

HAUNTED HISTORY SERIES PART II

Local lore on the peninsula



Spooky tales on the North Coast

Ira Wesley Kitmacher, of Ocean Park, Washington, explores the history and tall tales behind many local towns in his soon-to-be-published book “A Road-trip Through the Most Haunted Place in America: the Graveyard of the Pacific.”

Coast Weekend will feature excerpts from Kitmacher’s book throughout October.

Barbara Lloyd McMichael

The Knappton Cove Heritage Center is located in the building that housed the lazaretto for the Columbia River Quarantine Center.

BY IRA WESLEY KITMACHER

On May 9, 1899, the U.S. government purchased the then-deserted Knappton Cannery and established the Columbia River Quarantine Station at Knappton Cove, informally known as the Columbia River’s “Ellis Island.” It now serves as the Knappton Cove Heritage Center.

From 1899 to 1938, the center was used as one of two federal quarantine stations north of San Francisco. Immigrants arriving to the West Coast by ship, suspected of carrying a contagious disease, were sent to the center to quarantine. These diseases included bubonic plague, yellow fever, cholera, smallpox and typhus.

Some visitors to the center reported strange occurrences, including seeing a woman dressed in period clothing wandering the shore.

Some paranormal investigators visited the center, placed a cup of coffee in one of the quarantine rooms and set up a recording device before stepping outside. When they checked back, there was less coffee in the cup and the recording had captured the audio of someone whispering “Coffee, coffee.”



Patrick Webb

The North Head Lighthouse.

Ilwaco

Ilwaco served as a transportation hub for ferry travelers. A railway was oper-

ated by the Ilwaco Railway and Navigation Company. It ran from 1888 to 1930, from Ilwaco, Washington, to Nahcotta, Washing-

ton. The train carried passengers, mail and oysters.

One stop on the railroad was known as the “Loomis Ghost Station.” The stop was located at the mansion of Lewis A. Loomis, the railway’s founder. He died in 1913. His mansion fell into disrepair, described by some as a “spooky old dilapidated house.” The railroad soon ceased making stops at Loomis. In 1953, the mansion was torn down by Loomis’ son.

The Bell Tower Inn was built in 1928 as a Presbyterian church. In the 1970s and 1980s, it served as a barracks for fishermen. Witnesses reported sounds of disembodied footsteps, unexplainable noises and curtains raising themselves.

The Ilwaco Community Building was originally a hospital. Witnesses reported seeing ghosts of children, as well as ghostly orbs of energy. Some reported seeing a man’s apparition holding a baby. The spirit of a red-haired woman has also been spotted walking toward what used to be a patient’s room.

Witnesses have also reported seeing spirits near Ocean Beach Hospital.

See Page 7