

National Park Inn (Longmire Springs Hotel)  
Mt. Rainier National Park  
South Side of Nisqually - Paradise Road  
Longmire  
Pierce County  
Washington

HABS No. WA-184

HABS  
WASH,  
27 LONG,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

HABS  
WASH,  
27-LONG,  
2-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK INN (LONGMIRE SPRINGS HOTEL) HABS No. WA-184

LOCATION: On south side of Nisqually-Paradise Road, at Longmire, in Mount Rainier National Park, Pierce County, Washington

U.S.G.S Randle Quad (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 10/590700/5177780

PRESENT OWNER: National Park Service

PRESENT OCCUPANT: Park visitors and concession staff

PRESENT USE: Concession, managed by Guest Services, Inc.

SIGNIFICANCE: The National Park Inn is located within the proposed Longmire Historic District and is considered to be a contributing element of the district. Built in 1917, the National Park Inn is the oldest surviving lodging facility in the park and a reminder of Longmire's heyday as the park's first developed area. The district illustrates the National Park Services (NPS) rustic style of architecture as it was practiced in the 1920s and 1930s by the NPS. Characteristics of the rustic style at Longmire include the use of native or natural materials (stone and wood), dark forest colors and irregular siting to harmonize with the environment. Earlier structures predating the NPS era, such as the National Park Inn, are compatible with the NPS-designed buildings in terms of their design, scale and use of materials.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

James Longmire discovered the mineral springs near the banks of the Nisqually River in 1883, while accompanying the Bayley-Van Trump ascent on Mount Rainier. Recognizing their commercial potential, Longmire returned in 1884 to build a cabin at the springs and cut a trail to it. By 1885, tourists were staying at Longmire's cabin, establishing Longmire Springs as the first development within the boundaries of the present national park.[1]

Longmire patented 20 acres incorporating the springs in 1887 under the Mineral Law of 1872. Over the next decade the Longmire family provided the primary tourist accommodations at Mount Rainier. By 1899, when Mount Rainier National Park was established, the "Longmire Medical Springs" establishment included cabins, bathhouses, a two-story hotel, and numerous outhouses.[2]

In 1906, the Tacoma Eastern Railroad acquired a five-year lease on two acres of land immediately to the south of Longmire's claim from the U.S. General Land Office. On this land, the railroad built a 2 1/2-story frame hotel, 125 feet long and 32 feet wide, with 36 guest rooms; an adjacent tent camp handled the overflow.[3] Although the new hotel, which was named the National Park Inn, provided the Longmires with their first real competition, it appears that there was plenty of business for both operators.[4] Neither establishment, however, was managed in a manner entirely satisfactory to park officials, who complained of ill-kempt grounds and a motley assortment of outbuildings despoiling the Longmire scene.

Following the death of Elcaine Longmire in 1915, the Longmire family leased their holdings at Longmire to a group of three individuals (Judge Snell, L.M. Dickson, and Mrs. Alexander B. Jones) known as the Longmire Springs Hotel Company. Much to the pleasure of Superintendent Reaburn, the new company made considerable progress in cleaning up and refurbishing the Longmire property. In his 1917 Annual Report, Reaburn noted the construction by the company of a new two-story hotel building measuring 50' x 100'--the present National Park Inn--and 16 cottages.[5]

The operations of the Longmire Springs Hotel Company were of short duration, however. In 1916, at the urging of Steven Mather, Director of the newly-established National Park Service, a group of businessmen from Tacoma and Seattle formed the Rainier National Park Company (RNPC) to provide accommodations and transportation for visitors to Mount Rainier National Park. With a monopoly concession for the park granted by the National Park Service (NPS), the RNPC moved to consolidate existing tourist operations in the park.

Superintendent Roger Toll reported in 1919 that the Longmire Springs property, including the hotel and cottages, were "now leased by the RNPC and the proper development of the springs is under consideration." The hotel was renamed the National Park Inn Annex and at least part of its space was converted into general offices for the company. Toll's report indicates that the annex also had 17 sleeping rooms, all with hot and cold running water and some with private bath.[6]

As the official RNPC records for the lease agreement with the Longmire Springs Hotel Company have not been located for this report, the terms of the agreement between the two companies are not known. However, the RNPC's control of the property was sufficient to allow it to request permission from the NPS to move the annex across the street to a new location adjacent to the National Park Inn and its clubhouse (L-501; built in 1911). Covered walkways were built to connect the three structures. Toll's 1920 Annual Report explained.

This gives it [the Annex] a better location and improves the appearance of the buildings at Longmire Springs, and enables it to be more conveniently operated in connection with the National Park Inn.[7]

Coincident with the move, which took place in May 1920, the old Longmire Springs Hotel (built by the Longmires) was dismantled and burned. The RNPC also did considerable work in cleaning up the Longmire property, including enclosing the springs with masonry walls and constructing walkways. The Longmire family, however, retained ownership of the property until 1939, when they finally reached an agreement to sell out to the National Park Service.[8]

Initially, after the RNPC took over management of the concessions in the park, the "New Longmire Springs Hotel" was operated independently of the National Park Inn. The relationship between the RNPC and the Longmire Springs Hotel Company in the late 1910s is not entirely clear, but a 1917 RNPC pamphlet advertising the accommodations available at the park indicates that both hotels offered rooms and meals under the American plan, with room rates starting at \$2.50 a day; both had their own group of bungalows or tents; and each operated on their own schedule, the Longmire Springs Hotel staying open for a slightly longer season.[9] However, by the time the hotel was moved across the street in 1920, it primarily provided support facilities for the larger inn and for company operations parkwide. Subsequent advertising for Longmire referred only to the National Park Inn. Guest rooms were retained on the second floor, of the Annex, but the first floor provided offices for the RNPC, a post office, lunch counter, camper supply store, and a "museum" with curios and pictures. [See Figure 4]. The annex was connected from its rear elevation to the clubhouse and the National Park Inn by walkways, which were protected by cedarshake gable roofs supported on log posts.

