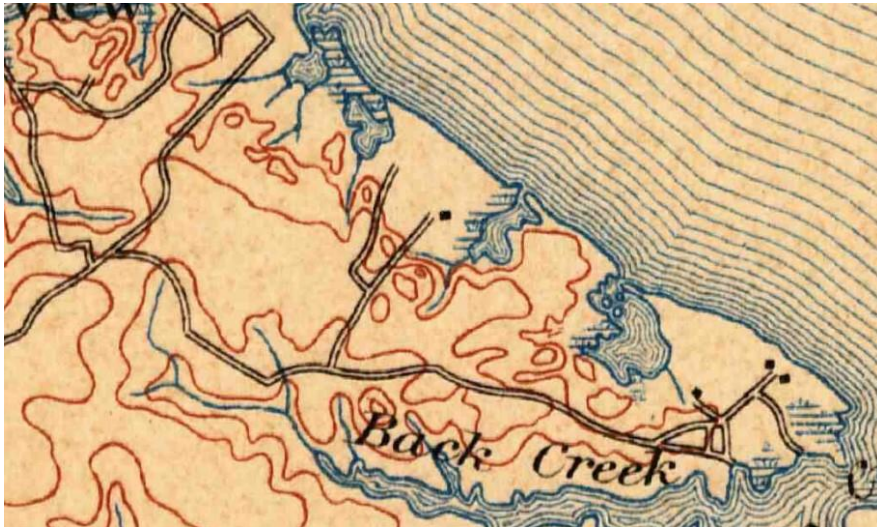


Paradise Beach & PBIA History

Prior to the residential development of Paradise Beach, it is believed that the land was extensively used as a peach orchard.



1900 Street Map from the U.S. Geological Survey; Paradise Beach Road can be seen as the only spur off Bayside Beach until reaching the Bayside Beach Community

Houses began to be installed around the turn of the 20th century, with numerous homes showing a deeded structure completion date of 1900. Seven (7) of the houses that were built in 1900 remain occupied by current residents, along with 5 additional houses being constructed during the Great Depression years. The community subdivision was completed in September 1921 by Albert Retowsky, with the lots being 25' wide at varying depths. The boundaries of this subdivision were designated & recorded in the Anne Arundel County Land Records Liber 15/Folio 12, entitled Paradise Beach.

The Paradise Beach Improvement Association was formed in 1927. Its stated goal was to “maintain, protect, and promote the welfare of this community, and to strive to make the Paradise Beach area a more desirable and progressive community in which to live.”

Few will remember Paradise Beach Blvd, as its remains are no longer in place. It was a small access road on the present shoreline that was destroyed by a hurricane in 1933. This was the very same hurricane that created the 50' wide Ocean City inlet at the south end of the resort town.

On December 30, 1937 an Agreement was made between Albert Retowsky and Katherine Retowsky, his wife, and the Paradise Beach Improvement Association, Inc., authorizing the PBIA to improve, repair and keep in repair the Beach Community lot. This was to be done in such a manner as to not interfere with the use thereof and access to the beach by owners of lots at Paradise Beach. The Agreement stipulated that no buildings for private occupancy shall be erected thereon or any structures that may be unsightly could be installed. This was recorded on April 26, 1938 within the records of the State of Maryland, City of Baltimore. The PBIA president at the time was Henry C. Knoblock.

As an aside, Kurtz Avenue was formerly known as Patapsco Avenue, and Paradise Beach Road was previously Potomac Avenue. It seems there were numerous streets throughout Anne Arundel County that had identical names, causing confusion for emergency police & fire services as well as the mail system. During World War II, several homes were built that still exist and are in use along Paradise Beach Rd and on Kurtz Ave. In fact, 18 of these houses remain occupied. During this time, only Paradise Beach Road was paved, with both Bush and Choptank being dirt / stone roads.

