

Original Life Saving Station
Spermaceti Cove
Sandy Hook, Monmouth County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
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133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Original Life Saving Station
Spermaceti Cove
Sandy Hook, Monmouth County, New Jersey

Owner: United States Coast Guard

Date of Erection: 1848

Architect:

Builder: Erected by United States Government

Present Condition: Very good

Number of Stories: One

Materials of Construction: Foundation - Piles

Exterior walls - original shingles;
frame of sawn oak; the building
is not sheathed inside or out.

Floor - pine planks, new

Roof - original shingles

Historical Data:

The Original Life Saving Station at Spermaceti Cove was erected under the authority of an Act of Congress approved in 1848. William A. Newell, the father of the United States Life Saving Service, was responsible for the legislation, which was in the form of a rider attached to another bill. Newell got ten thousand dollars to equip lighthouses with surfboats, life-cars, rockets, cannonades, and the like. The building was used only for housing equipment; no crews were attached. All the life saving work was done voluntarily by the natives of the district.

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In 1871 Sumner Kimball became head of the Revenue Marine Bureau of the Treasury Department; he originated the idea of guarding the entire coast. The service was to be in charge of thorough seamen who had knowledge of the shore. At first the service was attached to the Cutter Division of the Treasury Department; in 1878 it became a separate bureau.

E. T. Osborn of the Coast Guard discovered that this building was the first life saving station; he thought that it should be rededicated. The building was rededicated on May 21, 1930. It is now used as a museum and a great deal of the original life saving equipment is preserved there.

Bibliography:

Smith, Joseph W. Gleanings From the Sea Andover, Massachusetts, the author, 1887. (This book contains an article by Merryman, J.H. "United States Life Saving Service", which appeared originally in Scribners January, 1880)

Field Books and Drawings of Survey

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