

Crisfield

MARYLAND

VISITOR GUIDE & WELCOME PACKAGE



WELCOME TO Crisfield, Maryland!



THE CRAB CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

So, you're interested in Crisfield, Maryland. Why is that?

- Maybe you've heard Crisfield is a unique and charming little town, where the water that nearly surrounds it provides a playground for all kinds of summer fun like boating and crabbing...
- Maybe you've heard about our first class marina with over 500 boat slips along the protected harbor... Or our state park that is ideal for camping, hiking, picnicking, or crabbing off the dock as well as boating and kayaking along 30 miles of water trails...
- Maybe you've heard about our charter boats that take people out fishing and that we have the best bottom fishing on the Chesapeake Bay...
- Maybe you want to take a cruise boat from Crisfield to Tangier Island or Smith Island, two inhabited islands just off our coast...
- Maybe you like seafood, crab especially, and you know that Maryland blue crab, which is plentiful in Crisfield, is the best...
- Maybe you just want to get away from the crowds, the noise, and the traffic of the big city, and go somewhere where it's calm, peaceful, and beautiful, and the people are friendly and welcoming to visitors...
- Or maybe you're just looking for a great place to retire or escape after years of the rat race.

Whatever your reason for wanting our new Crisfield Visitor Guide, welcome!
We're happy you found us, and we can't wait for you to come and enjoy our little piece of heaven at the end of the road. Just follow Route 413 to its end at the water, park your car, and dive in. (Not literally, of course.) See ya 'round!

This Visitor Guide is a marketing project of:

The Greater Crisfield Action Coalition, Inc. (GCAC)
GreaterCrisfieldMD.org • contact@greatercrisfieldmd.org
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See our video of Crisfield!



Crisfield's Top 32 Assets

Whether you come to VISIT, STAY, or BUILD a BUSINESS...
The Greater Crisfield Area offers a wealth of unique assets including
people, physical infrastructure, natural resources, rich heritage and
special events that make it **Uniquely-Crisfield®**

1. The goodness, friendliness and diversity of its people
2. A city built on oyster shells and surrounded on 3 sides by water
3. Located just one hour's drive from Ocean City or Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and their 10 million annual tourists and an easy drive from Washington DC, Baltimore, Wilmington, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, & New York
4. A reputation as the "Crab Capital of the World"
5. The natural beauty of the Tangier Sound, its islands and its marshes
6. An abundance of sea life and waterfowl
7. Outstandingly beautiful sunsets
8. A city beach accessible from town and miles of white sand beaches accessible by boat
9. A City Dock and pavilion, with over \$1 million in recent renovations
10. A cruise ship port-of-call and twice-daily departure point for Smith & Tangier Island ferries
11. A charter fishing fleet
12. A growing complement of fine gift and antique shops
13. The largest and best state-owned Marina on the East Coast with 515 deep water slips in a protected harbor ac commodating boats from 15 to 150 feet and 2017 recipient of the Boaters' Choice Award by Marinas.com
14. Jane's Island State park with 1300 acres of wilderness, 11 miles of pristine beaches, 30 miles of marked water trails, over 100 tent, camper and cabin sites, nature center, and conference facility.
15. The J. Millard Tawes Historical Museum, celebrating the history of the Crisfield area and its relationship to the water
16. Departure point for Tangier and Smith Islands - rated "Best Trips 2016" by National Geographic Traveler
17. One of "America's Top Five Kayak Destinations" by Paddler Magazine and TripAdvisor
18. One of "America's 101 Best Outdoor Towns" by 101 Best Outdoor Towns: Unspoiled Places to Visit, Live & Play by Tuff and Melille
19. One of "America's 10 Best Places to Buy a Waterfront Second Home" by Zillow, July 2014
20. One of the "9 Maryland Towns You Should Be Spending More Time In," according to Thrillist, November 2015
21. Gateway to Smith Island, rated "One of the 28 Best Trips of 2016" by Outside Magazine
22. The National Hard-Crab Derby, a 70+-year tradition on Labor Day weekend
23. The J. Millard Tawes Crab and Clambake, a 40+ year tradition the 3rd Wednesday of July
24. The Softshell Spring Fair, a 25+ year tradition in May
25. Freedom Fest, an annual tradition of celebrating our heroes in July
26. Great Hope Golf Course, an 18 hole 7000 yard course designed by world-renowned golf architect Dr. Michael J. Hurdzan
27. An arts-culture with many local artists, home to the Somerset County Arts Council, and an Arts & Entertainment District with expected startup in 2018
28. Home to the Smith Island Baking Company, producing Maryland's State Dessert, Smith Island Cake
29. Home of Water's Edge Restaurant, listed among "These 15 Restaurants in Maryland Have Jaw-Dropping Views While You Eat," according to OnlyInYourState.com, February 2016
30. Home to The Crab Place, the first and largest online business to sell and ship Crisfield blue crab to all fifty states (reported by the Wall Street Journal) and now promoting and hosting Crab & Cruise and Crab & Concert events in Crisfield, bringing thousands of visitors from across America to over 20 events annually. Also chosen in 2018 as #2 of top 15 places in Maryland for best steamed crabs by OnlyInYourState.com.
31. Home to Chesapeake Cowboys, a 'rodeo' organization formed by local boat captains, which attracts thousands of spectators to its boat docking competitions across the region. Starting with one event in Crisfield, they have expanded to over a dozen cities from Baltimore to Deal Island to Cambridge in Maryland to Cape Charles, Virginia.
32. A calm and peaceful environment as the safest city in Maryland, ranked 58th out of 8,000 cities in the nation, according to the 2016 FBI Annual Report

... See all the rest of Crisfield's assets by going to <http://www.greatercrisfieldmd.org/plan/> and view *The Action Plan Part Three*, pages 84-88.

