

LONGMIRE SERVICE STATION
(Automotive Service Station, Longmire Springs Historic District)
Mount Rainier National Park
State Route 706
Longmire
Pierce County
Washington

HABS No. WA-239

HABS
WA-239

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
COLUMBIA CASCADES SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
909 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104-1060

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LONGMIRE SERVICE STATION

(Automotive Service Station, Longmire Springs Historic District)

HABS No. WA-239

Overview and Introduction

The construction of the Longmire Springs Automotive Service Station was a significant step in the promotion and development of tourism during the early years of Mt. Rainier National Park. The varied natural resources and scenic beauty of the park could now be explored and enjoyed by more people because fuel availability would allow adventurous 'Motor-Campers' to remain for extended stays within park boundaries. The service station is complemented regionally by an impressive network of engineered artifacts including roads, bridges, scenic vistas, tunnels, and antique snow clearing and highway maintenance machinery. The service station's cultural significance must be understood within this greater context.

Currently, the Longmire Service Station is centrally positioned within and belongs to the Longmire Springs Historic District recently designated National Landmark. This special designation provides the structure, the adjacent landscape and human settlements with much needed preservation protection. This HABS documentation is intended to graphically consolidate and record existing conditions of the Service Station prior to its conversion into a Transportation Museum by the NPS. Ease of public access, an open plan arrangement, a proximity to other nearby services and the building's history and its significance of association with transportation related activities are all factors that suggest the building is a logical candidate for such a transformation of use. The Service Station Museum and associated cultural resources graphically presented inside the building will contribute to visitors' greater understanding of the history of Mount Rainier National Park and the human drama that unfolded because of the implementation of technology and the availability and distribution of energy resources.

The Service Station was designated National Historic Landmark in 1987.

Park History and Cultural Heritage

Longmire Springs Historic District is Located near the Southwestern Boundary of Mount Rainier National Park and is a protected cultural resource. For the first time park visitor, it would be easy to overlook or under-interpret the subtle cultural and human geography. The unblemished presence of Mount Rainier persistently ascends in the immediate foreground. The park, established in 1899, protects varied and unique natural and cultural resources found within its boundaries. Prior to the designation of the Mount Rainier area into the US National Park system, the heritage of the land was claimed by various Northwest Indian tribes for hunting, foraging and timber resources. There is no direct anthropological evidence to indicate anything other than seasonal occupation by native peoples. This is no doubt due to the severe weather conditions occurring in the park and neighboring regions during the Winter months. Nearby Paradise Lodge often records 95 feet (30 meters) of snowfall annually. All park roads, except the road to Paradise, are closed in the Winter.

Within the Park can be found four distinct climatic zones, each with differing flora and fauna. Beaver, black tailed deer, black bear and quail, western white pine spruce, Alaska yellow Cedar and mountain hemlock can easily be identified in the lower three zones. The upper-most fourth zone, the Arctic-Alpine zone trees are sparse and animals are infrequent. Both the native peoples and the early settlers used all of these resources in order to survive in this complex wilderness. Mount Rainier is also an active volcano closely watched by vulcanologist.

Architectural History: Longmire Springs Service Station

Longmire Springs Automotive Service Station was built in 1929 with Associate Landscape Architect E.A. Davidson as construction supervisor. The current building replaced an earlier station built by the Standard Oil Company in 1919 and today stands as the second automotive service station constructed in the park (of which there have been four total). Charles P. PUNCHARD, a Landscape Architect, was asked by the National Park Service in the late 1920's to inspect various structures at Mount Rainier National Park. PUNCHARD proposed changes to the Longmire Service Station to conform to a Rustic Style of architecture, such as shingles instead of clapboard and the introduction of log poles and split log siding to break up uninteresting surfaces. The building was based upon a standard plan adapted by the San Francisco Office of the National Park Service and was approved by the Standard Oil Company, the fuel vendor at the time of

construction. The Service Station is similar in design and construction to a petrol gas station constructed within Yosemite National Park and is part a of a larger family of buildings constructed in the tradition of a Rustic Style Architecture produced by the Park Service between 1925 and 1945.

