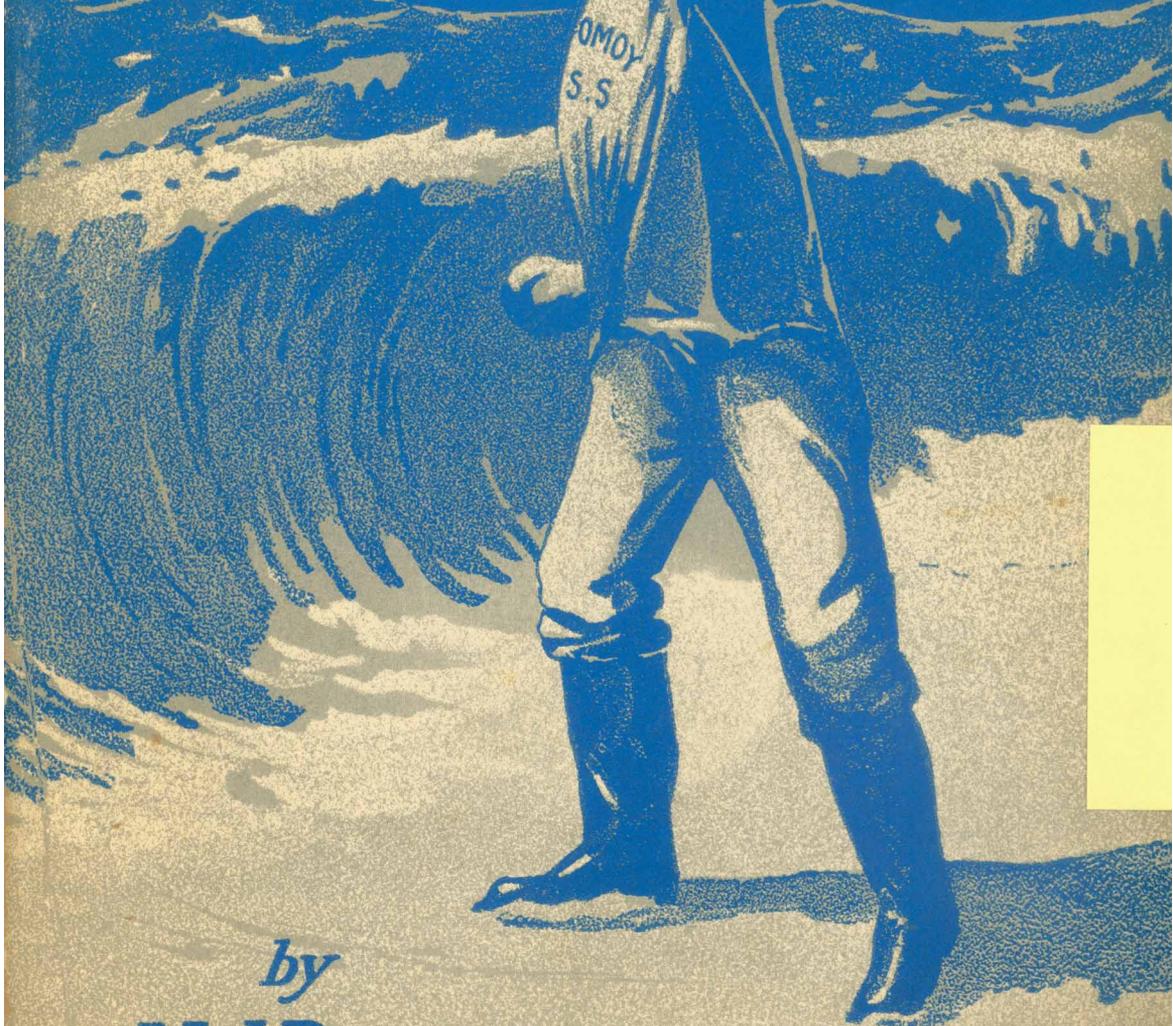


# The Life Savers of Cape Cod

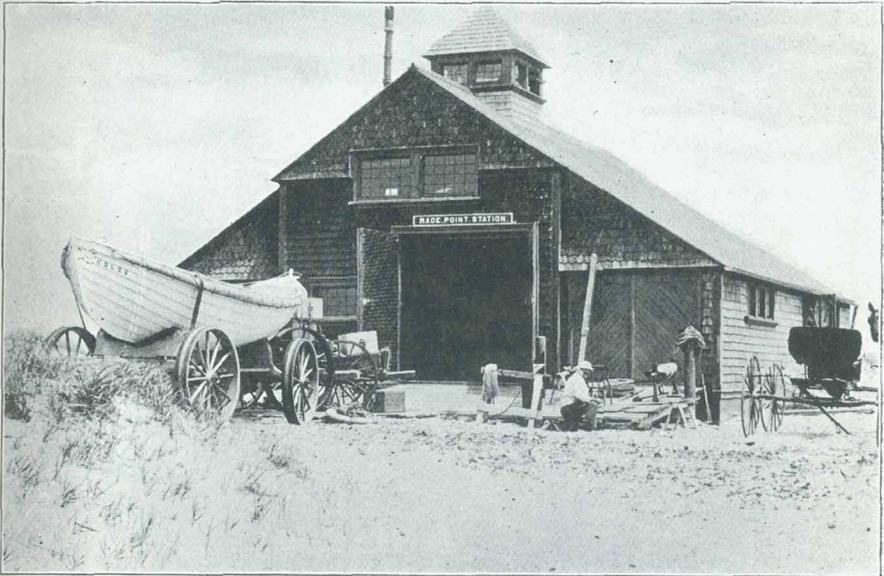


*by*  
**J. W. DALTON**

\$2.95

**RACE POINT STATION.**

This station is one of the original nine stations erected on Cape Cod in 1872, and was manned in the winter of 1873. The station is one and five-eighths miles east of Race Point, from which it derives its name. Its approximate position as obtained from the latest coast survey charts is latitude north  $42^{\circ} 04' 45''$ , longitude west  $70^{\circ} 13' 15''$ . From Provincetown the station is about four miles distant, and easy of access over a highway across the sand dunes. The coast at Race Point is very treacherous, and has been the scene of many wrecks. The tides run past the point with great velocity, and vessels are fre-



RACE POINT STATION.

quently swept to destruction on the sunken reefs which lie along the coast there.

The surfmen of this station go over a patrol westward of two and one-half miles, and eastward about one and three-quarters miles. On the eastward patrol the surfmen meet and exchange checks with the surfmen from Peaked Hill Bars Station; on the westward patrol the surfmen use a time clock, as "Race Run" so called, an inlet through the beach, prevents them from meeting the surfmen from Wood End Station. The station is supplied with three surf-boats of the Race Point model, two beach carts, with guns, breeches-buoys, etc., and a life-car

Ninety-two vessels, of all descriptions, have met with disaster near this station since Capt. "Sam" Fisher has been keeper. On these

vessels there were over six hundred seafarers, including two women. Of this number of persons taken ashore, thirty-seven were landed by the breeches-buoy, the surf-boat being employed to bring the others that were saved to the shore.

“Nigger,” the horse which is on duty at the Race Point Station, is a noble and intelligent animal. When storms are sweeping the coast, “Nigger” shows a restlessness that is not dispelled until fair weather again prevails. As the surfmen return from their patrol at night, “Nigger” always gives evidence in some way or another that he is awake and ready for duty. “Nigger” takes kindly to the work of dragging the heavy beach apparatus and surf-boat through the sands,



NIGGER, THE HORSE KEPT AT RACE POINT STATION.

and responds to the call “ship ashore” as lively as the surfmen. “Nigger” is the pet of all the surfmen, and seems to enjoy having visitors call to see him.

