



History of the Port of Baltimore

1706 - 1789

- Trade begins in the natural harbor area of today's Port of Baltimore.
- Colonial legislators designate the area near Fort McHenry as a Port of Entry for Maryland's tobacco trade with England.
- Fells Point, the deepest part of the natural harbor, evolves into a leading colonial shipbuilding center.
- The city of Baltimore is established, and trade increases; fabric mills are built on the Jones Falls and wharves, warehouses, and counting-houses sprang up. Goods from China, such as tea and silk, began arriving into Baltimore.
- The Patapsco River Valley, called the cradle of Maryland's industrial revolution, supports the development of the Port of Baltimore.
- The sleek and maneuverable Clipper ships, which would immortalize Baltimore in shipbuilding lore and enhance the Port's reputation, become more popular. Today, a Clipper ship is depicted on the seal of the Port of Baltimore.

1800 - 1893

- Alexander Brown arrives from Ireland and founds one of the world's foremost investment houses. His son George acquired the Brown's Wharf complex in 1840.
- The Chasseur merchant vessel is built. Captained by Thomas Boyle, it becomes famous during the War of 1812. Baltimore becomes famous for its schooners and clippers.
- Baltimore becomes the third largest city in the U.S., its growth driven by the multiplier effect of the Port's expanding maritime commerce.
- California Gold Rush; orders pour into Baltimore shipyards for fast ships to make the voyage to California. Baltimore emerges as a national leader in canned goods. Pioneers moving West carry provisions in cans.
- The Association of Maryland Pilots is formed. Bay pilots guide vessels along the Chesapeake.
- Coffee ships, built specifically for the coffee trade with Brazil, become even more successful immediately following the Civil War. Coffee warehouses jam Thames Street in Fell's Point.
- Civil War – Maryland has strategic value as a shipbuilding and transportation hub during the conflict, and Union forces mount cannon atop Federal Hill to guard the city of Baltimore and its valuable harbor.

- Immigration – The German Lloyd company begins regular steam travel to Baltimore, bringing tens of thousands of eastern and southern European immigrants into the United States through Locust Point.
- Railroad – In the decades following the Civil War, the growth of the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad helps to make Baltimore the sixth largest port in the world.
- Terminal Trucking is established when Terminal Warehouse Company is formed by a subsidiary of Pennsylvania Rail Division, North Central Railroad.

1917 - 1994

- Schooners – Four and six-masted schooners, among the last of the working sailing vessels, are built for coastal trade. The Maryland skipjack, a single-masted boat built around this time, is used for oyster dredging. It would be the last commercial sailing fleet in the United States.
- Rukert Terminals, specializing in salt, metals, ores, and fertilizers, is established by William G. Norman “Cap” Rukert.
- Baltimore is ranked as the second-largest seaport in the U.S. for waterborne commerce.
- The Maryland General Assembly creates the Maryland Port Authority (MPA) and begins development of Dundalk Marine Terminal on the site of a former airfield.
- Dundalk Marine Terminal opens for business. Automobiles, its first commodity, drive its success.
- Containers – Sea-Land begins its new container service at Dundalk.
- Locust Point – The port authority takes a 40-year lease on the B&O Locust Point piers. A \$30 million reconstruction program begins. The MPA purchases both Southside and North Locust Point.
- Maryland Port Administration becomes part of the Maryland Department of Transportation.
- Dundalk Marine Terminal Expansion – The \$21.7 million expansion includes the purchase of four container cranes and development of two new berths.
- Inner Harbor waterfront project begins as a partnership of the city and private industry.
- Fairfield Auto Terminal opens. The terminal is constructed by the MPA, and jointly opened with Toyota Motor Sales, USA.
- Hart-Miller Island Project – Using innovative approaches for handling dredged materials, the MPA completes an award-winning beneficial use project in the Upper Bay.
- Seagirt Marine Terminal opens. Seagirt is built on material dredged from the Fort McHenry Tunnel construction project. The terminal is among the most efficient and productive container terminals in the U.S.
- “Port Fest” – a celebration of maritime history and growth is co-sponsored by the MPA and private partners. Port Fest was one of several continuing port community events during the 1990’s.
- The Terminal Corporation, a firm started by the Menzies family in 1893, celebrates its 100th anniversary.
- Seagirt Marine Terminal sparks a technological revolution, which moves port operations from clipboard to keyboard-based. Computerized gate complexes, hand-held scanners, Electronic Data Interchange, and other advances are instituted.

2000 - Present

- Dundalk Marine Terminal, a 570-acre terminal, which serves as the Port's general workhorse, celebrates 40 years of service.
- Wallenius Wilhelmsen Americas Region makes Baltimore its North Atlantic shipping hub for Roll On Roll Off (Ro/Ro) cargo, signing a 20-year lease with three five-year extensions, the largest shipping deal in the history of the Port.
- Rukert Terminals, led by the third and fourth generation of the same families, celebrates its 80th anniversary as one of the mid-Atlantic's premiere privately owned bulk and break-bulk terminals.
- Maryland Port Administration takes access of six high capacity Rubber Tired Gantry (RTG) cranes at Seagirt Marine Terminal, increasing the container capacity at the marine terminal by 50 percent. The MPA now has 12 RTGs.
- Along with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Bureau, the MPA unveiled the latest tool used to combat terrorism and smuggling at U.S. ports. Vehicle and Cargo Inspection Systems (VACIS) machines are non-intrusive detection systems, which quickly and easily inspect the contents of trucks, containers, cargo, and passenger vehicles.
- Mercedes-Benz signs a 20-year lease with two 10-year extensions for 104 acres of land at Fairfield Auto Terminal. The agreement assures \$61.1 million in revenue over the life of the lease and creates or retains a total of 330 direct jobs. It will also generate \$3.6 million in State and local taxes annually.
- Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) is honored for surpassing previous port statistics by shipping more than 100,000 containers and two million gross tons of cargo along Baltimore's waterfront.
- The Port of Baltimore celebrates its 300th birthday. The port is marketed aggressively around the world and plays an essential role in Maryland's economic development.