



## Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station:

### Home to Unsung Heroes

Using Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station as an example, students will learn about the importance of the U.S. Lifesaving Service to shipping along North Carolina's coast.

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### Objectives

Students will:

- a) Understand why the Federal Government took an active role in protecting mariners by creating the U.S. Lifesaving Service (USLSS)
- b) Explain the nature of duty in the USLSS, including the daily routine and rescue activities
- c) Describe how the USLSS was perceived by some of the Atlantic Coast sailors whose lives were saved,
- d) Examine modern rescue methods in their community and to compare them to U.S. Lifesaving Service operations.

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### Background

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file for "Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving/Coast Guard Station" and primary sources about the station's activities.

Little Kinnakeet was written by Chris Eckard, former

Historian at Cape Hatteras National Seashore. This lesson was edited by Fay Metcalf, education consultant, and the Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) staff. TwHP is sponsored, in part, by the Cultural Resources Training Initiative and Parks as Classrooms programs of the National Park Service. This lesson is one in a series that brings the important stories of historic places into classrooms across the country.

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### Where this fits into the curriculum Topics

This lesson could be used in U.S. history, social studies, and geography courses in units on 19th-century commerce or transportation, civics, or the chronological period after Reconstruction. Little Kinnakeet will help students understand the need for the USLSS, a government agency that often has been forgotten but was responsible for saving more than 175,000 lives during its 44 years of operation. In 1915 the U.S.L.S.S. merged with the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service to become the U.S. Coast Guard.

**Grade Level:** Eighth Grade

**Grade Subjects:** History, Geography, Social Studies

**Duration: Two-** 45 minute lessons

**Location:** Classroom

**Group Size:** Up to 36

### Standards:

National Standards for History:

Grade 5-12: Era 6- Standard 3

National Social Studies Standards:

Theme III: People, Places, and Environment  
Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance  
Theme IX: Global Connections

### Further Lesson Plans/Activities:

<http://www.nps.gov/caha/forteachers/>

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## Procedure

1. Download the pdf.
2. Read the directions for teachers.
3. Make copies for the students.
4. Teach and discuss with the students.

## Directions for Teachers:

Teaching with Historic lesson plans provide a rich opportunity to enhance learning by bringing historic places across the country directly into your classroom. Students experience the excitement of these special places and the stories they have to tell through carefully selected written and visual materials.

1) **Getting Started** Begin each lesson by asking students to discuss possible answers to the inquiry question that accompanies the Getting Started image. The purpose of the exercise is to engage students' interest in the lesson's topic by raising questions that can be answered as they complete the lesson.

Rather than serving merely as illustrations for the text, images are documents that play an integral role in helping students achieve the lesson's objectives.

2) **Setting the Stage** Next present the information in Setting the Stage. This material may be read aloud to students, summarized, or photocopied for students to read individually or in small groups. Setting the Stage material provides background information necessary to acquaint students with the topic of the lesson they will be studying.

3) **Locating the Site** Next provide students with copies of the maps and questions included in Locating the Site. Have students work individually or in small groups to complete the questions. At least one map familiarizes students with the historic site's location within the country, state, and/or region. Extended captions may be included to provide students with information necessary to answer the questions.

4) **Determining the Facts** Provide students with copies of the readings, documents, and/or charts included in Determining the Facts. Again, allow students to work individually or in small groups. The series of questions that accompanies each of these sections is designed to ensure that students have gathered the appropriate facts from the material.

5) **Visual Evidence** Distribute the lesson's visual materials among students. You can print these images straight from the website or display them on a computer screen. Have the students examine the photographs and answer the related questions. Note that in some of the lessons two or more images are studied together in order to complete the questions. Extended captions may be included to provide students with important information.

6) **Putting It All Together** After students have completed the questions that accompany the maps, readings, and visuals, they should be directed to complete one or more of the activities presented in Putting It All Together. These activities engage students in a variety of creative exercises that help them synthesize the information they have learned and formulate conclusions. At least one activity in each lesson plan leads students to look for places in their community that relate to the topic of the lesson. In this way, students learn to make connections between their community and the broader themes of American history they encounter in their studies.

## Materials for students

The materials listed below either can be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

- 1) [three maps](#) showing North Carolina, the Outer Banks, and USLSS stations
- 2) [three readings](#) about the USLSS, providing instructions to mariners in case of shipwreck, and the personal testimonies from rescued crews
- 3) [four photos](#) of Little Kinnakeet and its lifesaving crews

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**Assessment:**

Students will be able to

- Discuss two reasons the Federal Government felt it was important to create the U.S. Lifesaving Service
- Discuss three reasons a lifesaver's job was complex
- Discuss three similarities and differences of rescue by members of the USLSS and lifesavers of today

**Visiting the site**

Located within Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station is 3.5 miles north of Avon, North Carolina, off NC Highway 12 on Hatteras Island. Year-round exhibits and summer interpretive programs about lifesaving history are presented at the National Park Service's Hatteras Island Visitor Center in Buxton, North Carolina. For more information, contact the Superintendent's office, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, 1401 National Park Drive, Manteo, North Carolina 27954, or visit the [park's website](#).