#### **CAPT. SAMUEL O. FISHER.**

Capt. Samuel O. Fisher, keeper of the Race Point Life-Saving Station, was born in Provincetown in 1861, and has been in the life-saving service twenty-three years, eight of which he spent as surfman at Peaked Hill Bars Station and fifteen as keeper of this station. “Sam” Fisher came from a seafaring family and is a near relative of the late Isaac G. Fisher, a noted life saver. He went to sea as a sailor on a coasting vessel when a young man. He left the coastwise trade to go tow boating, which he followed for a short time, when he again entered the coastwise trade. He was also a fisherman and boatman off the shores of Cape Cod. He entered the life-saving service when

nineteen years of age, being assigned to the Peaked Hill Bars Station under the late Captain Atkins. He was then an experienced boatman, strong and robust. He had been a member of the station crew but a short time when he came near losing his life in a terrible tragedy that took place on the bars near the station.

It was at the time the sloop *C. M. Trumbull* stranded on Peaked Hill Bars. Captain Atkins and his brave crew had pulled out to the

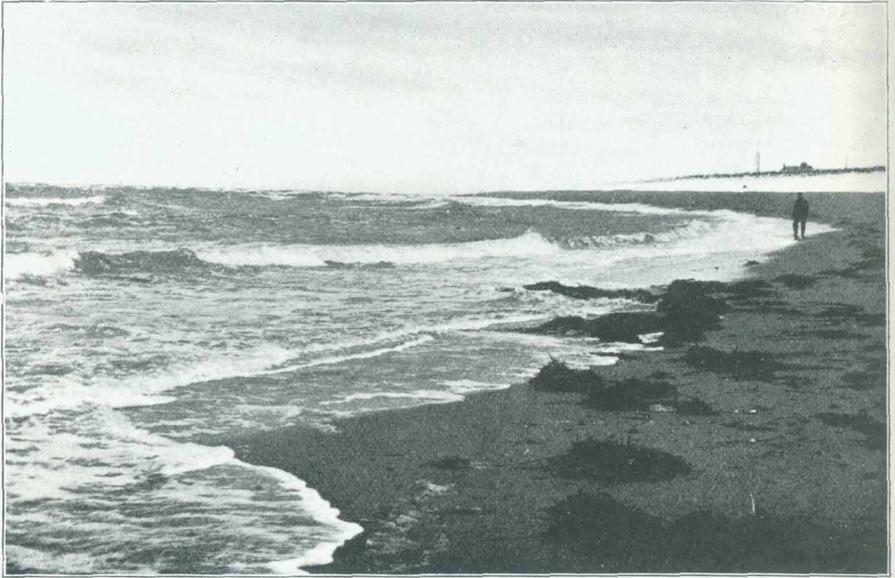


CAPT. "SAM" O. FISHER, KEEPER OF RACE POINT STATION.

stranded sloop and was about to effect the rescue of the imperiled crew when the surf-boat was capsized, throwing all hands into the raging sea. Captain Atkins and two members of the crew perished, Fisher and two others managing to reach the shore after a desperate struggle. After the death of Captain Atkins, the late Capt. Isaac G. Fisher was prevailed upon to take charge of the station. Capt. "Sam" Fisher remained as surfman under Capt. Isaac Fisher until he was

appointed keeper of the Race Point Station, succeeding John W. Young.

From his experience at Peaked Hill Bars Station Capt. "Sam" Fisher was well fitted for the arduous duties of keeper of the Race Point Station. During the fifteen years that he has been keeper of the Race Point Station he has led his crew to deeds of great heroism. He has had many narrow escapes from serious injury and death in the performance of his duty, and was once obliged to retire for a period of fifty days on account of injuries received while working on a wrecked schooner. Once he was obliged to swim ashore from an overturned boat, and several times he has narrowly escaped losing his life going



LIFE SAVER STARTING OUT ON THE SUNSET WATCH FROM RACE POINT STATION.

to wrecks. Lawrence Maddocks, a member of the crew who was thrown out of the boat with Captain Fisher at the time of the wreck of the schooner *Julia Bailey*, died shortly after from the effects of exposure.