Photo Gallery



Somers Cove Marina

"I've been around a bit--Cape Hatteras, Cape May, and all up and down the East Coast--and, compared to some, Somers Cove Marina is a gold mine. There is no other place as nice on the eastern side of the Chesapeake Bay. We've got a great location, we can go anywhere from here, good security, we can sleep at night, clean showers, relaxed but disciplined regulations... Besides all that, we have easy access for boat repairs, plus great restaurants nearby. There's not a town on the Eastern Shore that wouldn't trade places with Crisfield if they could have that marina."

Captain Ron Groff, Pocomoke, MD

Wheels on the Waterfront

Classic Car Cruise In. Every July, special interest car enthusiasts from all over the shore gather in Crisfield sharing their cars for all to see.

Great Hope Golf Course

Nestled in the wetlands of Somerset County, Maryland lies "one of the most beautiful golf courses on the Eastern Seaboard". Designed by the world-renowned golf architect, Dr. Michael J. Hurdzan, this 7000-yard championship course stands as a popular site for avid golfers.



crabcapital.com



Governor Tawes Crab & Clam Bake

Held every year on the third Wednesday in July at Somers Cove Marina in Crisfield, this annual celebration is named in honor of Crisfield native, J. Millard Tawes - the 54th Governor of the State of Maryland. This event, listed in Frommers Travel Guides and other National Event Directories is described as “..an outdoor all-you-can-eat affair featuring crabs, clams, fish, corn on the cob, and watermelon, and in election years, lots of politicians.”

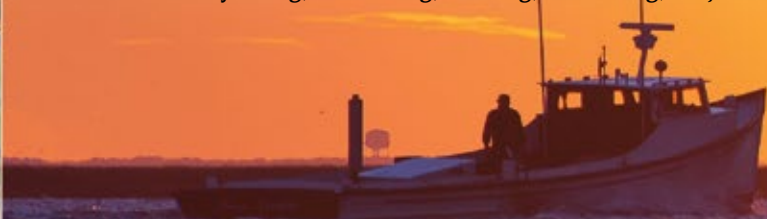
National Hard Crab Derby

held every year during Labor Day weekend features a Street Parade highlighting the “Miss Crustation” winning contestants. Other activities include: Boat Docking Contest, a 10-K Race/Walk, Swim Meet, Skiff Races, Crab Picking Contest, Annual Governor’s Cup Race, National Hard Crab Derby Race, Arm Wrestling Contest and Concert.



Janes Island State Park

offers visitors a unique opportunity to enjoy the beauty and bounty of the Chesapeake Bay. Within the mainland portion of the park are the campground, rental cabins and conference center, picnic areas and pavilions, and the boat ramp and marina. The island portion of the park - Janes Island - includes over 2,900 acres of saltmarsh, over 30 miles of water trails, and miles of isolated pristine beaches. Enjoy hiking, biking, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, crabbing, or just admiring nature.



Arts & Entertainment



Photo by Leslie Pruitt



Artist Debra Howard, photo by Rusty Merritt



Katherine Kiss

Crisfield's historic architecture, affordable cost of living, and charming Chesapeake waterfront are a draw for artists and visitors alike. We are a thriving community with visual artists, performing artists, writers and craftspeople. Local art forms such as model ships and duck decoys often reflect our working waterfront culture, and you can't beat the seafood!

Visit our 4th Saturday Bay Strolls at the City Dock (1201 W Main Street) from May through October for live music, art and festival food - including crabcakes! Come for the art, stay for dinner and our legendary sunsets. Reservations for our seafood restaurants are a good idea, especially on 4th Saturdays. Event and restaurant information are available at Crisfieldarts.org.

Crisfield is home to many unique cultural events like the Soft Crab Festival on Sunday of Memorial Day weekend and the Hard Crab Derby on Labor Day weekend. But it's also a great idea to visit on one of the quieter days to see the real heart of the town. Have an ammonia soda at Gordon's Confectionary or take a ferry from the City Dock to Tangier or Smith Island, the last populated islands in the Chesapeake Bay. Experiences don't get more authentic than Crisfield - come and see!

Charter Boat FISHING



- Charter Boat Fishing Center..... Somers Cove Marina
Crisfield, MD 21817
410-968-0925
- Barbara Ann Fishing.....Captains Joe and John Asanovich
Barbara Ann II
410-957-2562
barbaraannfishing.com
- Captain Dan Harrison..... The Salty Fly
443-235-6760
crisfield.com/fly
- Karen Ray II Sportfishing..... Captain Curt Johns
443-783-7993
www.facebook.com/chesapeakefishing
- Bay Eagle ChartersCaptain Larry Laird, Jr.
The Bay Eagle
443-235-6282
- Rollin' Stone Fishing Charters..... Captain David Stone
The Rollin' Stone
410-726-5597
dastone.com

For information on Charter Fishing in Crisfield: crabcapital.com



Other helpful websites:
crisfeldevents.com • visitcrisfield.com • visitsomerset.com



History of Crisfield



Among the first colonial settlers to this area was the family of Somers. Benjamin Somers (Summers), the progenitor, settled in the Annessex area in the year 1663. He was granted a patent by the Calverts of Maryland on February 10, 1663. His tract of land was called Emessex and contained 300 acres. His home was near the center of the tract on a small gut leading out of a cove, which was later called Somers Cove. The upper part of this tract became the town of Crisfield, and the Cove still bears the name.

