## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating 0r requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions In Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property		
	tt Cottage	
other names/site number Hollan	nd Cottage	
Witten	nzand	
2 Location		
street & number 1106 Atlant:	ic Avenue	N/A net for publication
city. town Virginia Be	ach	N/A vicinity
state Virginia code	VA county <u>in ¢it</u>	<u>code 810</u> zip code 23451
3. Classification		
Ownership of Properly	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property
X private	I building(s)	Contributing Noncontributing
public-local		1 $1$ buildings
public-State		
	site	
public-Federal	structure	
	object	<u> </u>
Name of related multiple property listing	a.	Number of contributing resources previously
N/A	ig.	listed in the National Register
4. State/Federal Agency Certific	ation	
National Register of Historic Places In my opinion, the property X mee Signature of certifying official	and meets the procedural and pr	Decumentation standards for registering properties in the rofessional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.         I Register criteria.         See continuation sheet.         May 13.         Date
In my opinion, the property mee	ets does not meet the National	l Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other officia	al	Date
State or Federal agency and bureau		
5. National Park Service Certific	ation	
I, hereby, certify that this property is:		
entered in the National Register.		
See continuation sheet.		
determined eligible for the Nationa Register. See continuation sheet.	Ш	
determined not eligible for the		
National Register.		
removed from the Netlevel Devictor		
removed from the National Register	H	
other, (explain:),		

6. Function or Use	Current Euro	ations (ontar actogorios from instructions)			
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) DOMESTIC / single dwelling	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) DOMESTIC / single dwelling				
DOMESTIC / single dwelling	DOMESTIC	/ single dwelling			
7. Description					
Architectural Classification	Materials (enter categories from instructions)				
(enter categories from instructions)	· ·	c ,			
	foundation _	Brick			
LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne	walls	Brick			
		Asbestos Shingles			
	roof	Ashestos Shingles			
	other	Wooden Porch			
		Wooden Cupola			

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

#### Summary

The de Witt cottage is located on the oceanfront and occupies a corner lot fronting the boardwalk at Twelfth Street. The cottage was constructed in 1895 as a year-round single family residence. The two story building is ell shaped in plan and is surrounded on three sides by a one-story porch. It has a full basement and a habitable attic. Solid brick walls, which are fourteen inches thick, support wood framed floors and a hip roof. The house, a product of the late Victorian period does not show any major stylistic influences other than the limited Queen Anne detailing on the columns and brackets of the porch. It does exhibit a high degree of architectural and historical integrity since there have been very few changes since it was built in 1895, it remains on its original site and the historic fabric is in relatively good condition.

#### Architectural Analysis

The de Witt cottage is Located on an oceanfront lot and remains relatively unchanged since it was built in 1895. It was used continuously as a dwelling from 1895 until January 1988 when it was vacated by two elderly members of the de Witt family who had Lived in the house since 1909. The cottage is still in the possession of the de Witt family and has recently been boarded-up to protect: it from vandalism since it is no longer occupied. During the depression years and until the early 1970's the family also rented rooms, primarily to friends and acquaintances.

The cottage is a brick, free standing, two story building built over a full basement and has a hip roof with dormers. The plan is an ell with the kitchen located in the rear wing. The front, two sides and rear of the main portion of the house ate surrounded by a one-story wood porch. The front and both sides are divided into two bays with single, double-hung windows. The architectural classification is primarily vernacular with secondary Queen Anne influences evident in the chamfered wood columns and wood brackets on the porch. The overall exterior character is quite plain with ornamentation limited to the relatively modest brackets at the porch columns.

The rear kitchen wing was originally one-story and the major change seen in the structure is the result of the addition of a second floor above the kitchen in 1917. The exterior walls of this addition are clad in shingles.

8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this prope	erty in relation to other properties: statewide X locally	ű.
Applicable National Register Criteria X A B X C	D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	D E F G	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) OTHER: Resort Development Architecture	Period of Significance 1895 - 1937	Significant Dates 1895 1909
at at a second sec	Cultural Affiliation	9 al
Significant Person	Architect/Builder Unknown	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. Statement of Significance

The de Witt cottage is significant because it is the sole surviving example of the type of oceanfront dwelling constructed in Virginia Beach during its first period of development between its founding in 1883 and its incorporation in 1906. Alterations to the structure have been few and in keeping with its character. The house retains most of its turn-of-the-century ambiance. The remainder of the early Virginia Beach development, however, has changed completely. High-rise hotels and condominiums dwarf the de Witt cottage; rising land values and modern development pressures threaten its existence.

