

IMAGES
of Rail

EASTERN SHORE RAILROAD

Chris Dickon

Eastern Shore Railroad, Chris Dickon, Arcadia Publishing, 2006, 0738542431, 9780738542430, 128 pages. In the 1880s, New York railroad magnate Alexander Cassatt looked at a map of America's East Coast and decided that he could overcome a challenge of geography if he thought of a new railroad in a non-traditional way. North and South were now trading with each other postwar, and the two most prominent coastal cities of those regions, New York and Norfolk, were less than 500 miles apart--except for one very large problem: at the end of a straight route down the Eastern Shore of Virginia lay the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, with more than 20 miles of open water to the rail yards of Norfolk. Thus Cassatt created the New York, Philadelphia, & Norfolk Railroad, which ran overland from Philadelphia to Cape Charles, Virginia; at Cape Charles, the railroad became waterborne on barges and passenger ferries that traveled the rough waters at the mouth of the bay. Now known as the Eastern Shore Railroad, since 1884, the operation has followed a path through history that has been no less dramatic than the rise and fall--and curves in the right-of-way--of American railroading during that time..

A Civil War Army Vs. Navy : a Year Inside College Football's Purest Rivalry, John Feinstein, Oct 1, 1996, , 412 pages. Brings to life one of college football's oldest and most heated rivalries through the 1994 season, explaining the struggles faced by each team, including player deaths, close

Chesapeake circle , Robert H. Burgess, Jun 1, 1965, History, 211 pages. .

Chesapeake steamboats vanished fleet, David C. Holly, 1994, Transportation, 308 pages. In eight engaging chapters, this book portrays the steamboat era (1813-1963) on the Chesapeake, which matched in glamour and excitement the steamboats' history on the

Bingham Canyon Railroads , Don Strack, Aug 1, 2011, Transportation, 128 pages. Railroads and mining in Bingham Canyon have gone hand in hand since the first railroad was constructed in the canyon in late 1873. Bingham Canyon in the early years was a gold

Sacramento Impressions , Tom Myers, Sally Myers, Tom, Sally, and Jeff Myers, Sep 1, 2007, , 80 pages. Longtime residents, the Myers capture Sacramento in all of its many moods: from the brilliantly colored fireworks at the Capitol to the silhouetted fishermen quietly fishing

Farmers 1951 income , , 1951, , . .

Colonial Beach, Virginia Playground of the Potomac, James Tigner, Jr., May 28, 2008, , 128 pages. The steamboat St. Johns has just brought you down the Potomac from Washington. The boardwalk is only steps away. Fun awaits! Enjoy your stay! Colonial Beach, Virginia, was the

Chesapeake Bay Steamers , Chris Dickon, 2006, History, 128 pages. Since English settlers first touched the shore of the new country in 1607, the Chesapeake Bay has been a multifaceted engine of American history and commerce. The body of

On land and sea a pictorial review of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, John William Robertson, 1961, Eastern Shore (Md. and Va.), 160 pages. .

The Suffolk Peanut Festival , Patrick Evans-Hylton, 2004, History, 128 pages. With the popularity of P.T. Barnum's circus and America's game-baseball-peanuts became the snack food of the people across the country in the late 1800s. Sold hot from a

The Enduring Journey of the USS Chesapeake Navigating the Common History of Three Nations, Chris Dickon, 2008, Architecture, 157 pages. James Lawrence's command, spoken as his final fighting words in the historic 1813 battle between the USS Chesapeake and the HMS Shannon, would endure as the motto of the U.S

Last of the steamboats the saga of the Wilson Line, Richard V. Elliott, 1970, Transportation, 204 pages. .

College of William and Mary , Chris Dickon, 2007, History, 128 pages. By the time of the American Revolution, the College of William and Mary was already into its eighth decade as the academic source of what the new nation would become and how it

A study of the socio-economic effects of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel upon the eastern shore of Virginia "before phase" report. Selected socio-economic and highway oriented characteristics of the eastern shore of Virginia, Virginia Council of Highway Investigation and Research, 1965, . . .