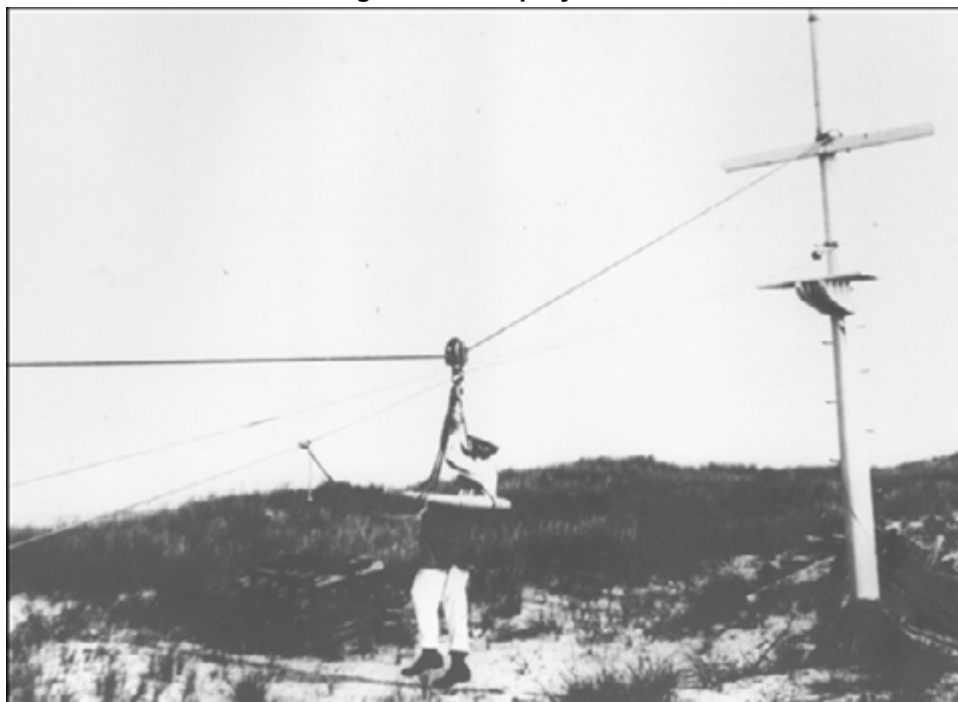
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**Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station: Home to Unsung Heroes**

Bellowing its rage like a thunderous symphony, the Atlantic Ocean throws itself once more against the narrow bastion of North Carolina's barrier islands. Storm winds shriek above the roaring breakers, and carry with them a blinding flurry of sand and sea-foam. Bird and beast alike have fled the unyielding fury of the storm, for nothing can withstand this powerful onslaught of nature. Merciless waves will overwhelm ships caught in the turmoil or drive them ashore to be smashed to pieces in the pounding surf. Yet for this very reason a lifesaver from Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station struggles amidst this forbidding storm, patrolling the beach in search of shipwrecks where mariners might be in need of assistance.

Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station is an excellent reminder of the stations constructed by the U.S. Lifesaving Service (USLSS) during its 44-year existence (1871-1915). The original station building was among the first seven constructed on North Carolina's treacherous Outer Banks in 1874. A larger building was added in 1904, and the site remained active under the U.S. Coast Guard until 1954, when it was decommissioned and transferred to the National Park Service as a part of Cape Hatteras National Seashore. It still stands among the windblown sands of Hatteras Island, untouched by development and a poignant monument to the lifesavers it once housed.

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**Getting Started: Inquiry Question**

What might this man be doing?

Why do you think so?

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## Setting the Stage

The sea has played an important role in transportation and commerce throughout our nation's history. An unfortunate consequence of the nation's dependence on water transportation in the 18th and 19th centuries was the death of sailors and passengers due to shipwrecks. In the late 18th century, the new Federal Government established agencies which had some influence on the safety of ocean travel, ships, and their cargoes.

The U.S. Lighthouse Service, established in 1789, provided beacons to warn sailors about nearby dangers such as shallow seacoast waters filled with sandbars and rocky seabeds. The U.S. Revenue Marine, later called the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, was established in 1790 to help prevent smuggling and enforce the collection of customs duties. This organization eventually became responsible for sea rescues.<sup>1</sup>

The seamen of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, lighthouse keepers, and local volunteers did their best to alert ships to danger, but an untold number of lives were lost in shipwrecks before 1844, when Congress set aside funds for lifesaving efforts. In 1848, Congress appropriated \$10,000 to buy surfboats and other equipment to help ships in trouble along the New Jersey coast, an area that witnessed many wrecks as ships approached New York City harbor. At this time eight small lifesaving stations were ordered built on the New Jersey coast.

Public interest grew, and by 1854 there were 137 lifesaving stations along American coasts. However, all were manned only by community volunteers due to limited funding. During the winter of 1870-71, several severe storms in the Great Lakes region and on the East Coast caused great loss of life. These deaths once again called attention to the inadequacies of the lifesaving system.<sup>2</sup> In 1871 Congress created the United States Lifesaving Service (USLSS) which finally employed full-time professional lifesaving crews.