#### Justification of Criteria

The de Witt cottage is eligible for registration under Criteria A and C. It is eligible under Criterion A because of its association with the development of oceanfront resort property for the use of prosperous city-dwellers. Oceanfront resort development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a national phenomenon. Under Criterion C the house is eligible because of its architectural quality and integrity. It remains today an informal beach house that well represents the era in which it was constructed.

#### Historical Background

The de Witt cottage is significant because it is the last remaining example of early domestic oceanfront resort development in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Resort development is one of the events during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The cottage is also architecturally significant because it still functions as a single family dwelling, has undergone only minimal change since it was constructed in 1895, and still possesses integrity of location, design, and workmanship. In contrast, all of the other oceanfront property in the original area of Virginia Beach has undergone extensive change. The area of the original development, which was primarily residential, may now be characterized as a relatively high density, high rise, contemporary hotel, and condominimum resort. The de Witt cottage is a solitary survival.

X See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References	
Dunn, Joseph and Lyle, Barbara. Virginia Bea Donning Company, Norfolk, Virginia, 1983.	ach, "Wish you were here." The
Eighmey, Kathleen M. The Beach, A History Virginia Beach Department of Public Libraries,	<b>of Virginia Beach, Virginia.</b> Virginia Beach, Va., 1976.
Ferebee, E. E. "Princess Anne Towns." An Princess Anne County by E. E. Ferebee an University of Virginia Record Extension Ser Charlottesville, Va., 1924.	nd J. Pendleton Wilson, Jr.,
Jordan, James IV, and Jordan, Frederick S. History. Hale Publishing, Richmond, Va., 1974	
	X See continuation sheet
Previous documentation on file (NPS):  preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  previously listed in the National Register  previously determined eligible by the National Register  designated a National Historic Landmark  recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #  recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	Primary location of additional data: X State historic preservation office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Specify repository: VA Div. of Historic Landmarks
	221 Governor Street Richmond, VA 23219
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of propertyless than one acre (150 FT x 10	$J_{5} F_{1} = 0.36 AC$
UTM References A [1_18] [4  1_13  2_16_15] [4_10  7_17  4_10_15] Zone Easting Northing C	B L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L
Verbal Boundary Description	
	X See continuation sheet
Boundary Justification	
The boundary includes the two city lots th the property.	at have historically been associated with
	See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By	
name/titleMichael B. Newbill, President	00 Eshwayy 1000
organization <u>Newbill &amp; Beale, Inc., architect</u>	001 100 5150
street & number <u>1813 First Colonial Court</u> city or town <u>Virginia Beach</u>	telephone <u>804 422-5153</u> state <u>Virginia</u> zip code <u>23454</u>

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The exterior walls of the original portion of the house are 14-inch thick brick except for the wall at the south side of the kitchen which is nominally eight inch thick brick. The inside face of these walls is furred and clad in beaded pine paneling except that the parlor, dining room and kitchen are plastered. The paneling is made of 2 1/2-inch wide boards with 4 adjacent 1/2-inch beads covering one inch at one side of the 2 1/2-inch face. The original paneling remains intact throughout the house and generally it has been left natural rather then painted. The same beaded boards have been used for the ceiling finish; typically they have been painted. The paneling has been applied diagonally on the lower portions of the walls to form a wainscot. A chair rail, located approximately 4 feet above the floor, serves as a transition between the diagonal wainscoting and the vertical paneling above.

The house had four chimneys when it was built, of which only three remain. Two chimneys on the south side were destroyed by hurricanes during the 1950s and not replaced. These two chimneys were unusual in that they served flues that were completely concealed within the 14 inch thickness of the brick walls. These flues were connected to wood stoves; two stoves were located in the living room and one stove was located in each of the two bedrooms above. The stoves no longer remain but the wall openings at the flues, now capped, are still visible. The rear chimney above the kitchen was also destroyed by a storm but it was subsequently rebuilt. The chimney above the fireplace on the north side has never been damaged or modified.

The exterior of the house is painted brick. The shingles on the second floor addition are also painted. Two members of the de Witt family, who lived in the house from 1909 until 1988, report that it has always been painted and that the colors (light gray walls, dark green trim) have never been changed.