In addition to consolidating existing concessions, the RNPC significantly expanded the available facilities at the park with the construction of the Paradise Inn, which opened its doors on July 1, 1917. Paradise became the focus of RNPC's operations and the premier tourist destination in the park. The impact on Longmire was significant. It lost its historical role of providing the primary tourist accommodations in the park to Paradise and, as early as 1920, company and park officials were seeking ways to restore some of its diminished popularity. A 1920 bulletin issued by the RNPC advertised the Inn as the "ideal vacation place," "a place to remain for a time:"

Paradise Inn will, in the nature of things, be the busy place--the transient hotel. National Park Inn is to become the comfortable vacation place; the place of first class rooming conditions, good eating, health giving springs, shaded trails, mountain atmosphere and the change of altitude that all sea-level dwellers greatly need.[10]

Superintendent Peters noted in his 1921 Annual Report that the Inn was not being greatly patronized by the public, despite the excellent service offered. He stated that "this is doubtless due to the very human desire of all tourists to reach the end of the road [Paradise]" and proposed that Longmire Springs be developed "as rapidly as possible" as a health and recreation resort to restore its sagging popularity. Suggested improvements included a natatorium and tennis courts and the promotion of the medicinal properties of the mineral springs. Peters urged that "every inducement should be offered to enable the company to install the needed features at Longmire as soon as possible." [11] The Rainier National Park Company responded by installing a tennis court and free shower baths during 1922 and establishing a low weekly rate for the National Park Inn.[12]

Another of Peters' suggestions--establishing Longmire as a winter resort once the paving of the road between Tacoma and the Nisqually entrance was completed--became a reality in 1924 when Longmire's first winter season opened on December 6th. The National Park Service kept the road to Longmire open, enabling visitors to reach Longmire by private car or RNPC stages. Winter sports facilities included a toboggan slide; a ski slide and ski jump; a 4-horse, 12-passenger pleasure sleigh; and a team of Alaska huskies. For the more adventurous there was a snow shoe trip to Paradise Valley where limited accommodations were available.[13] Superintendent Tomlinson reported on "the enthusiastic response to the Service's first attempt at making the park a winter playground." [14]

The success of the winter operation at Longmire, was, however, countered by the completion of road improvements within the park which greatly shortened the trip to Paradise Valley. The shorter trip meant there was less disposition on the part of tourists to stop at Longmire, either for lunch or an overnight stay. Revenues from the National Park Inn were less than a third of those from Paradise and the company's 1924 Annual Report expressed its manager's concern that "our Longmire Springs property will prove increasingly difficult to handle in a profitable way." [15]

The efforts of company and park officials to promote Longmire and the National Park Inn were dealt a severe blow in 1926 when the main inn burned to the ground. The fire started on the morning of June 9th; by noon the Inn had been completely destroyed. Defective electrical wiring was blamed as the cause of the fire and it was only through the heroic efforts of the park and company staff and the timely arrival of some high pressure pumps that the rest of Longmire and the surrounding forest were not also consumed. No lives were lost and about 50 percent of the furniture, furnishings, and fixtures of the Inn were salvaged. [16]

Rainier National Park Company officials took immediate steps to provide for continued service at Longmire. The Annex (soon to be renamed the National Park Inn) became the focus of operations. A number of alterations to the Annex were completed within three weeks of the blaze: the company's offices were moved to the clubhouse, permitting removal of partitions and creation of a large dining room; a second floor room once used as a ladies' lounge was refurnished for use as a second lobby for social affairs; and a small addition was built on the rear as a kitchen annex. A porch similar in design to that of the original National Park Inn was added to the Inn's front elevation. Eight two-room bungalow cottages were started on the site of the Inn once the debris was cleared and additional tents were brought in to handle any overflow. By the end of June complete dining room and lobby services equaling those lost in the old building were available. [17]

Thus, service was maintained at Longmire. However, the number of patrons that could be entertained in first-class accommodations--hotel rooms with or without baths--had been reduced and the clubhouse, which had been the center of social activities, was no longer available to guests. The change was reflected in the next year's decision to convert meal service at the National Park Inn (formerly the Annex) from dining room to cafeteria service. [18] In the following year's annual report, the RNPC announced that it was planning to transfer the focus of its winter sports service to Paradise, explaining that "our winter sports service at Longmire Springs has grown far beyond our housing possibilities, and it is not feasible to construct additional quarters there." [19] Winter facilities continued to be available at both locations, but it was Paradise Valley that became the preeminent spot for skiing and winter sports in the Pacific Northwest during the 1930s.

The annual reports of the 1930s for the RNPC were not located for this report and the specific references to the National Park Inn in Superintendent's Annual Reports are few during this period. There was a small roof fire in 1932, which started from a fireplace flue but, unlike 1926, the blaze was contained with minimal damage to the Inn.[20]. According to Superintendent Tomlinson, an increase in business during the previous season made it financially possible for the RNPC to redecorate the National Park Inn in 1934. New celotex ceilings and walls were installed in the lobby and bedrooms and new shades and drapes were hung. Tomlinson commented that "this was a much needed improvement which has made the hotel much more attractive and comfortable." [21]

This remodeling effort was the last major renovation of the Inn for at least a decade. A combination of large-scale capital investments in the early 1930s, including the development of the Sunrise Lodge and improvements at Paradise, and declining revenues in a depression economy placed the RNPC's finances in an extremely precarious state by the late 1930s. On December 4, 1938 the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported that General Manager Paul H. Sceva had announced that the RNPC might have to close down its operations at the end of the 1939 unless arrangements for a government take-over of the property could be made. In the financial statement that accompanied Sceva's announcement, the company listed its indebtedness and contingent liabilities at \$311,861 and stated that it had "no credit, either private or from the banks, without personal endorsers of our notes." In 22 years of operation, the company showed a deficit of \$218,250 above net receipts.[22]

Superintendent Tomlinson noted in his 1940 Annual Report that a bill was introduced in Congress in 1939 to purchase the company's holdings but it was not reported out of Congress. The company did not shut down its operations as threatened but there was a drastic curtailment in services as the company struggled to reduce its expenses. Service at both Paradise and Longmire was limited during the fall and winter months, even as winter attendance hit new highs.[23] At the same time the company cut its rates in an attempt to attract new customers.