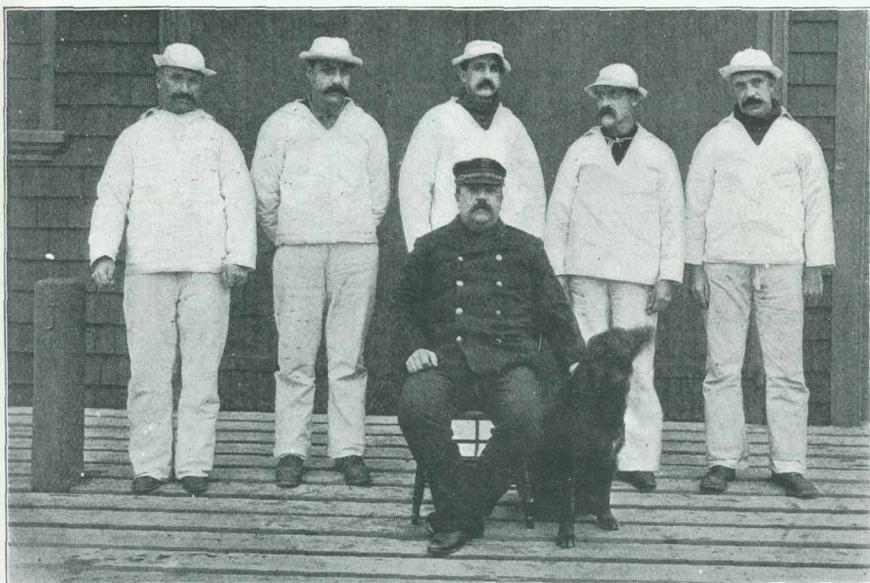
He married Myra L. Pierce.

#### RACE POINT STATION CREW.

The No. 1 surfman is Edwin B. Tyler. He was born in Provincetown, is thirty-two years of age, and has been in the United States Life-Saving Service five years. Prior to his joining the service he engaged in boating and fishing. In this way he obtained a thorough knowledge of the coast about the tip end of the Cape, and became

skilled in the management of boats in the surf, all of which has been of great value to him since he entered the service. Surfman Tyler, in the few years that he has been in the service, has had his full share of the hardship that is part of the life of a life saver on Cape Cod. He married Pauline Ryder.

The No. 2 surfman is George H. Burch. Surfman Burch was born in Provincetown fifty years ago, and in point of years of service he is the oldest member of the crew of the Race Point Station. He has been a member of the Race Point Station crew for fifteen years, joining the station when he entered the service. Surfman Burch went to sea when a boy, and followed it until he entered the life-saving service.



FRANK BROWN.

MARTIN NELSON.

EDWIN B. TYLER.

CAPTAIN FISHER.

GEO. H. BURCH.

JOHN B. BANGS.

RACE POINT CREW.

In addition to being a coastwise sailor, he also went in pursuit of the whale. He is an old and tried life saver who knows no fear, and on whom the fifteen years of hardship has left no visible trace. He married Mary Sylva of Provincetown, and is the father of a son.

The No. 3 surfman is Henry I. Collins. He was born in Truro in 1871. Surfman Collins entered the life-saving service three years ago, being assigned to this station. Before entering the service he had followed the sea as a boatman and fisherman from the time he was a small boy. He is an expert boatman, and was not long in the service before he demonstrated his worth as a life saver. He married Nellie Lombard, and is the father of two girls.

The No. 4 surfman is Frank Brown. Surfman Brown was born in Provincetown in 1866. He joined the life-saving service in 1899, being assigned to the Muskeget Station at Nantucket. After serving there for several months he was transferred to this station. Surfman Brown from his long experience as a fisherman and in the coasting trade is an expert boatman, and also possesses all the other qualifications necessary to make a life saver. He married Margaret Sullivan of Provincetown.

