



*The first lifesaving station,  
Spermaceti Cove, Sandy Hook*

The carronade was a form of mortar which fired a block of wood to which a line was attached. When this reached a wreck a stronger rope was attached to the line and pulled aboard. In 1850 the Francis car, still a part of standard life guard equipment, was perfected by Joseph Francis of Toms River. This light metal car, which holds four or more people at once, operates by hawser, on the same principle as the more familiar breeches buoy. It was first used on Squan Beach in the same year to save 201 from the Scottish brig *Ayrshire* during a blinding snowstorm. The original Francis car, after saving 1,493 lives, is now on exhibition at the National Museum at Washington.

The greatest advance in lifesaving equipment was invention of the breeches buoy, a pair of short-legged canvas breeches attached to a life preserver. This hangs from a hawser stretched between the sinking ship and the shore. It is equipped with a pulley arrangement so that it can shuttle back and forth carrying one passenger at a time.

The first lifesaving station was erected at Spermaceti Cove on Sandy Hook. About the size of a one-car garage, the frame building was completely equipped with the latest devices for rescue work: signal rockets, tackle and blocks, lifeboats and a mortar and shot for throwing lines to boats in distress. Only one thing was forgotten or deliberately omitted: a supervisor or any staff whatsoever. When necessity arose the station and equipment were used by residents in the vicinity. The key was left at a nearby house or with the lighthouse keeper.

*The present lifesaving station,  
Spermaceti Cove, Sandy Hook*



The Lighthouse Service had been one of the first agencies established by Congress in 1789. At that time there were 12 lighthouses in operation, including the one at Sandy Hook built in 1764. By the time Newell's amendment passed, other lights had been placed at Cape May, Highlands and Barnegat.

The amendment provided \$10,000 for surfboats, rockets, carronades and other equipment for the coast from Sandy Hook to Little Egg Harbor. This was the official beginning of the Life Saving Service. The following year Newell got another \$10,000, and boat-houses and stations were built along the Jersey shore.