

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 5 1981  
DATE ENTERED NOV 30 1981

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** Fort Hancock Life-Saving Station

HISTORIC

The Spermaceti Cove No. 2 Life-Saving Service Station

AND/OR COMMON

Fort Hancock Life-Saving Station

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

North of Highlands on Sandy Hook

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Highlands *Me*

VICINITY OF

3rd

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Jersey

34

Monmouth

025

**2 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, North Atlantic Region

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Boston

VICINITY OF

Massachusetts

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Monmouth County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Princeton

New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Although the first Fort Hancock Life-Saving Station was built in 1848, the present building dates from 1894. Built about 1,000 feet from the 1848 site, the shingle style building is a 1-and-1/2-story office section, with a 2-bay boathouse on one end and a 4-story tower on the front with a pyramid roof (facing the sea). The second story of the tower is connected to the pitched roof of the office section by an enlarged dormer form whose walls are flush with the sides of the tower. The boathouse has a shallow pitched roof and a pair of double doors facing the sea.

The fourth floor of the tower has a cantilevered balcony on all four sides which is supported on framing principals. The office section has a central chimney, a jerkin head gable with an entrance door which is reached by means of an exterior stair of two colinear flights with a landing between. There is also a bent dormer on each side and a front porch which encloses the base of the tower.

The porch was closed in in the 1930s with weather boards and the main entrance was placed there.

Excluding the porch the entire building is shingled. The windows are chiefly pairs of 1-over-1 sash type, with 1-pane casement windows set into the tower. The railings on the balcony and exterior stair and the framing principals are cleanly articulated with simple rectangular balusters and struts. This together with their date (c. 1914) suggests a strong craftsman influence. There is also a 40-foot mast stepped on the balcony.

The structure is located east of Hartshorne Drive on a sandy knoll which overlooks the Atlantic Ocean. When constructed in 1894, the life-saving station stood over 800 yards from the ocean. Beach erosion, however, has reduced that distance to 150 feet.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1894-1949

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Spermaceti Cove No. 2 Life-Saving Service Station is significant because of its association with the earliest Federally sponsored efforts to save life and property from coastal shipwrecks. The station was built in 1894,<sup>1</sup> and up until 1949,<sup>2</sup> the U.S. Life-Saving Service (USLSS) conducted rescue missions from this building. The U.S.L.S.S. was the parent organization of the U.S. Coast Guard which was founded in 1915.<sup>3</sup>

Spermaceti Cove was one of six (or eight)<sup>4</sup> original U.S.L.S.S. New Jersey coastal sites. The first U.S.L.S.S. station on this location was erected in May of 1849<sup>5</sup> on land controlled by the War Department. In 1894<sup>6</sup> the present structure was built about 1,000 feet from the old station site.

The long tradition of heroic rescue efforts at Sandy Hook's Spermaceti Cove ended in 1949 when the 1894 station was decommissioned as an active U.S. Coast Guard Station. By 1962<sup>7</sup> it housed administrative offices for a New Jersey State Park. Since 1974<sup>8</sup> it has served as a visitors' center for the Gateway National Recreation Area.

The U.S. Life Saving Stations of 1855, 1872, and 1891<sup>9</sup> built to the north of Spermaceti Cove have all disappeared. Relatively unaltered, the 1894 Spermaceti Cove No. 1 Life-Saving Station is an important example of late-19th-century New Jersey coastal utilitarian architecture.

<sup>1</sup>Tom Hoffman, acting Park Historian to Marlene Rockmore, acting regional historian (March 23, 1979), National Park Service, North Atlantic Regional Office.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Date courtesy of Boston U.S. Coast Guard--Office of Public Affairs.

<sup>4</sup>Hoffman to Rockmore

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>David N. Poinsett, Supervisor, Historic Sites (letter of June 18, 1975).

<sup>7</sup>Hoffman to Rockmore

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Records, U.S. Life-Saving Service - U.S. Coast Guard.  
Records Group 26 National Archives.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	5 8 6 1 3 0	4 4 7 5 3 8 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

ASPECT NOT VERIFIED  
UTM NOT VERIFIED

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See boundary on enclosed site map.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
New Jersey	34	Monmouth	025
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ricardo Torres-Reyes, Historian & Jonathan Fricker, N.J., H.S.S.

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, North Atlantic Region 4/75, updated 3/80

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

DATE

TELEPHONE

617 223-3778

STATE

Massachusetts

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES  NO  NONE

SEE XEROX OF ORIGINAL FORM

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*J. H. Holland*

TITLE

Assistant Director,  
Cultural Resources

DATE

NOV 2 1981

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Bruce M. Dwyer*

DATE

11/30/81

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ROAD TO HIGHLANDS

ROAD TO STATION

OLD  
STATION

STATION

ROAD TO BEACH

200'

200'

200'

RECEIVED  
NOV 5 1981  
INVESTIGATION  
UNIT

SCALE : 2" = 100'

S PERMACETI COVE COAST GUARD STATION

NOV 30 1981



Sandy Hook Life Saving Station,  
1974

Photo by George J. Stephens

(Spermaceti Cove No. 2 Life-Saving  
Service Station)

NJ, Monmouth Co.

FORT HANCOCK LIFE SAVING STATION

NOV 5 1981

NOV 30 1981