



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Station Chatham, Massachusetts

USLSS Station #13, Second District
Coast Guard Station #42

Location:	North of Chatham light station in 1880; South-southwest of Chatham light station in 1915.
Date of Conveyance	(?)
Station Built:	1872
Fate:	Station was moved in 1880. Transferred to Fish and Wildlife Service in 1955. New Chatham Station still in operation.

Remarks:

First described in the *Register* as being located "two miles north of Chatham Inlet" and later "on Morris Island, south-southwest one and one-quarter miles of Chatham Lights," this station was one of the original nine built on Cape Cod in 1872. A few years after the station was established it was moved across the harbor to where the Old Harbor Station later stood. It remained there a few years when it was again moved back to its original site "on the northern end of Monomoy, near the 'cut through,' within easy distance of Chatham village." This station appears in the 1879 record as being located "one and one-quarter miles south of Chatham Light."

In the *1880 Annual Report* was the entry that the station "has been removed from its former position south of the town to a point about two miles north of Chatham lights. The removal became necessary on account of the encroachments of the sea, which for some time have been carefully watched by the keeper, and at length reached a point threatening the security of the station. The new site gives at least as great advantages to station operations as the old, and brings the patrol of the station into communication with that of Orleans, formerly barred by

the intervening inlet, while it also affords the opportunity for combination of the two crews in case of shipwreck occurring north of Chatham." The site description was changed accordingly. When the station was moved from the Old Harbor site, it was believed that a new station would be built there, but not until after the wreck of the schooner *Calvin B. Orcutt* on Old Harbor bars was the Old Harbor station erected. It was "extensively improved and repaired" in 1888. The *1915 Annual Report* mentions that the station was rebuilt on a new site and in 1916 the launching facilities were extensively improved.

The first keeper was Alpheus Mayo who was appointed at the age of 47, with twenty years experience as a surfman, on December 12, 1872. He was succeeded by Nathaniel E. Gould, who was appointed on April 26, 1880 and was dismissed on August 19, 1893. He was followed by a man who had been a surfman at the station for thirteen years, Hezekiah F. Doane (September 9, 1893 until reassigned to the Old Harbor station on November 23, 1897). Then followed a man who had spent eight years at the station as a surfman before being appointed keeper, Herbert E. Eldridge (December 16, 1897 until he was incapacitated and retired on August 15, 1916). He was followed by Edwin B. Tyler (reassigned on August 23, 1916 from the Maddaket station and retired March 2, 1925), Richard E. Ryder (reassigned from the Gloucester station on March 28, 1925 and reassigned to the Monomoy station on September 18, 1931) and Alvin H. Wright (from the Old Harbor station on September 18, 1931, he went to the Orleans station on December 2, 1936). Next came George B. Nickerson from the Old Harbor station on December 1, 1936 and serving until his retirement on March 1, 1939. The station was still active in 1945.

