



Bayshore Waterfront Park Activity Center (Seabrook-Wilson House)



Listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, the Seabrook-Wilson House is one of the oldest surviving houses in the Bayshore. Daniel or James Seabrook built the oldest section of this house by about 1720, and over the years the house was expanded to its present size through a series of additions. Five generations of Seabrook's farmed the "plantation" at Shoal Harbor. In 1855 this became the home of William V. Wilson –preacher, farmer, and investor in steamboat companies – who lived here with his wife Mary Seabrook and their family until the 1890s.

For many years the house stood almost alone, surrounded by a farm of several hundred acres and salt marsh. With the development of steamboat service and the railroads in the mid-1800s, the Bay Shore landscape was transformed, and the village of Port Monmouth grew up around the steamboat pier and commercial fishing. The old farmhouse became an inn for summer tourists.

By 1967, after almost 50 years as an inn and tavern, the building had become severely dilapidated. At the urging of local residents, the Township of Middletown purchased the Bayshore landmark and saved it from destruction. It was a local history museum called the Spy House until the Township transferred the property to the Monmouth County Park System in 1998 and it became part of Bayshore Waterfront Park.

The Monmouth County Park System restored the Seabrook-Wilson House in 2009, which was funded in part by a grant from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund. The building now serves as the Bayshore Waterfront Park Activity Center, where its primary function will be for Park System nature and history programs. The first floor includes a reception area, program room, exhibit areas, and a restroom. Exhibits are under development and will be installed over the next two years.

For more information email info@monmouthcountyparks.com

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