



Station Duluth, Minnesota

Coast Guard Station #304 (originally #265)

Location:	On Minnesota Point, Upper Duluth, Lake Superior
Date of Conveyance:	1890
Station Built:	1894
Fate:	Still in commission as of December, 2000

Remarks:

The land for the Duluth Life Saving Station was donated by the City of Duluth to the Life Saving Service on 19 June 1866, for a consideration of \$1.00 (Recorded in Book 41, 84 Stat. Page 50 --29 September 1890). The plot was known as Franklyn Square and was on Minnesota Point. On 29 July 1890, the City of Duluth gave a warranty deed but this was not recorded until 1894.

The first mention of this station is in the *Annual Report of the Life-Saving Service for the Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1894* under "Establishment of Stations" (page 67). It reads regarding stations built "Two others have been built, and are now receiving their equipment, one at Duluth, Minnesota, and one at Portsmouth, North Carolina." The 1895 *Annual Report* states, "The new stations at Duluth, Minnesota and Portsmouth, NC, which were mentioned in the last annual report as receiving their equipments, have been manned and put in operation." The station was listed in that report for the first time under the Tenth Life-Saving District.

Vessels had been stranded in the locality in 1885 and 1888 and two were recorded as stranded during the fiscal year 1895. One of these to whose aid the new life-saving station crew came was the schooner SAM FLINT, of Port Huron, MI which became disabled one mile north by east of the new station. The vessel was skippered by a Captain Sevens and was 499 tons burden. It was proceeding from Duluth to Tonawanda, NY, with a cargo of copper ore valued at \$10,000.

The vessel itself was valued at \$12,000. The vessel was salvaged by the Life-Saving Service crew and a tug. All nine persons on board were saved. The loss is estimated at \$100.

During the fiscal year 1896, the station performed 11 rescues, most of them being persons in small boats, sailboats, or steam yachts. One large vessel assisted was the 38 ton steamer *Pathfinder* (Captain Brown) which collided, capsized, and sank 2/3 of a mile WNW of the station on 1 September 1895. One of the crew of five was lost and damage was \$3000 to a \$7000 vessel. Five days later on 6 September 1895, the steamer *Samuel F. Hodge* was a casualty in Duluth Harbor with a damage of \$1000 in a total value of \$38,000. None of the crew of 20 was lost.

On 2 July 1896 the station assisted the 77 ton steamer *L.L. Lyon* (Captain Brickly), which was towed to safety. Seven other smaller boats were also assisted during the fiscal year 1897. During the fiscal year 1898 the station performed 18 rescues. Most of these were sailboats, sloops, or yachts but the 60 ton steamer *Record* which was sunk in Duluth Harbor on 2 June 1898, was a catastrophe in which 3 lives were lost. During 1899 there were 13 rescues, one in connection with the 2476-ton steamer *Northern King* (Captain Connors) which got into difficulties on 3 June 1899, one mile SW of the station and was assisted, with no lives lost.

Fourteen vessels were assisted during the fiscal year 1900. The 309-ton steamer *Alvin A. Turner* (Captain Shean) was assisted on 24 July 1899. On 29 May 1900 the 1848 ton steamer *Fedora* (Captain Fisk), valued at \$100,000, called on the station for assistance while bound from Toledo, OH to West Superior, WI, with a \$10,000 cargo of coal. No lives were lost. Between fiscal years 1901 and 1915 there were only 10 cases of assistance rendered by the Duluth Life-Saving Station. The names of the earlier keepers are not listed in available records.

It was the duty of life-saving station crews in the earlier days to maintain a visual watch of the coast and be prepared to launch their boats to go to the assistance of any ship that seemed to be in trouble. Under the Coast Guard, it became the Duluth Lifeboat Station. With the advent of radio, the station was equipped with voice radio communication. Added later were also an electronic repair shop, a group office, a light attendant station, and a light station at Duluth.

Keepers:

Donald McKenzie was appointed keeper on 26 MARCH 1895 and died of cancer on 4 JULY 1898.

Murdoch A. McLennan was appointed keeper 9 SEPTEMBER 1898 and was still serving in 1915.

Photography (click on caption to view image):

[Photo of the Duluth LSS boat-house, circa 1907](#)

[Photo of the Duluth LSS crew and mascot near the station with the beach cart \(n.d., probably pre-1910\)](#)

[Photo of the Duluth LB station building, circa 1928](#)

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Added: December 2000