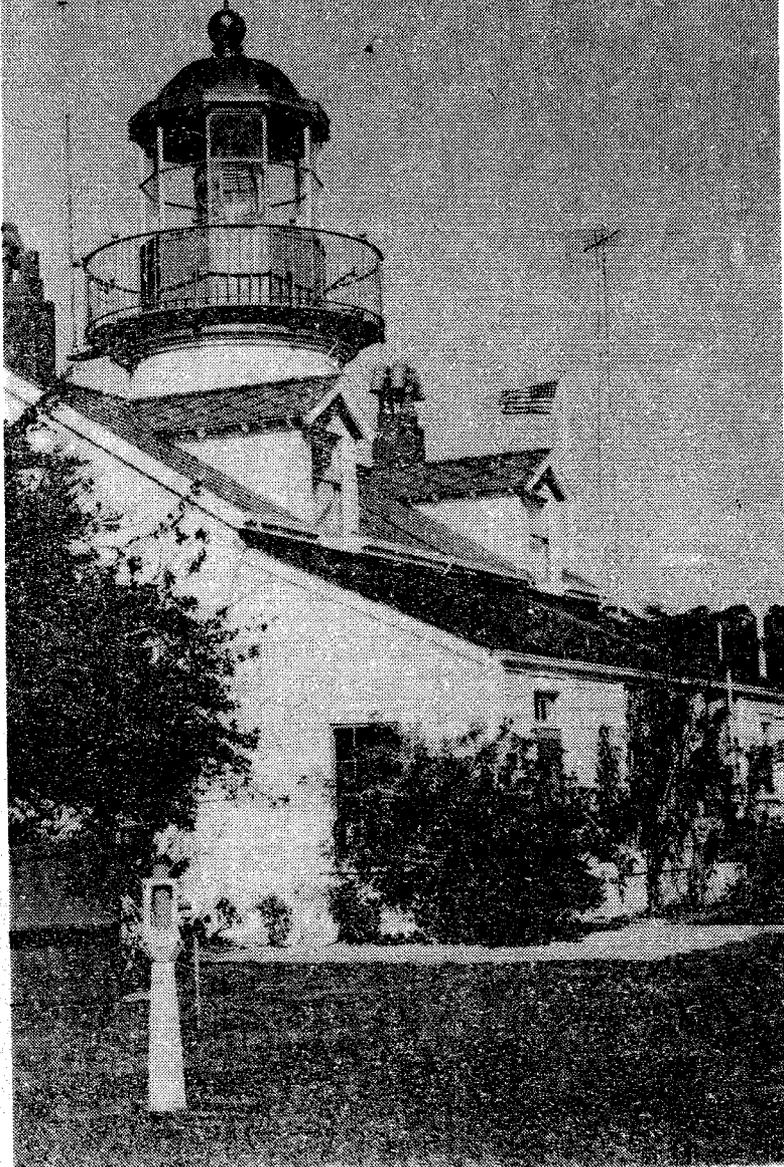


POINT PINCS LIGHT STATION



**UNITED STATES  
COAST GUARD**

WELCOME TO

POINT PINOS LIGHT STATION

...operated by the United States Coast Guard at Pacific Grove, California for the protection of life and property at sea.

Point Pinos Light Station is under the direction of the Commander, Twelfth Coast Guard District, San Francisco, who requests that visitors observe the following rules:

1. Visitors are not permitted in dangerous or unauthorized places.
2. Children will not be admitted unless accompanied and supervised by adults.
3. Adults in other than street clothing will not be admitted.
4. As guests of the Coast Guard and the Officer in Charge of the station you will be guided by his instructions.
5. Visitors must assume all risk. The Government will not be responsible for accidents of injuries.
6. Visiting hours are:
  - 1 to 3 p.m. Weekdays
  - 1 to 4 p.m. Sat., Sun. & holidays

(The station may be temporarily closed during regular visiting hours if, in the opinion of the Officer in Charge, unusual hazards exist or special operations in progress would be hampered by guests.)