The No. 5 man is John B. Bangs. He was born in Provincetown and is twenty-nine years of age. Surfman Bangs has been in the service seven years. He was first assigned to the High Head Station under Captain Kelly and has been connected with this station but one year. Surfman Bangs from his experience as a coastwise sailor, fisherman, and boatman found no difficulty in passing the rigid examination necessary to enter the service, and is a skilled and intrepid life saver.

The No. 6 surfman is Martin Nelson. Surfman Nelson was born in Sweden in 1869. He went to sea when about fifteen years of age and sailed over a great part of the world before he reached the shores of Cape Cod. He has been in the service four years, being assigned to the Monomoy Station under the late Captain Tuttle when he entered the service. Surfman Nelson was also a member of the crew of the Monomoy Station under the late Captain Eldredge, being transferred to the Race Point Station but a short time before. Captain Eldredge and all but one of his boat's crew lost their lives. Surfman Nelson came of a seafaring family and seems especially fitted for the hard life that he has chosen. He married Louise C. Smith, of Provincetown, and is the father of a boy.

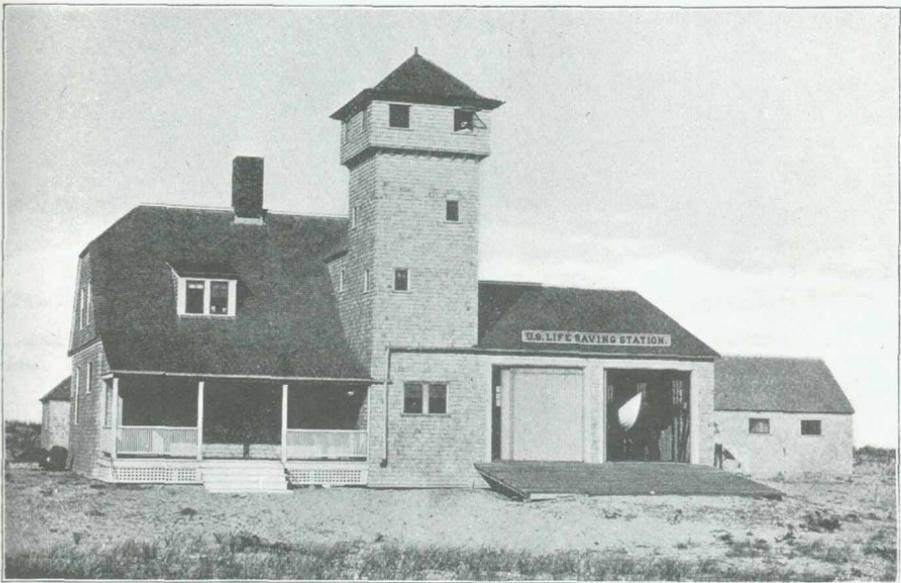
The No. 7 surfman is Eugene R. Conwell. He was born in Provincetown in 1880, and is the youngest member of the crew of this station. Surfman Conwell entered the service in June, 1902, being stationed on the floating station at City Point during the summer season, coming to this station in December, 1902. Surfman Conwell, while a young man, is an experienced boatman and has the youth and vigor that will help to make him a valuable member of any life-saving crew to which he may become attached.

## WOOD END STATION.

This station is one of the new type of life-saving stations, with commodious quarters for the keeper and crew, large boat room and look-out. It was built in 1896, and manned in 1897. The late Capt. Isaac G. Fisher, who was keeper of the Peaked Hill Bars Station at the time, was placed in charge of the station and a picked crew of surfmen. Captain Fisher continued as keeper until ill-health caused him to resign from the service. Capt. William Sparrow, now keeper of the Point Allerton Station, who was No. 1 man under Captain Fisher, acted as temporary keeper until Captain Bickers was placed in charge. The station is located on the narrow strip of beach at the tip end of Cape Cod, Provincetown, one-eighth of a mile east from the Wood End lighthouse. Its approximate position as obtained from the latest coast survey charts is latitude north  $42^{\circ} 01' 15''$ , longitude west  $70^{\circ} 11' 30''$ . From Provincetown the distance to the station over the sand dunes and along the beach is about three and one-half miles. Across the head of the harbor, a way that is accessible when the tide

has ebbed, the distance is much shorter. The station is supplied with two five-oared surf-boats of the Race Point model, two beach carts, with guns, breeches-buoys, etc., and one life-car. The patrol from this station extends three and three-quarters miles north, and two and one-quarter miles south. This is the only station on Cape Cod where the surfmen do not meet and exchange checks with the surfmen from other stations, time clocks being employed to record the performance of duty of the patrol.

