

## *U.S. Coast Guard History Program*

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# Station Ship Bottom, New Jersey

USLSS Station #20, Fourth District  
Coast Guard Station #116



<b>Location:</b>	On Long Beach, at Ship Bottom N.J., 8 miles south-southwest of Barnegat Light; 39-38' 13"N x 74-10' 42"W in 1880; 39-38' 10"N x 74-11' 00"W in 1915.
<b>Date of Conveyance</b>	1887
<b>Station Built:</b>	1872
<b>Fate:</b>	Turned over to the GSA

### Remarks:

Original site acquired in 1849. A new "Jersey Pattern" structure was built (pictured above) to replace the original "1855-Type" structure at some point. The older station building is still in existence as a private residence.

Seven Gold Life-Saving Medals were awarded to the Ship Bottom crew for their 1903 rescue of *Abiel Abbott* survivors. Their award citation noted:

In recognition of the heroic conduct exhibited on 21 January 1903, in the rescue of 5 men from the wrecked barkentine *Abiel Abbott*, the following Life-Saving Service members received the Gold Lifesaving Medal: Keeper Isaac W. Truex and Surfmen J. Horace Cranmer, James H. Cranmer, Walter Pharo, Barton P. Pharo, A. B. Salmons, and C. V. Conklin of Shipbottom (NJ) Station and Keeper George Maths, and Surfmen W. E. Pharo and M.D. Kelly of Long Beach (NJ) Station.

The *Abiel Abbott*, out of Turks Island and headed for New York, stranded on Shipbottom Bar on the New Jersey coast about 500 yards from shore. On 20 January 1903 the night was dark and stormy and the sea was running high. At 8:15 PM a surfman on patrol discovered the wreck. The lifesavers soon assembled upon the beach, but with the intense darkness an attempt to launch a boat, in such a sea, would have been rash.

The surfmen, therefore, directed their efforts to establishing communication with the vessel by use of the Lyle gun. Several shots were fired and one of them carried a line on board the doomed craft. Heavy seas swept her decks and she had begun to break up. Her crew found it impossible to reach the line. During the night, four of the ship's nine-man company lost their lives. By the morning the vessel had become a shattered hulk. The five remaining crewmen could be seen clinging to the top of the cabin.

At the first signs of dawn the lifesavers launched the surfboat. Though broken and jagged wreckage threatened the boat with every stroke of the oars, the surfmen pulled desperately for the wreck. In spite of this effort, the boat was beaten back upon the shore and the crew was nearly exhausted. When another attempt with the Lyle gun failed, the crew again put out in the surfboat. This time, however, they succeeded in reaching the shipwrecked men and safely brought them to the shore. Captain Abbott testified that he believed it impossible for the lifesavers to get to them. Furthermore, that they succeeded in doing so, he thought it was a miracle.

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### **Keepers:**

Edward Jennings was appointed in 1856. It is unknown when he left the service.

Henry Lamson was appointed on NOV 22, 1872 and left the service in 1874.

George W. Crane was appointed on NOV 10, 1874 and left the service in 1877.

John N. Truex was appointed on AUG 2, 1879 and resigned from the service on SEP 12, 1896.

Isaac W. Truex, a Gold Life Saving Medal recipient, was appointed on OCT 31, 1896 and left the service on 1915.

Calvin E. Falkenburg was appointed in 1915 and was still serving in 1915.

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**Photographs:**



"SHIP BOTTOM"; no date/photo number; photographer unknown.  
Courtesy of Van Field.

This station building replaced the original 1872 structure.

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**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.