Crisfield would probably have retained the name Somers Cove or Annessex but for a trifling accident which befell the Honorable John Woodland Crisfield, a leader of the Somerset Bar and Member of Congress from the District. Mr. Crisfield was also involved with the railroad, and during an inspection tour of the docks, he was walking along a shaky old footway which led to the Steamboat landing. The story goes that one of those old boards gave way, and the distinguished lawyer and statesman landed in the cold waters of the Annessex River. With much difficulty he was fished out, not much the worse for his ducking, but his clients sought to mollify his wrath, and on the spot christened the future City of Crisfield.

Crisfield received its Charter from the Maryland Legislature forming the town in 1872. Most of the first houses built were placed on piles over marsh or water. To fill the swamp land, oyster shells were used. Today from the center of the town to the City Dock is manmade land of billions of oyster shells crushed compactly together forming the foundation of the larger part of the business section of the city. The ground is as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar.

The late 1800s was the era of the steamboat, and Crisfield had regular steamer service sailing from Norfolk to Crisfield and from Crisfield to Baltimore. By 1910, the Custom House at Crisfield had the largest list of sailing vessels of any port in the United States, and became a port of entry. In 1910 Crisfield abandoned its early form of Commissioner Government that had served the community since 1872. Doctor William Fletcher Hall, a practicing physician in the city, was elected the first Mayor. W. Jerome Sterling, Edward P. Wyatt, and Benjamin F. Gibson were elected as Councilmen, and William E. Daugherty was appointed Clerk-Treasurer.

Today ferries from Smith and Tangier Islands and hundreds of work boats travel in and out of Crisfield harbor carrying passengers, oysters, crabs and other seafood. Crisfield is still a great port to visit, and we are grateful for the many visitors that arrive by cruise ship, private yacht, buses, cars and even airplanes.

Crisfield people find pleasure as well as their livelihood on the water. The fishing grounds adjacent to the city are unequalled. Tangier Sound, situated on one side of the peninsula on which Crisfield is located, offers one of the finest courses for sailing yachts and motor boats in the world.

The "early history" of Crisfield is in its people. The courteous and respectful treatment of visitors, the slow and easy but thorough way of doing things which is rapidly disappearing from the American scene, is still very much in evidence in this virgin territory. Past customs and speech are not forgotten but are cultivated for future generations.

Crisfield's history is probably not any different than many other ports on the Chesapeake, but to the residents of this once busy sea port, it is the birthplace of a nation and what we call home. Our city continues to grow in the 21st Century as new condos replace old seafood plants. It is our challenge to grow with a reverence for our past and those who struggled to build this city on the Bay.

--Article by Phil Goldsborough, local historian

The Accohannock Indians

A BRIEF HISTORY



courtesy of the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art

The indigenous Accohannock Indian people are classified as a Woodland Algonquian sub-tribe of the Powhatan Empire from the Atlantic Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Their home was the Kingdom of Accomac, as it was known to the Indians in pre-colonial times. This was before there was a Virginia or Maryland. It included what is presently Somerset County and extending south to Kiptopeke, Virginia. The Accohannock Indians made up the northern portion, and the Accomac made up the southern portion.

An estimated 2,000 Indians lived in this area, which included Crisfield and Marion. These Indians were a canoeing society, and most of their movements and trade routes were done by water. The Accohannock name means “people of the bending waters”.

The Accohannock people inhabited the same territory for at least 8,000 years, making the Accohannock Indians the oldest historical tribe in Maryland. The written history begins in 1524 when Captain Giovanni Verrazano landed at the 38th parallel of the Eastern Shore on the Chesapeake Bay, which is now in Maryland, but previously considered Virginia. This is where he met the first tall, light skinned Indians of the Southern Eastern Shore Tribes of the Chesapeake Bay. These Indians were known as the Accomac Confederation.

In 1995 the Accohannock Indian Tribe became a corporation and received their 501(c)(3) status. They have worked diligently as the Accohannock Indian Tribe, Inc. to preserve their heritage and to present educational opportunities to their community. In 2017 the Accohannock Indian Tribe Inc., officially became recognized by the State of Maryland and is now striving for federal recognition.



Facts about Crisfield & SOMERSET COUNTY



- Crisfield is the southernmost point in Somerset County and Maryland.
- *“Somerset County is an area rich in Eastern Shore and Maryland history, boasting more historical buildings and sites than any other county in Maryland.”* visitsomerset.com
- The largest employer in Crisfield is McCready Memorial Hospital. The 2nd largest employer is Sherwin Williams (Rubberset).
- Crisfield is a historic waterfront town nearly surrounded by the waters of the Chesapeake Bay off of Tangier Sound and is famous for its fishing, sailing, and boating. In addition, Tangier Sound offers one of the finest courses for sailing yachts and motor boats in the world. Along with that, Somers Cove Marina, with its 515 boat slips, is considered by some to be the best marina in the state, if not on the East Coast. Plus, Janes Island State Park, with 3000 acres of salt marsh and over 30 miles of marked water trails and miles pristine beaches, is a haven for birds, fish, crabs, and other salt marsh dwellers. No wonder some consider this area the edge of paradise.
- *“Above all, the town stands out for the courteous and respectful treatment of visitors and the slow and easy but thorough way of doing things, which is rapidly disappearing from the American scene, but is still very much in evidence here.”*
Phil Goldsborough, local historian
- Janes Island State Park was recently named to the American Canoe Association’s inaugural list of recommended water trails.
- Lavalette’s house at Hammock Pointe was not only used in the movie *Jacob Have I Loved*, but was also once owned by Actress Linda Hamilton.
- Smith Island and Tangier Island off the coast of Crisfield are the only two inhabited islands in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Crisfield High School was the first high school in Maryland to install a wind turbine for educational purposes.
- Crisfield has the best wind resource in the State of Maryland, according to the Maryland Energy Administration. Following one year of measurement the average wind speed at 256 feet was 14 mph. Crisfield now has a 750 MW Wind Turbine at the Waste Water Treatment Plant providing much of the WWTP electrical energy which currently costs over \$185,000 per year.
- According to Science teacher Pat Carson, *“Most of the Shore gets all of its water from wells (ground water), and they are drawing it out faster than it can be replaced. There is not one municipality that uses rivers for water, mainly because most are tidal. But Crisfield is on a different aquifer than the upper end of the county. And because we are right down on the bedrock, our water comes from the Piedmont snow and rain that seeps down in the ground and forms the underground river that flows under the Bay to us. As a result, Crisfield has an abundance of water.”*
- *“Somerset County has more than 500 miles of land kissing the Chesapeake Bay.”*
From Destination Maryland - State of Maryland Official Travel Guide
- The McCready Foundation was one of 13 hospital systems in Maryland to receive the “Delmarva Foundation for Medical Care’s Excellence Award” for Quality Improvement in Hospitals in 2012.



