



Eastport

STORY BY: LYNNE GARDNER
PHOTOS BY: K TOM PHOTOGRAPHY

Bounded by Back Creek on one side and Spa Creek on the other, the Maritime Republic of Eastport is defined by both geography and location. A naturally formed, nearly flat and narrow peninsula that juts into the Severn River, the Republic is surrounded by water and located just a short bridge's length from historic downtown Annapolis.

Land records show ownership of the peninsula, originally named Horne Pointe, began with a grant to Robert Clarkson in 1665. Fort Horn, built at the tip of the peninsula in 1776 as a defensive post overlooking the Severn River, was occupied in both the War of Independence and the War of 1812, but abandoned sometime after. The area remained largely agricultural until construction of the Naval Academy began in 1845 and a development company, the Mutual Building Association of Annapolis, was founded in 1861. The Mutual Building Association platted 101 acres of land, which it sold to families in need of housing close to downtown Annapolis. It wasn't until the mid 20th century that industry and agriculture gave way to residences and neighborhoods.

Long before Annapolis became synonymous with sailing and yachting, Eastport was home to fishermen, crabbers, watermen, boat builders, sail makers, marine engineers

and the laborers required to create and sustain all manner of traditional maritime enterprises. The peninsula was annexed to Annapolis in 1951. While the Republic is indelibly connected to sister-city Annapolis, it retains a distinct personality and whimsicality all its own.

The Back Creek side of Eastport is best known for residential condos, quiet street-end docks, row upon row of boats of every sort and a slough of small marine enterprises. The Spa Creek side faces downtown Annapolis and is a bit livelier for the boat brokers and yards, sailing clubs, restaurants and commercial businesses.

The interior of the peninsula contains all manner of homes. Gentrification in the past two decades has brought major renovation and reconstruction to formerly working class and farm-style houses. It isn't unusual to find a lowly bungalow sandwiched between a luxuriously appointed New England style home and a true Arts and Crafts masterpiece.

When I first moved to Annapolis in 1990, the revitalization of Eastport was in full swing and homes were being snapped up from original owners with fervor. Many of the properties were quite distressed and had to be reconstructed from the bones up. Others were made

into affordable rentals for the young adults who helped Eastport evolve into a bohemian, laid back, stay-cation sort of neighborhood that counts beloved cafes, restaurants, bars and pubs as common meeting places.

In the 1990's, Eastport's boundaries were from Horn Point on the East to First Street on the West and from State Street and Severn on the North to Chester on the South. A growing desire to live on the Eastport side of the Spa Creek Bridge and a surge in development has expanded those boundaries for practical purposes all the way to the intersection of Bay Ridge Avenue and Hilltop.

Home values in Eastport have significantly changed since my arrival. When I was house shopping for a home in Eastport in 1995, I recall the average cost of a house in the original core of the neighborhood was \$130,000-\$360,000 depending on street location, condition and proximity to the water. Today these same houses are selling for up to \$2,000,000 or more with price determinate on location, house size, lot square footage and buildout grades of construction. Recent trends show the median price of homes sold in spring 2016 was \$495,000, or about \$283/sq. ft.

Eastport continues to be a great investment due to continued gentrification, commercial viability, community activism, recreational access to the water and an expanding list of amenities.

Lynn's Eastport Recommendations:

BEST BAKERY:

› Bakers & Co, Wonderful baked goods and great coffee.
bakersandco.com

BEST BAND:

› Them Eastport Oyster Boys

BEST EVENTS:

› Eastport A Rockin', JUNE 18

eastportarockin.com

› MRE Tug-of-War V, Annapolis FALL 2016

› Eastport Oyster Roast and Sock Burning, SPRING 2017

› Boatyard Bash, SEPT 19

BEST CULTURAL SITE:

› The Annapolis Maritime Museum, a hub for events, summertime concerts and information about Eastport's maritime history.

ameritime.org

BEST RESTAURANTS:

› Boatyard Bar and Grill, known for their race day after parties as well as a raucous full moon party every month.

boatyardbarandgrill.com

› Vin 909, There are lines every night to get into this popular small plates eatery.

vin909.com

› Davis Pub, A casual local hangout for generations, Davis' has reasonably priced beers, fantastic chili and a great neighborhood atmosphere.

davispub.com