The original roof was standing-seam metal and lasted until 1956. The tin roof was removed as a result of hurricane damage; the current roofing is asphalt shingles. The original dormers remain at the east and west side. Each dormer contains two double hung windows and the roof is hipped. The east dormer also has a small circular lite in each of its sidewalls. These lites are original and provided improved visibility to the north and south along the oceanfront. The two triangular dormers on the south side are also original. The single triangular sash in these two units are bottom hinged and outswinging. They are operated by ropes attached to the apex of the sash which pass through a pulley at the head of the window. Two triangular dormers were also located on the north side. These were removed (ca. 1935) and a strip dormer was installed containing six double hung windows. The original rafters were simply rotated upward to allow space for the new windows to be installed. The cuts at the heels of the rafters next to the ridge board, which match the pitch of the original roof, can still be seen.

The dominant feature of the roof design is the small open cupola located on the south side of the ridge near the center of the building. This was included in the original building as an observatory for wildfowl on the lakes behind the house since the first owner (B. P. Holland) was an avid hunter.

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The windows on the first and second floor in the 1895 portion of the house are also all original. They are of the double hung type and each sash has two vertical lites. All of these windows are located in brick walls and have stone sills and lintels. The sills and lintels are painted and it appears that they are cast stone rather than natural stone. The finish on the horizontal surfaces at both the sills and lintels is smooth; whereas the vertical surfaces are rusticated. All of the windows on the brick walls were flanked by operable wood shutters. These were removed in 1928. Most of the shutters have been retained and are now stored in the basement.

The porch which surrounds three and one-half sides of the house is typically 6 feet wide. The railing is a simple round wood member that is supported at each column. This is the original design; there never was a balustrade. Sections of railing have been replaced from time to time. A wooden windbreak was located at the front entrance until the last few years. It is not known if this was a part of the original fabric; its removal has left only very minimal evidence of its existence in the form of a very faint outline on the painted brick walls and floor. This suggests that it may have been added after the building was complete.

The first floor contains a living room, parlor and dining room in the main part of the structure and a kitchen and servants quarters in the rear wing. There has not been any significant modernization of the kitchen. The second floor has four bedrooms and a bath in the main portion of the house and two bedrooms and a half bath in the addition above the kitchen wing. Ceiling heights are 9'-6" on the first floor and 9'-3" on the second floor. The attic, accessible via a stair located off of the hall of the rear addition, has been subdivided into three rooms and a half bath. A second floor porch that was on the south side of the rear wing was removed in 1987. This porch was built in 1917 as a part of the second floor addition.

A partition, parallel to the east-west axis of the house and generally on line with the wall separating the parlor and dining room, separated the living room into two spaces. This partition was removed in 1928. It appears that it was not constructed as part of the original building since its removal did not disturb the adjacent floor, wall or ceiling finishes which continued behind the partition without interruption.

Fireplaces are in the parlor, dining room and northeast bedroom on the second floor. The wooden chimney pieces in these locations are each of different design. The back of the dining room chimney also has a niche for a wood burning stove and a small wood stove is now used at this location for heat. The dining room chimney was constructed with an auxiliary flue that conducted heat from the wood burning kitchen stove to the bedroom and bath above.

Ornamental plaster ceiling medallions are located at the center of the ceilings in both the parlor and dining rooms. The oil lamps used at these locations were abandoned in 1913 when electrical power and lighting systems were installed. Most of the doors and hardware are original. Many of the original wood door knobs are still in good condition. A modern fire door has been added at the top of the steps leading from the living room to the second floor hall. Doors were also added where penetrations were made in the original exterior wall at the 1917 second floor addition.

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The basement is reached via an outside stair on the back porch. It is a full basement with its floor approximately four feet below grade. Despite the oceanfront location of the house, and its exposure to severe storms, the basement has never flooded. This is in part due to the elevation of the site (estimated to be in excess of 10 feet above sea level) which is relatively high for Virginia Beach. It has also been reported that the foundation was backfilled with cinders from the nearby railroad to facilitate drainage away from the building. The basement contains a fairly large cistern that was in use until ca. 1929. An unusual feature of the basement construction is that the lintels in masonry walls above basement doors and windows are fabricated from pieces of railroad track.

The house originally had "indoor plumbing" when it was built. The bath on the second floor above the dining room included a "tin" tub that was subsequently replaced by a cast iron tub. Heat is provided by hot water radiators which are original. The furnace was converted from coal to oil in 1938. The coal bin was in the basement below the west end of the living room. Telephones were installed ca. 1915.

