



HISTORY OF THE NANTUCKET DREAMLAND



The Nantucket Dreamland Foundation has a rich and storied history, deeply rooted in the Nantucket community.

Nantucket Dreamland's history is a captivating tale of community passion, preservation, and commitment to the arts. This iconic institution has undergone many transformations since its inception in the 19th century.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

(1830-1831)

The story of Dreamland begins with the construction of the Hicksite Quaker Meetinghouse for \$3,250. This historic building would later become the foundation of the Dreamland Theater.



TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE AGES (1880-1922)

In 1880, the building was used as a straw-hat factory and roller-skating rink. In 1883, it was dismantled and moved to Brant Point, where it was reassembled and incorporated into the Nantucket Hotel as “Atlantic Hall”. After being purchased by new owners in 1905-1906, the building was floated back across the harbor to its current location and reopened as Smith and Blanchard’s Moving Picture Show. It was eventually renamed the Dreamland Theatre in 1911. Following a renovation in 1922, the Dreamland Theatre became Nantucket’s primary entertainment venue for over 80 years, showcasing first-run movies.



PRESERVATION EFFORTS (2005-2007)

By the early 2000s, the theater had fallen into despair. In 2005, a group of local residents established the Nantucket Dreamland Preservation Trust to save the theater from demolition. In 2007, the non-profit Dreamland Foundation purchased the building, kickstarting the restoration process.



REBIRTH OF THE DREAMLAND (2012)

After years of dedicated efforts, the Dreamland Theater reopened its doors in 2012 as a state-of-the-art performing arts center and cinema. The Dreamland once again became a vibrant cultural hub for the Nantucket community, thanks to the unwavering support and contributions of the island residents and donors.

Today, the Nantucket Dreamland Foundation remains committed to preserving and enhancing the cultural life of Nantucket through diverse and accessible arts programming. The rich history of the Dreamland serves as a reminder of the profound impact a dedicated community can have on shaping its cultural landscape for generations to come.



