

## You Are Here!

You are here because of the past, the present and the future. The history of Chesapeake Beach is rich in its foundation and development as a resort town within Calvert County. The present day Town of Chesapeake Beach is a direct result of that history.

In order to preserve this information, it became imminent that the integrity of known landmarks, names, their significance, and locations should be captured before memory fades. Residents, visitors, and future generations will now have this guide as a reference to the town's beginnings.

The Chesapeake Beach Historic Heritage Trail is a self-guided walking tour through the Town of Chesapeake Beach highlighted with wayside signs. These informational signs show and tell the historical significance of the various spots located along the way of the "trail". As you follow the trail and study the signs, try to imagine what it was once like "back in the heyday" realizing why You Are Here!

For more detailed information about the history of Chesapeake Beach, please visit these places:

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum  
4155 Mears Avenue  
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732

Bayside History Museum  
4025 4th Street  
North Beach, MD 20714

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch  
3819 Harbor Road #200  
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732

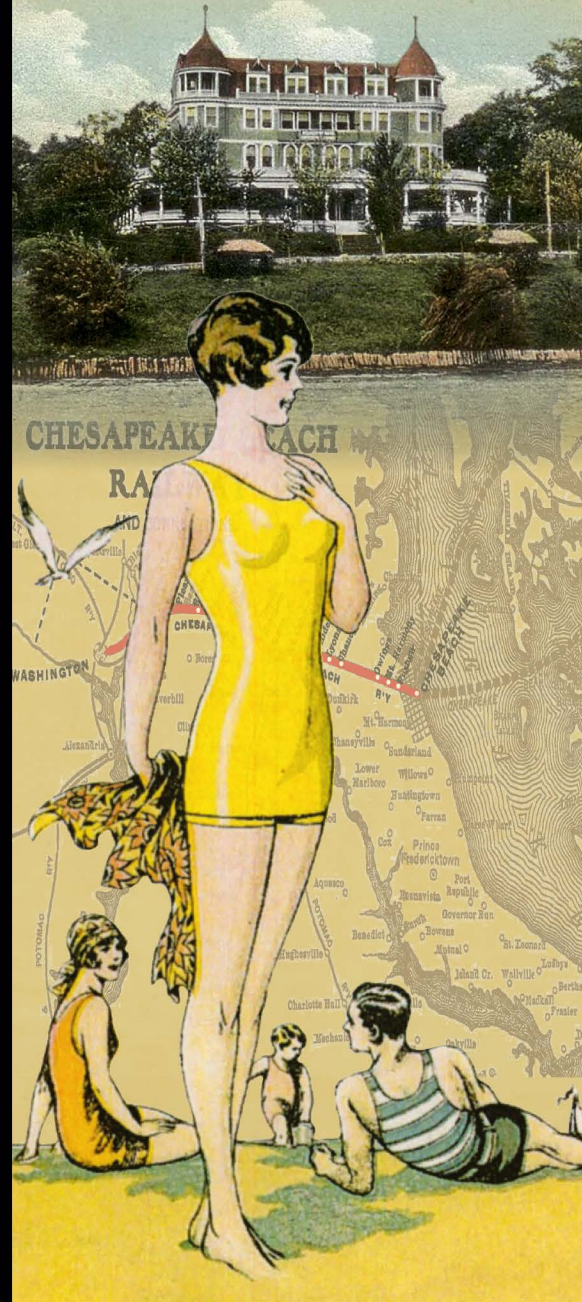


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Town of Chesapeake Beach  
PO Box 400  
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732

## CHESAPEAKE BEACH HISTORIC HERITAGE TRAIL



## 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.

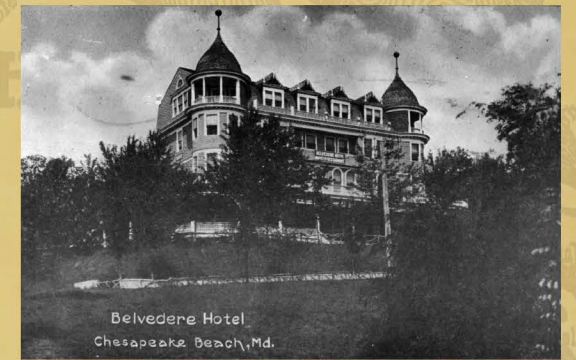


A new company, the Chesapeake Beach Railway Company, took up the idea in 1896. This company completed the railway, and on June 9, 1900, the resort staged its grand opening. As the years progressed, the adjacent community of North Beach continued to develop as a neighboring cottage community.

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." Originally conceived as a resort intended to rival Atlantic City and Coney Island, it was promoted as "The New Monte Carlo." The resort's close proximity and rail connection to



Washington, D.C. enticed thousands of visitors to escape the sweltering heat of the city and enjoy the cool bay breezes and salt water of the Chesapeake Bay.



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 Chesapeake Bay before it was destroyed by a fire on March 30, 1923. The resort consisted of a boardwalk over the water which was lined with a band shell, a scenic railway, restaurants, souvenir shops, amusements, and arcade games.



"The Great Derby" roller coaster was constructed over the boardwalk in 1916 and operated until 1926. A pleasant park and picnicking area on the nearby land were featured as part of the resort's additional attractions. The boardwalk eventually fell into disrepair and destruction in 1929-1930.

The Chesapeake Beach Railway brought people to the two beach towns until 1935 when bankruptcy forced the railway to close down its operations. The park was renamed Seaside Park and opened in 1930 moving the amusements to the adjacent land. In 1946 the management of the Park once again changed along with the name; the park would be known as Chesapeake Beach Park until it finally closed in 1972.

All images courtesy of CCG The Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum collection.



This is a copy of a colorized panoramic photograph of the Boardwalk at Chesapeake Beach taken sometime before the Belvedere Hotel (in the background, on the left) burned down on March 30, 1923.



This is a map of Chesapeake Beach from September 1923 laid over a current map of the Town to show the original location of the Boardwalk and the amusements portrayed in the photograph above.