He retold the story of how a New York railroad man created three railroad lines from Philadelphia to Cape Charles in order to connect New York to Norfolk. These lines were then sent to a railroad that traveled on water via barges and passenger ferries. That railroad is now the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

After his talk, I had a few follow-up questions for Dickon. As we were talking, he mentioned that most people don't realize that Arcadia requires its authors to have more than 200 pictures for their publications. Having written three books for Arcadia, it's a process that has sent him to libraries, city halls and historical societies up and down the East Coast. All in all, he said, it takes him about a year to fill a book.

It wasn't until the 1960s that the sum total of all of the world's bridge-building technology could accomplish what Alexander Cassatt had accomplished with the railroad and maritime engineering of his day in 1884. Soon after the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel opened its 17.6 miles of length across the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay on April 15, 1964 it was deemed "One of the Seven Engineering Wonders of the Modern World". It took cars, trucks and buses across thirteen miles of trestle and four miles of tunnels from Cape Charles at the tip of Virginia's Eastern Shore to Virginia Beach and Norfolk on the southern shore of the Bay. And it made obsolete much of what Cassatt had created 180 years earlier – a small railroad with a remarkable audacity.

Cassatt was a wealthy railroad magnate. He would later go on to head the Pennsylvania Railroad, build the railroad tubes beneath the Hudson River, then Manhattan's classic Pennsylvania Station on Eighth Avenue. But in 1882 he had looked at a map of America's east coast and seen the solution to a geographic puzzle: how do you create a direct rail link from the northern commercial hub of New York City down to the southern commercial hub of Norfolk? The two cities were less than 500 miles apart, but there was that 18 miles of open water to be crossed at the journey's end – not just any stretch of water, but roiling tidal water, the point at which the great Atlantic Ocean met the nation's largest natural estuary.

The task could have gone undone, after all. Virginia's Eastern Shore had been a geographic cul de sac since its first settling in the early 1600s. In 1879 an article in "Harper's New Monthly Magazine" said of the Shore that "it appears to be cut loose from the rest of the world, sleepily floating in the indolent sea of the past, incapable of crossing the gulf that separates it from modern life, and undesirous of joining in the race toward the wonderful future." That future was one in which post Civil War America was ready to develop its industry and agriculture, to trade between once antagonistic states and export its bounty to the rest of the world. The population and commerce on America's mid-Atlantic coast was developing exponentially, but because the portions of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia that formed the Delmarva Peninsula were surrounded on three sides by water eastern population followed a bypassing arc from Baltimore, inland to Richmond, and down the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

Cassatt saw it differently, and in 1882 he got on a horse, laid out a route for a railroad and determined the location for a port from which the railroad would continue by barge and passenger steamers to the port of Norfolk. The site he chose was described by one historian as "a cornfield beside a brackish pond." But Cassatt figured it would be the most practical tidal harbor with closest access to the deep waters of the Bay, and so it was there that the town of Cape Charles was built from scratch and put in business.

Cape Charles proved to be not just another small American town. As Cassatt intended, it became the point of intersection between land and sea; industry, agriculture and the aquaculture of the surrounding waters; and the north and south of postwar America. In the years since 1884 the railroad and the town that gave it access to the sea have ridden all of the ups and downs, booms and busts, and transportation trends of American history up to the present day. The era of the passenger steamers across the Bay has long since ended, motor vehicle traffic that parallels the railroad has increased, the town of Cape Charles is always redefining itself, and the railroad still travels down the Shore and across the Bay, but, like many small railroads, never quite certain of what its future holds.