TWO MUSEUMS Preserve the History of Crisfield



The rich history of this major region of the Chesapeake Bay is preserved for posterity by two museums in Crisfield. Organized under the Crisfield Heritage Foundation, these museums tell the story of the City. First, the J. Millard Tawes Historical Museum is the general history museum of the area. Its collections tell the story of the vicinity from its pre-Columbus beginnings when native-Americans surrounded the land, through the colonial period, and up to the present.

This museum is named after J. Millard Tawes, who was the 54th Governor of the State of Maryland, and who was born, raised, and passed away in Crisfield. Governor Tawes was one of Maryland's most active governors and is remembered as an advisor and confidante of three presidents. His many achievements include the creation of the Center for Public Broadcasting, which became the model for other states.

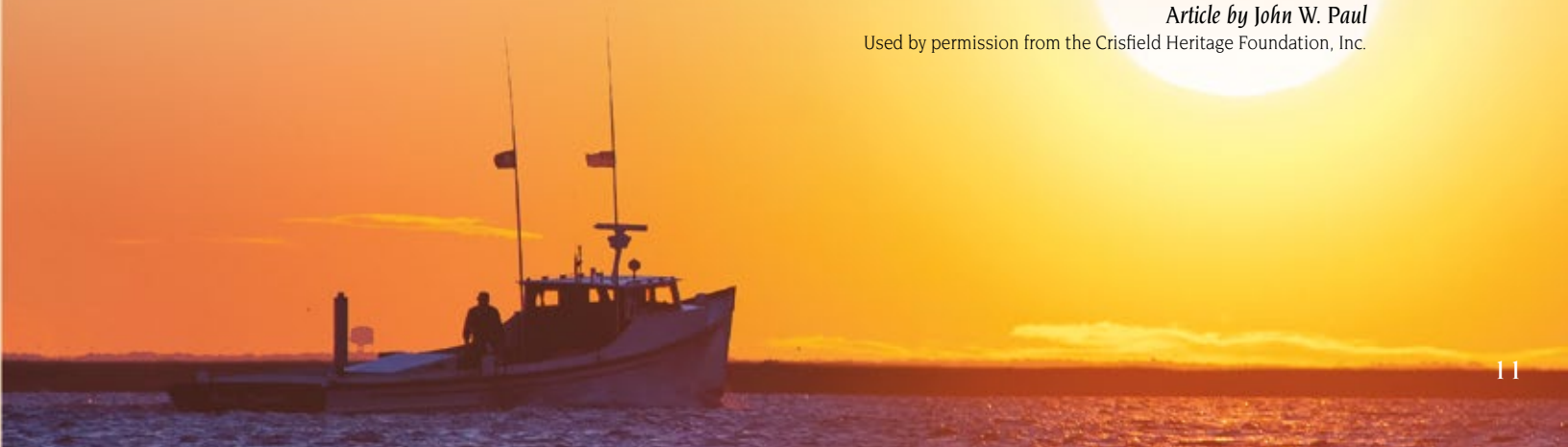
Governor Tawes was also the first southern governor to ban discrimination in public accommodations and also discrimination in state employment. The governor additionally started the University of Maryland Baltimore campus, authorized the second span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, and served as the first secretary of the Department of Natural Resources.

The second museum operated by the Foundation is the Ward Brother's Workshop. Lem (1896-1984) and Steve Ward (1895-1976), the two sons of a Crisfield barber and boat builder, became famous for their carved decoys. Now recognized as masters of decoy and decorative bird carving, they worked here at their workshop all of their lives, producing nearly 25,000 decoys in 60 years. Their workshop is actually composed of the separate structures which were combined by Lem and Steve to form a complete decoy carving and painting workshop.

