

Jersey, in which three hundred lives were lost, caused the bill to be promptly and favorably acted upon at the next session of Congress. Under the provisions of this bill a superintendent at a salary of \$1,500 per annum was appointed for the Atlantic and Lake coasts, keepers were placed in charge of the stations at a salary of \$200,

the beginning of the employment of crews of surfmen at the United States life-saving stations, and was the first step in the direction of their employment at all stations for regular periods.

During the winter of 1870-71 a number of appalling, fatal disasters occurred along the Atlantic coast. These disasters not only revealed the fact that the coast was not properly guarded, but also that the service was inefficient and needed a more complete organization. In 1871 Congress again appropriated \$200,000 and authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to employ crews of surfmen at such stations and for such periods as he might deem necessary.

Mr. Sumner I. Kimball, the present general superintendent of the United States Life-Saving Service, was at that time in charge of the Revenue Marine Service, and the life-saving stations being then under the charge of that bureau, he at once took steps to ascertain the conditions of the service.

An officer of the Revenue Marine Service was at once detailed to visit the life-saving stations and to make a report of their condition and requirements.

The report made by the officer was a startling revelation. Absolutely no discipline was found among the crews, no care had been taken of the apparatus, some of the stations were in ruins, others lacked such articles as powder, rockets, and shot lines, every portable article had been stolen from many stations, and the money that Congress had appropriated had been practically wasted.

From the report it was plainly evident that the reorganization of the service must be speedily brought about, and in accordance with an act of Congress in 1872, the organization of the present system of life-saving districts with superintendents took place.

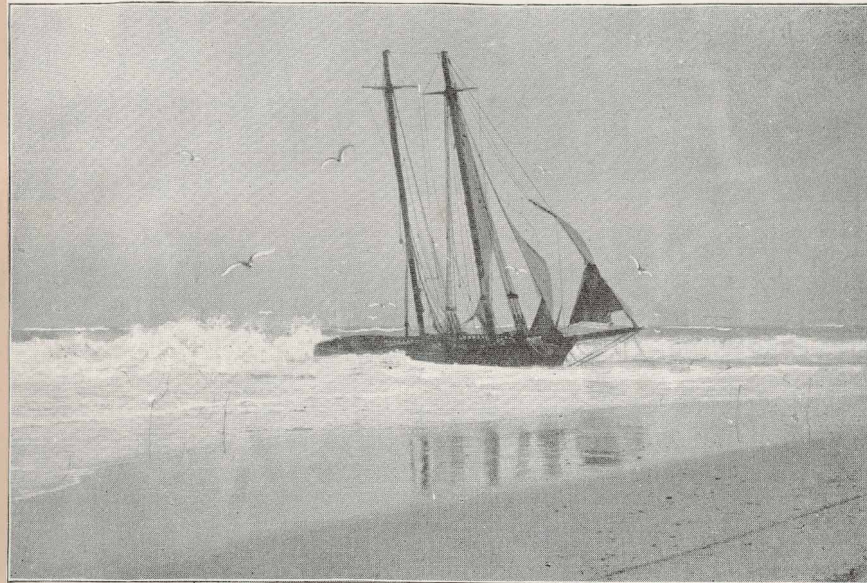
The inefficient keepers were at once removed and the most skilled boatmen obtainable were placed in charge of the stations.

The stations were also manned by the most expert surfmen to be found along the coast, and the patrol of the coast at night and during thick weather by day was inaugurated. It was soon found that the life-saving stations, however, were too far apart for the crews to be of assistance to one another in the event of a wreck, and measures were adopted to place them within distances of from three to five miles of one another. To bring about this result, twelve new stations were built on the New Jersey coast, six on Long Island, while the location of some of the existing stations were changed.

The stations were plain houses forty-two feet long and eighteen wide, of two stories and four rooms. One room below was used by the crew as mess-room, the other room contained the boats and other apparatus used at wrecks. One of the upper rooms was used as a sleeping room for the crew, the other room was used as a storeroom.

As a result of the reorganization of the service, the record for the first season shows that not a life was lost in the disasters that occurred on either the Lake shores or the Atlantic coast.

Interest in the success of the life-saving service under the new system was now keyed up to a high pitch. Congress had authorized a new station for the coast of Rhode Island in 1871, and in June, 1872, one more was ordered for that coast, and nine for the coast of Cape Cod. These stations were built and manned in the winter of 1872. The nine that were erected on Cape Cod were located as follows: Race Point and Peaked Hill Bars, at Provincetown; Highlands, at North Truro; Pamet River, at Truro; Cahoon's Hollow, at Wellfleet;

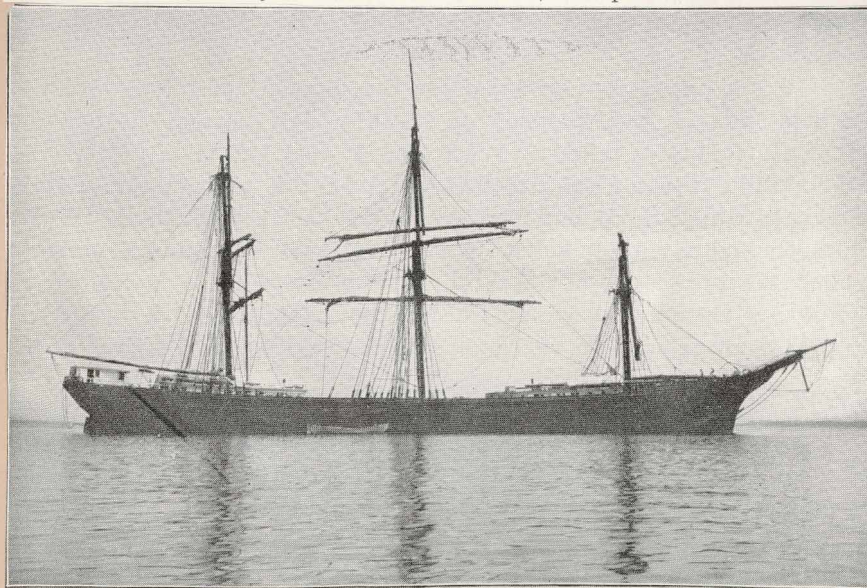


ELSIE M. SMITH, WHICH BECAME A TOTAL LOSS ON NAUSET BEACH.

bonded custodians secured for the life-boats and other apparatus, and the stations and equipments speedily put in order.

The service was somewhat improved as a result of this, but there were still many defects in it, which were brought to light as disaster followed disaster along the seaboard. Up to this time the life-saving crews were not regularly employed.

A bill providing for the employment of regular crews of surfmen was presented to Congress in 1869. Strange though it may seem, in view of the terrible disasters and loss of life which had so recently taken place along the Atlantic coast, the bill suffered defeat. A substitute bill, however, which provided for the employment of crews of surfmen, though only at alternate stations, was passed. This marks



SHIP A. S. ROPES DISMASTED OFF PROVINCETOWN DURING A GALE.