

## Richard Etheridge Statue <sup>[1]</sup>

### Rating:



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Richard Etheridge Statue, Manteo. Photo courtesy of DreamQuest Productions

<sup>[2]</sup>

Richard Etheridge Statue  
Manteo

View complete article and references at Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina at:

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/372> <sup>[3]</sup>

Description: This life size bronze statue depicts Richard Etheridge, the first African American to serve as the officer in charge of a U.S. Coast Guard life-saving station. Etheridge served as the officer in charge of an all-African American crew at the Pea Island Life-Saving Station from 1880 to 1900. The statue represents him with a posture and gaze of strength, courage, and calm as he stands with both feet firmly planted on the ground and holding the long oar of a rescue boat in his right hand. The statue rests atop a circular platform made of brick and cement. A bronze commemorative plaque with an inscription is mounted on a low slab of granite on the grass in front of the platform.

The efforts of Etheridge and his historic all-African American crew at Pea Island are also honored by another marker on Roanoke Island -- the [USLSS/USCG Station Pea Island Marker](#) <sup>[4]</sup> located on the grounds of the North Carolina Aquarium.

[Historical image of the Pea Island Life-Saving Station crew](#) <sup>[5]</sup>. Richard Etheridge is on the far left.

### Inscription:

Plaque: Richard Etheridge, Keeper / Pea Island Life-Saving Station / 1880-1900

Dedication date: 5/8/2010

Creator: Stephen H. Smith, Sculptor

Materials & Techniques: Bronze

Sponsor: The traffic circle project was funded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Unveiling & Dedication: The statue was on display at the Manteo town offices prior to its installation and dedication on May 8, 2010, the anniversary of Etheridge's death. The statue was unveiled by community children, the sculptor, and the descendant of one of the Pea Island Life-Saving crew.

Subject notes: Richard Etheridge was born into slavery in 1842 and subsequently served in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was appointed keeper at the life-saving station at Pea Island in 1880, leading an all-African American crew. Etheridge died at the station on May 8, 1900, after more than 20 years of service to the Coast Guard. He is buried

alongside members of his family on Roanoke Island on land now occupied by the North Carolina Aquarium. The Pea Island Life-Saving Station is historically the only all-African American staffed unit. Etheridge became known for his rigorously trained and well-prepared team. On October 11 1896, the crew rescued nine people from a schooner, the E.S. Newman, after it became stranded in a dangerous storm. The success of the rescue was attributed to Etheridge's courage, leadership, and expert rescue techniques. The Pea Island Life-Saving Station Crew is credited for rescuing over 600 lives without the loss of a single crew member. In 1996, Richard Etheridge and the crew of the station were posthumously honored with a Gold Lifesaving Medal of Honor for their courage and service. The medal was obtained through the work of Kate Burkhart, a 15 year-old from Washington, N.C., who wrote an essay on the neglected history of the men and contacted Congress and then President Bill Clinton to have the crew's efforts and history acknowledged. And in 2012, a new Coast Guard cutter was named in honor of Etheridge.

Location: The monument sits in the traffic circle at Bideford and Sir Walter Raleigh Streets.

Landscape: The monument platform is surrounded by a grassy garden area with evergreen and seasonal plantings.

City: Manteo

County: Dare

Subjects: African American Monuments,First Responders,Historic African American Figures

**Latitude:** 35.90418

**Longitude:** -75.67849

**Subjects:**

[Monuments](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

[Places](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

**Authors:**

[Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

**Origin - location:**

[Dare County](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

[Manteo](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

**From:**

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