The house is in fair condition. In the past few years some damage has occurred from neglect and leaks. Plaster on the inside face of the north and east exterior walls has suffered moisture damage. The wooden porch roof and porch flooring exhibits various degrees of decay; the porch roof on the north east exposure is in the worst condition. Wiring and heating systems are antiquated and plumbing leaks have damaged plaster in the dining room. The damage which has occurred appears to be mostly cosmetic except for the porch roof which can be easily repaired. The overall condition of the structure is still sound and the adverse impact of damage and decay upon the property's historic integrity has been minimal.

In summary, the overall integrity of the property remains undisturbed. The changes which have occurred have been minor and have left the historic fabric substantially intact.

A small, freestanding, one-story cottage is located at the northwest corner of the site. This was erected in the mid-1940s and is not considered to be a contributing resource.

\_\_\_\_\_

The following is a brief chronological outline of the property's history with emphasis on the physical changes occurring between 1909 and the present.

1895	House	built	for	Β.	Ρ.	Holland	(first	occupied	December	1895).	

1905 The Holland family moved to a new house.

1905 to 1909 House was rented.

- 1909 House was purchased from B. P. Holland by Cornelius de Witt for his wife.
- ca. 1910 Ceramic tile was installed on the parlor fireplace surround by Cornelius de witt.

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ca. 1913 Electric power and lighting installed (oil lamps abandoned).

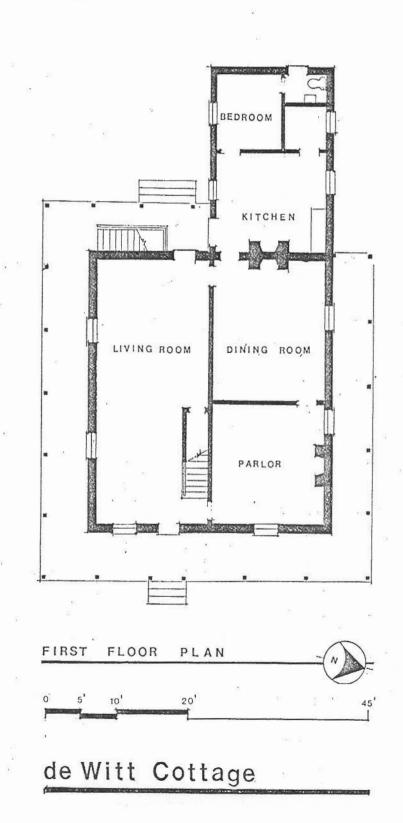
ca. 1915 Telephone installed.

- 1917 Two bedrooms and bath added above kitchen wing.
- 1917 Stair from second floor to attic modified in conjunction with two bedroom addition.
- ca. 1928 Partition in living room removed.
- ca. 1928 Shutters removed from all windows.
- ca. 1929 Cistern in basement abandoned.
  - 1930 Electric stove replaced wood stove.
  - 1930 Electric water heater installed in basement.
  - 1933 Kitchen chimney lost during hurricane and rebuilt.
- ca. 1935 Roof on west side was raised to accommodate strip dormers.
  - 1938 Coal fired furnace converted to oil fired.
  - 1940 Asbestos shingles replaced wood on second floor of kitchen wing.
  - 1956 Two chimneys on south side lost during hurricane and not replaced.
  - 1956 Standing seam metal roof replaced by asphalt shingles.
  - 1972 Tornado damaged porch on the north side of house (several columns were blown into street).
  - 1981 Vibration from pile driving for adjacent high-rise hotel caused minor damage to plaster and plumbing.
  - 1987 Second floor porch on the south side of the rear wing removed (porch was built in 1917).
  - 1988 House boarded-up after being vacated by the de Witt family in January. The house is still owned by the family.

The dates on the foregoing outline were provided by Katrine de Witt and Julia de Witt who have occupied the house since 1909. These were given to Michael Newbill during interviews in August 1987, December 1987, and January 1988. The dates marked ca. are estimates. The dates without ca. are considered to be the actual dates but are based on memory rather than documentary evidence.