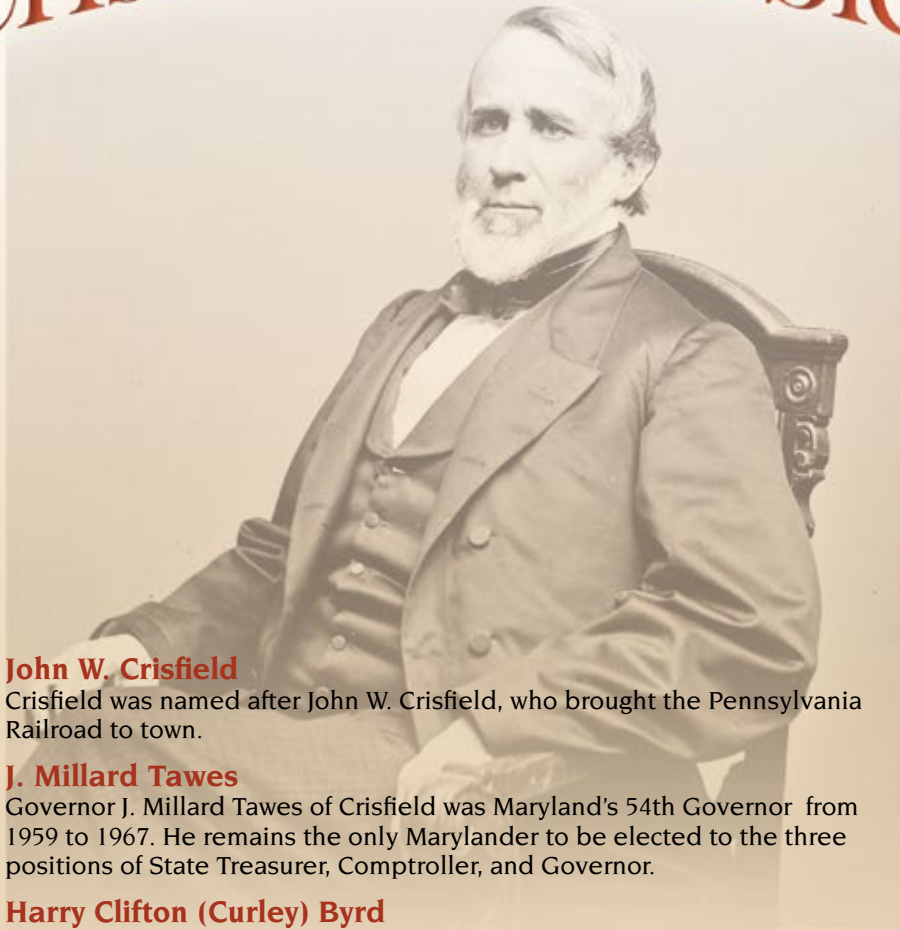
These two museums offer the visitor a complete cultural heritage experience of this historic waterfront town.

Article by John W. Paul

Used by permission from the Crisfield Heritage Foundation, Inc.



Crisfield Notables



John W. Crisfield

Crisfield was named after John W. Crisfield, who brought the Pennsylvania Railroad to town.

J. Millard Tawes

Governor J. Millard Tawes of Crisfield was Maryland's 54th Governor from 1959 to 1967. He remains the only Marylander to be elected to the three positions of State Treasurer, Comptroller, and Governor.

Harry Clifton (Curley) Byrd

President of the University of Maryland.

Lt. General Jefferson Fields

Commanding General of Camp Pendleton (1960), Director of Personnel for the entire United States Marine Corp (1962).

John Wesley Nelson

Founder of Del Monte canned products.



Lem and Steve Ward

The Ward Brothers were featured in National Geographic Magazine three times. In 1983, Lem Ward received the National Heritage Award from Ronald Reagan through the National Endowment for the Arts, recognizing both brothers as the fathers of the modern movement in decorative wildlife carving in America.

