



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Station Damariscove Island, Maine

Also referred to as Damariscove Island

Coast Guard Station #8

Location:	On the west shore of Damariscove Harbor; 43-45' 20"N x 69-37' 00"W
Date of Conveyance:	1881
Station Built:	1897
Fate:	Station still in operation in 2000; now designated Boothbay Harbor

Remarks:

The lot for Damariscove Island Lifeboat Station was acquired on 3 September 1881, from Joseph Y. Stetson of Danbury, Connecticut. It was described as "all that certain lot of land situated in the town of Boothbay County of Lincoln and State of Maine, on what is known as Damariscove Island, and thus described and bounded: beginning at a point on the Westerly side of Damariscove harbor, marked by a ring bolt set in the rock. Sixty-seven feet North, three quarters West, from the Crown of Eronita Point which is marked by a ring bolt set in the rock. Thence running West one hundred feet, thence South one hundred feet thence East one hundred feet, thence North one hundred feet".

According to the Coast Survey Charts, the station is located on the west shore of Damariscove Harbor at Latitude North 43 degrees, 45 minutes, 20 seconds and Longitude West 69 degrees, 37 minutes.

The lot was acquired under authority authorized by the Act of Congress of March 3, 1875, which states "And the Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized whenever he shall deem it advisable, to acquire by donation or purchase, in

behalf of the United States, the right to use and occupy sites for Life-saving or Life-boat Stations, House of Refuge, and sites for Pier- head Beacons, the establishment of which has been or shall hereafter be, authorized by Congress".

During the fiscal year 1896, additional property adjacent to this land was acquired and the station was built and established in 1897. From the time that the station was established it has been a help to vessels in distress, vessels disabled and over adventurous swimmers. Two major instances of assistance are told here.

"On January 11, 1905, the Schooner *Ray G.* stranded on Bantam Shoal at 32-1/2 miles SSW of the station. The life-saving crew at once pulled out to her with their surfboat to offer assistance. The tide was well up at the time of her grounding. Soundings were taken, anchors and lines run out and the deck load thrown overboard to lighten her. The services of a tug were procured to float her, but all attempts proved futile. Bad weather setting in, with thick took the crew ashore and succored them at the station until the following day. During the severe storm which followed, the *Ray G.* broke up and *proved* a total loss".

On 21 April 1906, the American Schooner *Catherine G. Howard* struck on Bantam Rocks 1-1/2 miles SSW from Damariscove Island Stations at 2:30 a.m. The life-savers from that station went aboard in the surfboat and brought 5 of the vessel's crew ashore, the other 15 landing in a private boat. They were all cared for at the station until 2 p.m. of the 22nd. Numerous trips were made between the wreck and shore and her sails, running rigging, masts, gaffs, compass, clock, anchors and chains, 10 dories and 100 fathoms of hawser were saved by the Damariscove Island crew and 2 dories by the Hunniwelle Beach crew who went to the scene in their surfboat. Numerous times somewhat less assistance stance was given to vessels in distress.

During the year 1903, the name of the station was changed from Damariscove Island to Damiscove Island. On March 15, 1939, the Secretary of the Treasury officially changed the name back to Damariscove Island Lifeboat Station. It disappears from the records in January 1960.

Keepers:

The early keepers were Eugene H. Spinney (December 3, 1897 until his dismissal February 6, 1900), Elwood S. Richardson (April 30, 1900, died "from disease contracted in the line of duty" on November 26, 1906), Joseph J. Staples (December 21, 1906 until reassigned to the Isle of Shoals station on May 16, 1910), Walter H. Godfrey (November 7, 1910 until reassigned to the Rye Beach station November 7, 1917), Charles A. Hand (acting until his appointment on November 20, 1918, he was reassigned to the Portsmouth Harbor station on September 1, 1919), Rollo A. Morton (reassigned from the White Head station on November 20, 1918 until reassigned to the Fletchers Neck station on February 1,

1923), and Almond G. Maker (reassigned from the Plum Island station on February 17, 1925 and reassigned to the Quoddy Head station on November 9, 1930). Chief Boatswain's Mate E.A. Gamage is the next officer in charge having been reassigned from the Cranberry Island station in 1931.

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.

