

Windows on the Past: Interrorem Cabin is Key Remnant from Early Forest Service era

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There are very few log structures from the early Forest Service era that survive in the Pacific Northwest.

Interrorem Cabin is the oldest administrative facility in the Olympic National Forest, and one of the earliest remaining Forest Service structures in Oregon and Washington. The cabin has been in use for over 100 years! Due to its rich historic and cultural significance, Interrorem Guard Station is

[Interrorem cabin 1937] listed in the [National Register of Historic Places](#).

Though the structure is no longer part of the daily operations of the Olympic National Forest, [Interrorem Cabin](#) recreation rental and nearby accessible interpretive trail play a key role in illuminating the daily lives and duties of the early forest rangers on the peninsula.

Cabin History

Located near Brinnon, Washington the cabin is a well-preserved example of ranger-built, pre-design-era Forest Service administrative log guard station. It was built by an early forest ranger Emery J. Finch in 1907, just after forest reserves were transferred to the Department of Agriculture in 1905, and federal funds were allocated for the creation of guard stations to help facilitate land management.



As an assistant ranger, one of Finch's tasks was to construct his own station that [Duckabush River] originally included a barn, corral and wood shed. Finch strategically located the cabin in the rich timberland of the Duckabush watershed which had pasture for horses and fresh water for the station. Finch occupied the station the following spring with his bride Mabel.



A native of nearby Hoodspport, Finch was familiar with local building material and traditions. Constructed from local timber, the peeled logs were flattened on the top and bottom, and saddle-notched at the corners providing a relatively weather-tight fit with little use of chinking.

[Interrorem Cabin Rental] Finch used hand-split cedar shingles for the roof and supplemented the native building material with stock five-panel doors and casement windows. The interior of the cabin was divided into three rooms; the office/living area, bedroom, and kitchen. A wood stove was located near the center of the cabin.

The 20' x 24' guard station is an excellent example of a single pen, saddle-notched log structure that maintains architectural integrity. The three-room structure exemplifies early Forest Service guard stations in: log construction, hip roof, front porch, multi-pane windows, central chimney, and rock skirting around the foundation.



for the greatest good

Although this building was constructed before the Forest Service standardized plans, the Interrorem cabin could be considered a prototype for the later Rustic style Forest administration buildings.

Originally, the site included a barn, corral, and woodshed, but over the years only the cabin survived. The cabin served as an administrative site from 1908 (year of occupancy) to 1933, and then hosted government-sponsored work programs during the Great Depression such as the Civilian Conservation Corps.

As forest management needs changed, the cabin was adapted to accommodate new demands. The federal work programs ceased as the United States entered World War II and the cabin was used as a guard station until 1986. Forest Service volunteers used the building from 1986 to 1994, until it became part of the [US Forest Service cabin rental program](#).



[Interrorem Log cabin, built in 1907. Picture taken from road. April, 1937 by Supervisor Hanson.]



[Interrorem G.S. House. Shows dismantled era camp tent frames used previous summer. April, 1937.]