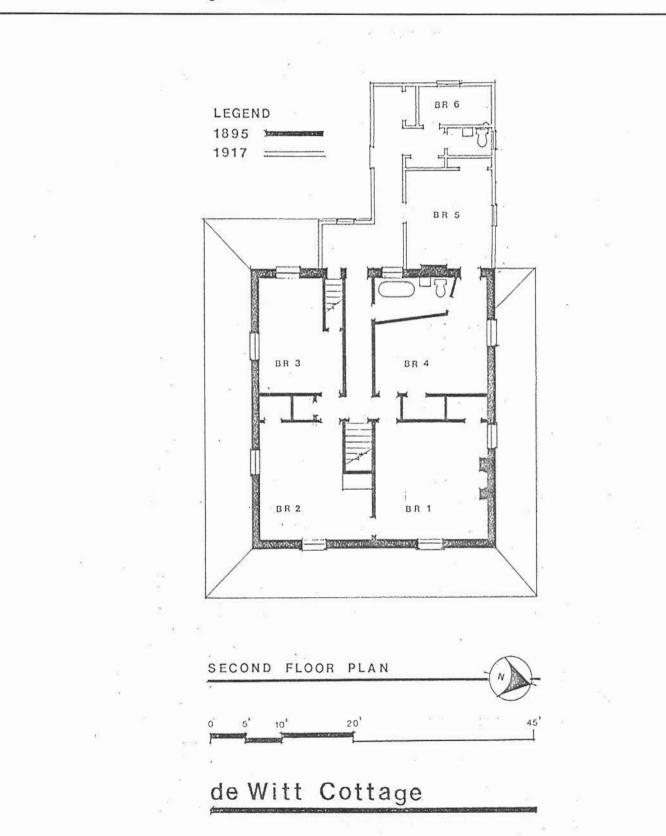
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The development of Virginia Beach commenced in 1880 when a group of people from Norfolk built a club house for hunting, fishing, and weekend outings. The members of this club called the area Virginia Beach. At that time there was only limited accessibility via country roads. In 1883 a group of investors, realizing the potential of the area, organized the Norfolk and Virginia Beach Railroad and Improvement Company. The company built a narrow gage railroad which began service to the oceanfront from Broad Creek in Norfolk on July 17, 1883. The company acquired land for development and constructed the Virginia Beach Hotel, which was the first hotel in the area. In 1887 and 1888 the investment company was sold. The new owners included the Vanderbilts from New York, and the hotel was substantially improved and reopened as the Princess Anne Hotel.

During the same period lots were sold near the hotel and several oceanfront "cottages" were built. Some of these were only for summer use but others were permanent residences. The development company intended to create a year-round upper class resort where the hotel guests and permanent residences could mingle socially.

The company's plans were apparently successful since many residents and a large number of prominent persons visited the Princess Anne Hotel including Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, and Alexander Graham Bell.<sup>2</sup> Prominent citizens from Norfolk and Princess Anne County also built cottages.

From 1887 to 1890 sixteen hundred acres around the hotel were subdivided and by 1889 "there were fourteen cottages and another small hotel in the community." <sup>4</sup> A survey of the area prepared by S. F. Day, C.E. (civil engineer) in April 1901 shows that there were at least two hotels and approximately forty-five oceanfront cottages in the area between 8th Street and 24th Street. On March 6, 1906, the General Assembly of Virginia approved an act which incorporated the town of Virginia Beach in the county of Princess Anne. It is interesting to note that this act listed B. P. Holland, who built the de Witt cottage, as the mayor of the town until a regular election could be held in June of that year. The 1910 federal census listed 300 residents in the town of Virginia Beach.

The development of Virginia Beach coincided with that of other oceanside resorts along the Atlantic Coast. West Palm Beach and Miami in Florida, Newport, Rhode Island and Atlantic City, New Jersey are resorts that flourished during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A recent essay on nineteenth century American resorts and hotels states, "For American resorts, the years 1870-1914 saw them also come of age. American energy, expansion and industrial might required the special places, whether Yellowstone or Bar Harbor. The American resort of these years has been seen as an attempt to escape from the pressures, dirt and close of the growing American city. The urban population grew nearly fivefold in the years 1870-1910 from nine million to forty-one million, and resorts grew accordingly."

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The de Witt cottage's period of significance, from 1895 to 1937, commences on the date of its construction and continues until the present but is terminated at the fifty year limit for historic significance. The property has sustained ongoing significances beyond its date of construction because it has continued to function for its intended purposes with little or no change in its historic integrity. It was occupied as a single family residence by the Holland family until 1905. After that date it was rented for several years, again as a single family dwelling, until it was purchased by the de Witt family on November 1, 1909. The de Witt family continuously occupied the house as a permanent residence from 1909 until January 1988. They also operated the cottage as a guest house from approximately 1932 until 1970. Paying guests, who were frequently friends and acquaintances, were accepted on a limited basis while the property continued to be occupied as a residence by the family. It is important that there were no "modernizations" or changes made to accommodate the guest house function that have had an adverse effect upon the integrity of the property. In fact, the cottage's operation as a guest house may also be considered as contributing to its significance since this was frequently a means by which oceanfront property owners could continue to support their properties during the depression years of the thirties.