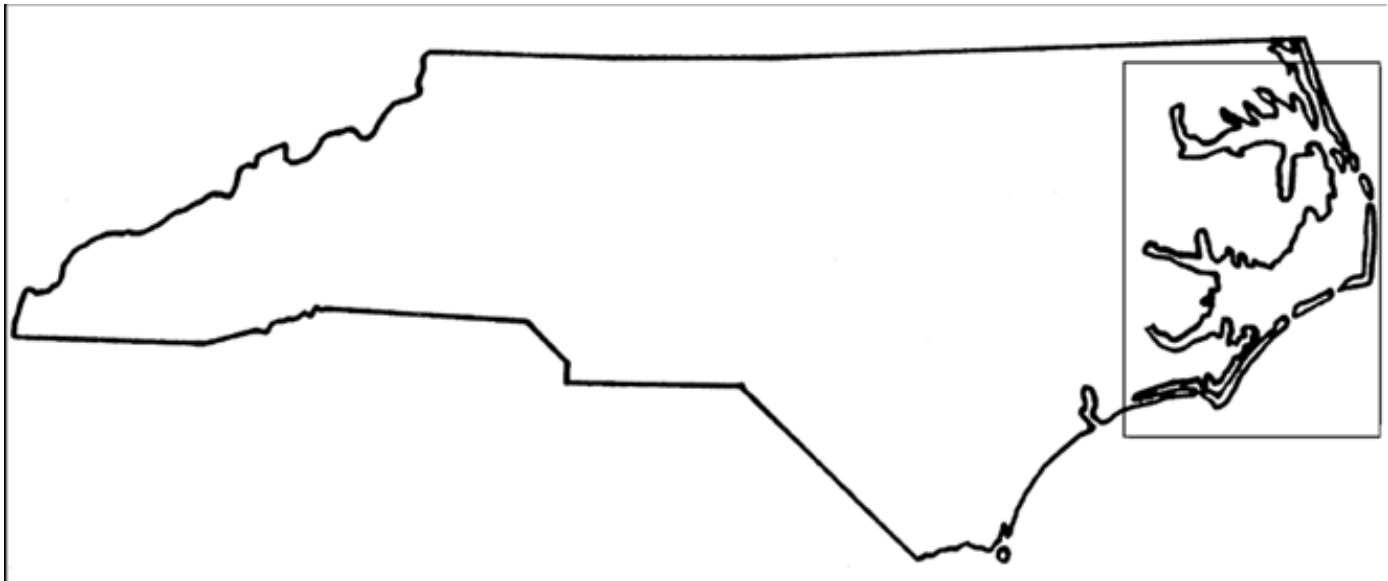
<sup>1</sup>Dennis Noble, *That Others Might Live: The U.S. Life-Saving Service, 1878-1915*(Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 150.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 24.

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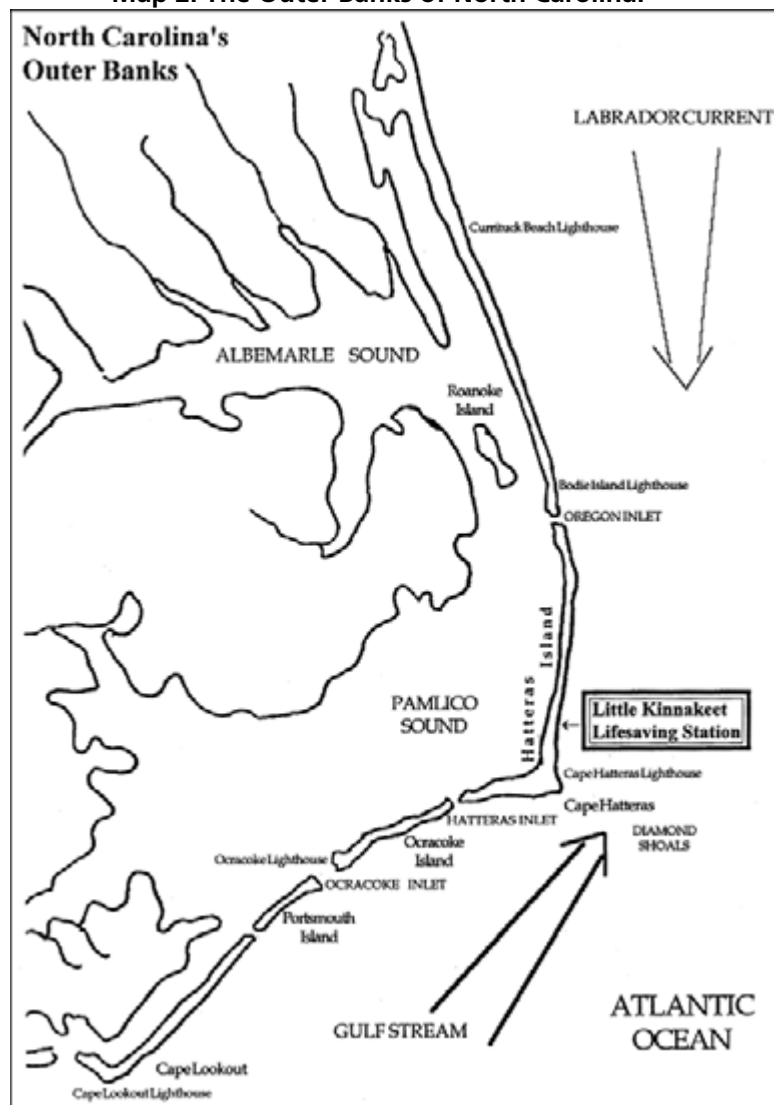
## Locating the Site

**Map 1: North Carolina and the Outer Banks.**



North Carolina, (NPS)

Map 2: The Outer Banks of North Carolina.



