

TEXT DRAFT

CLAUDE BROOKS

301-333-6611

SMITH ISLAND

MARYLAND

A VISITOR'S GUIDE AND ISLAND WALKING TOUR

WHERE IS SMITH ISLAND?

Smith Island is the last of Maryland's inhabited offshore islands. Somerset County's Smith Island is located in Tangier Sound, near the middle of the Chesapeake Bay, 13 miles west of Crisfield. The uninhabited southern tip of the Island intersects the Maryland-Virginia line.

HOW TO GET THERE

Passenger ferry boats leave year-round from Crisfield, Maryland. During the summer season they also leave from Point Lookout, Maryland and Reedville, Virginia. Boats are for passengers only. (You can't take your car).

There are no air strips on Smith Island.

In Crisfield the best place to leave your car is at the Somers Cove Marina near the Governor J. Millard Tawes Museum. The Tawes Museum Building, which also houses the Crisfield Chamber of Commerce, is a good place to pick up free information about Smith Island, and the Crisfield area.

CRUISES TO SMITH ISLAND

THE CAPTAIN TYLER

301-425-2771

Somers Cove Marina

Crisfield, MD 21817

1 hour, 15 minute package cruise. Includes a family style lunch in Ewell at Alan Tyler's Restaurant. Arrives at Rhodes Point with a short bus ride including a tour of Ewell. Schedule: Memorial Day - September, daily, leaves Somers Cove Marina, Crisfield at 12:30 pm, returns to Crisfield at 5:15 pm.

THE CAPTAIN JASON I, II, & III

301-425-5931

General Delivery

Ewell, MD 21842

35 minute ride from Crisfield City Dock at the end of Route 415 to Ewell. Schedule: year-round, daily; leaves Crisfield at 12:30 and 5 pm, departs Smith Island for Crisfield at 4 pm and 8 am.

CAPTAIN GORDON EVANS

301-425-5571, (DISCONNECTED NUMBER) Ewell, MD 21842

Leave Reedville, Virginia KOA campground and docks at Ewell.
Point Lookout ?

OTIS TYLER

301-425-4271

P.O. Box 28

Ewell, MD 21842

Leaves Crisfield City Dock and arrives at Ewell.

YOUR OWN BOAT

There are two entrances to the Smith Island Harbor at Ewell. The principal entrance is the channel on the west side. At low tide, the controlling depth is about 4 1/2 feet.

The entrance from Tangier sound via Big Thorofare has a controlling depth of about 6 feet.

WHAT WILL YOU FIND ON SMITH ISLAND?

There are three towns on Smith Island, each with a working harbor. These are communities of watermen that make their livelihood from oystering and crabbing. Oystering is done from locally built work boats. This process is called "tonging" because it utilizes long handled, rake-like, hinged tongs. Wooden shanties house family-owned soft crab shedding operations in the harbor areas.

Smith Islanders are direct descendants of British colonists. You will notice a strong holdover of the Elizabethan/Cornwall dialect among the local inhabitants due to the isolation of this island.

There is only one motel on the island with eight cozy rooms and bicycles for rent. There is also one bed and breakfast with two rooms.

Public rest rooms are limited but visitors are invited to use those located at Tyler's Restaurant during business hours.

You will find many well fed cats on the island that live comfortably outdoors.

In summer months mosquitos are prolific and also well fed. The smart visitor will always keep a little mosquito repellent close by.

WHAT WON'T YOU FIND ON SMITH ISLAND?

On Smith Island there are no sidewalks, street names, convenience stores, movie theaters, liquor stores, bars, fast food chains, boutiques, amusement parks, laundromats, FAX machines, mass transit, or taxi cabs.

LIFE ON SMITH ISLAND

Religion is a very important part of island life. Joshua Thomas established the Methodist religion on Smith Island and several other Chesapeake Bay islands during the late 1800's and it is still the dominant religion today.

A radio telephone service first appeared on the island in 1939. The emergency communication system was replaced by regular service in 1940. Electricity came to the island in 1949.

There are some interesting customs on the islands. You may notice that islanders in cars and trucks honk their horns and wave to greet all other vehicles and pedestrians.

There are over four thousands acres of marshland managed by the Glenn L. Martin National Wildlife Refuge. The wildlife here includes muskrat, mink, red foxes, otter, egrets, osprey, blue heron, diamondback terrapin and migratory wild fowl. Visiting these areas is not encouraged due to the large number of fragile habitats.

HOW TO BE A WELCOME VISITOR

- . Don't consume alcoholic beverages in public areas, if at all.
- . Don't walk through private yards (respect the privacy of the residents).
- . Don't disturb crabbers when they're unloading, sorting, and packing.
- . Don't litter. Trash disposal on the island is a monumental task.
- . Ask questions, take photographs, leave only foot prints.
- . Take time to meet and talk with some of the islanders. Find out why they love their island and their lifestyle.

EWELL

The Island's Largest Town

Ewell is sometimes referred to as the "capital of Smith Island." It is the most visited destination because of its ferry access and services. Most of the island's seafood packing houses are located in Ewell. Homes in Ewell range from 1850's center-gabled houses to Cape Cods to modular homes and trailers. Many homes were moved to Smith Island from nearby Holland Island when they were threatened by erosion.

A WALKING TOUR OF EWELL

1. Tyler House. The former residence of the Tyler family is now operated by the National Park Service as a natural interpretive center and headquarters for the Glenn L. Martin Wildlife Refuge.
2. Sunken Remains of the Island Belle. The first island ferry boat.
3. Goat Island. Domestic goats were released here _____ years ago and have multiplied into a herd that number approximately _____ today.
4. Pitchcroft. Smith Island's first settlement, originally called Pittcraft, was the location of the island's oldest home until 19__ when it burned. __ British soldiers from the Revolutionary War are allegedly buried here. Their graves are marked by tombstones on the left hand side of the trail. Until 19__ a British flag, donated by the United Kingdom was flown over this spot.
5. Ruke's Store (Miss Willie's or Old Store). Small rustic country store with recently added dining area. Is a local gathering place and social center. Has a gift department that resembles a local flea market.
6. Ewell United Methodist Church, Cemetery and Parsonage. The parsonage was rebuilt in 1937 after being destroyed by fire. Because of the high water table, many graves are above ground. Deceased are taken by boat to a Crisfield mortuary for embalming and returned for funeral services.

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5. Calvary United Methodist Church
6. Community Building. Formerly a church. Now houses the Senior Citizens' Center.
7. Miss Livy's Old Red Store

TYLERTON

Smith Island's Remote Victorian Town

Some of the most ornate architecture on Smith Island can be found in Tylerton but this town is accessible only by boat.

1. Union Methodist Church and Cemetery
2. Fire Department
3. Chesapeake Bay Foundation. An estuarine study center.
4. Tylerton School and Library
5. Store