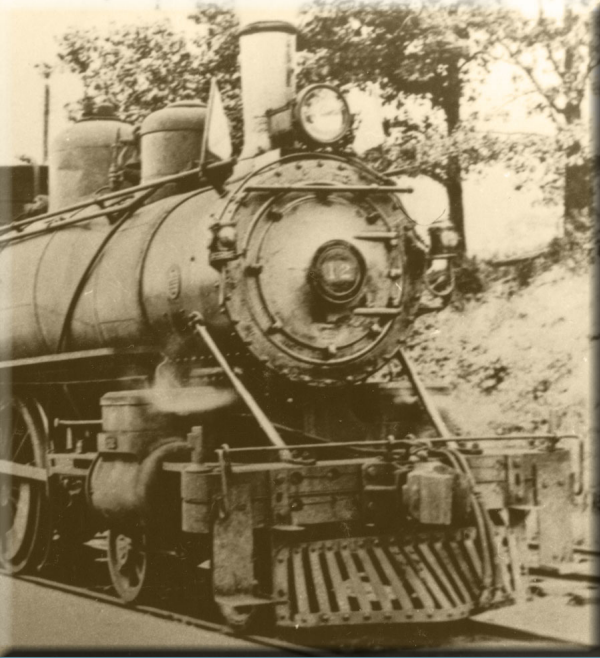


# Heritage Tour



## Twin Beaches: Chesapeake Beach & North Beach, Maryland

### History of Chesapeake Beach

The Town of Chesapeake Beach began as the dream of developers of the late 19th century who planned a grand resort on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. The State of Maryland granted a charter to the Washington and Chesapeake Beach Railway Company in 1891, and in 1894 the W&CBR was granted a charter to incorporate the Town of Chesapeake Beach. The grand schemes of the W&CBR were never to be implemented, however.

A new company, the Chesapeake Beach Railway Company, took up the idea in 1896. This company completed the railway, and on June 9, 1900, the resort staged its grand opening. As the years progressed, the adjacent community of North Beach continued to develop as a neighboring cottage community.

From 1900 until 1930 Chesapeake Beach was a thriving independent community. People would mainly come here for day trips by railway and steamboats like "The Dixie" and "The Dreamland." Only 32 miles from Washington, DC, those with more leisure time would flock to Chesapeake Beach for the cool breezes and salt water.

Overnight visitors stayed in the luxurious Belvedere Hotel, which was built about 1900. It was located on the north side of 17th Street overlooking the Bay before it was destroyed by a fire on March 30, 1923. The resort consisted of a boardwalk over the water and a pleasant park and picnicking area on the nearby land. On the boardwalk, one could find a bandstand, performing bears, games of chance, a carousel, casino, theaters, and many restaurants.

A roller coaster, called "The Great Derby," was constructed over the boardwalk in 1915 and operated until 1926.

The Chesapeake Beach Railway brought people to the two beach towns until 1935 when bankruptcy forced the railway to close down its operations. Seaside Park opened in 1930 and all the amusements were moved to land. In the late 1940s the management of the Park once again changed and so did the name; the park would be known as Chesapeake Beach Amusement Park until it finally closed in 1972.

The neighboring towns of Chesapeake Beach and North Beach grew up together in conjunction with the resort. Both towns supported popular bayside activities, entertainment, as well as shops. Seasonal and year-round homes have been built in both communities, and the population of our area continues to grow.



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### History of North Beach

Nestled on the Chesapeake Bay's western shore, the Town of North Beach epitomizes "land of pleasant living." Its seven-block waterfront contains a public fishing pier and a half-mile-long boardwalk with an accompanying bike path. The boardwalk is dotted with benches for residents and visitors to linger and Bay-watch. North Beach also encompasses a wildlife refuge in its tidal marshlands, home to native wildlife and host to seasonal migrations.

Platted in 1900, North Beach celebrated its Centennial at the turn of the century. Socially and culturally, the Town has a rich and diverse history. Originally settled primarily by part-time residents from nearby Washington and Baltimore, North Beach provided an ideal site for vacation cottages, as well as for those of the Chesapeake Bay's working watermen.

When the Bay Bridge opened in 1955 bringing easier access to the Atlantic Ocean's resorts, summer crowds on the western shore soon dissipated, and the end of legalized gambling brought an end as well to the heyday of North Beach as a rollicking resort.

Following a period of decline, recent years have produced a re-birth of civic pride and a burgeoning sense of community. Old buildings have been removed; houses refurbished and flower beds blossom everywhere. North Beach is home to the Bayside History Museum. Located in one of the oldest houses in town, the museum opened in 2004.

Other recent developments in North Beach include a senior citizens' apartment complex which opened in 2001 and a primary care medical facility which opened the following year. Visitors flock to North Beach each June to the North Beach House and Garden Club Tour and in August for the Town's annual Bayfest. Local antiques and gift stores attract shoppers, while beachcombers delight in the search for fossil sharks' teeth. Mother Nature herself is the Town's greatest asset.

Today's population is composed primarily of year-round residents who know they've found "The Jewel of the Chesapeake Bay." It's a place to take a quiet, friendly walk around town away from the congestion and hassle of the city, a place where government wears the face of one's neighbor and each resident can keep a finger on its pulse, and it's a place to call your own little bit of heaven on earth.



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