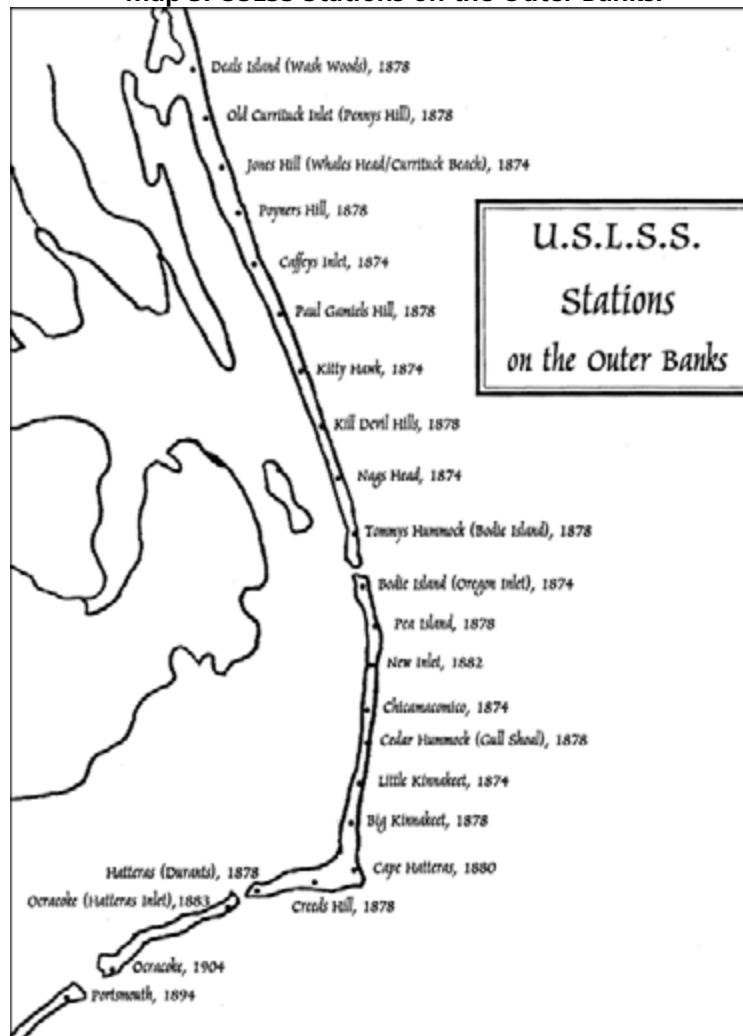
Outer Banks of North Carolina, (NPS)

In 1874, the USLSS expanded its operation to include seven stations on North Carolina's Outer Banks, a string of sandy barrier islands separating the mainland from the Atlantic Ocean. Due to the proximity of coastal shipping lanes, prevalent storms, strong currents, and deadly shoals, this once isolated and desolate area (centered on Cape Hatteras) saw many shipwrecks and earned a grim designation as "The Graveyard of the Atlantic."

### Questions for Maps 1 & 2

1. Identify the barrier islands known as the Outer Banks on both maps. Why do you think they are called "barrier islands"? Why was this region a likely area for shipwrecks and lifesaving activities?
2. What other aids to navigation are evident? Why were they important?
3. Use a dictionary, encyclopedia, or other reference book to define the Labrador Current and Gulf Stream. What might happen when these two currents meet?
4. Why might seafarers have risked navigating these notoriously treacherous waters?

Map 3: USLSS Stations on the Outer Banks.



Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station was among the first seven stations constructed on North Carolina's treacherous Outer Banks in 1874.

**Questions for Map 3**

1. Highlight the seven original USLSS stations.

2. What was the nearest station to Little Kinnakeet in 1874? When were closer stations built?

3. How many stations were constructed on the Outer Banks? Does this number surprise you? Why or why not?

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**Determining the Facts**  
**Reading 1: A Noble Service**



USLSS emblem, U.S. Coast Guard

Establishing the United States Lifesaving Service was not an easy job. Limited federal funding allowed for the construction of stations, purchasing of equipment, and the hiring of crews. The USLSS experienced a number of growing pains because there was no lifesaving tradition in this country to serve as an example. Fortunately, Sumner L. Kimball, the first superintendent of the USLSS, suggested and implemented many good practices. Emphasizing training and inspections, selection and use of proper rescue equipment, and overall professionalism, Kimball brought the Service through its early hardships. He was largely responsible for making it the successful, noble, and heroic agency it became.

Once a new lifesaving station was established, a Keeper was chosen and placed in charge of recruiting lifesavers or "surfmen." Men with fishing, boating, or coastal water experience received preference. Applicants had to pass a swimming test as well as a strict medical exam. Once accepted, the life of a surfman was carefully regimented under the overall command of the Keeper. On the East Coast, surfmen served only during the winter when wrecks were much more likely to occur. The Keeper, however, lived at the station throughout the year. Surfmen worked in units that usually included eight men. Each received a ranking according to his experience and duties.

The surfmen took shifts performing various duties each day and night. One lifesaver kept watch from the watchtower, while two others patrolled the beach on either side of the station. Every surfman also was responsible for cooking one day of the week. A weekly training schedule was established for all USLSS crews. Each day of the week was dedicated to a particular aspect of lifesaving duty: Monday for inspecting the equipment; Tuesday for lifeboat practice; Wednesday for signal training; Thursday for the beach apparatus drill; Friday for practicing resuscitation (similar to modern CPR); and Saturday for cleaning and polishing everything at the station. Sunday was a day off.

Day after day, week after week, they followed this routine. The pattern was broken only by shipwreck rescues or inspections by the district superintendent.

Such a strict regime made the crew proficient and ready to use the standard USLSS rescue procedures. For the most daring of the two main types of rescues, lifesavers rowed to the wreck in surfboats, which they pulled to the shore by horse and wagon and then launched into the pounding surf. If the surf was too high or the vessel was close to the shore, the surfmen used the beach apparatus method. This procedure involved using a small cannon--a wreck gun--to fire a line out to the wreck that could be recovered by the crew and attached to their ship. The secured line carried a breeches buoy, a life ring with short trouser legs into which one person at a time climbed and was pulled from the wreck by surfmen. Lifesavers hauled the breeches buoy back and forth to the wreck until the last person, usually the captain, was safe.