National Park Service officials observed the company's efforts to survive with some skepticism as to their chances for success. In a memorandum to the Director, dated April 25, 1941, Superintendent Tomlinson stated that "it is doubtful whether any operation other than limited overnight accommodations and short-order meal service would be profitable [at Longmire]." [24] Later in the year Tomlinson reported that

No new development or modernization of existing facilities was undertaken by the park operator [RNPC], although most of the Company's buildings and equipment are obsolete and should be either replaced or modernized.[25]

E.A. Davidson, Regional Chief of Planning, prepared a memorandum for the Regional Director exploring options for Longmire. Davidson suggested converting the concession operation at Longmire into "something like a modern auto-camp layout." His proposal included:

Replacement of the Inn by a more efficient type of building, perhaps but 1 1/2-story height, using rooms for help upstairs, and with an elastic food service layout, part of which might be closed during slack\* seasons. Fountain, curios, cigars, etc. Replacement of three-room housekeeping cabins (or conversion) by multiple unit hotel-type rooms.[26]

Any effort to improve or replace the existing facilities at Mount Rainier was put on hold along with other park operations with the onset of the war years. Despite good patronage, particularly from military personnel stationed at or moving through the major military bases in western Washington, the RNPC curtailed its service at both Paradise and Longmire. Cabins built at Paradise and Sunrise were sold and removed from the park to ease the critical shortage of housing in wartime Washington. When Paradise Inn was opened during the summer season, the dining room was closed at the National Park Inn. Only after Paradise closed in the fall could both rooms and meals be obtained at Longmire. During the 1944 season, the RNPC only operated the Paradise Inn.[27]

Even during the war years, however, the question of what to do about the concession at Mount Rainier continued to be debated by NPS and RNPC officials. An NPS memorandum dated October 31, 1945 summarized agreements that had been reached during these discussions. Despite a recommendation from Superintendent Preston that the "old and out-moded" National Park Inn should be torn down[28], Director Drury stated that "The Company will be required to remodel and refurnish the National Park Inn for all-year operation on a better standard of service." Parkwide, Drury required the Company "to maintain and keep all buildings used by it in a good state of repair." Most importantly, however, for the long-range future of the concessions at Mount Rainer, Drury stated:

It was agreed that, as a long-range objective, the Government should own all public facilities in Mount Rainier. This does not preclude an operating contract, for an appropriate term, with a corporation such as the Rainier National Park Company.[29]



All concession facilities at Mount Rainier were in operation during the 1946 season, for the first time since 1941. A notation in the Mount Rainier Building Maintenance file for the National Park Inn indicates that the Inn was "remodeled" in 1946.[30] There is no mention of any work being done at the National Park Inn in the Superintendent's Annual Report for that year and the Annual Report for RNPC was not located, so the extent of this work is unknown. It would seem reasonable to assume that it was limited, however, as Superintendent Preston described the antiquated facilities at the park in his 1947 Annual Report and noted that legislation had again been introduced in Congress to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the property of the Rainier National Park Company.

Authorization to purchase the RNPC property finally came in 1950.[31] In the interim, the RNPC contract, which had expired in 1947, was extended several times on a short-term basis to enable the concession to keep operating. Investment in the National Park Inn and other concession facilities was minimal throughout this period of uncertainty. During the 1949-50 winter season, the National Park Inn was closed from November 1 to April 30.

Appraisals done of the RNPC properties provide detailed descriptions of their condition in 1950-51; copies of two of the appraisals of the National Park Inn are reproduced in Appendix B of this report. There is some disparity in the two appraisers' descriptions of the National Park Inn, which is reflected in their evaluations. However, both agreed that the interior finishes were worn and the exterior needed a good coat of paint. A sales price for the RNPC's properties was finally agreed to and a check for \$300,000 was turned over to the Company's President and General Manager, Paul Sceva, on August 18, 1952.[32] A telegram to the Superintendent from Region Four, dated August 21, 1952, transmitted the Director's instructions for operation of the newly-acquired facilities. At Longmire, only grill type meal service during daylight hours would be provided and public accommodations were to be limited to the Inn; the cottages were to house employees only.[33]

The RNPC continued to operate the concession facilities under short-term extensions of its contract and then new multi-year awards through 1972. In each new contract the Park Service spelled out the terms under which service would be provided. Throughout the RNPC's remaining years of managing the concession facilities, the services offered at Longmire remained at a consistent level. During the winter season the company provided snacks such as coffee and doughnuts, confectionary, tobacco, and souvenirs; they operated the service station and post office and could rent tire chains, skis, and accessories. The winter season initially ran from January through April; by 1958, however, it was extended from October 1 through the second half of May. Winter service elsewhere in the park was limited to snacks and rentals on weekends at Paradise. During the summer season, meal service was expanded to grill items and lodging was offered at the Inn[34].

The new operating permit for the RNPC also required that the company spend a specified sum on the maintenance and upgrading of the concession facilities. Expenditures on the National Park Inn by either the RNPC or the park during the 1950s appear to have been very limited. In 1957 walk-in refrigerator boxes were rebuilt.[35] In 1958, Superintendent Macy forwarded a sketch to Paul Sceva for use in providing rooms at the National Park Inn with tubs and showers. No record was found that indicated this work was actually done.

The Inn finally came due for some significant renovation in the early 1960s. In 1961 NPS painted the exterior of the Inn. When the Director visited Longmire in August of 1963, a number of improvements accomplished by the RNPC to the Inn were pointed out:

All rooms had been rewired and new baseboard heaters installed. The upstairs men's and women's restrooms had been remodeled using marlite paneling for walls and ceilings, new light fixtures, new plumbing fixtures, and paint. New tubs were installed in two rooms with baths. New light fixtures were hung in the lobby area. A new dishwashing machine was installed in the kitchen.[36]

The 1964 RNPC Annual Report stated that rehabilitation at the National Park Inn was continuing, but did not provide any specifics. The concessions prospectus issued by the Park Service the following year, however, describes the kitchen and related storage and work facilities as recently rehabilitated to meet Public Health Standards.[37]

In 1968, the same year that the RNPC was acquired by the AMFAC corporation, the front porch of the Inn was rebuilt. The project included construction of a new foundation, porch steps, railings, and roof support posts. This and subsequent work on the Inn appear to have been funded from the park's own budget. Wood fire escapes were rebuilt in 1967 and replaced in 1982 with the existing steel fire escapes.

