



Station Ocean City, Maryland

USLSS Station #4, Fifth District
Coast Guard Station #146



Location:	On beach at Ocean City, Md., 7 3/8 miles south of Fenwick Island Light, and 1/2 mile north of entrance to Sinepuxent Bay; 38-20' 00"N x 75-05' 00"W
Date of Conveyance:	1878
Station Built:	1878
Fate:	Turned over to the GSA in 1964

Remarks:

A hundred years ago Ocean City, Maryland was a desolate island, a stretch of lonely wind-swept sand-separating the Synepuxent Bay from the Atlantic. After the Civil War, an enterprising farmer constructed an inn to accommodate visiting sportsmen. In 1875 a number of hotels opened up for business and the popularity of the resort grew. Early means of reaching the resort were by stage coach, then across the bay by scow. With the rapid development of the resort city came the United States Coast Guard.

A Coast Guard press release of the period noted that:

The Coast Guard has been a citizen of Ocean City since 1878. For over 80 years the station, then a part of the U. S. Lifesaving Service, stood on Caroline St. as a landmark of safety to fishermen, boaters and swimmers. Her missions are still the same as they were 80 years ago, protecting life and property, but today the Coast Guard operates from an ultra-modern station.

The new station was commissioned in 1964 and covers an area of 2.5 acres of land. The station is equipped with large berthing areas (two men to a room), stainless steel messing facilities, central air conditioning, and a crew parking area. Ocean City Station, one of five life boat stations that make up Group Chincoteague, has a complement of 18 men under BMC William R. Bowen, Officer-in-Charge.

Attached to the unit is a 44 footer, 30 footer, 25 footer, a 16 foot outboard and a sea dog named "Blackie" who has been in the Coast Guard since he was a puppy. Chief Richard Mitchell, the unit's first Officer-in-Charge brought "Blackie" to the unit from Assateague. The chief moved on, but "Blackie" stayed. Chief Bowen has been Officer-in-Charge for 2 years and he has been in the Coast Guard for 15 years. He says "Ocean City is the nicest station I have ever seen in the Coast Guard." The men stationed at the unit seem to feel the same way. Morale is at a high level.

One of the big reasons for good morale is undoubtedly the friendly atmosphere of the resort city. The Coast Guard is an integral part of the community and many of the towns citizens have made it known. Chief Bowen was recently honored when he was made an honorary member of the Ocean City Marlin Club. Many of the local citizens have organized a Coast Guard Auxiliary unit to assist the station.

Duty at the Ocean City station is undoubtedly enviable, but don't let the good community relations and modern living deceive you. The 18 men assigned to the station earn their liberty. Since July of last year they have answered over 130 SAP cases.

A recent case of interest involved a 23 foot motorboat, the Tempest III. Ocean City Station monitored her "Mayday", which said she was sinking 30 miles off Ocean City with five people on board. Coast Guard boats from the station were underway in minutes. Help from Elizabeth City Coast Guard Air Station, and Cape May Coast Guard Air Station were also on their way. Chief Bowen asked the Tempest III crew how long they could stay afloat. They replied that they could hold back the water for only one hour. An Elizabeth City C-130 was overhead 35 minutes later with pumps for the stricken vessel, a tribute to combined Coast Guard efforts initiated by Ocean City Station.

A lifeboat station at North Beach was constructed in 1893.

Keepers:

William T. West was appointed keeper on 19 December 1878 and resigned on 16 December 1889.

Adelbert Soper was appointed keeper on 20 February 1890 and transferred to Green Run Inlet Station on 24 March 1892.

Joshua J. Dunton was appointed keeper on 24 March 1892 and resigned for physical reasons on 30 October 1906.

John B. Jones was appointed was appointed keeper on 2 November 106 and was still serving in 1915.

BMC Richard Mitchell, OIC, 1964-

BMC William R. Bowen, Officer-in-Charge

Photographs:







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: Costano 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.