The surfmen of the US Lifesaving Service established an impressive record of success and bravery. Seafarers came to depend upon these men as a constant presence, a source of hope amidst the wrath of the sea. Sensational and dramatic rescues drew newspaper headlines and widespread praise, but it was the drudgery of constant drill, the misery of nightly beach patrol in the worst of weather, and an ongoing dedication to duty that earned the life savers the respect and gratitude of seamen from all over the world.



USLSS crew with a wreck gun, (NPS)



USLSS surfmen in uniform, U.S. Coast Guard

By 1900 ships were built of steel and were machine-powered, thus no longer completely dependent on winds. As improvements in navigational aids and equipment were made, ships no longer had to stay as close to the shore and were less likely to run aground.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the need for lifesaving stations diminished. In 1915 the USLSS and the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service combined to create the U.S. Coast Guard. Today, it is easy to underestimate the challenges faced by the U.S. Lifesaving Service and to take its efforts for granted. No one knows how many lives were lost before the Service was established, but it is known that during its 44-year existence, the USLSS saved 177,286 lives. Modern technology has changed the nature of lifesaving, but today's Coast Guard crews continue the tradition of excellence in rescue established by the USLSS.

<sup>1</sup>Dennis Noble, *That Others Might Live: The U.S. Life-Saving Service, 1878-1915*(Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 148.

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### Questions for Reading 1

1. Who was the first superintendent of the US Lifesaving Service? Why was his job difficult?
2. Why were some stations manned only part of the year?
3. Why do you think Kimball established a regimented training schedule for members of the USLSS?
4. Why did the need for lifesaving stations eventually decrease? What happened to the USLSS as a result?



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## Reading 2: Instructions to Mariners in Case of Shipwreck, 1894

Following is a portion of the material provided to mariners concerning the operations of the U.S. Lifesaving Service. The ship's captain was responsible for preparing his vessel and crew in the event of a disaster. By the time of this report in 1894, the USLSS maintained stations on the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf, and Great Lakes coasts. In addition to patrol and rescue operations, crews at these stations communicated with vessels offshore, using the flag system known as the International Code of Signals or hand held flares of different colors called Coston lights. Weather predictions, location (latitude and longitude) of the station, or ship damage were common types of information conveyed.

Instructions to Mariners in Case of Shipwreck, with Information Concerning the Life-Saving Stations Upon the Coasts of the United States. Prepared by Lieutenant C. H. MCLELLAN, U.S.R.C.S., Assistant Inspector Life-Saving Stations, under the Direction of the General Superintendent

### General Information

*All life-saving stations on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts are manned annually by crews of experienced surfmen from the 1st of August to the 1st of June following. Upon the lake coasts the stations are manned from the opening until the close of navigation, and upon the Pacific coast they are opened and manned the year round[.]*

*All life-saving stations are fully supplied with boats, wreck guns, beach apparatus, restoratives, etc.*

*All services are performed by the life-saving crews without other compensation than their wages from the Government, and they are strictly forbidden to solicit or receive rewards.*

*Destitute seafarers are provided with food and lodgings at the nearest station by the Government as long as necessarily detained by the circumstances of shipwreck. The station crews patrol the beach from two to four miles each side of their stations four times between sunset and sunrise, and if the weather is foggy the patrol is continued through the day.*

*Each patrolman carries Coston signals. Upon discovering a vessel standing in danger he ignites one of them, which emits a brilliant red flame of about two minutes' duration, to warn her off, or should the vessel be ashore, to let the crew know that they are discovered and assistance is at hand.*

*If the vessel is not discovered by the patrol, immediately after striking, rockets or flare-up lights should be burned, or if the weather be foggy, guns should be fired to attract attention, as the patrolman may be some distance away on another part of his beat.*

*Masters are particularly cautioned, if they should be driven ashore anywhere in the neighborhood of the stations, especially on any of the sandy coasts, where there is not much danger of vessels breaking up immediately, to remain on board until assistance arrives, and under no circumstances should they attempt to land through the surf in their own boats until the last hope of assistance from the shore has vanished. Often when comparatively smooth at sea dangerous surf is running, which is not perceptible four hundred yards offshore, and the surf, when viewed from the vessel, never appears so dangerous as it is. Many lives have unnecessarily been lost by the crews of stranded vessels being thus deceived and attempting to land in the ship's boats.*

*The difficulties of rescue by operations from shore are greatly increased in cases where the anchors are let go after entering the breakers, as is frequently done, and the chances of saving life correspondingly lessened.*

### Rescue with the Lifeboat or Surfboat

*The patrolman, after discovering your vessel ashore and burning a Coston signal, hastens to his station for assistance. If the use of a boat is practicable, either the large lifeboat is launched from its ways in the station and proceeds to the wreck by water or the lighter surfboat is hauled overland to a point opposite the wreck and launched, as circumstances may require.*

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*Upon the boat reaching your vessel the directions and orders of the keeper (who always commands and steers the boat) should be implicitly obeyed. Any headlong rushing and crowding should be prevented, and the captain of the vessel should remain on board to preserve order until every other person has left.*

*Women, children, helpless persons, and passengers should be passed into the boat first. Goods or baggage will not be taken into the boat under any circumstances until all persons are landed. If any be passed in against the keeper's remonstrance he is fully authorized to throw it overboard.*

Reading 2 was excerpted from Annual Report of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1894, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895

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### Questions for Reading 2

1. What supplies did each lifesaving station have? Can you figure out the purpose of each item?
2. How could a ship in distress and lifesavers on shore communicate?
3. Under what circumstances should a ship's master (captain) and crew remain on board the wrecked vessel? Why?
4. What part of a lifeboat rescue do you think would be the most difficult? Why?
5. As a ship's captain, what information about the USLSS would you have considered the most important for your crew to know? If you were reading this information for the first time, what general opinion would you have about the USLSS?

