

# JASON BEACH

For generations, this area – known as Jason Beach – was a vibrant gathering place for the local Black community. Locals came together to swim, play, picnic, dance, and hold church services among other activities.



This modern image is marked to show the layout of Jason Beach based on locals' memories from the 1940s to the 1970s.

According to locals, the concrete pad in front of you was the foundation of the concession stand. This stand was operated by Andrew and Agnes Selby who owned a grocery at Lowes Crossroads, approximately 3 miles west of this site.

- The road leading to the beach was narrow, rutty, and made of dirt.
- A "change room" was in this general vicinity. Unlike the existing bathhouse (built by the early 1970s), this was one long open building without separate rooms. An area on one end was for men and boys to change, while the other end was for women and girls. Each side had one bathroom stall, but there was no indoor plumbing.
- This area was used for fishing.
- Horseshoe pits were in the same area they are today.
- This pavilion was not here.
- The existing concrete pad is the part of a former "snack shack." The small A-frame concession stand was operated by the Selby family. They sold sausage sandwiches, candy bars, peanuts, sodas, and other snacks here.
- A jukebox stood in the corner of the former pavilion – filling the air with sounds of jazz, swing, James Brown, and Lloyd Price.
- Locals remember a different pavilion that stood here. Covered, but not enclosed, the pavilion was the hub for all kinds of gatherings – from sunrise services to nighttime dances.
- Instead of picnic tables, those who gathered here brought folding tables and chairs or spread blankets on the ground.
- Generations of families were baptized in the waters off the point of Jason Beach.

*"When you went to Jason Beach you had a chance to meet your friends, your cousins...and you met people that you'd never seen before and would make friendships....It was like a community center for the African American folks....it was just a wonderful place there."*

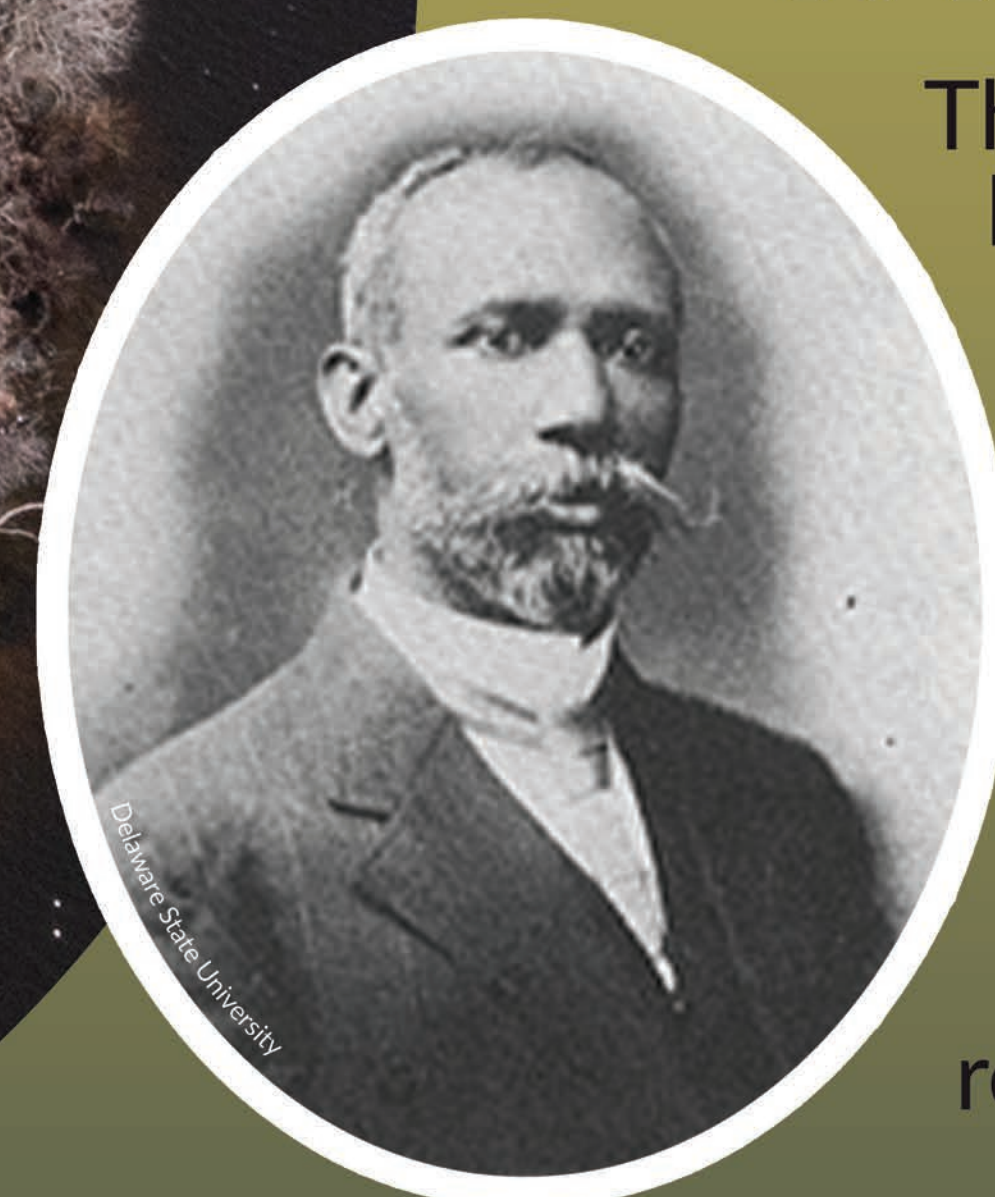
— Howard West, remembering his time spent at Jason Beach in a 2021 interview



Howard West loved spending time at Jason Beach in his youth. Image courtesy of Howard West.

## WHY IS THIS PLACE CALLED JASON BEACH?

This beach is named for Dr. William C. Jason, the second and longest-serving president of Delaware State University at 28 years (1895-1923). His longevity and leadership provided much-needed stability at a time when the then-State College for Colored Students did not receive adequate state funding.



In recent decades, this area has been known as Cypress Point. In 2022, Governor John Carney formally renamed the site Jason Beach, in recognition of its historic significance.