

CHESAPEAKE BEACH HISTORIC HERITAGE TRAIL



Near this spot in the early 20th century, steam trains from The Chesapeake Beach Railway discharged passengers from Washington, D.C. They arrived with great expectations for a busy day enjoying the many amusements of the beach and park. The park offered many activities: restaurants, arcade games, a scenic railway, a carousel, music at the band shell, and the dancing pavilion. Most of these activities were located on a boardwalk over the water, which was 300 to 400 feet from the shore. The usual water-related pastimes, such as swimming, boating, fishing, and crabbing, were also available. On the adjacent shore there were pleasant picnic grounds, walking paths through shady groves, scenic overlooks over the Chesapeake Bay, sumptuous restaurants, and hotels for overnight accommodation. The grand roller coaster located over the water and known as the Great Derby, opened for operations in 1916 and survived for a decade. A later roller coaster, called The Comet, was situated on land during the 1930's and early 1940's.



The amusement park had three distinct periods. The first was the era of the Boardwalk, dating from 1900 until 1930. In the summer of 1930, Seaside Park opened on land adjacent to the water. This land-based park survived through the summer of 1942; the park operations were curtailed by WWII. After the war, the park reopened as Chesapeake Beach Park, and continued operations until finally closing in 1972. Two of the favorite places for enjoyment in the later park were The Ballroom and the Salt Water Swimming Pool.