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### Reading 3: Personal Testimonies

Official USLSS reports explained the facts of a rescue in a straightforward style, but the human element was just as important as the physical details. The following excerpts from letters written to the U.S. Lifesaving Service demonstrate this fact.

#### Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station August 18, 1899

*We, the undersigned, captain and crew of the wrecked schooner Robert W. Casey, which was driven ashore by an east-northeast hurricane with very high surf and tide on August 17, 1899, at 5:30 p.m., wish to make the following statement:*

*At that time no person could have reached us, but as early as anything could possibly be done the life-saving crew were on hand with their beach apparatus ready to land us...then they took us upon the beach clear of the surf. They arrived at the wreck about 6 a.m. on August 18, 1899. After landing us they took us to the station three-quarters of a mile distant, and provided us with dry clothing, stimulants, and food; they gave us the very best treatment, and aided us in every possible way to save our effects so far as we could find them on board our vessel.*

*We also wish to say that these noble, gallant, and heroic life-savers do most dreadfully suffer hardships of life to save, protect, and take care of sailors who may be cast into their care. There was nothing left undone by the acting keeper and crew of the above-named station. They performed their duties most nobly.*

*Respectfully submitted. Julius Olsen, Master; Adolph Schick, Cook; Conrad Prescod; George Busby, Seamen; George W. Layfield, Mate; Cook George Wilkins; H. P. Russell*  
Excerpted from Annual Report of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1900, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901, 204.

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**Avon, North Carolina  
February 14, 1895**

Sir:

*On February 14, I was logged up with ice off Hatteras Banks, about 3 miles from land and without assistance, and being in a dangerous position I hoisted my flag at 8 A.M. At 9:30 A.M. the keeper and crew of Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station were discovered beating their way through the ice, coming to my assistance. They reached me at 11 o'clock, almost exhausted, wet, and cold. They took me in their boat and proceeded to shore, which we safely but narrowly reached at 1 P.M.*

*To the keeper and crew of Little Kinnakeet I owe my life, knowing that had it not been for their heroic labor and risk in endeavoring to take me ashore, I surely must have perished in consequence of the cold and dangerous position in which I was placed.*

*In Conclusion, allow me to congratulate them for their kindness.*

*I am your obedient Servant*

*H. C. Miller, Master and Owner Sloop (sic)*

*Inez, of Avon, North Carolina*

Excerpted from Annual Report of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1895, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896, 234.

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**Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station, North Carolina  
May 28, 1900**

Gentlemen:

*Please accept thanks of myself and crew for your kindness in taking care of us and feeding us in our destitute condition, and for taking care of our schooner and cargo, which drifted ashore near your station May 6, 1900, until I arrived at Cape Hatteras Station, where I had been carried by the crew of that station, who rescued us from a small yawl on May 5, our vessel having been sunk off Cape Hatteras. I am glad, as a seaman, to be able from personal experience to recommend this crew for doing their whole duty. In conclusion, I wish to congratulate the general superintendent for having such good and accommodating men in his service as I have found during my stay here.*

*Very truly yours,*

*J. W. Sabiston, Master of the Schooner Hettie J. Dorman.*

Excerpted from Annual Report of the United States Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1900, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900, 211.

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**Questions for Reading 3**

1. Why were these letters written?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What happened to each of these ships, and in what way were the captains and crews in need of assistance?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why do you think it took so long to complete a rescue?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. The rescue Captain Miller describes in his letter is relatively simple, yet he terms it "heroic labor" by the keeper and crew of Little Kinnakeet. Why? For what reason does the crew of Robert W. Casey refer to the Little Kinnakeet lifesavers as "noble, gallant, and heroic"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What opinion of the U.S. Lifesaving Service as a whole do you get from these letters, and why?

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## Visual Evidence

**Photo 1: A lifesaving crew with beach apparatus cart, ca. 1890s**



Lifesaving crew with beach apparatus, (The Smithsonian Institution)

