

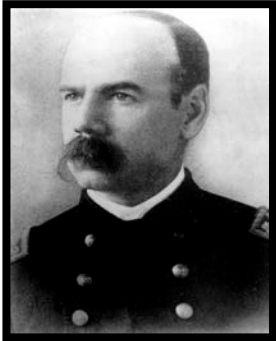


U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Leonard G. Shepard

1889-1895



Leonard G. Shepard was the first officer in permanent charge of the Revenue Marine. He was born in Massachusetts on 10 March 1846 and appointed as a Third Lieutenant in the Revenue Marine Service on 6 June 1866. He was appointed as Chief, Revenue Marine Service on 28 December 1889 and Chief of the Revenue Cutter Service on 31 July 1894.

During his tenure as Chief of the service, Shepard was very concerned with personnel issues. Foremost among these was the stagnation of the officer corps. So many officers, some over the age of 80, filled the higher levels of command there were almost no opportunities for junior officer advancement. This meant that officers were often past their prime before they ever had the opportunity to command. As such, Shepard fought for the passage of HR 6723. This bill created a medical board that examined senior officers and eliminated those not fit to command. Though this was not a permanent solution, it did initially clear a number of senior billets. This reinstated upward mobility and revitalized the officer corps. Shepard also worked toward material improvement of the fleet. As a result, a number of modern cutters were constructed and commissioned. While he was still in office, however, Shepard contracted pneumonia and he died in Washington, DC on 1 March 1895.