Architecture: Physical Description

The Longmire Service Station is a simply constructed building that attempts to achieve a particular "Rustic" aesthetic and, at the same time, embraces technological inventiveness to achieve this goal. This polarized construction assembly yields a unique hybrid construction type, one that is not easily classifiable. The building utilizes heavy timber pole columns and corner posts and 'faux' log siding to address the rustics aesthetic (refer to Level One Plan). In this respect, it is similar to timber frame building construction. However, the building also utilizes dimensional wood framing and a stud wall load-bearing system that is more akin to conventional stick framing.

Working from grade level up the construction assemblies are;

- concrete slab on grade supporting concrete foundation stem walls clad in Nasqualli river rock,
- large diameter log corner post and columns set upon concrete foundations or stem walls,
- dimensional lumber in-fill walls (with faux veneer siding) supporting a conventionally framed floor and roof structure
- a singled gable ended roof with projecting eaves and verges
- conventionally framed roof diaphragm sheathed in cedar shake

Shelf purchased fixed sash casement style wooden windows and wooden doors are typically used for fenestration enclosure. (refer to drawings)

Function and Utility

The Service Station roughly measures 16' X 25.5'. Within this small foot print in one and one-half stories the following functions occur . . .

- First floor—Pump facilities and drive-in service aisle, an office desk, a service work bench with vise and storage for service station needs
- Upper floor—small apartment that includes a water closet a lavatory and vanity and three storage areas
- Entrance to the apartment is by means of a wooden stairway to the building's rear.

The structure has a high roof pitch which aids in the removal of accumulated snow. The building is also structurally stout, able to withstand the heavy snow load imposed upon it in the winter

Physical Location:

The Longmire Automotive Service Station is located on the east side of the main road coming up from the West park entrance within the town boundary of Longmire. The building is situated approximately 100 feet south of the former ranger station. (GPS Coordinates). The building, which measures 16 feet by 25-1/2 feet, is handsomely cited between mature Douglas Fir trees (refer to site plan drawing).

Cultural Landscape

Maintained Cultural Landmarks within the Mount Rainier NP number upwards of fifty-eight. The significance of the Longmire Station in the development of the park can not be undermined by the larger structures found nearby, namely the Community Building constructed in 1927 and the Old Administration Building constructed in 1928. The Longmire Service Station is part of a larger system of road networks, bridges, scenic viewpoints and overnight lodging facilities that allowed visitors "sustained" access to the varied areas of the park (refer to historic photographs).

The Town of Longmire

Three distinct forms of cultural landscape order can be identified and investigated within the designated Longmire Springs Historic District. These can be generalized as follows;

- Scenographic ordering of artifacts -arranged for dramatic effect as seen by visitors.
- Functional/technical ordering of artifacts- arrangement for park support and maintenance services.
- Topographically and socially arranged cabins and campsites.

Scenographic Order - The first belongs in the domain of the tourist and is ordered around their vantage point and enjoyment. The Nasqually Road and its scenic viewpoints rise up from the West Park entry towards Longmire. Upon approaching Longmire Town, buildings (Museum, Services Station and Longmire Hotel) are nestled into the trees, situated slightly off of the road. The majority of visitor parking is located behind the structure, its view being obscured by trees. The “dramatic effect” that the CCC construction engineers wanted to achieve is evident in the topographically sensitive siting of the buildings in relationship to the road, further emphasized by tree coverage.

Functional Order - Utilization of the work yard with building close together to minimize the impacts on the site. Basically a functionally derived set of inter-relationships that utilizes the spaces created between building as utilitarian work/service yards.

Topo-logical and socio-logical order

Cabins appear to be arranged both socially and topographically which alludes to a sensitive organization and cohesion of function/action relationships. The buildings are sited in a way that they read as a group, a collective group. The scale and placement of the buildings allows for the “impromptu” insertion of fire-pits, picnic tables and laundry-lines, all of which add to the camp-iness of the area. The scale and location/proximity of the structures seems to encourage a slower pace of life, a resting and relaxing effect for the user.

