A HISTORY OF MAPPING
OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

The mapping of the Chesapeake Bay started in 1587 when Ortelius spotted a small inlet on his map of North and South America. The Indian name first showed up on White's map of 1590 where he drew a non-descriptive inlet north of Roanoke Island, "Chesapiooc Sinus."

It was not until 1608 that John Smith made his first exploration of the Bay with 14 men in an open barge. A second expedition took place in September, 1608. The map he produced from these expeditions certainly was remarkable considering the technologies he had available. This Smith Map that was printed in London in 1612 was copied by many mapmakers.

Robert Dudley, in 1661, combined the White Map and the Smith Map very effectively. Also during this same period, the Dutch were mapping the Bay and some of the rivers. They mapped the James River to assist in their trading, particularly tobacco. Several of these are shown in the exhibit. In fact, the best map of the James River was produced by the Dutch in 1617 and was not duplicated in quality until the Coastal Geodetic Survey was formed in 1840.

Because of many boundary issues among the English, Swedes and the Dutch, Lord Baltimore contracted with Augustine Herrman to construct a map of Maryland and the neighboring colonies in exchange for 20,000 acres of land. This excellent map was first published in 1673 and was copied and added to by many for the next 80 years.

At that time, Frye and Jefferson prepared their famous map which became the basis for many maps to follow, such as the Anthony Smith Map of July, 1776. This contained a great deal of nautical information.

The U.S. Coastal Survey began mapping the Chesapeake in 1850 and its rivers in the 1860's. The next evolution was brought about by aerial photography and satellite recordings of the Bay.

The maps and charts on display are from Alan Voorhees' collection.
America
Abraham Ortelius, Antwerp, 1587

This map, printed in 1587, depicts the general knowledge of the world at about the same time that Roanoke and Jamestown were settled. Although the coastline of North America is substantially accurate, the interior is nearly blank. The Great Lakes were still unknown. This map was included in an atlas prepared by Ortelius, who produced the first modern atlas of the world in 1570.
This map has many "firsts." It put the Chesapeake Bay "on the map," and contains the first printed use of the name "Chesapiooc Sinus" (Chesapeake Bay). It is the first separate map of Virginia with any degree of accuracy and detail. It remained the basic prototype of the mouth of the Bay until John Smith's Map. A highly decorative map, it depicts trees, mountains, and Indian villages, as well as the location of shoals.
This map of Virginia was the by-product of John Smith's survey of the Chesapeake Bay. His first expedition, in June, 1608, was made with fourteen men in an open barge and lasted six weeks. A second expedition of similar length took place in September, 1608. This map is particularly remarkable considering the fact that they had no modern surveying instruments.
Four Small Copies of the Smith Map

This depicts four small copies of the Smith Map which appeared in small atlases. The interesting thing about this is how they vary from the Smith Map, although they all claim to be derived from the Smith Map. Upper Lefthand Corner - Minor - Mercator, 1628, Amsterdam; Upper Righthand Corner - Oblong - Mercator, 1634, Amsterdam; Lower Lefthand Corner - Hall, 1636, London (shown above); and Lower Righthand Corner - Minor - Mercator, 1648, Amsterdam.
Large Copy of Smith Map
Blaeu, Amsterdam, 1638

This is a typical copy of the Smith Map produced in nearly every atlas in the 17th Century. It was popular in its day because it showed a great amount of detail and also depicted the life of the Indians in the New World. The coloring of the map was added by hand at the time of publishing. This map appeared in the Mercator Atlas, published in Amsterdam in 1638.
Vingboons Chart of the James River
Amsterdam, 1619

This nautical chart was prepared from material collected by various Dutch ships that were exploring the James River to develop the tobacco trade. The cartographer who assembled this information was named Johannes Vingboons. It certainly indicates a great deal of accuracy. In fact, this is the best map of the James River until the U.S. Coastal Survey work done in the 1860's.
Carta Particolare della Virginia Vecchia e Nuova
Robert Dudley, 1661

