

MAYO BEACH PARK ABBREVIATED HISTORY

Compiled by Darald G. Lofgren

PREHISTORIC AND COLONIAL

Artifacts have been found at Mayo Beach Park including arrow points, glass and mill stone. One arrow point identified as a Savannah point is 4000 years old, and a second a Late Woodland Period point is 500 years old. The Algonquin and Iroquois Indians dominated the middle Atlantic coast at the time of the arrival of John Smith through the Colonial Period.

Settlement began in Mayo on July 26, 1658, when Cecilus Calvert, Lord Baltimore, granted a tract of four hundred ninety acres of land between South River and Rhode River to Captain Edward Selby. Today the areas south and north of the park are known as Shoreham Beach and Saunders Point respectively. Mayo Beach was known in colonial times as “Proctor’s Landing.”

Three portions of a mill grinding wheel have been discovered on the north end of Mayo Beach Park property that is 150 to 300 years old. Many Chesapeake Bay families engaged in commercial and agricultural work on land as well as with water enterprises. Fishing, crabbing and oystering , boat building and water transportation were important occupations. Water travel on the rivers and bay depended on navigation and seamanship, and light houses were important aids.

THOMAS POINT LIGHTHOUSE

Northeast across the South River from Mayo Beach is the point of land known as Thomas Point. The famous Thomas Point Shoal lighthouse is now a visited signature landmark, and was an important navigational aid. This Chesapeake Bay lighthouse was first constructed in 1824. A second lighthouse was constructed a decade later. The present screwpile lighthouse was erected in 1875. It is the only screwpile lighthouse that remains on its original bay location.



Commodore Isaac Mayo
(Artist: William Edward West)

MAYO BEACH

Mayo is the historical name of our present beach park and the entire Mayo peninsula. The peninsula between South River and Rhode River were named after Commodore Isaac Mayo who purchased 39 acres of Mayo Beach in 1856 from William and Sophia Dawson as an addition to his plantation estate. Commodore Isaac Mayo was a prominent United States Naval officer and Maryland citizen from Anne Arundel County. He amassed an estate of more than 1400 acres. His ancestral home, Gresham, was built in 1686 and designated as a United States Historic Place in 1984. He had an extensive U.S. Naval record from 1809 to 1861.

MAYO BEACH CLUB

Charles and Mary Trabing purchased Mayo Beach from Hoffbatetter in 1939. Mayo Beach Club was developed as a popular family beach area with swimming, food, amusements, and slot machine gambling, serving Baltimore and Washington, D.C. residents. Scores of Anne Arundel County teenagers worked at Mayo Beach, Triton Beach, and Beverly Beach Clubs during these commercial summer resort years. The opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the demise of slot machines in Southern Maryland led to a negative economic impact on the resort business in Southern Maryland.

MAYO BEACH PARK

The Mayo Beach property was purchased by Anne Arundel County for recreation and park open space. Fred Kramer became the residence employee caretaker of Mayo Beach Park. He was married at Mayo Beach Park and raised two children while residing at the park until 2001. The Kramers continued the group rental tradition begun by the Trabings. The park continues in active use as a site for rentals for family reunions, weddings, and company picnics.