The provided site plan clearly delineates the different attitudes that various groupings of buildings convey.

Longmire Gas Station, Dewey Collection, Negative No. 909-707, copy of historic print, Mount
Rainier Archives



Longmire Gas Station, 01/01/29, Nitrate Collection, No. 4 (3672), Mount Rainier Archives



LONGMIRE SERVICE STATION
HABS No. WA-239
(page 8)

Longmire Service Station, San Francisco Collection, No. 1828, RAI-35-JB-79 SFBOX 5, Mount
Rainier Archives



Longmire Gas Station, MORA, 725.1, Dewey Collection, Negative No. 1362, Photographer:
Ells, 8/75, for the Denver Service Center's Historic Structures Inventory, Mount Rainier
Archives



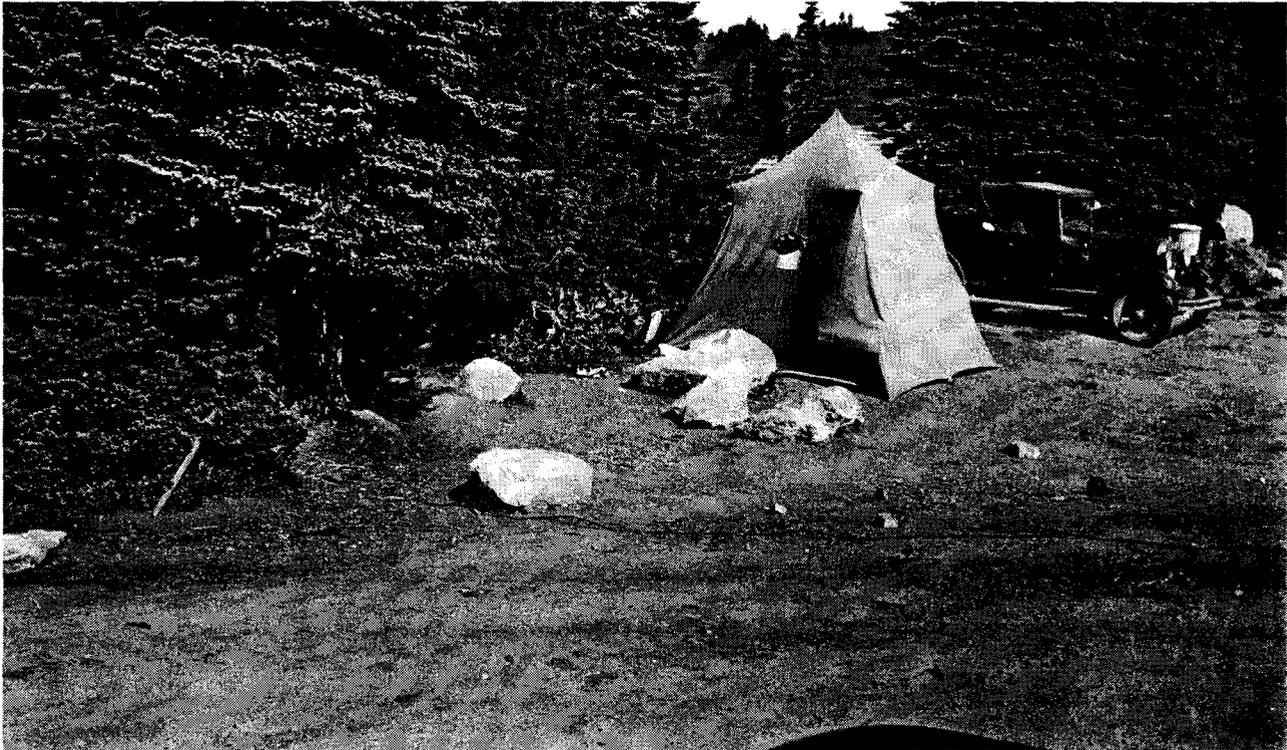
First Stages to operate at park, Nitrate Collection, No. 284, 3" x 4" negative, Mount Rainier
Archives



One of the first Stages to Operate in the Park to Paradise Valley, Dewey Collection, Negative No. 1739, Copy of an old photo loaned by Mr. E.S. Hall, Mount Rainier Archives