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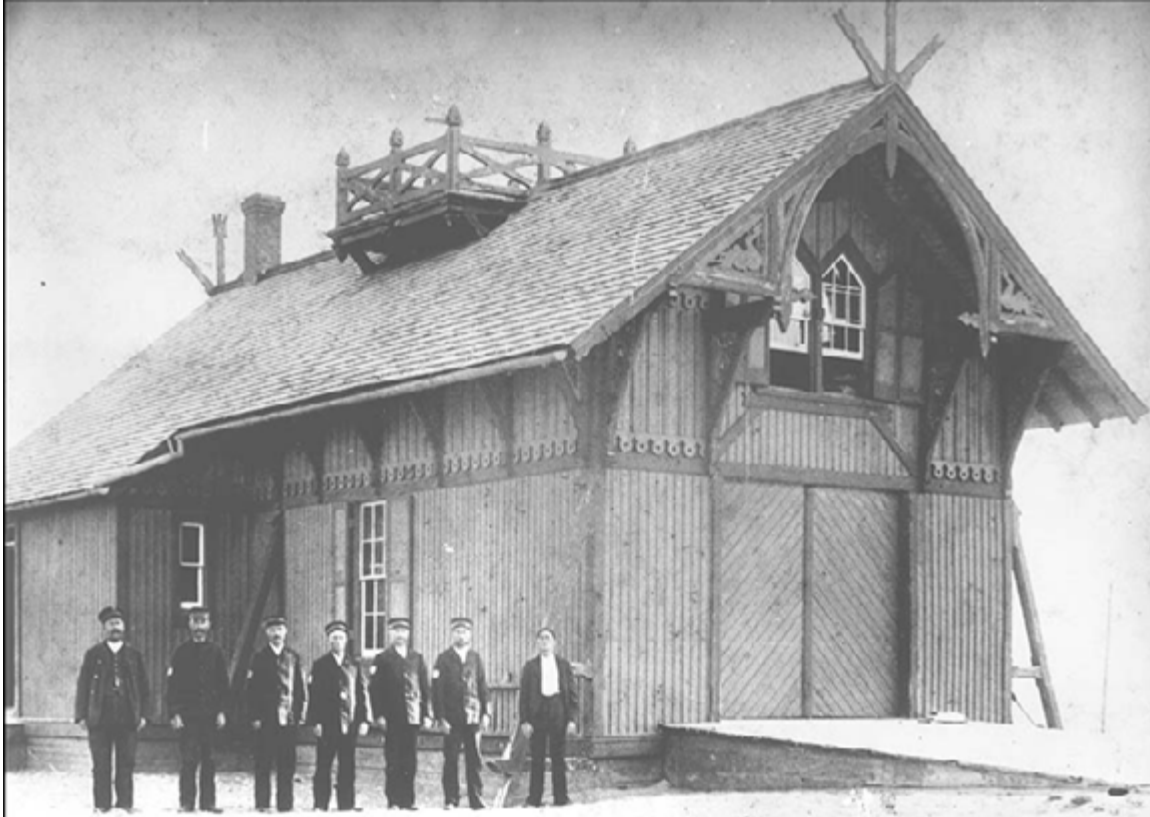
### Questions for Photo 1

1. Describe what is taking place in the photo.

2. How difficult does it appear to have been to get lifesaving equipment a long distance down a beach? How might this have affected rescue attempts?

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**Photo 2: Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station  
and crew, ca.1890s**



Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving station and Crew, (North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences)

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**Photo 3: Little Kinnakeet Coast  
Guard Station, 1935**



Little Kinnakeet Coast Guard Station (U.S. Coast Guard)

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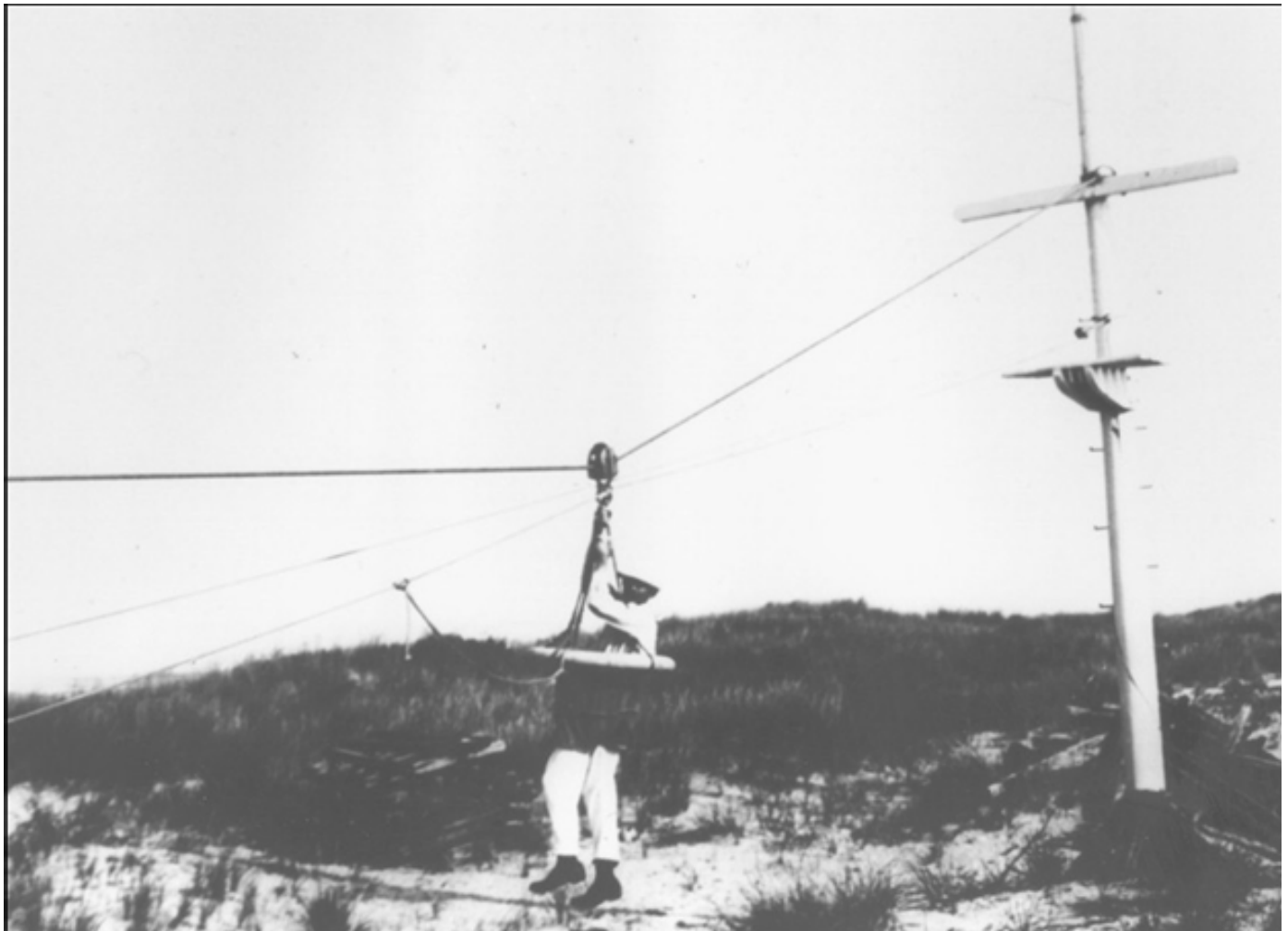
Little Kinnakeet was staffed by a keeper and six surfmen. It was not until the early 1900s that the station was occupied year round. The original station was converted to a boathouse in 1904 when a larger station was completed. The main floor of the new station included a large day room, the keeper's office, and a kitchen/pantry. The upper level had a large dorm room and the officer's bedroom. The site remained active under the U.S. Coast Guard until 1954, when it was decommissioned and transferred to the National Park Service as part of Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

