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Title of Proposal: African Americans in the United States Life-Saving Service: An Examination of Cape Fear Life-Saving Station

Abstract: It is an unfortunate reality that many facets within the gem of history are often overlooked and ignored while a single narrative becomes the monolithic representation of a multifaceted past. Pea Island is a great example of a Life-Saving crew manned entirely by African Americans. However, this single example does not provide a complete representation of other crews with African American members. The Cape Fear Life-Saving Station is an important example of a desegregated station. This crew, working within a very different social dynamic than those at Pea Island, represent a broader narrative of African Americans in the Life-Saving Service throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Examining the history of the Cape Fear Life-Saving Station adds depth to an otherwise narrow understanding of the Light Saving Service and its African American members.