## ABOUT POINT PINOS

Since 1855 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. Before the lighthouse was erected, the point of land had a long history of which little is known.

Indian arrowheads found here are the only evidence of its earliest inhabitants. First seen by white men in 1602, it was named the Point of Pines by its discoverer, Sebastian Viscaïno.

On September 28, 1850, Congress first appropriated funds for beginning construction of six lighthouses in California, one of which was at Point Pinos. The lighthouse was completed and its light first shown on September 28, 1855.

The dirt around the building was shipped here from Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay and the tower constructed of granite 18" in thickness.

The heavy lenses, prisms and mechanism controlling the shutter were made in France by Henri Lapaute. Although this was not the first lighthouse established on the California coast -- the first was at Alcatraz Island in November, 1854 -- it is one of the few lighthouses which still uses its original building and original lenses and prisms. The tower was badly damaged by the earthquake of 1906 and partially rebuilt in 1907.

The light at Point Pinos which has burned continually through the years, has changed with the times. The first light was from 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 1,000 watt lamp is used, and shining through the center lense produces 50,000 candlepower. With the center prism of the lens 89 feet above sea level the light of Point Pinos is visible up to 15 miles at sea.

The bulb now turns on and off to give the characteristic flash of 20 seconds followed by a ten second eclipse. The light is in operation from one hour before sunset until one hour after sunrise, or whenever visibility is less than five miles. The old shutter and gasoline lanterns, however, are still kept in readiness in case of power failure, and have been used for several such emergencies through the years.

Other valuable aids to navigation are also operated and maintained by the Coast Guard men at Point Pinos. Two, modern electric "Tyfons" which send out a fog signal are placed in operation during periods of low visibility, and a class "D" Radio Beacon was installed in 1952. The radio beacon is in continuous operation, 24 hours a day, transmitting on 290 kilocycles, and has a range of 10 to 20 miles. The radio beacon is used primarily as a harbor entrance marker for Monterey.

## ABOUT POINT PINOS

The Point Pinos Light Station has had a relatively quiet history, and fortunately there have been no shipwrecks caused by the failure of the light or fog horn. But the lighthouse log books, kept faithfully for more than 100 years, provide a glimpse of life at Point Pinos through the years.

The first keeper at Point Pinos, Charles Layton, was succeeded in the post by his wife Charlotte. Then there are log entries which tell of the periodic stops of the supply boat SS Madrona from San Francisco, of bear tracks on the reservation in 1860, and even the birth of a litter of pigs to a keeper's sow. Visits of wild game are frequently mentioned and even today a small herd of deer visit the reservation drawn by a fondness of geraniums and glads.

Point Pinos Light Station is operated and maintained by three Coast Guard men who live here with their families.

\*\*\*\*

Today, under the supervision of the U. S. Coast Guard there are approximately 400 active lighthouses. The number is constantly changing in keeping pace with present day requirements and as more modern aids to navigation are being developed and put into use. Of this number, twenty lighthouses are located in northern California. All which are accessible by public highways and roads are open for visitors during the hours listed on page 1.

## THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Operating and maintaining aids to navigation such as the one you have just visited is only one of the many responsibilities of the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard, as the nation's oldest sea-going armed force, is a versatile military service with fulltime, peacetime jobs throughout the world.

As a safety agency the Coast Guard is charged with the protection of life and property at sea. It conducts merchant vessel inspection; maintains special patrols in many oceans and other aids to navigation such as loran stations and buoys to safely guide mariners. And when accidents occur in spite of all safety precautions, there are lifeboat stations to cope with emergencies along the shore and Coast Guard helicopters, airplanes and cutters for search and rescue operations on and over the sea.

The Coast Guard is also an enforcement agency. As such its task is to see that Federal laws are observed on the high seas and navigable waters of the United States.

Finally, the Coast Guard is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States at all times...serving in peacetime as an agency of the Treasury Department, and in wartime as a part of the Navy. Since its founding in 1790 the Coast Guard has lived up to its motto "Semper Paratus" -- always ready -- in peace and war.

\*\*\*\*\*