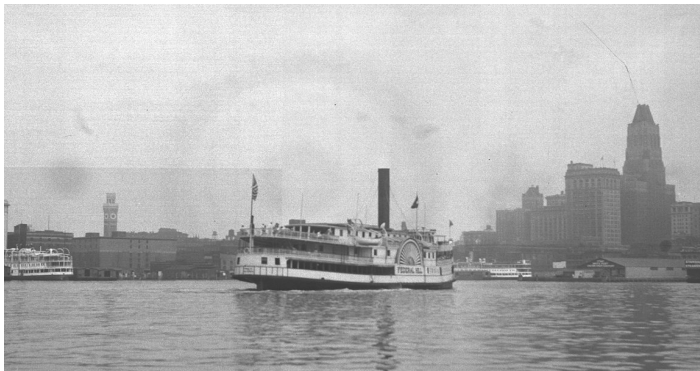


Browns Grove and Captain George Brown's Steam Ships

Steamships provided transportation around the Chesapeake bay throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century. Transportation by water was the quickest and easiest way to travel around the Chesapeake Bay region. The Baltimore, docked between our A dock and B dock is an example of a Steam powered tug boat from that time period.

Just after the Civil War, in an effort to attract customers, steamship companies built amusement parks and beaches away from the heat of the city. They would pick up passengers in Baltimore and take them out to these parks for just the day or sometimes longer. Most times passengers would ride out in the morning and back home in the evening.



July 13, 1937. Steamer *Federal Hill*, the former *Avalon*, bringing African Americans back to Baltimore. Note the Bromo Seltzer Tower in the background. (from MS0091, Elwin Eldredge Maritime Papers)

Because of Jim Crow laws African Americans were not allowed to travel on these ships or visit these beaches. Captain George Brown, a man who left North Carolina and moved to Baltimore in 1893. Like all African Americans of

this time he had experienced this discrimination first hand. He was inspired to create a shipping line and amusement park for African Americans to travel on and visit. He started by first chartering steamships and eventually owning several large steamships. Transporting African Americans all around the Chesapeake bay.



Capt. George W. Brown, dressed in white at the far right, is gathered with several prominent Baltimoreans, including educator and school principal John N. Cotton, seated in front; directly behind him, Milton Q. Dorsey, an educator and president of the Monumental Democratic Club, the African American Democratic Club of Baltimore; and in the far left, back row, James A.B. Callis, an educator, YMCA president, and president of the Colored High School (Baltimore) Alumni Association. *Photo, Early G. Lane's Studio, mid 1920s, courtesy of Philip J. Merrill, Nanny Jack & Co Archives*

Browns Grove

In May of 1913 Captain Brown opened Browns Grove, an amusement park, beach on Rock Creek in what is now Pasadena. Browns Grove

was not the only beach and amusement park for African Americans but was reportedly one of the more elegant parks. It had a roller coaster, bathhouse, beach, carousel, midway and

refreshment stands. Working class African Americans could get out of the city for the day and escape the heat, relax and have fun for the day. Browns Grove fell victim to a fire in 1939 and was never rebuilt.

Travel by Steam ships continued until after the Second World War. After WWII steamships could not compete with trains, planes and ever improving roads.

References

[Baltimore's Captain, George W. Brown,By Wendy Mitman Clarke](#)

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[The steamers of Brown's Grove](#)

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