



The Seaside News



Pea Island Lifesavers,
Richard Etheridge (l.)
Courtesy of the U. S.
Coast Guard.



First African American Man Appointed Life-Saving Station Keeper

On February 1, 1880, Richard Etheridge became the first African American United States Life-Saving Service Station Keeper. It was unusual for Black people to become keepers because usually the job was given to White people. But the men in charge of the stations along the North Carolina coast heard that when the ship *M & E Henderson* got stuck on a sandbar, the lifesavers at the Pea Island Station didn't do a good job rescuing them, and four men from the ship ended up dying. Two men from the government came down to Pea Island to find out if this was true. Like detectives, they asked questions, and discovered that the men did not do a good job and that is why the people died. They fired the White keeper and two of the White lifesavers. They hired Richard Etheridge as the keeper because he had experience and was incredibly good at doing his job. The White lifesavers still working at the station did not want to work for a Black man. They thought they were better than Black people, so they quit their jobs. Richard Etheridge hired all Black people to take their place. They practiced a lot and did an exceptionally good job saving people from shipwrecks.

Richard Etheridge Word Search

S K C E R W P I H S
M S A N D B A R U Y
J M Y K S A V E L L
L I F E S A V E R S
J J R I C H A R D K
M O W H I T E H H E
P D N A L S I R U E
S S P T Z T P A E P
L E G D I R E H T E
O B L A C K H X V R

BLACK	ETHERIDGE	ISLAND
KEEPER	LIFESAVERS	PEA
RICHARD	SANDBAR	SAVE
SHIPWRECKS	WHITE	

1. Who was Richard Etheridge?
2. Why did White lifesavers quit their jobs at Pea Island?
3. Which ship grounded on a sandbar?
4. Why were the Black lifesavers at Pea Island able to do an exceptionally good job?
5. Who was fired from their jobs?
6. What did people do in this story that was wrong?

Joke of the Month!

How do we know that the sea is friendly?

It waves!

1. The first African American Life-Saving Station keeper.
2. They did not want to work for a Black man.
3. *M & E Henderson*
4. They practiced.
5. The White keeper and two White lifesavers.
6. Some of the White people thought they were better than Richard Etheridge. They also did not do a good job at work, and some of them quit their jobs because they did not want to work for a Black person.