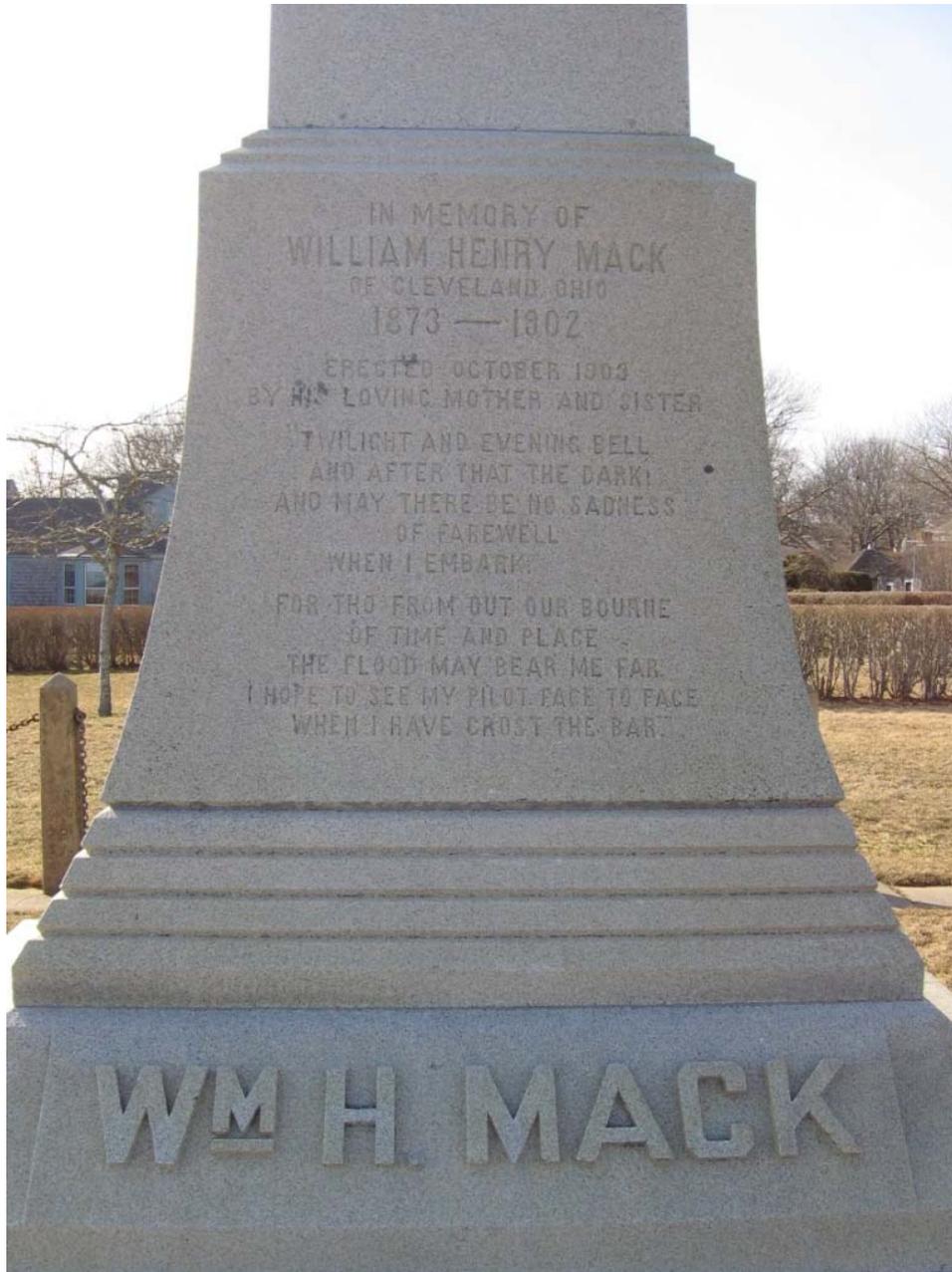
The property was turned over to the GSA in 1955 and subsequently turned over to the Fish and Wildlife Service. There is still a Chatham station in operation.

In the file was a newspaper article that noted: "A 45-foot fishing vessel from Marshfield sank a mile east of Nauset Beach here last Friday, July 27 [1984], as its crewmembers were hoisted to safety in a Coast Guard helicopter. No one was injured....The helicopter was above the *June Allen*...pumps dropped by the helicopter were unable to stem the flooding of the *June Allen*, and the vessel sank at about 1:30 p.m. Capt. Carl Rispettoso and crewmembers William Harvey jr. of Marshfield and George McIntyre of Quincy were hoisted from the waters of the Atlantic into the helicopter and taken to Air Station Cape Cod. Coast Guard Station Chatham was also involved in five other assistance cases during the week, none involving personal injury or property loss." (Newspaper clipping, 2 August 1984)