Church Services

SCHEDULE

African Methodist Episcopal

St. Paul's A.M.E. Church

4th and Broadway

Sun Service: 10:30 am

Church School: 9:30am

Bible Study: Wed 7:00 – 8:00pm

Youth Bible Study: Thur 5:30 – 6:30 pm

Assemblies of God

Faith Fellowship

26950 Plantation Road

Sun School: 9:30 am

Sun Worship: 10:30 am

Wed Worship: 7:00 pm

Baptist

First Baptist Church

1 S. Somerset Ave.

Sun School: 9:45 – 10:45 am

Sun Service: 11:00 am

Mt. Enon Baptist Church

361 Tyler Street

Sun School: 9:30 am

Sun Worship: 10:30 am

Catholic

Holy Name of Jesus Church

1913 Old Virginia Road, Pocomoke, MD

Sat Mass: 5:00 pm

Sun Mass: 11:00 am

St. Elizabeth Church

8734 Old Westover Road, Westover, MD

Sun Mass: 8:15 am & Spanish Mass: 11:15 am

Church of God

Crisfield Church of God

134 Maryland Ave.

Sun School: 10:00 am

Sun Worship: 11:00 am and 6:00 pm



Holiness

Highway Holiness Church

27127 Old State Rd.

Sun School: 9:30 am

Sun Worship: 10:30 am

Methodist

Somerset Free Methodist

4 Maryland Ave.

Sun School: 10:00 am

Sun Service: 11:00 am

Wed Bible Study: 7:00 pm

Nondenominational

Blancia Rose Faith & Healing Chapel

510 West Main Street

Sun Service - 11:00 am

Christ Fellowship Bible Church

5910 Crisfield Highway, Marion Station

Sun School: 9:00 am

Sun Worship: 10:00 am

Evening Worship: 6:00 pm

Mon youth group: 6:30 pm

Tues evening Bible study: 7:00 pm

Heaven's Gate Sanctuary of Deliverance

78A Somers Cove

Sunday Service - 11:30 am

Living Hope Fellowship

27331 Crisfield Marion Rd.

Sun Service: 10:30 am & 6:00 pm

United Methodist

Asbury United Methodist

3380 Lawsonia Rd.

Sun School: 10:00 am

Sun Service: 11:00 am

Immanuel United Methodist

206 West Main St.

Sun School: 10:00 am

Sun Worship: 12:00 noon

John Wesley United Methodist

206 West Main Street

Worship Service: 9:00 am

Mariners United Methodist

26686 Mariners Rd.

Sun Service: 9:00 am

Shiloh United Methodist

109 North 4th Street

Sun Service: 11:30 am

Wesleyan

Emmanuel Evangelical Wesleyan

22 E. Chesapeake Ave.

Sun Service: 11:00 am

Crisfield Wesleyan Church

3065 Lawsonia Road

Sun School: 10:00 am

Sun Service: 11:00 am and 6:00 pm



CRAB PICKER EXTRAORDINAIRE! Hazel "Hurricane" Cropper



Hey, all you crab lovers! Here's a question for you: Who is the World Champion Crabmeat Picker of all time? None other than Crisfield's own, "Hurricane" Hazel Cropper. Hazel, who now picks crabs part-time for The Crab Place, has won the Crab Picking Contest at the National Hard Crab Derby more times than any other competitor since the contest started on Labor Day weekend in 1963. She has won eight years in a row, plus six more times, for a total of fourteen wins. Her personal record was picking 4.9 pounds of crabmeat in 15 minutes in 1991!

Born and raised in Crisfield, Maryland, known as The Crab Capital of the World, Hazel started picking crabs in 1947 at the age of nine. Taught by her grandmother, Meinne Bishop, picking crabs was a family affair, and she joined in with her sister, her aunts, and many other family members. In 1961, Hazel started work at Byrd's Seafood in Crisfield picking crabs, and continued on there for thirty years. "We were just like one big family," she said. "Every day at 9:00 AM, we'd stop work and sing *The Lord's Prayer*. While we worked, we'd laugh and talk, but we kept on picking." In fact, Hazel believes in giving a good day's work for a good day's wages. "Some people duck work, but I dive right in," she said with a smile. In fact, she worked two jobs for many years, picking crabs at Byrd's during the day, and then making corn fritters and onion rings at Mrs. Paul's Kitchen at night until 1991 when Mrs. Paul's closed. She entered her first crab picking contest in 1989 and won, and she's been winning ever since.

"There were others who picked crabs fast when the crab picking contest began, people like Bernice Banks, Carpathia Miles, and Grace Ward. When I win, I honor them as well. I like honoring them as well as myself. And I feel good to still carry on..." Hazel is also grateful for the healing of a hand injury she suffered while cutting soft crabs. It left her unable to compete in the Crab Derby crab picking contests from 2001 until 2007, when she returned and garnered her 11th win. She's racked up three more wins since then.

Winning the crab picking contests has gained her a certain amount of celebrity and the opportunity to travel and display her talent. For example, she has given demonstrations at the Baltimore Aquarium and at Sunfest in Ocean City, Maryland. She also traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to a food emporium there for several years, where she taught adults and school children about Maryland crabs and how to pick them.

"I like what I do," she said proudly. *"It is God who gives us gifts. I thank Him for the gift I have been given, and each time I win, I acknowledge Him. I enjoy demonstrating my way of life, and also I am able to shed light on Crisfield, the town I hail from. I feel somewhat blessed to be able to do that."* And Crisfield is blessed to have her. We are proud of her accomplishments and, most of all, her kind and generous spirit. May her legacy live on long after she's gone. And meanwhile, stop by and say hello to Hazel at The Crab Place in Crisfield. If you're lucky, she'll show you a thing or two about picking crabs!

CRISFIELD WATERMAN Philip "Moose" Labo



What's it like to make a living going out in a boat to catch crabs on a daily basis? For waterman Moose Labo, it's a labor of love. He started with his Dad when he was six or seven years old. He couldn't do much at the time, but by the time he was seventeen or eighteen, he was running his own boat and has been crabbing for over twenty years since then. During crab season, which starts April 1st each year, his day starts at 5:00 AM and ends around 2:00 PM, six days a week. When he first started crabbing, he had 200-300 crab pots. Now he has 900 that he has set out into the Bay, and each day he, and his two nephews Kris and Kam, and sometimes his Dad, go out to pull up the pots and bring in the catch for the day.

Moose said he loves being on the water and being his own boss. And, he added with a smile, "I really love it when I'm makin' money." "Makin' money" can be tricky for watermen. It's hard to know what to expect, and there is a great deal of risk involved for their investment in their boat, pots, and fuel. Sometimes they catch a lot of crabs and find that the price has dropped because crabs are so plentiful that they don't have much left after they cover their costs. Or crabs can be scarce, and they get a good price for the few crabs they catch, but not enough to make it profitable. "That's the hardest part," Moose said. "You put all the money you saved the year before into getting ready to crab again, not knowing if you're going to make it back." But then there are times when things align so that the catch is abundant and the price is good. Those are the times Moose enjoys the most!

Starting out at daybreak, Moose also enjoys watching the sun come up from his boat. "There's some beautiful sights out there. You never know what you're going to see. Some mornings, eagles swoop down and pick bait out of the water. It's amazing to watch," he said.

Watermen also find some unexpected "treasures" in their crab pots besides crabs. "The other day we were clear off shore, and we found a golf ball in a pot. Sometimes we find balloons. When I was young, I pulled up a pot, and it had the ugliest creature I've ever seen in it. I liked to jump overboard! To me, it looked like a Chinese eel. I still get scared when I think about it," he said with a grin.

When he's not getting pots ready for crabbing season or busy with life as a waterman, he works at the local Salvation Army Youth Club in Crisfield, overseeing programs and mentoring the kids. He said he loves it there too because he really enjoys working with young people. It's a good balance for him. Part of his life is out on the water making a living and part is on land making a difference. Either way, when it comes to Moose Labo, life is good.

Enjoy These Crisfield Eateries...