Carta Particolare della Virginia Vecchia e Nuova, which covers the lower two-thirds of the Chesapeake Bay to Cape Fear, is the first of the area to be done on the Mercator projection, thus facilitating navigation. The Delmarva Peninsula and many Indian names appear to be based on Smith's map of 1612. The North Carolina portion is from John White. The map appears in the atlas Dell Arcano Del Mare, which is one of the earliest and rarest of marine atlases and is the first by an Englishman.
Pascaerte Vande Virginies

Van Baya de la Madeleina tot de Zuydt Revier
Arent Roggeveen, Amsterdam, 1675

*Pascaerte Vande Virginies Van Baya de la Madeleina tot de Zuydt Revier* comes from the most important Dutch sea atlas in American history. Roggeveen's sea atlas is the earliest of the West Indies and East Coast of America and was based upon a large collection of manuscript charts. The publisher of this atlas, Pieter Goos, was Amsterdam's most successful printer of sea atlases.
This is the second edition of "Lord Baltimore's Map." The plate appears only in John Ogilby's 1671 English edition of Arnold Montanus, *De Nieuw en Onbekende Weereld*. This map is the most complete and accurate description of Maryland published to that time. This map is not as accurate as the John Smith Map. However, it names ten Maryland counties, identifies other new places, better defines the major islands in the Chesapeake Bay, including Kent, and moves the northern boundary farther up the Susquehanna.
Herrman, a merchant’s representative of the Dutch West Indian Company, proposed to Lord Baltimore that in exchange for 20,000 acres of land, he would construct a map of Maryland and the neighboring colonies. Because of endless boundary disputes with the Dutch, the Swedes and Virginians, Lord Baltimore accepted his offer. This map, the result of 10 years’ work, is amazingly accurate for its time.
This chart was coauthored by Fisher and Thornton, who produced their own rendition of the Herrman Map for the English Pilot Fourth Book in 1689. This particular chart was used over and over again and appeared virtually unchanged in editions printed as late as 1794. There were 37 editions of the English Pilot Fourth Book between 1689 and 1794.
Until 1735, the only significant chart of any part of the Bay to appear from the time of the Thornton Chart was that of Mark Tiddeman. As master of the British vessel, Tartar, from 1724 to 1728, he made soundings of the Hampton Roads area at the mouth of the Chesapeake. His chart was published in The English Pilot. This was from the 1750 edition. The Hampton Roads Chart includes more complete soundings than any previously available as far north as the York River to Yorktown and in the James to Norfolk.
Virginia
J. Van Keulen, 1685 - Amsterdam

Van Keulen's chart of Virginia is based on the most up-to-date survey by Augustine Hermann. Most of the previous maps of Virginia of the seventeenth century relied on John Smith's map. This decorative and detailed costal map of Virginia first appeared in the fourth part of the Zee-Fakkel, issued in 1684.
The publication of the Fry - Jefferson Map in 1751 provided the basis for development of many new charts to assist navigation. On July 1, 1776, this chart was published in London. The nautical information was attributed to Anthony Smith, a pilot of St. Mary County. A French version was published in 1778. This was the best chart of the Chesapeake until the U.S. Coastal Survey commenced its work in 1840.
This chart of the Chesapeake Bay, made in 1856 by the U.S. Coastal Survey, reveals the triangulation work that was done in the Chesapeake Bay area. This gave the necessary controls that were needed to establish the shoreline accuracy of the Bay and the rivers involved. These were published in an annual report made by the Superintendent of the U.S. Coastal Survey to Congress.
Fry and Jefferson
London, 1751

This map was first prepared in 1751 by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson. Joshua Fry was a former professor of mathematics at Oxford and William and Mary. Peter Jefferson was Thomas Jefferson's father. They worked together on various surveying projects before preparing this map -- the property limits of Lord Fairfax, the Northern Neck, and the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina. The Anthony Smith Chart of the Chesapeake was based on this map.