Visitor Activity Tent Car Camping, San Francisco Collection, Negative No. 1858, 01/01/35,
RAI-35-ED-111 SFBOX 5, Mount Rainier Archives



Longmire Winter Parking, Nitrate Collection, Negative No. 270, Mount Rainier Archives



References and Further Reading:

General References: Mount Rainier National Park (MoRa NP) Cultural Resources

- *Mount Rainier: A Record of Exploration*, ed. Edmond S. Meany (Portland, OR: Binfords and Mort, 1916).
- Schmoe, F.W., *Our Greatest Mountain* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1925).
- Snow, David E., *Historic Structures Report, Paradise Inn, Mt. Rainier National Park, Washington* (Denver, CO: Denver Service Center, NPS, 1979).
- Thompson, Erwin N., *Mt. Rainier National Park, Washington, Historic Resource Study* (Denver, CO: NPS Denver Service Center, 1981).
- *List of Classified Structures Inventory*, 1976. NPS, Washington DC
- *Historic Building Inventory, Mount Rainier National Park*, 1983. NPS, Seattle WA
- *Mount Rainier National Park - Home Page* (Official NPS Web-site) <<http://www.nps.gov/mora/>>
- *Mount Rainier National Park - Cultural Resources* (Official NPS Web-site) <<http://www.nps.gov/mora/cultures.htm>>
- *Armchair Tour of Mount Rainier - Longmire* (Official USGS/Cascades Volcano Observatory Web-site) <http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Volcanoes/Rainier/ArmchairTour/Tour/longmire_info.html>

References: Longmire Historic District and Issues Specific to the Preservation of the Longmire

Automotive Service Station Building

- Schiltgen, Lora J. *Managing a Rustic Legacy, A Historic Landscape Study and Management Plan for Longmire Springs Historic District Mount Rainier National Park*. Thesis Dissertation University of Oregon June 1986.
- Clark, Donald H., *Certisplit Manual of Handsplit Red Color Shakes* (Bellview, WA: Red Cedar Shingle & Handsplit Shake Bureau, 1971).

- Graham, Robert D. & Corden, Malcolm E., *Controlling Biological Deterioration of Wood with Volatile Chemicals*, Interim Report 1 (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Forest Research Laboratory, 1977).
- Graham, Robert D., and Helsing, Guy G., *Wood Pole Maintenance Manual: Inspection and Supplemental Treatment of Douglas-Fir and Western Red Cedar Poles*, Research Bulletin 24 (Covallis, OR: Forest Research Laboratory, Oregon State University, 1979).
- Myers, John H., *The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*, Preservation Brief 9 (Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Service, NPS, Government Printing Office, 1981).
- Schein, Edward W., *The Influence of Design on Exposed Wood in Buildings of the Puget Sound Area* (Portland, OR: Pacific NW Forest & Range Experiment Station, USFS, 1968).
- *Park Structures and Facilities* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1935).
- Weeks, Kay D. & Look, David W., *Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork*, Preservation Brief 10 (Washington, DC: technical Preservation Service, NPS, Government Printing Office, 1982).
- *Wood Handbook*, US Forest Products Laboratory Handbook No. 72 (Washington, DC: USFS, Forest Products Laboratory, Government Printing Office, Rev. 1974).

General References: HABS and Preservation Documentation.

- Burns, John A., ed. *Recording Historic Structures*. Washington, DC: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1989. See especially the Bibliography and appendices, pp. 229-238.
- Dean, Jeff. *Architectural Photography, Techniques for Architects, Preservationist, Historians, Photographers, and Urban Planners*. Nashville, TN: American Association of State and Local History, 1981.
- *Field Instructions for Measured Drawings*. Washington, DC : Historic American Buildings Survey, 1982.
- HABS/HAER. "Specifications for the Production of Photographs (for the use and guidance of contract Photographers)." Washington, DC: HABS/HAER, 1984.
- Chambers, J. Henry, *Cyclical Maintenance for Historic Structures* (Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Services, NPS, Government Printing Office, 1976).