21st century agriculture Alexander Cassatt American and Cape Charles Atlantic automobiles Baltimore bay steamer boat built Cape Charles Harbor Cape Charles Historical CBBT Charles Historical Society City Company Courtesy of Robert crew crossing Delaware Delmar Delmarva Peninsula dining downtown Norfolk Eastern Shore Railroad Eastern Shore Railway Elisha Lee engines ferry service freight cars Hampton Roads Harlan and Hollingsworth between Hotel journey Kiptopeke Kirn Library land and sea Little Creek loaded lower Chesapeake Bay Maryland miles per hour moved Norfolk and Cape Northampton Old Point Comfort Onancock Parksley passenger ferry passenger steamers passenger train photographs picture Pocomoke Pocomoke City postcard potatoes Robert Lewis Route 13 Salisbury Sargeant Memorial Room schedule seen ships Shore of Virginia Shore Railway Museum Southern station Street town of Cape track traffic transportation truck tugboats tugs and barges U.S. Route vehicles Virginia Historical Society Virginia's Eastern Shore workers York

Author Chris Dickon is a writer, historian, and Emmy-winning television producer. His work has been broadcast and published internationally, much of it derived from Virginia's rich past as the original source of American history. *Chesapeake Bay Steamers* brings together the photograph archives of the Library of Congress and 10 libraries, museums, and historical societies, large and small, from Norfolk to Baltimore.

In the 1880s, New York railroad magnate Alexander Cassatt looked at a map of America's East Coast and decided that he could overcome a challenge of geography if he thought of a new railroad in a non-traditional way. North and South were now trading with each other postwar, and the two most prominent coastal cities of those regions, New York and Norfolk, were less than 500 miles apart--except for one very large problem: at the end of a straight route down the Eastern Shore of Virginia lay the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, with more than 20 miles of open water to the rail yards of Norfolk. Thus Cassatt created the New York, Philadelphia, & Norfolk Railroad, which ran overland from Philadelphia to Cape Charles, Virginia; at Cape Charles, the railroad became waterborne on barges and passenger ferries that traveled the rough waters at the mouth of the bay. Now known as the Eastern Shore Railroad, since 1884, the operation has followed a path through history that has been no less dramatic than the rise and fall--and curves in the right-of-way--of American railroading during that time.

Title: A lot of work goes into these books Author: Lauren Wicks Publisher: Suffolk News-Herald Date: 8/19/09 From time to time, we here at the Suffolk News-Herald get releases promoting books that Suffolk citizens have written. A lot of these books are published by Arcadia Publishing, which is the leading local history publisher in the United States, with more than 5,000 different books in print. Authors are contacted to create these books about niche locations in the country, and they are charged with filling a book with the stories and photographs they pick up in their research. In fact, Suffolk has its own book -- a complete history of the Suffolk Peanut Festival, which was written by Patrick Evans-Hylton and published in 2004. Throughout the course of my time here at the paper, I've been able to meet a few people who have created these books. Every time I meet these authors, it's really a cool thing to see how much work goes into making just one of these publications. This week was no exception. Tuesday night, I was out at the North Suffolk library to listen Chris Dickon give a presentation about his Arcadia book, "Eastern Shore Railroad." While stories about transportation or infrastructure tend to make my eyes glaze over a bit, Dickon's tales had a different effect on me. He retold the story of how a New York railroad man created three

railroad lines from Philadelphia to Cape Charles in order to connect New York to Norfolk. These lines were then sent to a railroad that traveled on water via barges and passenger ferries. That railroad is now the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. What made Dickon's talk the most interesting were the images he selected for his PowerPoint presentation. He showed what Norfolk looked like more than 100 years ago. In one photo, you could see the empty waters and a single bridge where now reside the USS Wisconsin and Nauticus. It was pretty cool to see. After his talk, I had a few follow-up questions for Dickon. As we were talking, he mentioned that most people don't realize that Arcadia requires its authors to have more than 200 pictures for their publications. Having written three books for Arcadia, it's a process that has sent him to libraries, city halls and historical societies up and down the East Coast. All in all, he said, it takes him about a year to fill a book. So, the next time you see an Arcadia book, take a minute to peruse it -- you're holding a lot of work in your hands.

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