

MEMORANDUM

To: Paul M. Finnegan, Director P.G. Museum

From: Vern Yadon

Date: 6 November 2004

Subject: Historic Preservation Report

Paul:

You kindly let me see the Historic Preservation Report done by Glenn D. Simpson, National Park Service. While you have not asked for any input or information, I do have some comments. The report seems, in part, to be a proposal for certain research and preservation work. I thought to indicate to you that I asked Malcolm Watkins, who was then Curator of Cultural History of the Smithsonian Institution, to visit the Point Pinos Lighthouse shortly after its public visitation was turned over to the museum. The museum was to keep the facility open without additional funds. Certain restoration needs were obvious and some things had to be done immediately with Coast Guard concurrence. Doors were pulling off their hinges and could not be closed because of paint layers. Parts of the tower were unsafe and the building needed to be alarmed among other things. Malcolm's input was essentially that were the Smithsonian to own the building, they would remove everything that was not part of the original 1855 light.

While this information is all in museum archives, the above report doesn't indicate that the report writer knew that paint scraping had taken place nor did he seem to know a time frame for repairs some Coast Guard and some city. For example the boards (now metal) that then made up the catwalk on the outside of the light tower were very unstable. I was horrified one day to visit the lighthouse and see an entire class of children all on the catwalk at one time.

About that time the city received a federal grant to "create employment opportunities for unemployed people," (\$10,000 if my memory serves me). Part of these funds were used to employ two individuals and for a short time three to remove paint at the lighthouse. I kept records of paint color changes and samples of paint from an interior door including a rusted nail or two. I also instructed that a spot on the back side of the mantle in the parlor be left with paint intact for future study. The paint samples were in a labeled box that was in the back room of the museum when I left. If it hasn't been discarded, it is still there. George Vermilyer of the city staff made all of the metal gates that control public entry within the lighthouse rooms. He also beefed up the tower with a metal catwalk and repaired some of the railing. I am the source of some of the bronze bolts mentioned in the park service report. Several bolts holding metal plates in the tower were completely rusted away. I was able to find bolt replacements at a maritime supply in Monterey. These were of the same length, had the same threads and fit existing nuts of bolts securing other metal panels in the tower. The city also replaced the floor on the seaward entry. There was no ventilation under the original floor nor is there any under the present. The Coast Guard lieutenant stepped through the earlier rotted floor making an immediate repair necessary.