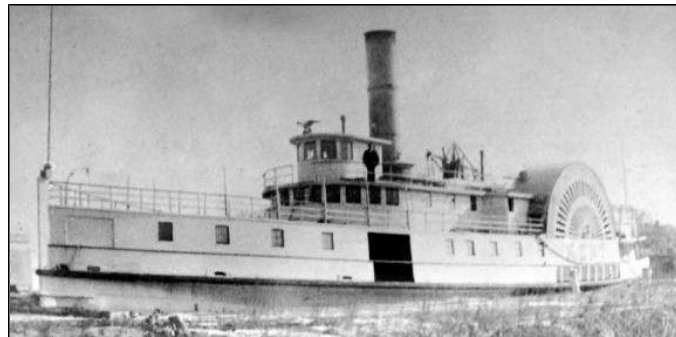


# A Look Back in Time

## Steamships in Seaford



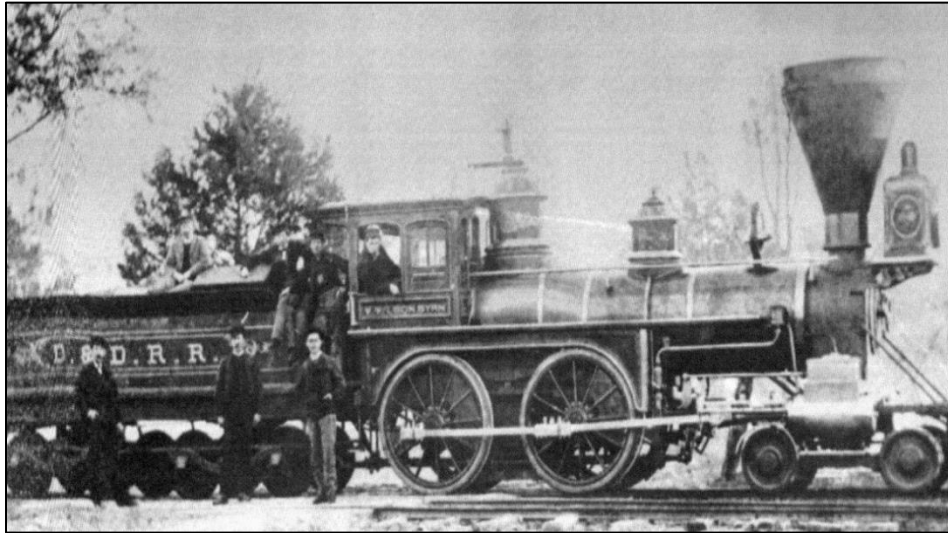
Steamboat Days on the Nanticoke. (by Seaford Historian Jim Bowden)

Seaford's commercial water travel up and down the Nanticoke started way before the railroad came in 1857. Steamboats came from both Baltimore and Norfolk over the years and were key to travel and commerce up until about 1926. Pictured are a few of the Steamboats that docked at the wharves in Seaford. The first shows the "Joppa" and "Avalon." The second is of the "Kent," which brought Harriett Tubman executing the escape of the slave Tilley to the North through Seaford on the Underground Railroad. The last trip by steamboat to Seaford was about 1932 when the Avalon pulled into the dock just west of the Seaford-Blades Bridge and the whole town came down to pay tribute to an era gone by!

What are three important facts that you learned from this article by Mr. Bowden?

Why do you think steamship transportation was an important part of Seaford's history?

# Railroads come to Seaford



Dorchester and Delaware Railroad

The major railroad line from Philadelphia finally arrived in Seaford December 11<sup>th</sup> 1856. This slowly changed Seaford commerce from Baltimore using the steamboats to Philadelphia by train. Seaford was a boomtown!

A short line from Seaford to Cambridge on the wide Choptank River, which at that time was the largest town on Maryland's eastern Shore, was proposed to connect to the mainline at Seaford. The charter for the railroad was granted in Maryland in 1866 and in Delaware in 1867. In 1867 a part of the road was built 6 miles from Seaford to the Maryland line at Oak Grove. The line opened with full service on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1869 with a ceremony marking the event. The train would leave Cambridge at 7 AM and passed through nine stations on its way to Seaford arriving at 9:12 AM. Those early stations were Thompson, Airey, Linkwood, East New Market, Hurlock, Williamsburg, Federalburg, Oak Grove, Flowertown and then Seaford. The line was built at a cost of \$300,000 in 1869, which would equate out to nine-and-a-quarter million in today's money.

This article has some vocabulary that you may not know. Look online to find the definitions of these terms:

Boomtown

Short Line

Mainline

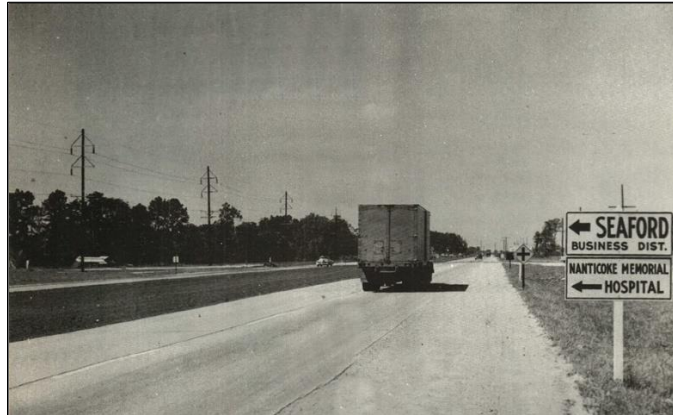
Charter

Why was there so much interest in connecting Seaford to Cambridge? What advantages would that connection bring to our town?

Mr. Bowden talks about commerce changing from Baltimore to Philadelphia. What affect do you think this change had on the social and political attitudes in our town?

How would Seaford be different today if the railroad had never come?

## Route 13, The “Dual Highway”



The call for a highway bypass around Seaford had been heard for many years. During and after World War 2, the OLD Rt 13 going through Seaford on Front street was congested with sailors and soldiers headed home to the northeast from Norfolk, along with normal traffic and, of course, the rush of the "Dupont shift change." However, the local Chamber of Commerce was concerned that, with no traffic downtown, businesses would wither up and die.

Downtown Seaford businesses stayed alive for many more years, but it was what happened west of Seaford's downtown, not the bypass east of town, that signaled the demise of businesses on High street. The Nylon Capital Shopping Center opened up in the late 50's and signaled the slow leak of customers away from downtown. Some businesses did go to the bypass, but it wasn't until 1971 when new businesses opened on Norman Eskridge Highway, and later in the new Seaford Village Shopping Center, that downtown business began to close in great numbers.

The east bypass highway was casually called the "Dual Highway" and many still call it that! "The DUAL" was opened for traffic at 3 PM on Friday September 4th, 1953!

Every innovation brings positive and negative consequences. List three pros and three cons that came with the opening of the “Dual Highway.” Think of some that were not mentioned in the article.

Do you think it's important for communities to have a “downtown” area? If so, why? And if not, why not?

In just 100 years, Seaford went from being served only by steamships to people moving by train to the opening of Route 13. Thinking in terms of both transportation and commerce, what do you think will happen in the next 100 years and how will that effect our town?