

The Bay From Above

How much has the Chesapeake Bay changed over the past 75 years? There are a number of ways to explore this question. One of the most effective and engaging is to take a bird's eye view of the Bay—say, from an airplane—and look at stunning photographs taken over time.

That's the idea behind a new exhibition developed by CBMM Curator of Exhibitions Lindsley Rice. "The Bay From Above: Aerial Views of the Bay Then and Now" juxtaposes the 1930s-1950s photography of H. Robins Hollyday with new photography by Hunter H. Harris, pairing

views of the same stretch of the Bay region. The result is a visually arresting exhibition, one that should appeal to both watershed residents and visitors.

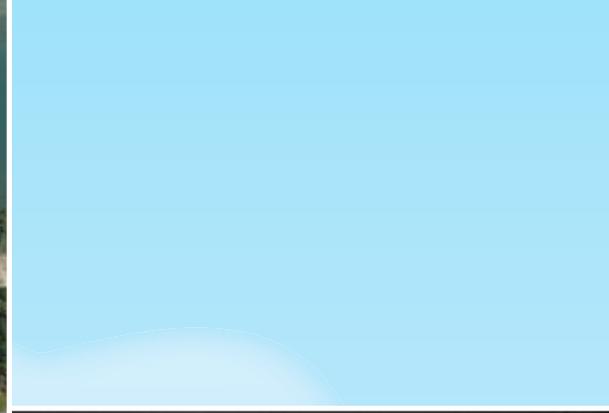
"The Bay From Above" is a collaboration between CBMM and Harris's Aloft Aerial Photography, in cooperation with the Historical Society of Talbot County, whose collection includes Hollyday's photographs. Hollyday worked as a commercial photographer from the 1930s to the 1950s, documenting life in Talbot County and on the Eastern Shore. Harris owns and operates his studio in Easton, where his own work focuses on land use and development.

Contrasting Hollyday's black-and-white photographs with Harris's color images of spectacular vistas and the unique viewpoint hundreds of feet above the Bay, this exhibition provides astoundingly beautiful and startling evidence of the changes in the Chesapeake's shoreline, farmland, and Bay spaces over the last 75 years.

The exhibition opens on Saturday, October 18, as a part of our Members' Day celebration and will be on display through the spring of 2009. The exhibit is supported by the Maryland Historical Trust, the National Park Service, and Verizon.



(Left and above) Ferry Point, across the Choptank River from Cambridge, Md., shows some of the most familiar changes to the Chesapeake over the past 75 years—development and the rip-rapping of the shore. The Route 50 bridge to Cambridge opened in 1935, extending the Eastern Shore's accessibility by highway to Dorchester County and beyond.



(Above and right) Some Bay places haven't changed as much as others around the watershed. The Oxford Boatyard on Town Creek in Oxford, Md. is still the site of much boat work, although it no longer launches new wooden sailboats. Recreational boating on the Bay has largely replaced boat building and other Bay industries. The A.B. Harris and Nollmeyer seafood companies no longer draw workers to this cove.



(Below and right) Occasionally, the human impact on the Bay goes against the tide—sometimes literally—as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rebuilds Poplar Island with dredge material from Baltimore Harbor and approach channels. Settled in the 1630s and at one time totaling over 1,000 acres, the island had eroded to a few green specks and some sand bars—just 10 acres—by the 1960s. The reconstructed Poplar Island will provide a diverse wetland habitat for Chesapeake flora and fauna.