**Questions for Photos 2 & 3**

1. What are the significant features of each building? What practical feature is prominent on both stations? Why would this have been important?
2. What are some of the differences between the two structures?
3. Which building appears to be older? How can you tell?
4. Note the clothes worn by the men in Photo 2. Why might the USLSS have adopted uniforms?

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**Photo 4: Thursday's drill at a lifesaving station.**



Thursday's drill at a lifesaving station, (U.S. Coast Guard)

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## Questions for Photo 4

1. Describe what is taking place in the photo.
2. What does the white drill pole represent?
3. Describe this rescue procedure. (Refer to Reading 1 if necessary.) Under what circumstances could it be used?
4. Why do you think it would have been important to practice rescue techniques on a regular basis?

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## Putting It All Together

The following activities will help demonstrate to students the need for the establishment of the United States Lifesaving Service and the important role it played in our history.

### Activity 1: Shipwrecks and Rescues

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Have each group write a short story about a shipwreck that could have occurred along North Carolina's Outer Banks during the late 19th century. Students should try to emphasize details about the ship, cargo, crew, and the circumstances of the wreck--weather, location, and so on. Randomly distribute these stories so that each group receives another group's story. Each group must then write a lifesaving rescue report to match that shipwreck story. Corresponding wreck and rescue accounts can then be read to the class and discussed.

### Activity 2: Beach Patrol

This activity simulates one of the most important duties a surfman had to perform: accurately reporting shipwreck details to the Keeper of the station. Divide the class into equal groups, and assign each group a separate area of the room to serve as their "station." Each group should elect a Keeper and assign numbers to the crew members or surfmen. All of the students who are designated Surfman #1 then step forward, walk a "patrol" once around the room, then report to the teacher, who will show them a sheet of information stating (a) the weather (clear, rain, snow, fog, etc.), (b) the type of ship in distress (schooner, steamship, warship, passenger liner, etc.), (c) the distance the wreck is from shore (in hundreds of yards), and (d) how many people were spotted aboard. The surfmen must memorize this information as best they can in 30 seconds and then return around the room to their station and report to their Keeper, who will record the information. Proceed with the Surfmen #2's, Surfmen #3's, and so on until all have participated. Put the data from each Keeper's log on the blackboard and have students assess the accuracy of the recorded information. Hold a general classroom discussion of what the students have learned about the lifesavers' complex job.

### Activity 3: Today's Lifesavers

Arrange for the class to visit a local fire station (or Coast Guard station if possible). Have students prepare a list of questions to ask a member of the rescue team about lifesaving procedures and training as well as about the history of the station building and how the space is used by the rescue personnel. After the visit, hold a classroom discussion about how modern lifesaving procedures and conditions differ from those encountered by lifesavers of the USLSS.

Alternatively, have students research details of a fire station call or Coast Guard rescue from the local newspaper and discuss similarities and differences of rescue by members of the USLSS and lifesavers of today.

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## Supplementary Resources

By looking at Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station: Home to Unsung Heroes, students learn about the daring rescues of the United States Lifesaving Service to save imperiled lives from the “Graveyard of the Atlantic.” Those interested in learning more will find that the Internet offers a variety of interesting materials.

### **Cape Hatteras National Seashore**

Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station is part of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, which is a unit of the National Park System. Visit the [park’s website](#) to learn more about the natural and cultural resources at Cape Hatteras, the USLSS, the Outer Banks, and the many shipwrecks off the coast of North Carolina.

### **Cape Lookout National Seashore**

North Carolina’s Cape Lookout National Seashore is a unit of the National Park System. Visit the [park’s website](#) for more information about North Carolina life-saving operations. Included is a history of the service and its time at Cape Lookout, and a station log that provides a detailed account of the life-saving operations at Cape Lookout.

### **Maritime Heritage Program**

The [Maritime Heritage Program](#) is a division of the National Park Service devoted to interpreting and preserving America’s maritime heritage. Included on their website is detailed information about lighthouses, life-saving stations, historic ships, and more.

### **US Coast Guard**

The [US Coast Guard website](#) provides detailed information about the Coast Guard’s mission today as well as the history of this maritime service. The US Coast Guard is a military, multi-mission, maritime service that has answered the calls of America continuously for over 209 years. Learn how the role of this organization has changed and adapted over time.

### **US Lifesaving Service Heritage Organization**

Visit the [US Life-Saving Service Heritage Association website](#) to learn more about this unique organization dedicated to preserving America’s lifesaving stations, history, boats, and equipment of the US Lifesaving Service and US Coast Guard.

### **Library of Congress: American Memory Collection**

Search the [American Memory Collection](#) for information on the US Lifesaving Service, the US Coast Guard, life-saving stations, and much more. Of particular interest is the architectural documentation of several lifesaving stations by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record.