In 1973, a new operator, Government Services, Inc., (GSI), took over the concession at Mount Rainier for the first time since 1916. GSI's current contract runs through 1991. General terms of the contract authorize GSI to provide overnight accommodations, food and beverage facilities and services, merchandising facilities and services, and such miscellaneous services as automobile service stations, camper supplies and services, and medical services.[38]

The GSI is also responsible for all maintenance and repairs to the assigned Government-owned facilities, as well as any facilities constructed by it, in a manner satisfactory to NPS. Major repairs remain the responsibility of NPS and major projects to upgrade facilities may be undertaken by mutual agreement.[39]

Annual Concessions Operations Plans and Maintenance Work Programs provide more specific details of the concession operation. In 1981, for example, the Operations Plan established the season for the National Park Inn as follows:

1. Hotel (daily): April 10 - January 3  
(weekends): January 4 - April 9  
(max. hours 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.)  
(min. hours 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
2. Restaurant (daily - year round)  
(max. hours 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.)  
(min. hours 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
3. Country Store (daily - year round)  
(max. hours 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.)  
(min. hours 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
4. Gas Station (daily - year round)  
(max. hours 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.)  
(min. hours 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

The 1978 Maintenance Agreement spelled out NPS and GSI's respective responsibilities. NPS is responsible for exterior maintenance and repair on buildings assigned to GSI. "Exterior" is defined to include exterior walls and surfaces; foundations, supports, and joists; roofs; fire escapes; walks and road surfaces; and exterior sections of chimneys. Additionally, NPS accepted responsibility for replacement of walk-in coolers or freezers at the Inn and exterior painting or staining. GSI's responsibilities cover interior maintenance including painting; repairs of plumbing, heating, safety, and electrical systems; and a full range of general housekeeping chores.

Since GSI took over the concession, several significant repair and rehabilitation projects have been undertaken for the National Park Inn. In 1976, work on the kitchen addition included replacement of rotten stringers, floor joists, studs, walls, and sub-floors; replacement of rotten roof rafters; and installation of a corrugated metal roof over the kitchen and bakery additions. In 1977 the cafeteria line equipment was installed and in 1979 the gift shop was remodeled. The exterior chimney on the west elevation was also removed in 1979. A number of fire and safety improvements were installed in 1982 by NPS, including steel fire escapes. These safety measures were continued in 1985 with the installation of a fire sprinkler system.[41]

A major rehabilitation of the National Park Inn under the Visitor Facilities Fund program sponsored by the National Parks Foundation is planned for 1986. Details of the "Scope of Work" for the proposed rehabilitation are provided in Part IV of this report.

ENDNOTES

1. This is not the present-day Longmire Cabin which still stands at the edge of the meadow and which was built by Longmire's son, Elcaine in 1888 or 1889.
2. Erwin N. Thompson, Historic Resource Study: Mount Rainier National Park (Denver: National Park Service, 1981), p. 61. Hereafter cited as "Thompson, 1981."
3. Mount Rainier National Park, "Superintendent's Annual Report," (1915). On file in archives at Mount Rainier National Park; hereafter cited as "Annual Report."
4. Annual Reports, 1907, 1908, 1911, quoted in Thompson, 1981, p. 66.
5. Annual Report, 1917.
6. Annual Report, 1919.
7. Annual Report, 1920.
8. Annual Report, 1939.
9. Rainier National Park Company, "Rainier National Park: How to Get There" (1917). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives, Pamphlet 979-77.
10. Rainier National Park Company, Bulletin No. 1, (June 10, 1920). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives.
11. Annual Report, 1921.
12. Rainier National Park Company, Annual Report (1922). On file at Northwest History Collection, University of Washington.
13. Rainier National Park Company. Official Bulletin (December 1, 1924). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives.
14. Annual Report, 1924.
15. Rainier National Park Company, Annual Report (1924). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives, 979-725 R13a.
16. .A. Tomlinson, Letter to the Director, National Park Service (June 10, 1926). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives.

17. Ibid; Annual Report, 1926.
18. Annual Report, 1927.
19. Rainier National Park Company, Annual Report (1928). On file at Northwest History Collection, University of Washington.
20. Annual Report, 1932.
21. Annual Report, 1934.
22. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, "Rainier Park Service Jeopardized, Company Reveals; Asks U.S. Aid" (December 4, 1938).
23. Annual Reports, 1940, 1941.
24. O.A. Tomlinson, "Memorandum to Director, National Park Service" (April 25, 1941). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives.
25. Annual Report, 1941.
26. E.A. Davidson, "Memorandum to Regional Director, Region Four, National Park Service" (October 30, 1941). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives.  
  
Note: E.A. Davidson previously served as the field landscape architect for Mount Rainier during the years of major NPS construction (c. 1920s - c. 1930s) at Longmire and Sunrise.
27. Annual Reports, 1944, 1945.
28. John C. Preston, "Memorandum to Regional Director, Region Four, National Park Service" (October 31, 1945). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives.
29. Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, "Memorandum to Regional Director, Region Four, National Park Service" (October 31, 1945). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives.
30. Victor E. Roth's 1950 appraisal also notes that renovations were made in 1946.
31. Annual Report, 1951.
32. Annual Report, 1953.
33. Regional Director, Region Four, National Park Service, "Telegram to Superintendent, Mount Rainier National Park" (August 21, 1952). On file at Mount Rainier National Archives. Note that an inspection of the property by NPS officials in 1952 recommended removal of the kitchen wing, Thompson, p. 73.

34. Conrad Wirth, Director, National Park Service, "Letter to Paul Sceva, President and General Manager, Rainier National Park Company" (March 13, 1953); Rainier National Park Company, Annual Reports (1952-1961). On file at Mount Rainier National Park Archives, File 380c.
35. RNPC, Annual Report, 1957.
36. RNPC, Annual Report, 1963. On file at Washington State Historical Society under Rainier National Park Company, Box 2.
37. RNPC, Annual Report, 1964. Washington State Historical Society under RNPC, Box 2.
38. National Park Service, "Government Services, Inc., Designation Under Concession Contract NO. 9900C20012" (April 29, 1974). Original Concession Contract No. 9900C20012 signed August 22, 1972 by NPS and GSI.
39. Ibid.
40. Mount Rainier National Park, "Building Maintenance File: L-600."
41. Ibid.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The National Park Inn is located at Longmire, which contains the largest single group of rustic structures in the Park. The Washington State Historic Preservation Officer has concurred with the National Park Service that the historic district at Longmire appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (see Appendix A). The most significant of these structures in the proposed district is the Administration Building (1928), in which the use of large glacial boulders in the stone masonry base, half log siding, and heavy timber detailing exemplifies the rustic styling of the early National Park Service developments. The design philosophy dictated the use of native materials on a scale appropriate to the environmental context to create structures that visually harmonized with the natural landscape.