No total wrecks have occurred within the province of this station since Captain Bickers has been in command, and no persons have been taken ashore by the crew either in the surf-boat or breeches-



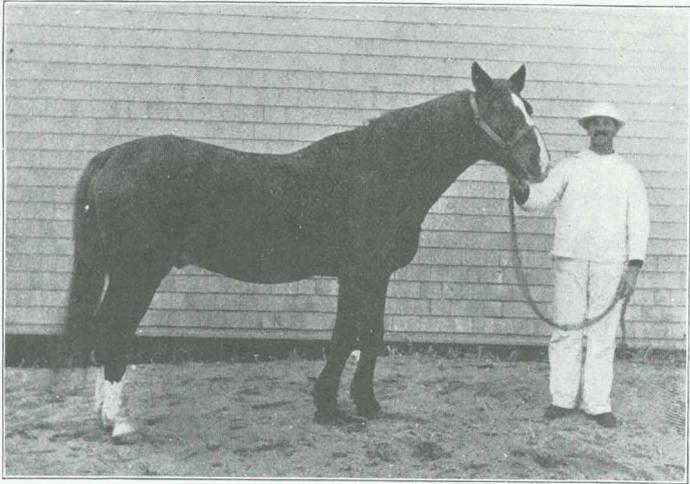
WOOD END STATION.

buoy, although a large number of vessels have met with disaster near there. The following vessels have been assisted and floated by Captain Bickers and crew: the yawl *Adventurer*, the barge *Paxnos*, and the schooners *Clara*, *Zephyr*, *Caviar*, *Manomet*, *Joseph I. Johnson*, *St. Bernard*, *Marjorie Brown*, *Gladstone*, and *Lewis H. Giles*. Captain Bickers and his crew also assisted in the rescue of the two men, members of the crew of the schooner *Two Forty*, who had been adrift in an open boat for fourteen hours.

“Tom,” the pet cat at the Wood End Station, while not being able to aid in the work of life saving, often goes out with the surfmen on their lonely patrol along the beaches to keep them company. “Tom” knows every foot of the beaches and seems to delight in going out

with the surfmen, whether the weather is fair or stormy. "Tom" often meets the surfmen half-way along the beach as they are returning from their patrol, running along ahead of the men as if to show them the way to the station. "Tom" is the pet of the crew and is well taken care of by them.

"Jim," the horse which is at the Wood End Station, is owned by Captain Bickers, the keeper. He was raised on Cape Cod, and has been connected with the station for one year or since Captain Bickers assumed charge of the station. "Jim" is an intelligent animal, and has upon more than one occasion been of valuable service to the crew, by



JIM, THE HORSE KEPT AT WOOD END STATION.

