

USLSS/USCG Station Pea Island Marker ^[1]

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USLSS/USCG Station Pea Island Marker

Manteo

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<https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/371> ^[2]

Description: This monument is a bronze plaque mounted on a four foot tall granite base chiseled at the top to display the plaque. The plaque bears an inscription honoring the all-Black crews who staffed the U.S. Coast Guard life-saving station at Pea Island and was dedicated for the Coast Guard's bicentennial in 1990. Above the inscription the plaque bears a polished bas-relief image of a three-masted schooner. The schooner memorializes the rescue of the E.S. Newman, a three-masted ship, two miles from the station on October 11, 1896 by Richard Etheridge and his life-saving crew. The monument site also marks the burial place of Etheridge, the first African American to serve in charge of the station, and his family. A life-sized statue of [Etheridge](#) ^[3] is located in Manteo.

[Historical image of the Pea Island Life-Saving Station crew](#) ^[4]

Inscription:

Plaque, top: USLSS [bas-relief image of ship] USCG

Plaque, center: STATION PEA ISLAND / 1880 - 1947 / LOCATED SOUTH OF OREGON INLET, LIFESAVING / STATION PEA ISLAND WAS THE ONLY UNIT IN THE / HISTORY OF THE COAST GUARD WHICH WAS MANNED BY / ALL BLACK CREWS. THIS MARKER IS DEDICATED TO / THE CREWS OF PEA ISLAND WHO RISKED THEIR LIVES / AND ENDURED SO THAT OTHERS MIGHT LIVE.

Plaque, bottom left: ON THE BICENTENNIAL OF / THE U.S. COAST GUARD - 1990

Plaque, bottom right: DONATED BY THE / COAST GUARD FOUNDATION

Dedication date: 2/9/1991

Materials & Techniques: Bronze, granite

Sponsor: The Coast Guard Foundation

Unveiling & Dedication: The monument was dedicated on Saturday, February 9, 1991.

Subject notes: The Pea Island Life-Saving Station is historically the only all African American staffed unit. Richard Etheridge was appointed as the Pea Island Lifeboat Station Keeper on January 24, 1880 and was the first African American to hold this position at any U.S. Coast Guard life-saving station. Etheridge became known for his rigorously trained and well-prepared team. On October 11 1896, the crew rescued nine people from a schooner, the E.S. Newman, after it became stranded in a dangerous storm. The success of the rescue was attributed to Etheridge's courage, leadership, and expert rescue techniques. The Pea Island Life-Saving Station Crew is credited for rescuing over 600 lives without the loss of a single crew member.

In 1996, Richard Etheridge and the crew of the station were posthumously honored with a Gold Lifesaving Medal of Honor for their courage and service. The medal was obtained through the work of Kate Burkhart, a 15 year-old from Washington, N.C., who wrote an essay on the neglected history of the men and contacted Congress and then President Bill Clinton to have the crew's efforts and history acknowledged.

Location: The marker is located on the grounds of the North Carolina Aquarium on the southwest side of Airport Road on Roanoke Island. The site faces the sound on the western side of the island.

Landscape: The marker sits within a brick walkway. The site is also the location of the grave of Richard Etheridge and his family.

City: Manteo

County: Dare

Subjects: African American Monuments,First Responders,Historic African American Figures

Latitude: 35.91786

Longitude: -75.70441

Subjects:

Monuments ^[5]

Places ^[6]

Authors:

Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina ^[7]

Origin - location:

Dare County ^[8]

Manteo ^[9]

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11 July 2014 | Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina

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