The Longmire Meadow and Springs are historically significant because of the catalyst role this area played in the early development of visitor facilities at Mount Rainier. The Longmire Plaza is located at the south end of the Meadow, and is the focal point of the Longmire development. The National Park Inn faces northward across the southwest end of the Plaza. The Gas Station, Comfort Station, Museum, and Administration Building

front the Plaza to the east of the Inn, with the Hiker's Center located to the west of the Inn. Within the Meadow area, two of the springs, Iron Mike and Soda, have stone masonry containment structures that date from 1920. The Longmire cabin, the oldest structure in the area (1888), is located at the north end of the Meadow, and is reached by the "Trail of the Shadows", one of the earliest self-guiding nature trails in the National Park system.

The National Park Inn is the predominant structure of the Plaza area, with the north elevation of the Inn (main entry/front porch) offering a clear view of both the Meadow and the peak of Mount Rainier. Paving associated with the roadway and parking areas adjoins the front elevation of the Inn, extending well beyond the length of the front porch and detracting from the otherwise pleasant ambiance of the site. A Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) project currently under design has been proposed to provide for a relocation of parking, a reduction of the excessive Plaza paving, and definition of pedestrian pathways. Landscaping efforts in conjunction with the road work will re-establish the image of the Plaza as an aesthetically pleasing area, and complement the rehabilitation of the Inn itself (see Appendix C).

The west elevation of the Inn faces the Hiker's Center and the site of the original National Park Inn (destroyed by fire in 1926). A new parking area is planned for a location behind the Inn and the Hiker Center. The south and east elevations are adjoined by areas of glacial cobble, scrub vegetation, and Douglas fir trees. There is an unpaved service road providing access to the rear of the kitchen wing at the south elevation. Removal of hazard trees and grading work to correct drainage deficiencies will be necessary in this area in order to ensure the integrity of the building and safety of its occupants.

The National Park Inn is a wood frame structure, two and one-half stories in height, with a cross-gabled roof. The original structure consists of three sections, two wings of 24' X 50' dimensions flanking a center section that measures approximately 38' X 52'. The front porch addition (8' X 52') runs the length of the north elevation and has a shed roof with hips at each end. Modifications to the building have included an addition to the front porch (1926), a one-story 25' X 63' kitchen section (1926), and several subsequent attachments to the kitchen wing, of which a 15' X 24' and a 13' X 47' expansion still exist. In the assembly of these parts, constituting approximately 10,900 square feet of floor area, the Inn is the sole site within the park providing year-round visitor food service and overnight accommodations. There are currently 16 guestrooms with a capacity for 48 people (including folding cots), and a dining room with seating for 96 patrons.

The exterior skin of the Inn is 1" X 8" rough lap siding on the first floor, cedar shingles at the second floor and gable ends, and cedar shake roofing on the original portion of the structure with sheet metal roofing on the kitchen wing additions. The perimeter foundation was originally stone masonry, with interior wood posts on stone footings. Some portions of the foundation at the south and east elevations have been replaced in concrete, and the entire kitchen addition has a concrete stemwall perimeter foundation. In addition, numerous interior footings are now concrete.

The first floor of the Inn consists of a guest registration desk and a gift shop/post office at the west end (main entry) area. The center and east sections contain the dining room, with public restrooms and the kitchen area to the south of this space. The original finishes in the lobby and gift shop area consisted of celotex walls and ceiling with a 44" high fir panel wainscot and a cobblestone masonry fireplace at the west wall. The (seven) light fixtures were bare bulb pendants with "Indian" motif parchment shades. The area that is now the gift shop retail storage room was originally constructed to serve as a men's restroom. In the dining room, there were initially 14 incandescent pendant light fixtures with glass bowl shades to illuminate the space. The wall and ceiling finishes were painted celotex with fir battens at the joints. The kitchen finishes were the same as exist now (plywood walls and ceiling), with the exception of battleship gray linoleum instead of the current sheet vinyl covering the 1" X 4" fir floors.

The second floor consists of guest rooms, guest toilet facilities and showers, and custodial storage closets. A central hallway runs the length of the second floor, with an exit door and metal fire escape stair at each end. In addition, there is a small lounge space at the west end of the second floor. The second floor guest accommodations were originally finished with celotex walls and ceilings, varnished fir trim, fir floors, and pendant light fixtures.

A stairway leads from the second floor to the unfinished, open attic space. Joists and rafters (2" X 6") are on 24" centers, with the cedar shingle roofing applied over spaced 1" X 6" sheathing.

A 20' X 20' basement space beneath the gift shop contains a mechanical equipment room, a laundry room, and an unfinished storage area with a dirt floor. The entrance to the basement is an exterior door located at grade level on the south elevation of the gift shop wing.

Existing interior finishes generally consist of carpeting or sheet vinyl over the original tongue-and-groove fir flooring, gypsum board on exterior and corridor walls, and plywood or "celotex" on the remaining walls, as well as on the ceilings. Restrooms have "marlite" as the surface finish on walls and ceilings.



Light fixtures on the first floor are three-light chandeliers in the lobby, gift shop and dining room, and 4/40 watt X 48" fluorescent surface mount ceiling units in the kitchen. Surface mount two-bulb incandescent ceiling fixtures are in the rest rooms. Upstairs are incandescent surface mount wall and ceiling units. None of the existing light fixtures are original, with those on the first floor having been installed within the last five years.

In 1982, life safety improvements, including steel fire escape stairs, exit doors with panic hardware, and steel sash with wire reinforced glazing were installed on the east and west elevations of the structure. In addition, fire rated doors were installed for all guest rooms. Currently (FY '85), a sprinkler system is being installed at the Inn through a Denver Service Center contract. A fire detection system already exists in the structure, and emergency egress lighting has been installed, but is both inadequate and visually inappropriate, and requires redesign.

