



Station Peaked Hill Bars, Massachusetts

USLSS Station 7, Second District
Coast Guard Station #34

Location:	2 1/2 miles northeast of Provincetown; 42-04' 40"N x 70-09' 50"W
Date of Conveyance	1882
Station Built:	?
Fate:	Discontinued 1938

Peaked Hill Bar(s) (#34):

This was one of the original nine stations which were erected on Cape Cod in 1872. "A more bleak or dangerous stretch of coast can hardly be found in the United States than at this station. The coast near the station rightly bears the name 'ocean graveyard.' Sunken reefs stretch far out under the sea at this place, ever ready to grasp the keels of the ships that sail down upon them, and many appalling disasters have taken place here. There are two lines of bars that lie submerged off the shore ... these bars are ever shifting." The site was described as "northeast two and one—half miles of Provincetown, Massachusetts." When the station was erected there was a long stretch of low beach between it and the shore, but sand dunes shut off all view of the ocean except from the lookout tower on the station. The effect of flying sand upon the glass made them opaque. The crew erected a lookout watch tower on the bluff overlooking the ocean from where they could keep watch.

The "s" was added to the station's name in 1886; until then, it was carried as Peaked Hill Bar. The station was afforded "extensive repairs and improvements" in 1888. The station disappears from the listings after 1938.

Keepers:

The first keeper, David H. Atkins, was appointed at the age of 34, with 22 years experience as a surfman, on December 2, 1872; he drowned on November 30, 1880. Then came Isaac C. Fisher (December 14, 1880 and reassigned to the Wood End station on September 23, 1896), William W. Cook (after serving as a surfman here for fourteen years, he was appointed on January 14, 1897 and served until he retired on November 3, 1915 at age 64), Stephen F. McInnis (appointed June 1, 1916 and assigned as Assistant to the Superintendent of the Second District in Provincetown, Massachusetts on June 24, 1919), and Matthew Hoar (reassigned from Peaked Hill Bars station on June 24, 1919 and retired with thirty years service on December 1, 1921). Next, Chief Petty Officer F. L Mayo is shown in charge in 1927; he received his warrant commission on October 20, 1930 and served here until his retirement on October 1, 1936. Next, Chief Petty Officer H. A. Daniels is shown as the officer in charge, having been reassigned from the Orleans station.

Keeper Atkins and two of his crew died trying to assist the sloop *C. E. Trumbull*, with a cargo of coal for ballast and a crew of six, when she stranded in a violent northwest went on the outer bar in the neighborhood of the station. The sea was rough and breaking heavily on the bar when the patrolman saw the outline of the grounded ship at four in the morning. The surf—boat was dragged to the beach abeam the Trumbull and launched. "The sea was smooth on the shore, but on the bar, where the vessel lay, it was rough enough to be dangerous. The vessel headed northeast. Her main sail stood full, and had in two reefs, with sheet half—way out, and she was rolling the boom in the water to the slings. We went up under her stern, a little out on her lee quarter, and threw a line, which the people on board made fast, I think, to the main sheet bitts. We hauled up from the boat until the bow lapped on to her quarter. Keeper Atkins called to them to jump in. They threw in a jacket, than a clothes bag. Atkins told them 'we are not here for your baggage; get in yourselves.'" "Four men came into the boat with a rush" and were taken ashore. As they got quite near the second time, Keeper Atkins called to cut the main sheet, which the remaining people on board did not do.

"... A sea came around the stern, threw the stern of the boat more towards the boom as the vessel rolled to leeward, and the boom went into the water."

"As the vessel rolled to windward and the boom rose, it caught under the cork belt near the stroke rowlock and threw us over, bottom up." The boat was righted, but capsized again in the seaway. The three died trying to stay alive on the capsize boat or during the swim to shore. The sloop worked her way off the bar and, with the captain and pilot still on board, made her way to safety. Killed with Keeper Atkins were Surfman Elisha M. Taylor and Surfman Stephen F. Mayo."

Photography:

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Added: December 2000