



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Station Brenton Point, Rhode Island

Coast Guard Station #53

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| Location: | On Prices Neck; 41-26' 58"N x 71-20' 10"W |
| Date of Conveyance | 1884 |
| Station Built: | 1884 |
| Fate: | Destroyed in the Hurricane of 1938, station abandoned in 1946 |

Remarks:

The *Act of May 4, 1882* authorized the establishment of a complete life-saving station at or near Brenton's Point or Beaver Tail, Rhode Island. The Brenton Point station was built "on Prices Neck southeast one and one-half miles of Castle Hill Light and southwest three miles of Newport, Rhode Island" in 1884. In 1912 a new boathouse and launch way were constructed.

Noted Rhode Island Life-Saving Service historian Tim Dring added further details to the station's history, particularly the effect of the Hurricane of 1938:

This station and its rescue boats/equipment were heavily damaged in the famous 1938 Hurricane, as described in the station logbook entry of 21 September 1938. In terms of structures, the main station house was heavily damaged such that continued operations and berthing in this building were no longer safe or practical. The detached boathouse and marine railway were destroyed, along with the detached garage. In the boathouse, and destroyed along with it, were the station's beach apparatus and carts, as well as Race Point type pulling surfboat No. 4120 and dory No. 4603. Ripped from its mooring and swept ashore in the storm surge was the station's 36ft. Type HR (R=revised) motor lifeboat No. 2052. Although later refloated, it was sufficiently damaged that a replacement motor lifeboat (newer 36ft.8in. Type TRS motor lifeboat No. 5192/CG36453) was assigned when completed at the Curtis Bay Yard in December of 1939. The

station's 38ft. cabin picket boat, No. 2393/CG38309, was in Newport Harbor at the time of the storm, where it safely rode out the hurricane and storm surge. The station also lost all of its supplies, spare parts, and fuel.

Following the immediate, critical disaster response assistance that station personnel provided, station operations were resumed, with the crew berthed at the Seaman's Church Institute in downtown Newport, RI, and the picket boat berthed at Government Wharf in Newport Harbor. This was the situation until replacement station facilities at the current Castle Hill location were completed in late 1941.

The property was abandoned in 1946.

Keepers:

The early keepers were Albert C. Gould (appointed October 30, 1884 and resigned March 20, 1887), Chauncey C. Kenyon (March 26, 1887 until his retirement with thirty years service on October 15, 1920), Frank E. Allison (reassigned from the Coskata station on May 3, 1921 and reassigned as Assistant to the Superintendent of the Third District in Bay Shore New York on July 17, 1922), Albert Rohdin (reassigned from the Coskata station on August 3, 1922, he was reassigned to the Quonochontaug station on March 15, 1926), and George W. Streeter (from the Quonochontaug station on March 15, 1926 and reassigned to the New Shoreham station on February 21, 1928). Next came Chief Petty Officer S. E. Littlefield, who went to the New Shoreham station in 1929, Chief Boatswains Mate E. Lanthan and, in 1934, Chief C. P. Lewis.

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: Costaño 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.