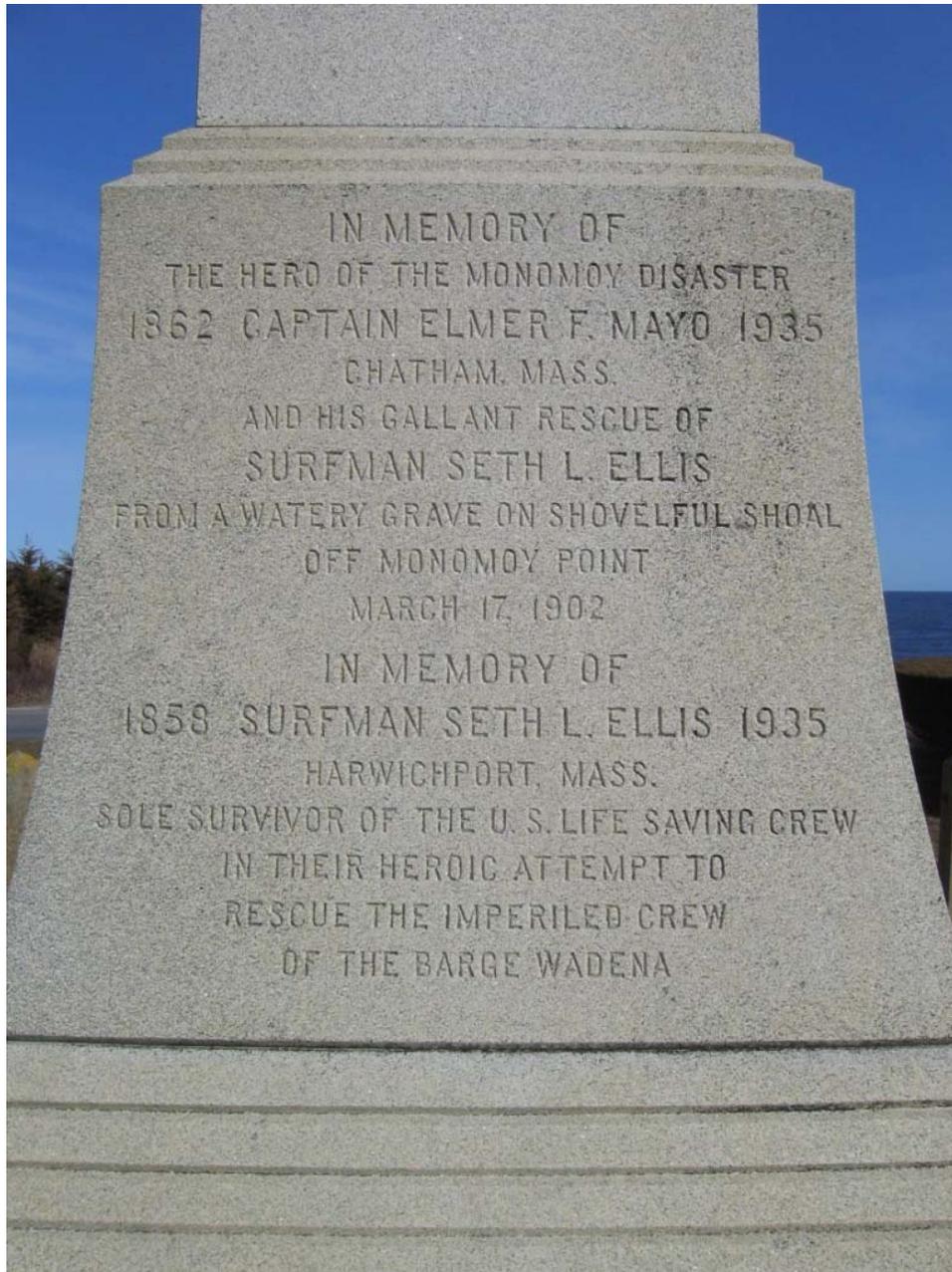
Photography:



The Mack Memorial next to Station Chatham, commemorating the attempted rescue of the crew of the barge *Wadena* off Monomoy Island on 17 March 1902, in which seven USLSS surfmen perished in the line of duty.



