



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Station Eagle Harbor, Michigan

Coast Guard Station #299

Location:	On east point of harbor about 1/2 mile east of Eagle Harbor Light.
Date of Conveyance:	1905
Station Built:	1912
Fate:	Turned over to the GSA in 1954

Remarks:

None.

Keepers:

Albert Ocha was appointed keeper on 29 JUL 1912 and died on 22 NOV 1912 from a disease contracted in the line of duty.

Charles A. Tucker (G) was appointed keeper on 14 DEC 1912 and was still serving in 1915. He and his crew were awarded Gold Life-Saving Medals for a rescue they undertook on 8 November 1913. The citation read:

On 8 November 1913 the steamer Waldo, nearly 5,000 tons, was driven onto Gull Rock, off Keweenaw Point, Lake Superior. The wind was about 70 miles an hour and the sea very rough. The vessel broke in two and the imperiled people took shelter in the cabin, where they remained for 90 hours without food. News of the wreck reached the Eagle Harbor Life-Saving Station on 9 November and the crew made a brave effort on that day to reach the vessel in a power surfboat. After having proceeded 8 miles, the great amount of ice on the small boat made it impossible to go farther. The boat, therefore, returned to the station.

The larger and more powerful lifeboat was undergoing repairs when word concerning the wreck was received. When it was found impracticable to effect a rescue with the surfboat, the crew returned to their task and made it ready to go to sea. The power lifeboat was launched at 3 AM on 11 November. After four hours of making way in rough seas and being exposed to the snow and freezing wind, the crew reached the Waldo, 32 miles from the station.

Information concerning the disaster was not received at the Portage Life-Saving Station until noon on 10 November. The shortest distance to the wreck was 60 miles, but the keeper, chose to benefit from the protection afforded by the ship canal to Portage Entry. By taking this latter route, the distance to the Waldo was 80 miles. The keeper, before starting, coordinated for a tug to meet the power lifeboat as it emerged from the canal. The tug towed the lifeboat to the scene of the wreck. They arrived on scene at 3 AM on the 11th.

While the Portage crewmen chopped the thick ice encasing the Waldo's cabin, the Eagle Harbor crew arrived. Both lifeboats were ice-logged. This made maneuvering the boats more difficult and increased the hazard of the rescue. Despite these difficulties, the lifesavers, in the face of great danger, landed the 22 men and 2 women, all hands, and the ship's dog safely at Houghton, MI.

In awarding the keepers and surfmen a Gold Lifesaving Medal, the department recognized the good judgment, skill, and undaunted heroism which stands with the most praiseworthy instances of bravery in the annals of the service.

The station was decommissioned and turned over to the GSA after World War II.

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.