Numerous alterations, additions, and "improvements" have been made to both the interior and exterior of the National Park Inn since its construction (see Parts IV. and V. of this report). The visual appearance of the front (north) elevation remains relatively unchanged since the Inn was adapted as a full service facility in 1926, and this, along with basic exterior finishes (lap and cedar shingle siding and shingle roof), and fenestration represent the major historic preservation concerns for the building. However, interior finishes should be stylistically compatible with the exterior appearance.

#### Chronology of the Construction and Alteration of the National Park Inn

1916 The Longmire Springs Hotel and 16 cottages were constructed by the Longmire Springs Hotel Company north of the present-day Nisqually-Paradise Road on the Longmire Patent (Superintendent's Annual Report, 1917).

The 2 1/2-story wood frame hotel built on a rubble foundation measured 50 x 100 feet. It was laid out in an H-plan with a cross-gabled, wood shingled roof. The first story was sheathed in horizontal rough-lapped wood siding; the upper story was shingled. The mid-section of the first story was recessed to form a covered porch with peeled log posts; a single-bay-width stair led to the main entrance door, which was flanked by vertical lights, at the east end of the porch. Windows were 8-over-2 wood sash. A second-story, wood frame door on the west end elevation opened over a shed-roofed porch that extended approximately 2/3 of the first floor to the rear (see Figure 2). The hotel had 17 sleeping rooms, all with hot and cold running water, some with private bath; dining room; and lobby (Superintendent's Annual Report, 1919).

The Rainier National Park Company (RNPC) was formed at the urging of NPS Director Steven Mather by a group of Seattle and Tacoma businessmen to provide improved visitor accommodations at Mount Rainier.

- 1917-1919 The RNPC leased the new Longmire Springs Hotel and cottages and the National Park Inn (built in 1906 by the Tacoma Eastern Railroad Company on leased government land south of the Longmire claim). The RNPC renamed the hotel the National Park Inn Annex and converted part of it for use as company offices.

The conversion probably required construction of partitions in the dining room on the first floor. These partitions are mentioned in 1926 when it was necessary to reopen the dining room (see description of 1926 alterations).

- 1920 In May, the RNPC moved the Annex across the road to its present location on government property, just east of the National Park Inn and its log clubhouse (L-501, built in 1911). The same month, the Old Longmire Hotel, built and operated by the Longmire Family since the 1890s, was dismantled and burned.

Several alterations of the hotel/annex are evident in a 1921 photograph taken after the move. The building was set on a new, lower, boulder foundation; at the west end, a slight slope allowed for a basement area that was lit by a six-light window on the front elevation. The front stairs were expanded to the full-width of the recessed porch. Two doors with 4-light transoms, at the middle and east ends of the recessed portion of the front elevation, may have replaced earlier windows; the photographic evidence is not entirely clear, but the doors differ in design from the known original door, now located at the west end of the porch. The shed porch, formerly on the west now east elevation, appears to have been removed. A new boulder chimney was built on the exterior of the west elevation. A 27' covered walkway of log posts supporting a shingled gable roof was attached to the rear elevation of the annex to connect it to the clubhouse and the National Park Inn (see Figure 4).

- 1926-1927 On June 9th, the National Park Inn was destroyed by fire (see Figure 7). The RNPC took immediate steps to maintain services at Longmire, including remodeling the Annex (soon renamed the National Park Inn).

The RNPC offices were moved out of the Annex into the clubhouse to make room for dining facilities. A dining room and lobby were created by removing partitions that had been added c. 1918. A second floor lounge was remodeled to host social affairs in place of the clubhouse. A one-story kitchen wing was added on the rear elevation and a full-width expansion of the front porch was at least partially completed in 1926 (see Figure 8). Eight, two-room bungalow cottages were also constructed in 1926 on the cleared site of the destroyed inn (see Figure 9).

1926-1927 Further changes to the front elevation are evident in a photograph dated 1927 (see Figure 10).

The expanded porch was completed with boxed columns patterned after those of the original inn, and a shed shingled roof. The new porch concealed the front basement window. A door was cut through the front elevation of the west section between two pre-existing windows. Photographic evidence indicates that the middle entry door in the recessed mid-section was replaced by a strip of ten, 6-light casement windows, possibly to bring more light into the cafeteria. When this area was converted back to its present status could not be documented. The dining room was converted to a cafeteria in 1927, which may have entailed some interior modifications (Superintendent's Annual Report, 1927).

1932 A small roof fire at the Inn was contained; the blaze was blamed on the fireplace flue (Superintendent's Annual Report, 1932).

1934 The RNPC remodeled the lobby and bedrooms of the Inn.

New celotex ceilings and walls were installed in the lobby and bedrooms; new lamp shades and drapes were added (Superintendent's Annual Report, 1934).

1935-1940s The RNPC's financial condition was critical. No new development or modernization of existing facilities was undertaken. The facilities were described in the 1942 Superintendent's Annual Report as "rapidly deteriorating" and "considerably below the standard of similar facilities outside of the park."

- 1946 The park's Building Maintenance file for the Inn states it was "remodeled" in 1946. No details of the remodeling were uncovered.
- 1951-1952 Congress authorized the purchase of RNPC properties by the Department of the Interior. The sale was completed in August 1952 for \$300,000. The new RNPC concession agreement required the company to spend \$10,500 on improvements to its former properties.
- 1951 Eastman appraisal notes several rear kitchen additions:  
  
25' x 65' kitchen addition, 15' x 24' kitchen addition, 12 1/2' x 47' bakery walk-in freezer addition, 4' x 12' porch and refrigeration shed, 11' x 14' lavatory addition plus a 3' x 6' shed and a 6' x 21' porch addition. The interior finishes are described as "well-worn." "The entire building is of cheap construction with shed additions having an exterior unfinished appearance. Part of the roof of main building is wavy and out of plumb." (Eastman, 1951; see Appendix B)
- 1957 The RNPC annual report noted that the walk-in refrigerator boxes at the National Park Inn were rebuilt.
- 1958 Superintendent Macy forwarded to RNPC General Manager Sceva a sketch for use in providing rooms at the National Park Inn with tubs and showers. Further details on the proposal were not found.
- 1961 The NPS repainted the Inn dark brown, including the porch that had been painted blue-green.
- 1963 The RNPC Annual Report stated that the following rehabilitation work at the National Park Inn had been completed:  
  
-- rewired rooms and installed baseboard heaters (\$1,126.04)  
-- remodeled upstairs men's and women's restrooms, walls and ceilings in marlite paneling, new light fixtures, new plumbing fixtures, trim painted (\$1,956.32)  
-- installed new tubs in two rooms with baths  
-- new dishwashing machine (\$1,410.94)
- 1964 The RNPC Annual Report states that rehabilitation work at the National Park Inn continued. This work may have included the rehabilitation of the kitchen noted in the 1965 Concessions Prospectus issued by the National Park Service.