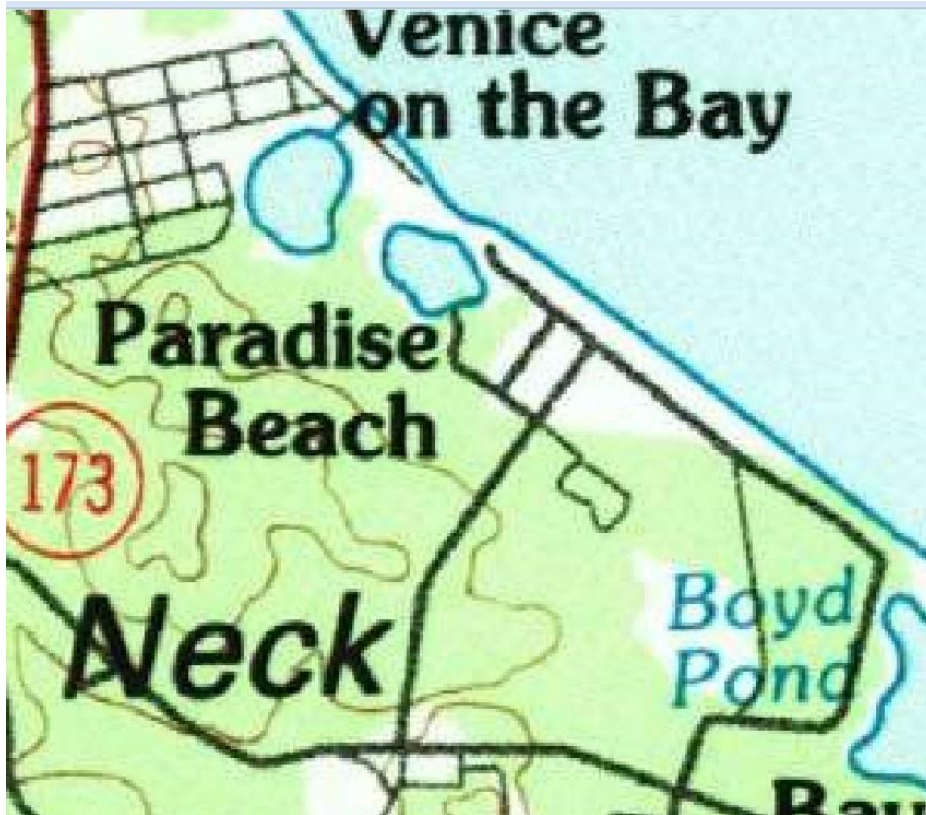
The PBIA bought the beach property in the early 1960s, led by the residents donating the necessary funds. This effort was started by Mrs. Helen Pokonoski who lived at 7617 Paradise Beach. At this point in time, there were approximately 35 residences, with maybe 20 of these homes being occupied 12 months a year. The other homes were "Summer cottages" with weekenders enjoying the respite from City life.

During these early years, the Community children attended school at the old Fort Smallwood Elementary which is now being used as a County School maintenance hub (it is next to the Compass Pointe Golf Course); then attended their Middle school years at George Fox, which has been renamed as Northeast Middle School; and then went to Glen Burnie High School. With the construction of Northeast High in 1964, and then Chesapeake High in 1976, the neighborhood high schoolers had their daily commute shortened significantly.

In addition to the beach property, the PBIA owns the Choptank property (northwest corner of Choptank & Paradise Beach Rd). There was a community hall located on this site that had previously been used as a military barracks before being relocated here. The building was used sparingly for PBIA meetings, neighborhood spaghetti dinners and Friday night bingo for residents only. In later years, the hall hosted a Halloween haunted house event. It was removed in 2008 as it was not economically justifiable to make the necessary repairs.

One cannot detail the history of this community without including mention of Kurtz's Pleasure. It was opened May 27, 1933 and was one of ten privately owned bathing beaches located here in northern Anne Arundel County. The other nearby beaches included Maryland Beach, Alpine Beach, and Pasadena Beach, with each offering guests a relaxing reprieve from the sweltering heat and humidity of a Mid-Atlantic summer. Tales of epic travel delays on Sunday nights have almost become legend, as several thousand guests from these beaches made their way up Ft Smallwood and Mountain Roads (both one lane roads and Route 100 not yet constructed), with relief finally coming about when traffic reached Ritchie Highway.

