

COURTESY SEASIDE MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

An early photo of the completed Tillamook Rock Lighthouse

Memorial Day Weekend Celebrating Veterans, Celebrating Freedom



Saturday & Sunday, 11:30 – 4:00
Fort Stevens State Park Historic Site

- ★ Families, Follow The Old Soldiers Trail Map, Discover The Secret Word, Win A Prize!
- ★ Follow The Gun Line And Discover How Fort Stevens Defended Us Before Air Power and Missiles!
- ★ See the newly acquired 3-inch gun at Battery Smur! Pretty Cool!
- ★ Buy A Raffle Ticket To Fire A Civil War era Cannon!
- ★ Take A Truck Tour Of The Fort On The BEAST! (fees apply)
- ★ Try Out The Increasingly Popular Underground Tour! Unforgettable! (fees apply)

Photo: Once the United States entered World War I, Troops were deployed from Fort Stevens to France in 1918 where they helped win the war. Photo taken at the Upper Fort area and the buildings still exist.

FOR MORE INFO SEE: visitfortstevens.com OR CALL (503) 861-2000

Sponsored by the Friends of Old Fort Stevens & Fort Stevens State Park, Warrenton, Oregon
No Admission Charge, \$5.00 State Park Day Use Fee Applies

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of area lighthouses, ships, shipwrecks and engineering sketches. There are no known photos of what Tillamook Rock looked like before it was leveled, or “decapitated” as Ratty writes in his book, revealing “it looked like the hump of a camel’s back.”

However, during his research, Ratty found what is believed to be the only illustration of what it (the rock) looked like before decapitation, which was included in a report by H.S. Wheeler, the superintendent of construction.

He gives a historical account of why American lighthouses were built, which was to ease the way for trading ships. As for Tillamook Rock Lighthouse, it was the last of three lighthouses constructed to help seamen safely navigate the Columbia River Bar. Cape Disappointment and Point Adams framed the entrance to the river but were not sufficient enough to keep the ships from danger — a third was needed.

Tillamook Head was considered the optimal location; however, it was constantly enshrined in fog. A large rock west of the headland and a mile out into the ocean was the best option, but getting the lighthouse built and maintaining it proved to be anything but easy. Pounded by winter storms and with no sensible access to shelter, the Rock earned the nickname “Terrible Tilly” early on.

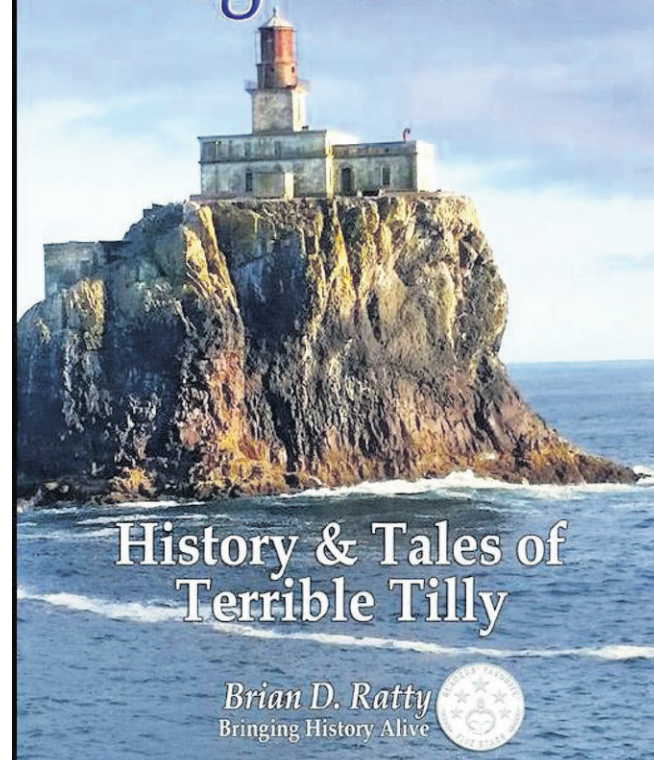
While her future is unknown, the mysteries of ghostly sightings and underground spirit caves remain local folklore. “With the single stroke of a pen, Tillamook Rock went from the hands of Mother Nature into the grasp of the Lighthouse Board. It would never be the same again,” Ratty wrote.

Tilly stands proud

Ratty said he always felt a special connection to the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse.

“While Karen Emmerling,

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse



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The cover of Brian D. Ratty's book “Tillamook Rock Lighthouse: History & Tales of Terrible Tilly”

owner of Beach Books, gave me the inspiration to write the book, it was my family history with the old lighthouse that drove me to the story,” he said.

His grandfather Harry Ratty almost died on the rock in 1934. He became ill due to exposure after a violent storm and was finally evacuated after several attempts at rescue.

When his family lived in Seaside during World War II, Ratty said, “we bathed in the light’s beacon and heard her horns almost every night, so the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse was as normal to us as the sea and the surf.”

Ratty said that, since the last book written on the history of the lighthouse was 30 years ago and is now out of print, he wanted to give “Tilly” her voice again.

During his research, Ratty

said he developed a much deeper respect for the men of the Lighthouse Service. Not only the keepers, but all the men who built, manned, supplied and maintained light stations up and down the coast. “These were a hardy bunch of dedicated men that kept the sea lanes open and the seafarers safe,” he said. “Hat’s off to all of them! I also developed a deep respect for ‘Tilly’ and feel she’s not ‘Terrible’ after all.”

“It’s the centuries of storms she endured that, to this day, make her stand proud, strong and tall,” Ratty added.

Although Tillamook Rock Lighthouse is still privately owned, it has become part of the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge and, in 1981, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.