

Chapter Nine: Station is decommissioned



Hatteras Weather Bureau, ca.1950. Photo: National Park Service

In June 30, 1940 The U.S. Weather Bureau is transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Commerce. In April 1946 Hatteras Weather Bureau Station is decommissioned and the functions transferred to the another building in Hatteras Village.

The U.S. Weather Service retained the Hatteras Weather Bureau Station as living quarters for Richard B. Daily, who was in charge of local weather observations. Between 1947-1952 alterations were made to the structure, including resurfacing of the interior walls with sheetrock and the installation and upgrade of electrical, water and sewer.

In 1952, the weather bureau station and its outbuildings were turned over to the General Service Administration as excess real property, whereby the U.S. Coast Guard acquired the property and used the station as a new Hatteras Inlet Lifeboat Station and a shelter for personnel and storage in the event of storms and threatening weather.²¹

²¹ Hatteras Weather Bureau Station National Register of Historic Places, February 17, 1978



Hatteras Weather Bureau, ca.1952. Photo: National Park Service

On July 18, 1958 the U.S. Coast Guard reported the Hatteras Weather Bureau Station as excess real property. Public Law 85-540 allowed for National Park Service to acquire additional excess property to the Cape Hatteras National Recreation Area. (later renamed Cape Hatteras National Seashore) Between 1958-1964, Cape Hatteras National Seashore permitted Dr. and Mrs. Harvey W. Wells from Duke University, Department of Zoology, Durham, North Carolina to use the building for a residence and laboratory for the studies of local marine invertebrates. On July 1, 1964 a special use permit was issued to North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina to use the weather station as a biological laboratory of the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station between 1964-1976.²²

²² Hatteras Weather Bureau Station National Register of Historic Places, February 17, 1978



U.S. Weather Station, Hatteras, North Carolina

Hatteras second Weather Bureau Station, 1957. Photo: Outer Banks History Center

Hatteras second Weather Bureau Station moved from Hatteras to Buxton, NC. in 1957. The concrete weather building in Buxton was equipped with radar, computerized instrumentation and data networking. Mr. Damon Gray Sr., who lived next to the Hatteras Weather Bureau Station, was hired to continue operating the weather flag tower and light warning unit till his death in 1980.



Hatteras Weather Bureau, ca.1980. Photo: National Park Service

In 1979, several changes to the interior structure of the building were made to use the building for park staff resident. Adding and removing partition walls, laying vinyl tiles in the kitchen and bathrooms, upgrading of electrical, water and sewer services. Interior woodwork and hardware were replaced and sheet rock wall covered with Luan.



Hatteras Weather Bureau, Photo: National Park Service, 1990

In 2000, the National Park Service began with replacement of the second floor windows, and abatement of asbestos shingles and lead-base paint.



Hatteras Weather Bureau, Photo: National Park Service, 2001

In 2001 the National Park Service received \$345,000 for phase one and two to restore the old U.S. Weather Bureau Station. In April, National Park Service/Cape Hatteras National Seashore Preservation Crew began work on phase one to replace the foundation began with the damaged and rotting wood and deteriorating brick piers support were repaired or replaced. Phase two exterior restoration started with stabilization, numerous beams and braces replaced and repaired to support the structure and foundation. Exterior siding and paint was removed, cedar shakes installed. The front pouch was rebuilt to the 1901 historic period. The exterior cedar siding was reinstalled or replaced, within keeping of much of the historic fabric as possible. The final exterior appearance will include its original colors of yellow, green and brown. The exterior two-storage shed received exterior restoration with the replacement or repair of exterior siding and cedar shakes.

Additional funding of \$442,000 was approved to continue the restoration of phase three interior restoration, starting in January 2002. The interior restoration will be to restore the interior floor plan to the 1901 period, interior painting of the original colors, wall treatments, flooring and ceiling, restored removal of modern furnishings, interior woodwork and hardware.



Artifact Recovered during Hatteras Weather Bureau Restoration, 2001
Photo: National Park Service

Several artifacts have been recovered during restoration, under the floorboard and in wall boards. 1914-telegraph dispatch, detailing Hatteras weather condition. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Hatteras Weather Bureau memo dated 1901.