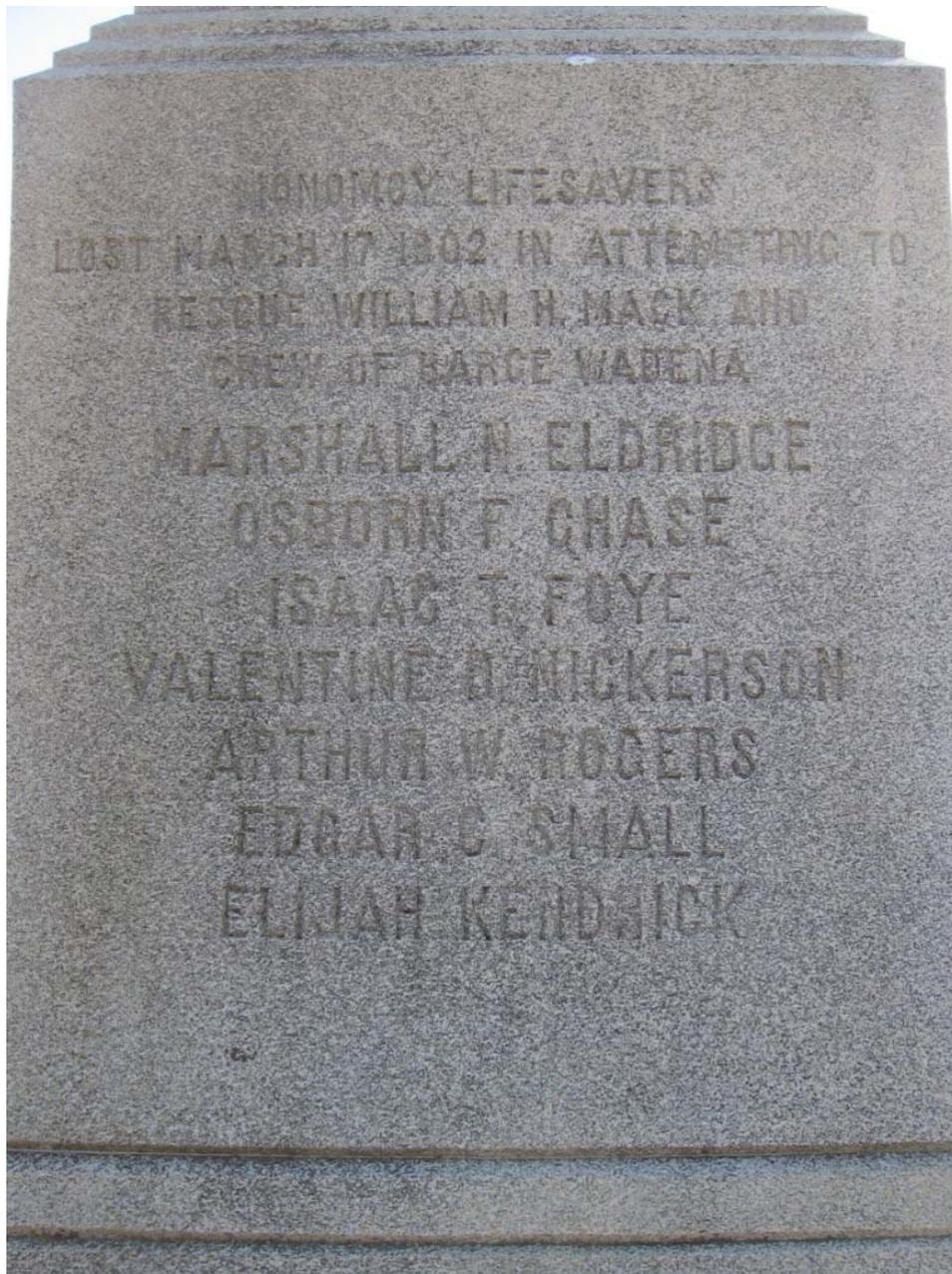
Another view of the Mack Memorial next to Station Chatham, commemorating the attempted rescue of the crew of the barge *Wadena* off Monomoy Island on 17 March 1902, in which seven USLSS surfmen perished in the line of duty.



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Sources:

Station History File, CG Historian's Office

Dennis L. Noble & Michael S. Raynes. "Register of the Stations and Keepers of the U.S. Life-Saving Service." Unpublished manuscript, compiled circa 1977, CG Historian's Office collection.

Ralph Shanks, Wick York & Lisa Woo Shanks. *The U.S. Life-Saving Service: Heroes, Rescues and Architecture of the Early Coast Guard*. Petaluma, CA: Costañó Books, 1996.

U.S. Treasury Department: Coast Guard. *Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers and Cadets and Ships and Stations of the United States Coast Guard, July 1, 1941*. Washington, DC: USGPO, 1941.