- 1 Cafe's Carry Out**
Fourth Street • 410-968-1400
- 2 Café Milano**
103 North Fourth Street • 410-968-1082
- 3 Captain Tyler's Crabhouse**
923 Spruce Street • 410-968-1131
smithislandcruises.com
- 4 Captain's Carry Out**
947 West Main Street • 410-968-1305
- 5 China Wok**
1 Jacksonville Road • 410-968-2888
- 6 The Crab Place**
Crab & Cruise Events held here (Must buy tickets in advance)
504 Maryland Avenue • 877-328-2722
crabandcruise.com
- 7 The Gathering Place**
4012 Crisfield Highway • 410-968-1600
- 8 Gordon's Confectionery**
831 West Main Street • 410-968-0566
- 9 Hoyt Harbor @ Corbin Park**
4459 Crisfield Highway • 410-968-3700
- 10 Ice Cream Gallery & Gift Shop**
5 Goodsell Alley • 410-968-0809
- 11 Java Jay's**
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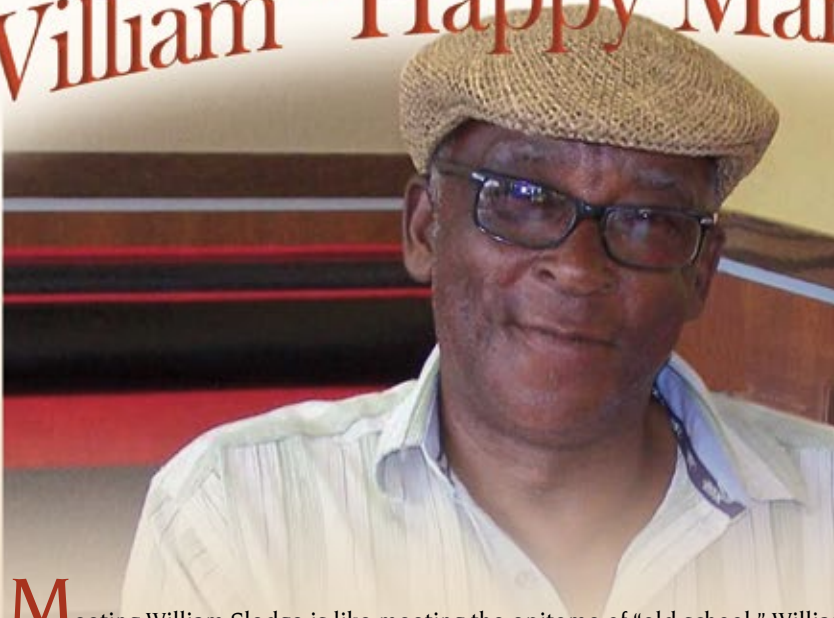


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OYSTER SHUCKER William "Happy Man" Sledge



Meeting William Sledge is like meeting the epitome of "old school." William has made more than a living. He has built a ***happy life*** upon the "old school" values and beliefs that have worked for him for over 50 years: devoting himself to his wife and family; working as an oyster shucker as well as other jobs to keep cash flowing; and managing money well by saving up for the things his family needed or wanted.

William started shucking oysters on the Eastern Shore of Virginia when he was fifteen years old in the '60s. He and his family worked in the fields during the spring and summer and then shucked oysters in the fall and winter. At the time, that was all that was available where they lived. He quit school in the eighth grade to work year round because, as the oldest of eleven children, his income was needed to help support the family. He left home when he was 18, and when he was 21, he met and married his wife, Diane. Forty-four years later, they are still married and have three grown children, all of whom are doing well. One daughter is a pharmacist. Another is working at a hospital and going to school at night. Their son has made a career of the Air Force for 22 years. William is proud of his family and attributes their success to the values he and his wife passed down to them.

One of the values he has passed down is the value of work. He is one of the fastest shuckers and can shuck a gallon of oysters in about twenty minutes. His hands move so fast, "you can hardly see them," he said, while never having an injury or a cut. "But," he adds, "*there are people faster than me.*" The men and women joke and sing as they shuck the oysters. They are, according to William, "a happy crowd."

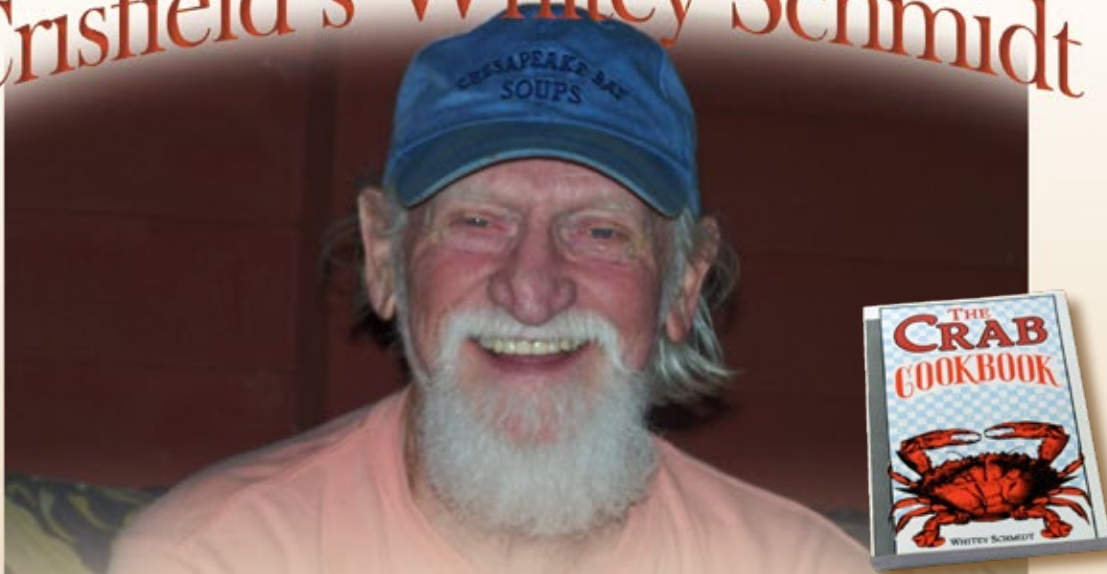
When it comes to cars and money, William is definitely "old school." He saves for what he wants. He said he never had a new car in his life. "*If I spend \$25,000, it will be on my house,*" he explains. "*I can't see a person making payments for 5-6 years, while paying rent. People are hollarin' 'it's hard times'. It's not 'hard times'. Why pay \$25,000 for a brand new car, when you're rentin' a place to stay? You can't have nothin' if you do that.*"