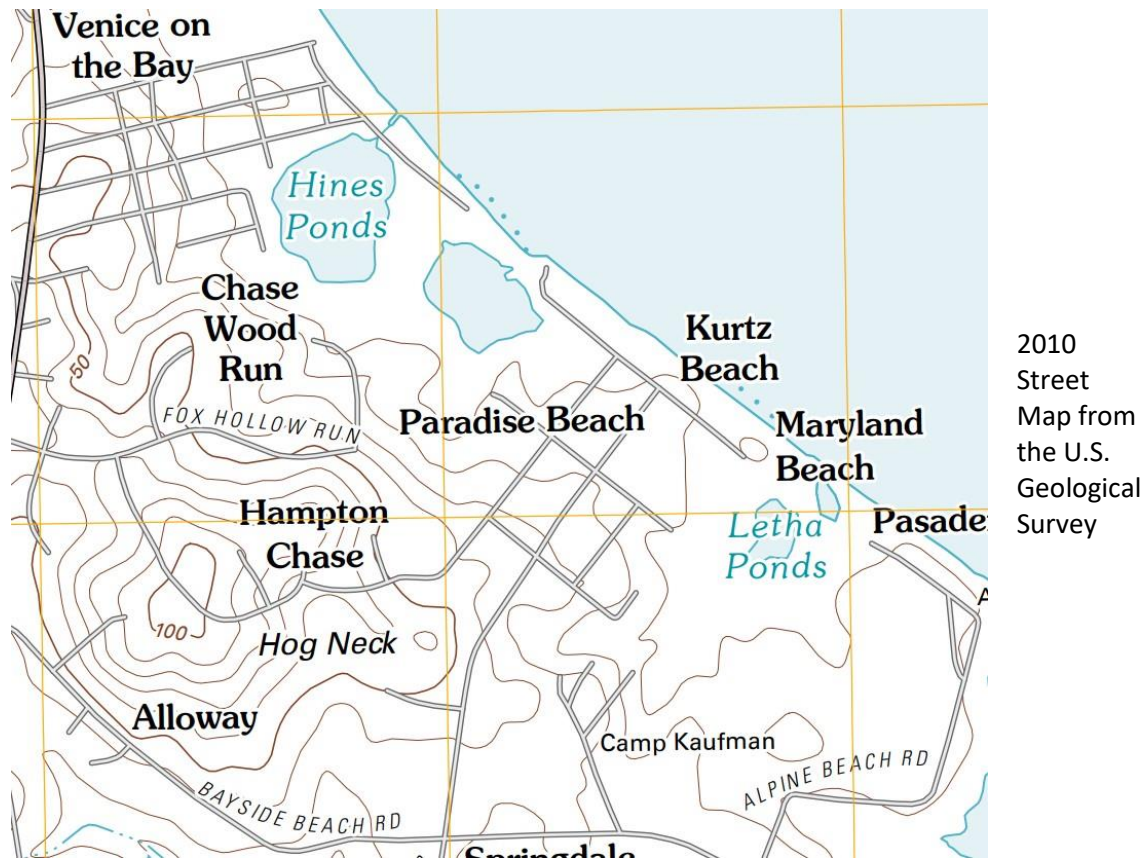
The bathing beach business experienced much success after the legalization of slot machines in 1943. Kurtz offered slots, live entertainment, a full kitchen, and bar that became a mainstay along with being fully "sea nettle" net protected. The beach flourished for some 30 years; however, with slots becoming illegal by July '68, and the 1969 construction of the west-bound Bay Bridge, Kurtz Beach experienced a slowdown. It subsequently was closed to the public from 1986 -1989, with the beach opened strictly for private events with catered cuisine. Forty acres of the original 64 acres were sold and developed for houses in the late 80s. Kurtz's Beach, Ltd. has operated since the early 1990s, hosting both public and private events such as weddings, banquets, picnics, crab feast and now festivals.



1981 Street Map from the U.S. Geological Survey; note the absence of Old Home and upper Bush Ave, as well as McKinnon Lane and Jeannine Ave

The late 1980s saw development and construction of the homes on Old Home Ave and the upper portion of Bush Ave. Some roads needed to be developed where none existed. For example, Bush Ave ended at Choptank and its extension into the pending Hampton Chase development was subsequently installed. "Old Hickory Road" had a sizable farmhouse adjacent to the Paradise Beach entry sign; this house was removed and the street name was changed to Old Home Ave, reflecting its past. In addition, the 40 acres of former Kurtz land were sold in the late 80s / early 90s, and new construction began in earnest, with houses being built on Old Home Ave and Jeannine Ave.

To include these newly developed properties in the PBIA, the association By-laws and Constitution needed to be amended in 1989. All told, the Constitution and By-Laws have been amended three times after the initial establishment of the PBIA in 1927. These amendments were done on July 21, 1963; again, on August 3, 1989; and then again on September 12, 2005. This 2005 amendment remains the controlling document for the PBIA.



Details of the Beach Community property is as follows: Beach Lots 65 and 66, Plat Book #15 page 12, Deed Reference # 5232/426. The Beach property is 50' wide x approx. 270' deep with all land lying between the rear property line and the mean high-water line of the Patapsco River fall in the 55' Abandon Right of Way known as Paradise Beach Blvd.

Vince Glorioso
June 2023

Special acknowledgement to Mike & Bonnie Dausch, Buck Linderborn, and Paul Streckfus for their invaluable contributions and insights to this summary.