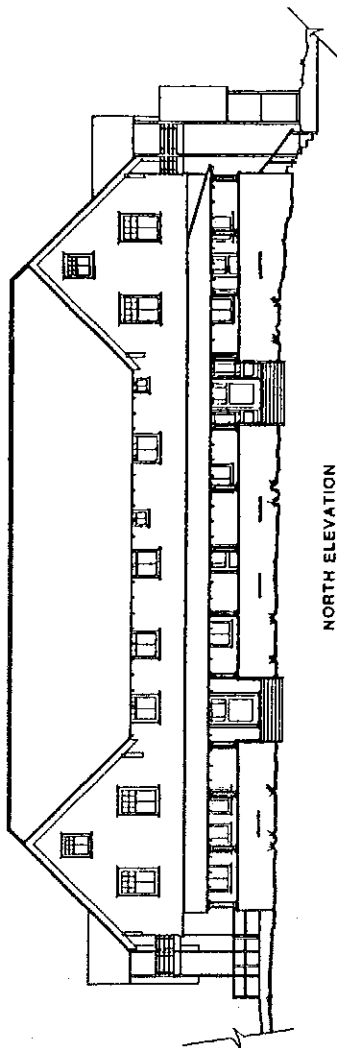
- 1968 The NPS rebuilt the front porch of the Inn. Work included a new foundation, porch, steps, railings and roof supports posts (MORA Building Maintenance File, L-600).
- 1976 The NPS rehabilitated the kitchen addition. Work included replacement of deteriorated stringers, floor joists, studs, walls and subfloor; rotten roof rafters were replaced; a corrugated metal roof was installed over the kitchen and bakery additions (MORA Building Maintenance File, L-600).
- 1977 Cafeteria line installed.
- 1979 Gift shop remodeled according to a plan prepared by TRA. West elevation exterior chimney removed.
- 1982 NPS installed several life safety improvements including:  
-- steel fire escape stairs, exit doors with panic hardware, steel sash with wire reinforced glazing on the east and west elevations  
-- fire rated doors were installed on guest rooms  
(MORA Building Maintenance File: L-600)
- 1985 NPS installed fire sprinkler system.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

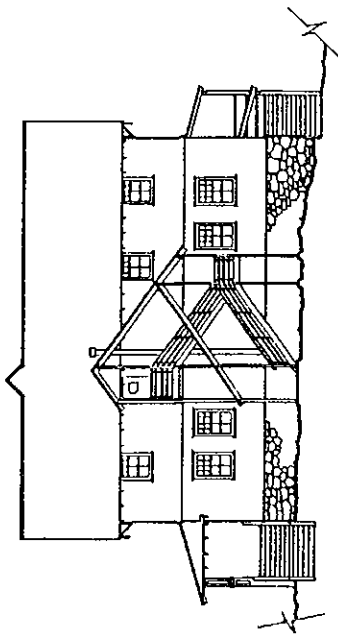
Kennedy, C. Barrett and Stephanie Toothman.  
Historic Structures Report, National Park Inn, Mount Rainier National Park  
National Park Service, Seattle, 1985.

Toothman, Stephanie. National Register Nomination for the Historic Resources of Mount Rainier National Park. National Park Service, Seattle, 1983.

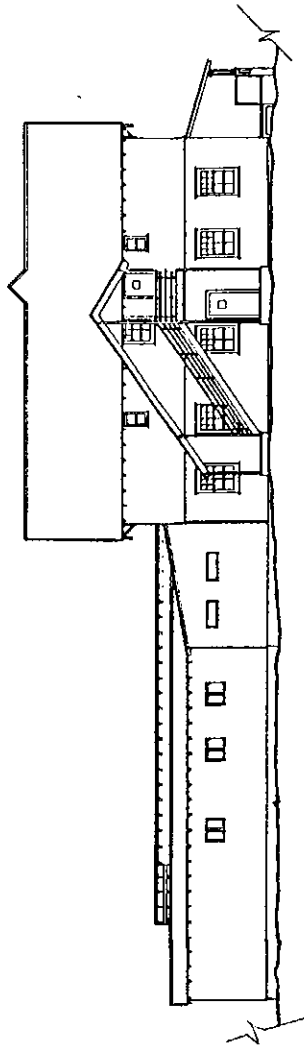
Prepared by: Gretchen A. Luxenberg, Stephanie Toothman  
Title: Historian, Regional Historian  
Affiliation: Cultural Resources Division  
National Park Service  
Pacific Northwest Region  
Date: June, 1988.



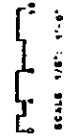
NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



