

**In 1986 John Eckstine sat down with Mildred Finlon to hear of her many fond memories of coming to Chesapeake Beach during her childhood summers.**

**Mrs. Finlon:** About 1922 my daddy decided that we should spend some time near the water so I might learn to love the water as much as he did.

One day we rode the streetcar to Seat Pleasant. I remember the motorman on the streetcar, a white-bearded, jolly man, who merrily greeted all the passengers as they boarded with plants, screen doors, windows, shades, and other equipment for summer cottages.

Mother always volunteered to carry the transfers while we carried the baggage.

We rode for about an hour on a smoky hot train where cinders blew in the open windows and lodged in the red plush seats in the coaches. The fare was 50 cents with special excursions for 25. The magic site was the Chesapeake Beach station where the smell of salt water, lotus blossoms, and fresh fish transported us to another world.

A five-cent trolley met the train to carry the passengers to North Beach. A boat was there to carry Boy Scouts to Camp Roosevelt.

We walked up a dusty road to the campground and rented the shack for two weeks. Shelters were propped up to keep out the rain.

Hucksters brought vegetables to the door. Ox carts carried cans from the backhouse and fresh fish were caught every day.

We walked to the Post Office for our mail where George Klein handled the mail and grocery store. I mailed Mother a letter without a stamp on it one night; but George gave it to her anyway because he thought the stamp probably dropped off in the mail — quite a change from the city.

By now Dad had built a cottage of our own and Chesapeake Beach was to be an important part of my life.

At first the backhouses had cans which were emptied every week by the honey wagon. It gave off an extremely fragrant odor usually just when a meal was being served. This was an ox cart driven by a coach.

When my cousin was about five years old, we asked him what he wanted to do when he grew up. He answered, "I want to have a wagon just like Coach."

Of course, we soon became modernized and had cement pits instead of cans. When the electricity goes off, I often wish we still had one left.

Summers at Chesapeake Beach were always exciting — dancing on the Boardwalk, weenie roasts on the Beach, hikes to Randle Cliff, canoe trips to Camp Roosevelt to wave at the Boy Scouts. The round dance floor was the scene of many activities — dancing, ponies, clowns, rodeo shows by Billy Gee, and magic shows of all kinds.