



## Station Moriches, New York

USLSS Station #18, Third District  
Coast Guard Station #76

<b>Location:</b>	On West Hampton Beach, abreast Moriches Bay, 1 1/16 miles east northeast of Moriches Inlet and 11 3/4 miles west southwest of Shinnecock Light; 40-46' 25"N x 72-42' 49"W in 1878; 40-46' 30"N x 72-43' 10"W in 1915.
<b>Date of Conveyance:</b>	1849
<b>Station Built:</b>	1849
<b>Fate:</b>	Turned over to the GSA in 1954

### Remarks:

Moriches station was built in 1849 at a site first described as "two and one—half miles southwest of Speonk village." At some time after its establishment, the station was moved to a tract of land then known as "Common Meadow" in the town of Southampton; the government had no title to this land. The station remained here for about twenty five years until it became necessary to relocate because of repeated flooding of the land. A new site was acquired in 1910. The site description was given in the 1920s as "abreast of Eastport and southwest two and one-half miles of Speonk Point." A contract was let in 1912 to "replace structures no longer suited to the needs of the service."

During the hurricane which swept the Atlantic coast in September of 1938, the station was demolished and all equipment except the motor surfboat was lost. In 1939 and 1940, the station listing appears with a notation "operation temporarily discontinued." However, there was still a Moriches station after the war.

Moriches Inlet created in 1931 has always been treacherous. For several years, mariners have been warned that navigating the inlet can be highly dangerous. In January, 1980, Moriches Inlet was by an Atlantic storm which widened it to 3/4 of a

mile in width. The inlet has been filled in over the past summer to its former size, but is still very hazardous.

Even Coast Guard boats have had a rough time in this inlet in recent years. During the summer of 1977, the station's 30 footer while attempting to run outside the inlet had its forward hatch carried away by a wave. The hatch crashed through the windshield and badly injured the coxswain. The seaman on board took over and kept the boat on an even keel until a rescue helicopter could take the injured man off and put a replacement coxswain on board. The following year the station's 40 footer was swamped over the stern while coming through Moriches Inlet from seaward.

During 1980, Moriches Station answered numerous rescue calls in the bays and inlet. Two dramatic cases stand out in the crew's minds above the others. In June 1980, the station motor lifeboat went on a desperate mission to save a diver. The vessel *Wahao II* had sent a diver down on an old wreck twelve miles southwest of Moriches Inlet. The diver had equipment malfunction and suffered an attach of the bends. The Moriches SAR boat arrived on scene, gave first aid and rendezvoused with a helicopter to evacuate the man to a Connecticut Hospital. Unfortunately, the diver later died in the hospital.

The second dramatic case at Station Moriches took place in September, 1980. One evening in early September while on patrol CG44405 sighted a 180 foot vessel 1 1/2 miles south of Moriches Inlet conducting mother ship operations with marijuana. As the motor lifeboat headed out the inlet the mother ship was warned by numerous contact boats heading into the bay with their illegal cargoes. The 44405 pursued the fleeing mother ship for five miles to the southeast of the inlet before breaking off the chase. But information provided by the Moriches Station boat crew aided the Coast Guard Cutter *Tamaroa* in overhauling the mother ship the next day. Two hundred and fifty tons of marijuana were seized aboard the vessel.

Moriches station was involved in the search and rescue operation on 17 July 1996, following the crash of TWA Flight 800.

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[Click here](#) for "U.S. Coast Guard Moriches Station History" by noted historian and Coast Guard Auxiliarist Van R. Field.

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**Keepers:**

The first keeper was E. Topping, who was appointed in 1853 for an unknown term; he was followed by Alvah Jones in 1856 who also served an unknown term ending some time in 1873. Then came William Smith (appointed July 1, 1873 and serving until he resigned on July 1, 1878), John N. Culver (January 28, 1878 until he was removed from office May 14, 1881), George C. Raynor (July 18, 1881 until his resignation May 1, 1886), Louis M. Jayne (appointed August 9, 1886, appointment revoked August 19, 1886), Henry D. Terry (appointed August 19, 1886 until his resignation April 28, 1887), Gilbert H. Seaman (May 12, 1887 until his resignation due to physical reasons March 11, 1904) and Charles T. Gordon (March 8, 1904 until his retirement August 21, 1922 with thirty years' service). No warrant or chief petty officer in charge is listed until 1928 and Chief Boatswains Mate A. J. Carter. He is followed by Chief Petty Officers Charles R. Peele (1929), W. J. Eldridge (1932) and J. H. Ketcham (1933 until 1938).

**Photographs:**  
**(Click thumb-nail image to see full-size)**

**Original photo caption; description; date & photo number (if known):**



"Life Saving Station opposite Eastport L D, 1909 [?]; no photo number; photographer unknown.

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<p>Station Moriches</p>	<p>No caption/ date/photo number; photographer unknown.</p> <p>Our thanks to Tim Dring for identifying this photo.</p>
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Added: January 2001