Instead, William has invested his money in his home and property. He bought his home when he was only 23 years old - a very small house on two acres of land. As his family grew, he saved up the cash to build onto it. "*I haven't had a mortgage payment in 33 years,*" he says with pride.

Along with his values of working hard, saving for what you want, and cultivating good friendships, most importantly, William has devoted himself to his wife and family. "*Me and my wife are just as happy as two peas in a pod,*" he beams. William sums up his life by saying, "*I'm a happy man. I have no regrets.*" With a long lasting marriage, seeing his children and grandchildren doing well, financial freedom, good health, and a positive attitude, it's not hard to see why he is happy and has no regrets. Now THAT'S inspiring!

(William Sledge died on September 3, 2017 at the age of 71. May he rest in peace.)

BLUE CRAB GURU Crisfield's Whitey Schmidt



Crisfield is proud to be home to author, Whitey Schmidt, who moved here from Washington, DC in the mid-90s, and has written several of his cookbooks here. Crisfield and Whitey couldn't be a better fit. The town is known as "The Crab Capital of the World," and Whitey is known as a Blue Crab guru, writer, and chef extraordinaire.

It all started when he was a young boy in DC, one of thirteen children. On weekends, his father would go out with his buddies and come back with fish, shrimp, or crabs for the family. Whitey was intrigued by where his father had gone to find these culinary delights. It became for Whitey a lifelong passion to seek out the crab houses nestled along the Chesapeake Bay on Maryland's Eastern Shore and to discover cooking methods and recipes for crabs and other seafood that were exceptional. As a young man, for fifteen years, he traveled every weekend and dined at a different crab house each time, looking for the best crab restaurants and collecting menus along the way. In addition, while distributing auto parts in Virginia, DC, and Maryland for his family's business, he would stop at nearby crab houses collecting more menus and business cards. He visited over 275 in all, particularly those that offer steamed crabs. He also worked for a time as head chef in a seafood restaurant as a young man, learning his craft and fulfilling his passion for seafood.

Over time, friends, knowing his obsession, would call for recommendations based on Whitey's travels and discoveries, which he kept in his own "black book." This led to his first book, published in 1985, called *The Official Crab Eaters' Guide*. He sold 5000 copies without advertising, quit his job in the family business, and made a living writing ever since. His second book was published two years later entitled *The Chesapeake Bay Waterview Dining Guide*. His third and most popular book was published in 1990, *The Crab Cookbook*. As a result, Whitey starred in the Maryland Public Television award-winning series *Eating Crabs Chesapeake Style*, which featured his crab cookbook. Also, his book *Flavor of the Chesapeake Bay* with renowned photographer Marion Warren is still a best seller. Along with recipes of the Chesapeake Bay's unique cuisine, his books contain tips and humorous anecdotes from Whitey's travels and experience. Whitey has tested and tasted every recipe in every book in his test kitchen (known as his "crab lab"), so you know that you're getting the most delicious seafood recipes possible.

For Whitey, writing and Maryland seafood became a part of him. When asked if he has a favorite book or a favorite recipe, he smiled and said, "*Mom Schmidt couldn't pick a favorite among her children and neither can I pick among my cookbooks or among my recipes.*" He said he's enjoyed every recipe many times over, and "I love them all."

And Crisfield has become home to Whitey Schmidt. He loves the people and the place. About Crisfielders he says, "*Crisfield people are clannish in a nice kind of way. If you stay to yourself, they will leave you alone and respect your privacy. If you come among them, they will welcome you like a newborn babe.*" As for Crisfield, we are delighted that he has "come among us," and that he shares our love for all things *crab* here in Crisfield - "The Crab Capital of the World."

(Whitey Schmidt passed away on July 18, 2014 at the age of 75. May he rest in peace.)



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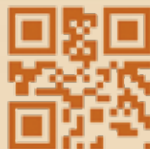
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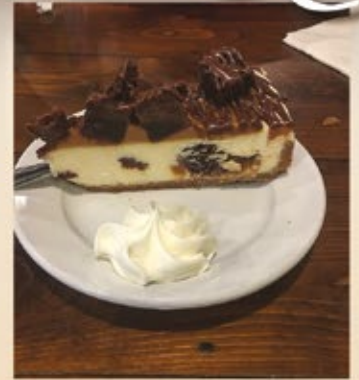
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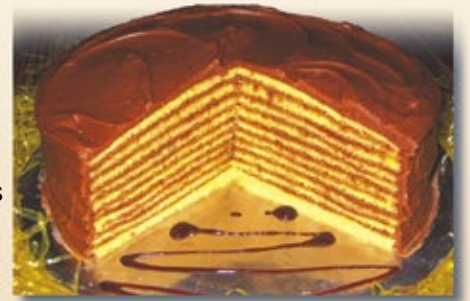
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