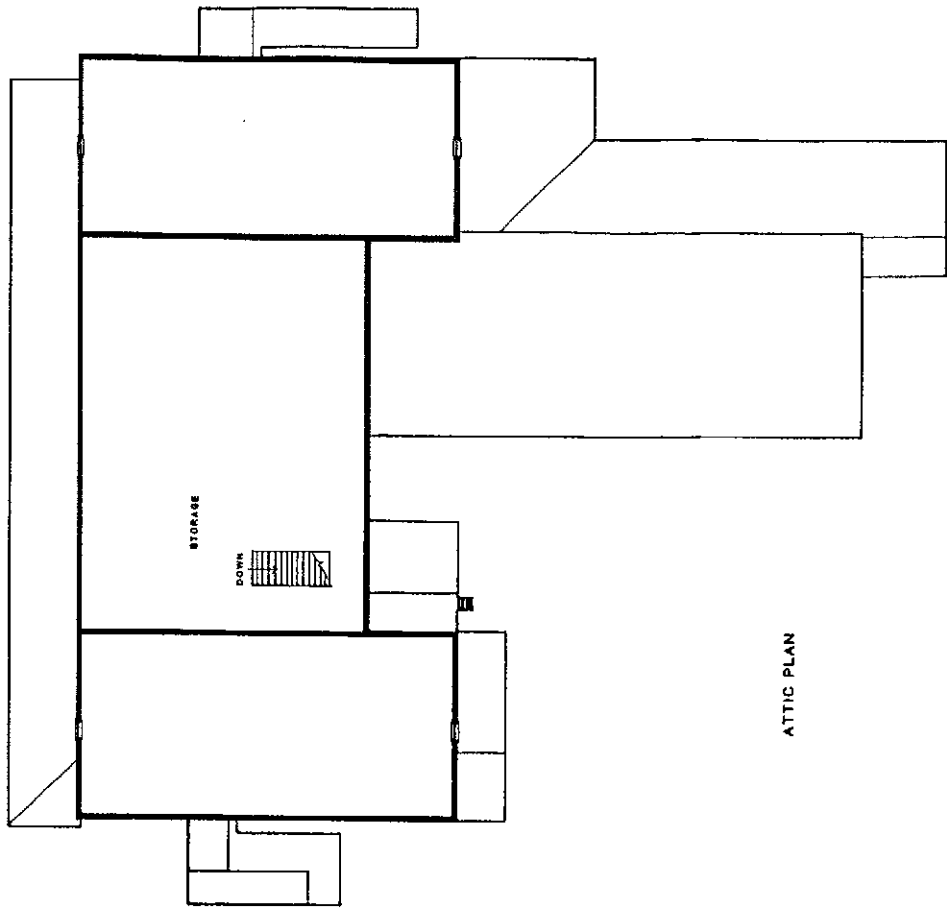
EAST ELEVATION



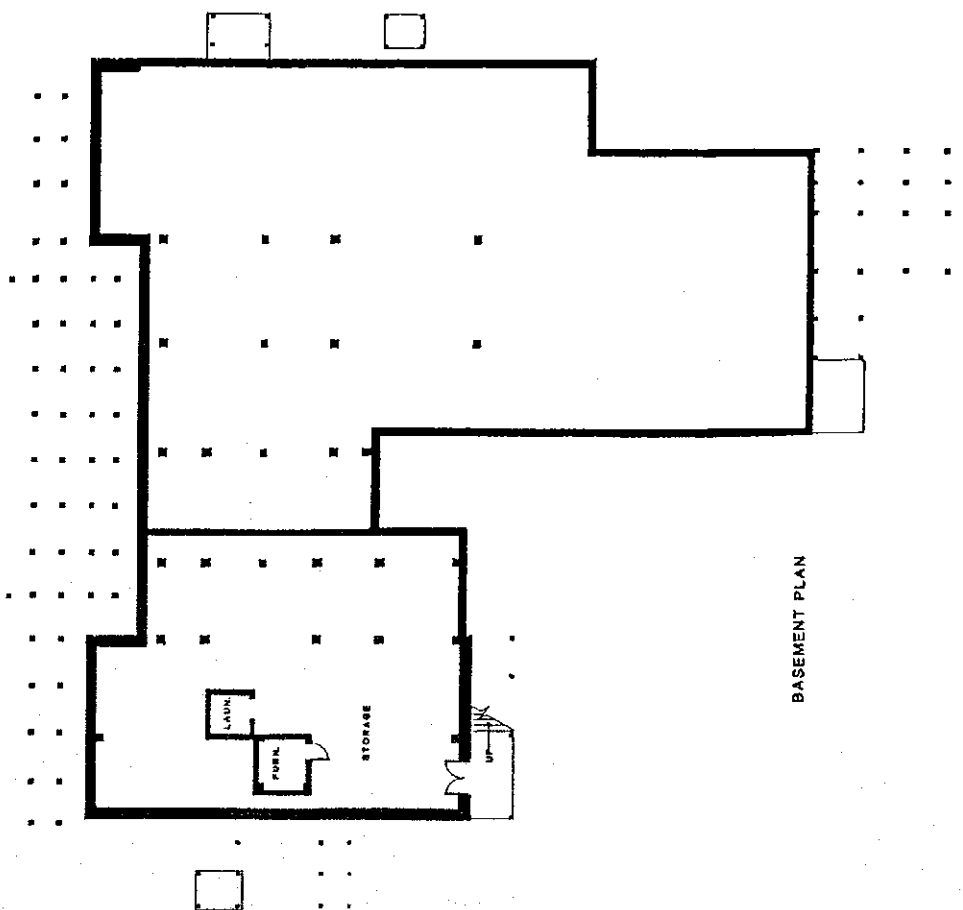
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DESIGNED:	DATE: 07/00	DRAWING NO. 00000	PAGE NO. 1	SHEET NO. 1	OF 6
DRAWN: KENNEDY TECH. REVIEW:	DATE: 07/00				
TITLE OF SHEET <b>EXISTING CONDITIONS          NATIONAL PARK INN          MT. RAINIER N.P.          LONGMIRE, WA.</b>					
SUB SHEET NO.					

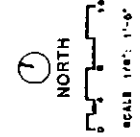




ATTIC PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN



DESIGNED:	SUB. SHEET NO.	TITLE OF SHEET	DRAWING NO.
DRAWN:		EXISTING CONDITIONS	1000
LAUNDRY:		NATIONAL PARK INN	1000
TECH. REVIEW:		MT. RAINIER N.P.	1000
DATE: 01/07		LONGMIRE, WA.	1000
			NO. OF SHEETS
			3
			OF 5



HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

HABS  
WASH,  
27-LONG,  
2-

National Park Inn (Longmire Springs Hotel)  
Mt. Rainier National Park  
South Side of Nisqually - Paradise Road  
Longmire  
Pierce County  
Washington

HABS No. WA-184

Note: These full-frame 4"x5" enlargements were made from 2 1/4" x 2 1/4" negatives.

Marty Stupich, Photographer, Spring 1985

- WA-184-1 National Park Inn, north elevation, looking south
- WA-184-2 National Park Inn, west facade, looking northeast
- WA-184-3 National Park Inn, west facade, looking southeast
- WA-184-4 National Park Inn, front (north) porch, looking east
- WA-184-5 National Park Inn, door detail
- WA-184-6 National Park Inn, interior, view of Post Office

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9A



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KODAK SAFETY FILM 6057

ETY FILM 6057

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HABS No. WA-184-5

KODAK SAFETY FILM 6057

KODAK SAFETY FILM 6057



HABS No. WA-184-6

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14