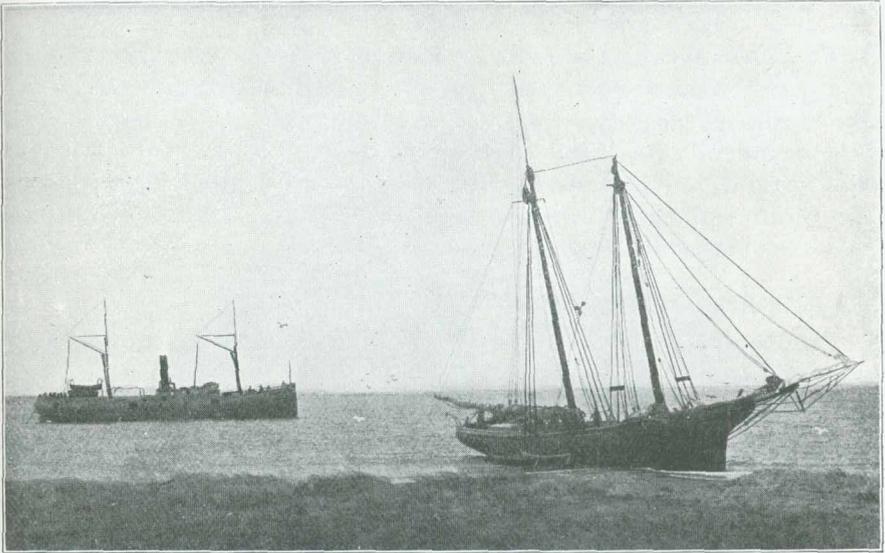
hauling apparatus to scenes of disaster. "Jim" knows when bad weather prevails, and is ever ready to do his share in the work of saving life or property.

#### **CAPT. GEORGE H. BICKERS.**

Capt. George H. Bickers, keeper of the Wood End Life-Saving Station, was born in Charlestown, Mass., in 1858. He has been in the life-saving service for eleven years, ten as a surfman at Race Point and one as keeper of the Wood End Station. After leaving school, when a young boy, Captain Bickers shipped before the mast on a coasting schooner. He followed coasting for a few years, when he went whaling. As a whalerman he learned the art of handling boats in riotous waters as well as seamanship in all its branches. Captain Bickers followed the sea until he was thirty-three years of age, when he entered the life-saving service, being assigned to the Race Point Station under Capt. "Sam" Fisher. From his experience as a sailor

since it was manned in 1897. Surfman Wages was a sailor and fisherman along the shores of Cape Cod before entering the service, and has made an able and faithful life saver. He married Phœbe Silva, and is the father of a son.

The No. 4 surfman is Albert G. Mabbett. He was born in Whitehall, N. Y., in 1872, and has been in the life-saving service for six years. He shipped as a sailor before the mast on a coasting vessel when he was a boy, and spent several years in the coasting trade. Later he made a number of trips on the United States school ship *St. Mary*, going on cruises to England, Ireland, and through the Straits of Gibraltar to the ports along the Mediterranean Sea. Prior to



MARY NASON WRECKED AT WOOD END.

entering the life-saving service as a regular surfman, he had substituted at other stations along the shores of Cape Cod. As a substitute he performed meritorious service, and has made an efficient and brave life saver. He married Grace May Henderson, and is the father of two daughters and a son.

The No. 5 surfman is Willie F. Eldredge. He was born in Chatham, is thirty-six years of age, and has been in the life-saving service three years. Before entering the service he was a boatman and fisherman along the Chatham shores, and from his experience in that work was well prepared for the duties of a surfman. He also substituted at many of the life-saving stations along the shores of Cape Cod, and is an experienced and efficient life saver.

The No. 6 surfman is James E. Worth. He was born in Province-

town in 1861, and has been in the life-saving service one year. When a boy Surfman Worth went cod fishing to the Grand Banks, and later shipped on a merchant vessel and made a great number of trips to the West Indies Islands and South American ports. After a few years in the merchant service he became a whaleman, and in that service had a number of thrilling experiences. After giving up going to sea he became a baggage-master on the Old Colony Railroad. Later he entered the employ of the Cold Storage Plant at Provincetown, remaining there until he entered this service. When he entered the service he was assigned to the Muskeget Station on Nantucket, and was later transferred to this station. He is an expert boatman and a brave and hardy life saver. He married Nellie P. Lewis, and is the father of two daughters and four sons.

The No. 7 surfman is John N. Lewis. He was born in Provincetown, and is thirty-eight years of age. Until he entered the service four years ago, he had followed the sea from a boy. For three years he was a member of the City Point Station, South Boston, during the summer seasons, and also spent one season at the Straitsmouth Station, Cape Ann. Surfman Lewis is a skilled boatman, and has proved that he can be depended upon to do his duty in any emergency.