



National Archives and Records Administration

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001

The Annual Reports of the Life-Saving Service, 1871–1913

The annual reports of the Life-Saving Service list appropriations and expenditures and high-ranking personnel. They also include information on rescue operations, such as numbers of persons rescued, value of cargo and vessels imperiled and saved, locations and causes of wrecks, names of ships involved, names of ships' masters, type of cargo carried, and so on (not all information is contained in all reports). In addition, these publications document building proposals and progress, improvements in boats and other life-saving equipment (individual inventors and engineers are sometimes specified), the rationale behind the hiring and firing of employees, the storm signal system, actions taken to improve efficiency, coastal features, and book donations to station libraries.

There are lengthy narratives describing shipwrecks and the actions of crew members and Life-Saving Service employees. In many cases, the narratives identify the individuals involved—even surfmen, who are rarely named elsewhere. Sometimes these accounts quote extensively workers' descriptions of disasters and their own rescue efforts (see, for example, the 1881 report). There are also narratives describing the actions of employees awarded medals for heroic service.

Locating the Annual Reports

The annual reports are often available in large university and public libraries across the country designated as U.S. Government Depository libraries. To identify a local depository library, go to the Government Printing Office web site at <http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp> and select the link to "FDLP Public Page."

Superintendent of Documents Number (SuDoc. No.)

Annual reports have a Superintendent of Documents [SuDoc.] number assigned to them to organize the reports. You will need that number to locate the reports at the National Archives or another Government Depository Library.

1872–1873

For these years, the annual reports of the Life-Saving Service were published within the annual reports of the Revenue Marine Bureau. SuDoc. Nos. T33.1:872 and T33.1:873, respectively. There are no annual reports for 1874–1875 (according to the Checklist for Government Publications).

1876–1913

SuDoc. No. T24.1:year date. The 1876 report was also included in the annual report of the Treasury Department, published in *U.S. Serial Set* volume 1752. The 1881 report was published in *U.S. Serial Set* volume 2047.

For more information, see the following reference report: *Life-Saving Service Employees, 1855–1913*.

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