



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Station Smiths Point, New York

USLSS Station #20, Third District
Coast Guard Station #78

Location:	On beach abreast west end of Narrow Bay, 17 miles east northeast of Fire Island Light; 40-44' 00"N x 72-52' 20"W
Date of Conveyance	1876
Station Built:	1872
Fate:	Turned over to the GSA in 1954

Keepers:

Gilbert S. Miller was appointed in 1856. It is unknown when he left service.

Alfred Brown was appointed in 1872. Again it is unknown when he left service.

Joseph H. Bell was appointed on JUL 1, 1873 and left service in 1880.

Edward A. Smith was appointed on AUG 27, 1880 and resigned from service on OCT 27, 1885.

John Penny was appointed on NOV 11, 1885 and was still serving in 1915.

Remarks:

This station was built in 1872. The original position is given as "abreast of the point;" this was later clarified to "at eastern end of Bellport Bay, abreast of Smiths Point." The site is reported as being acquired from a Egbert T. Smith. Upon his death in 1895, it was discovered that he had only a life interest in the land. The government continued to use and occupy the land for the station. In 1897, an

action of ejectment was brought by the heirs of Egbert Smith against the keeper and crew of the Smiths Point station. Condemnation proceedings were completed and the ejectment case was heard. Title to the original site was acquired by the United States through condemnation proceedings on July 17, 1905. When originally built, the station was so close to the water's edge that it was in danger. The 1878 Annual Report mentions that, during that year, "the dangers which threatened the station was foreseen, as is usual, in season to be provided against, and it was moved to a new and safe site." In 1912, it is reported that the station was rebuilt to replace decayed and antiquated buildings.

The first two keepers were Gilbert S. Miller (appointed 1856) and Alfred Brown (appointed 1872); their terms of service are unknown with certainty. Joseph H. Bell was appointed on July 1, 1873, and he served until 1880. Then came Edward A. Smith (appointed August 27, 1887, and resigned October 27, 1885), John Penny (Appointed November 11, 1885 and retired April 15, 1916), Edward H. Butler (acting keeper, but never appointed), Lewis K. Alcock (acting in 1918 until his appointment February 1, 1918, he resigned December 31, 1924) and Edward J. McGarvey (reassigned from the Forge River station on March 21, 1924 and served until 1927. Then followed a succession of Chief Boatswains Mates: C. A. Mister (1928), W. Raynor (1929) and P. H. Simpson (1930 through 1936).

Smiths Point station was discontinued as an active unit in 1922, but back in an active status in 1925. The station was listed as an inactive station in 1937 and remained so until the eve of World War II. The station garage was washed away during the hurricane of September, 1928. The site was turned over to GSA in 1954.

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.