The significant dates of 1895 and 1909 are, respectively, the dates when the cottage was built for Bernard Peabody Holland and the date it was purchased from Holland by Cornelius de Witt.

The de Witt cottage is used as the historic name for the property because it is the primary name that was used for 28 of the 42 years (67%) of the period of significance. The name was first used when the property was acquired by Cornelius De Witt for his wife Cecile Amelia de Witt in 1909. The property had been previously know as the Holland Cottage after it was built for B. P. Holland in 1895. The Holland name was abandonded when Mr. Holland built a new house directly across Atlantic Avenue from his original cottage which was sold to the de Witt family. The cottage was also briefly called "Wittenzand," Dutch for "white sand" by Cornelius de Witt.

- 1. Kathleen M. Eighmey, The Beach, p. 65.
- Kay D. Sewell, "Her oldest resident recalls 71 years at Virginia Beach," The Virginia Pilot, March 25, 1956.
- 3. The Public Ledger, April 28, 1888.
- 4. Katharine F. Syer, "The Town and City of Virginia Beach," II, p. 115.
- 5. Survey of Virginia Beach, Map Book 1, page 20.
- 6. Acts of Assembly 1906, chapter 76.
- Richard Guy Wilson, "Nineteenth Century American Resorts and Hotels," p. 14.

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Syer, Katherine F. "The Town and City of Virginia Beach, 1880-1957", The History of Lower Tidewater Virginia. Edited by Rogers Dey Whichard, Vol. II. Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1959.

Wilson, Richard Guy. "Nineteenth Century American Resorts and Hotels." Victorian Resorts and Hotels, Essays from a Victorian Society Autumn Symposium. Edited by Richard Guy Wilson. Published as Nineteenth Century: Vol 8, Nos 1-2, The Victorian Society in America, 1982.

#### Newspapers

Barrow, Mary Reid. "The last house on the resort strip." The Beacon, Virginia Beach, Va., August 14, 1985.

Kyle, Lousia Venable. "Old Virginia Beach Keeps Identity in Midst of Busy Resort." Norfolk Virginian Pilot, Norfolk, Va., August 24, 1952.

The Norfolk Landmark, Norfolk, Va., June 2, 1888.

The Public Ledger, Norfolk, Va., 17 May 1887.

The Public Ledger, Norfolk, Va., April 28, 1888.

The Public Ledger, Norfolk, Va., June 2, 1888.

Sewell, Kay Doughtie. "Her Oldest Resident Recalls 71 Years at Virginia Beach," The Virginia Pilot, Norfolk, Va., March 25, 1956.

Witt, John. "Sisters, 83, 85, act to save strip's last private home". Richmond Times Dispatch, Richmond, Va., 30 August 1987.

### Public Records

Chapter 76, Acts and Joint Resolutions passed by the General Assembly of Virginia during the session of 1906. Richmond: Superintendent of public printing, 1906.

Deed to Robert M. Hughes from the Norfolk and Virginia Beach Railroad Company, July 21, 1887. Deed Book 59, page 115. Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Virginia Beach, Va. (formerly Princess Anne County)

Deed to de Witt from Holland et ux, November 1, 1909. Deed book 83, page 372. Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Virginia Beach, Va. (formerly Princess Anne County)

Survey of Virginia Beach, S. F. Day, C.E., April 1901. Map Book 1, page 20, Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Virginia Beach, Va. (formerly Princess Anne County)

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All those certain lots or pieces of land with the buildings thereon, in the town of Virginia Beach, County of Princess Anne, State of Virginia, known numbered and designated upon a plat of the Virginia Beach property which is attached to and made a part of a deed to Robert M. Hughes from the Norfolk and Virginia Beach Railroad Company, dated July 21, 1887 and duly recorded in the Clerk's office of the circuit court of Princess Anne County as lots numbers one (1) and two (2) in block eleven (11) which lots are bounded and described as follows: Beginning at the Southeastern intersection of Twelfth Street and Atlantic Avenue and running South along the East side of said Atlantic Avenue One hundred and five (105) feet, thence Eastwardly at right angles with Atlantic Avenue One Hundred and fifty (150) feet; thence northerly parallel with Atlantic Avenue One Hundred and five (105) feet to Twelfth Street, thence Westerly along the Southern side of Twelfth Street one hundred and fifty (150) feet to the point of beginning. )R

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES

