

Isle of Kent - 1631

To Discover, Identify, Restore and Preserve the Heritage of Kent Island

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. WINTER 2016 - 2017

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Audrey Hawkins 90-92

Charles Koegel 93-94

Hugo Gemignani 95-98

Nancy M. Cook 99-08

President's Message



As we close out our calendar year, it's time to reflect on a very active and eventful 2016 in the Kent Island Heritage Society. At the top of our list of significant events was the induction of our own Ms. Nancy Cook into the Maryland Senior Volunteer Hall of Fame, then her selection to receive the top State "GERI" Award for her lifetime of volunteer contributions to our community. Nancy wears many hats in Queen Anne's County and is never shy about stepping up and getting the job done in her many areas of interest. What a role model ... and still going strong. Congratulations, Nancy – well deserved!

During the year, through the hard work and dedicated efforts of our Board and volunteer members, we accomplished many improvements to our historic sites. At the Kirwan House we replaced and rebuilt a new multi-use storage shed, which is quite useful and blends in nicely with the surrounding area. We restored and refurbished the old farm tool storage shed to become a new historic display site, as an Eagle Scout Project of Scout Will Moulden. And thanks to a volunteer donation from contractor Tom Willey, we added a newly rebuilt historic brick well next to the pump house – a handsome addition to the Kirwan back yard.

Inside the Kirwan House we applied the generous \$5,000 donation awarded by the Maryland Garden Club to repair plaster molding, walls, and ceilings that had water damage from recent storms. We also received a thoughtful donation from the estate of Anne Reifsneider which we hope to apply to further Kirwan House restoration efforts. In Stevensville, we completed some important wood and painting repairs to the Cray House, the oldest relic among our Kent Island Historic sites. This was done under the watchful eye of the Maryland Historic Trust, which holds an easement on the property because of their large grant made during the original restoration of the house.

Thanks to our VP, Frank Frohn, for tenaciously following through on the details and to our contractor, Lundberg Builders, for their expert workmanship and willingness to add donated time and materials to insure that the exacting MHT standards were met. Job well done! In the Historic Stevensville Bank, which we lease from Mr. Bob Marsteller and show as a historic site, work is progressing to incorporate a new sub-tenant who will operate an art-oriented business and keep the building open on a regular basis. More on this project in a future newsletter.

In a broader context, we are working at the county level in support of preservation of historic resources. We are supporting a proposed ordinance, the first of its kind for Queen Anne's County, which would require documentation and protection of archae-

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KIHS Committees

Membership

John Conley, Chair

Budget

Lynne Riley-Coleman

Jay Gibson

Linda Collier

Publicity

Martha Lostrom

Newsletter

Martha Lostrom, Editor

Carole Frederick, Managing Editor

Library/Genealogy

Frank Frohn

Bob Lowe, Chair

Lynne Riley-Coleman

Kirwan House

Linda Collier, Curator

Cameron Sewell

Taylor Harmon

Cemeteries

Steve Kougores, Asst. Curator

Cray House

Sally Lewis, Curator

Post Office

Earl Chambers, Curator

John Conley, co-Chair

Smoke House Building and Grounds

Train Station

Rudy Lukakovic, Curator

Bank

Marilyn Wilson, Docent

Lynnda Kratovil, Docent

Docents

Sally Lewis, Coordinator

Josh Bouchal

Anne Marie Bouchal

Butch Collier

Linda Collier

Cassy Dafin

Carole Frederick

Carl Gerg

Joanne Gerg

Jay Gibson

Toni Gibson

Taylor Harmon

Chris Kilian

Lynnda Kratovil

Sally Lewis

Rawle Mannix

Barbara Marmion

Fran Peters

Hanna Wall

Marilyn Wilson

PROGRAMS

Kent Island Day

Nancy Cook, Chair

Jack Broderick

Carole Frederick

Toni Gibson

Jamie Sasse

Picnic

Carole Frederick, Chair

Toni and Jay Gibson

Linda and Butch Collier

June General Meeting

Jack Broderick

Annual Election Brunch

Toni Gibson

Continued from page 1

ological sites and resources in the county affecting major site plans, major subdivisions, and certain other projects, using established standards and criteria. The measure has passed the Planning Commission with significant amendments and will be considered by the county commissioners. We will continue to follow it closely.

A second effort is a new county policy to notify "heritage stakeholders" of pending demolition of a historic property to allow possible salvage and preservation of significant artifacts or resources. The first such effort is being applied at the historic Crayford Property on Rt. 8, with the willing cooperation of the present owners, the Kerner family.

During the year we hosted a number of heritage events. Although our signature annual event, Kent Island Day, was rained out by a historic deluge in May, we look forward to the biggest and best KI Day ever in May 2017!

We hosted four significant quarterly events, in addition to having all our historic sites open with docents on the first Saturdays from May through November. In March we celebrated Women's History Month at Historic Christ Church with a remarkable presentation on Amelia Earhart by Mary Ann Jung. In June we celebrated our maritime heritage with a memorable evening dinner cruise on the Chester River aboard the *River Packet*. In September we gathered for our annual Fall Heritage Picnic at Kirwan place to celebrate the island's rural heritage. In December we held our annual General Membership meeting, with elections and swearing in of Officers and Board Members at Fisherman's Inn.

Our Officers for 2017 are President, Jack Broderick; Vice President, Hal Wilson; Treasurer, Lynne Riley-Coleman; Corresponding Secretary, Carole Frederick; and Recording Secretary, Nancy Cook. Martha Lostrom is joining the Board as a new member and will also serve as our new Publicity Chair and newsletter publisher.

We offer our sincere thanks and best wishes to Alex Johnson and Marilyn Hull and to Frank and Donna Frohn who are going off the Board. Their Board service has been invaluable. We look forward to their continuing involvement on special projects as volunteer members of KIHS.

And thanks to all of you for your involvement and support in 2016 and for your continued support in 2017, as we continue our mission to discover, identify, explore, and preserve the heritage of Kent Island.

Jack Broderick

Calendar 2017

JANUARY 18

BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 15

BOARD MEETING

MARCH 15

GENERAL MEETING

TBA

APRIL 19

BOARD MEETING

MAY 17

BOARD MEETING

MAY 20

KENT ISLAND DAY

JUNE 21

General Meeting - TBA

JULY 19

BOARD MEETING

AUGUST 16

BOARD MEETING

IF NEEDED

SEPTEMBER 20

BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 24

ANNUAL PICNIC

@ KIRWAN HOUSE

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

OCTOBER 18

BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 15

BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 11

ANNUAL MEETING/Brunch

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

FISHERMAN'S INN 12:30 - 4:00 PM

Holiday Cheer and Greetings to All Following the Annual Heritage Society Meeting in December



It was a wonderful Year of 2016 to celebrate as President Jack Broderick noted all the accomplishments of the Kent Island Heritage Society in opening message of this newsletter. Only the Kent Island Day's demise due to the wicked rainy weather dimmed the glow of the many positive activities enjoyed throughout Kent Island.

Nancy Cook, known as "The Energizer Bunny" of the Society, was honored as a state senior volunteer (see her story, next page). With a delightful and delicious brunch enjoyed, the group blended talents both for a "word game" related to holiday tunes and the exceptional local songs written by Toni Gibson. And they, in spirit, sum up our views and lives past and present in the Kent Island environs.

The Problem with Kent Island (to be sung to the tune of "Frosty the Snowman")

Refrain: Here on Kent Island, a near-perfect Paradise ...

We love our Bay and our island way, but the traffic – not so nice.

Here on Kent Island, everybody is a friend ... There's a smiling face, mostly every place 'cept when traffic has no end.

Verse 1: You're headed for the Safeway store on a summer day so fine ... You'll risk your neck, and you might say, "Heck!" when you see that endless line. **Ohhhhh**

Refrain

Verse 2: To cross the road at the overpass, it's like you're in a trance. ... Oh, that car's so

slow, will he ever go? And now you've missed your chance. **Ohhhhhh Refrain**

Verse 3: Coming up Route 8, now, you have to wait: on the bridge, an accident! The traffic's stuck, and you're out of luck. Call your boss to hear him vent! **Ohhhhh...**

Refrain

Verse 4: To fix this mess in the way that's best on the 50 "parking lot" ... Give your cars away and buy a sleigh like the one that Santa's got! **Ohhhhh... Refrain:**

Now on Kent Island, it's a PERFECT Paradise! ... All the cars are banned, so we walk the land. Yes, it's slow, but oh, so nice!!

Lots of news - Next Fall will see the 100th anniversary of the proving ground moving to Aberdeen - what would Kent Island have been if that had gone through, were it not for the tenacity of Sen. Kirwan. And a call goes out now for volunteers for the May 20, 2017 Kent Island Day or become a docent for the regular open houses in downtown Stevensville.

Kent Island Heritage Song

By Toni Gibson (sung to tune of Jingle Bells)

Refrain: Stevensville, Buzzardsville, places near the Bay; Chester and Dominion, too, all along the way. Down Route 8, up Love Point, on Rt. 50 too,

This island means so much to us; we hope it does to you!

Verse 1: In 1631, old Claiborne came along; He claimed us for Virginia's side, but That was very wrong. Now Maryland we are, And Maryland we'll stay; And thus begins the history of the Isle of Kent today!

Refrain: OH...

Verse 2: The War of 1812 was closer than

we'd hoped; Annapolis and Bowlingly were threatened, but we coped. ... The British all went home; we said our glad goodbyes. ... And over Fort McHenry's roof, the stary banner flies.

Refrain: OH...

Verse 3: Now Fate says Proving Ground. But Kirwan stopped the scheme, ... And now we're free and all the bombs go boom at Aberdeen! Our past has shaped our lives, our future we'll invent- With luck, and love, and fortitude, we'll stay the Isle of Kent!

Refrain: OH...



Queen Anne's County Commisioner Mark Anderson, left, installs the new board for the Kent Island Heritage Society at the annual meeting on December 11. From left, President Jack Broderick; Vice President Hal Wilson; Corresponding Secretary Carole Frederick, Treasurer Lynne Riley-Coleman; Recording Secretary Nancy Cook; Directors Toni Gibson, Jay Gibson and Martha Lostrom. (Photo by Doug Bishop, The Bay Times)

Nancy M. Cook Honored as a Top Senior Volunteer in Maryland

Nominee's Volunteer Activities: List the activities in detail of volunteer service. Include an explanation of the duties and responsibilities that demonstrate exceptional volunteerism.

Nancy Cook's occupation was that of a music teacher first in Queen Anne's County, then in Anne Arundel County and back to Queen Anne's County. She hails from Staunton, Virginia and graduated from Mary Baldwin College with a degree in vocal music. She married George Cook and they made their home in Queen Anne's County. Because of her love of music and wanting to promote music in the schools and community she became active in many facets of stimulating interest in both arenas. First, she organized choral music festivals for the entire Eastern Shore for both middle and high school singers. The All-Shore Choral Festival was an adjudicated festival for any school choruses on the Eastern Shore who wanted to participate. As president of this organization, she organized the entire structure of the event from where it was held, notifying choral directors in all of the schools, scheduling the performances, obtaining judges and setting standards of performance. Nancy also organized the Solo/Ensemble Festival which required the same arrangements as the choral festival, i.e., obtaining a location, notifications, scheduling, obtaining judges and setting standards. She continued to do this long after she retired from teaching which was in the early 90s.

To further her ambassadorship for music, Nancy is a member of the Board of Directors for the Mid-Shore Symphony which arranges and sponsors performances by the Baltimore Symphony in Queen Anne's County. She is currently writing a grant for this cause. She is also responsible for making sure there are programs and ushers for the concerts. She has organized coffee houses for the young folks and has obtained performers for the Kent Island Day Festival for many years. In addition, she sang with the Queen Anne's Chorale.

Nancy's contributions to The Kent Island Heritage Society are so numerous that one will probably forget to mention some of them. In this organization she has served as a board member, corresponding secretary, president (9 years), vice president (7 years) is currently a board member again and is chairing the annual Kent Island Day Festival. She is an organizer- extraordinaire. While serving as president she created a brochure that is printed each year that contains sketches and write-ups of the sites that the Society owns, the names of the officers and board members, the schedule of activities and a form for joining the organization.

A second brochure that she created is a walking tour of Stevensville. There is a picture and write-up of the historic houses in the town that are numbered so that one may follow

the map which is also numbered at the corresponding locations. Nancy researched the history and wrote a summary for each of our sites that are toured. She created a brochure with a picture of the site on the cover and the summary on the inside. These are given to visitors and further the docents' knowledge of the site.

For the last five years she has organized the docents for each of our six sites. They perform their duties six months of the year on the first Saturday of the month. Two docents are needed each time and Nancy made sure all sites were covered. If someone were missing, she would act as docent for that site. If two were missing she has been known to cover two sites at once (running back and forth!) Not only did she have the responsibility for obtaining docents, she has been known to clean the sites (from top to bottom – including windows) and to cut the grass if that were left undone.

When Nancy first became President of the Society, she made loose-leaf notebooks for all of the board members with information such as the list of all officers and board members with their addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and a copy of the calendar of events for the current year. Also in the notebook there was, a copy of the Society's seal, the Bylaws and the Senate Joint Resolution for the purpose of recognizing that Kent Island is the first permanent settlement of English speaking people within the boundaries of Maryland. Pocket dividers in which to keep pertinent information were also provided. No matter what is going on in the Society, Nancy volunteers to help with the work. She has helped the curator of the historic Kirwan House in Chester with many tasks of renovation – even scraping paint. She also has done inventories of furniture and other items in the Kirwan House and of donations for the Society. She saw to the renovation of the 1809 post and plank constructed historic Cray house – the historic Cray House in Stevensville, and oversaw acquisition and restoration of the historic Caboose to complement the display of the Stevensville Train Station. Likewise she oversaw the renovation of the Historic Stevensville Bank, when it was offered on a special lease to the Society for use as an additional historic site in Stevensville.

For years Nancy organized the Annual Dinner Meeting held at the local yacht club. There were centerpieces on the tables and a program at each seat. She acquired a guest speaker who would swear in the new board members and officers – usually a person of some note.

Under Nancy's leadership in 2001, the Society lead a campaign to encourage the County Commissioners to buy the his-



Nancy M. Cook, center, was honored at the annual meeting December 11th in addition to her state honors. Sen. Ben Cardin's assistant Kim Kratovil, right, also presented a certificate from him in support of this historic honor. KIHS President Jack Broderick is at left.

toric Episcopal Church and Rectory located in Stevensville. This campaign was successful and a board was formed that included county employees, members of the community and members of the Kent Island Heritage Society. Nancy became the chairman of this board and is still serving in that capacity today. She was involved in the renovation of the church and stabilizing the 1858 rectory. For the past several years she has served as the wedding coordinator when people inquire and/or want to be married in the church. She is there for the wedding rehearsals and weddings, making sure that the parties have everything they need including clean bathrooms. There is no task beneath her if she thinks something needing to be done would reflect poorly on her organization and/or work.

After Nancy retired from teaching, she was a member of the local retired teachers' association. For about ten years she was the chairman of their scholarship program. This involved notifying the schools of the availability of the scholarship for future teachers and providing application forms for the students to apply. Then she put the selection process in order by organizing a committee to choose the best students for the scholarships. The schools were then notified of the selections. She has handled the Heritage Society scholarship program for many years in much the same way.

When Queen Anne's County eliminated an important staff position, Nancy volunteered to fill the need. For many years, the county had a paid staff position, that of Historic Sites Coordinator, to oversee and assist the many independent historic sites and organizations around the county. After the decision was

made to eliminate the staff position, eight years ago, Nancy stepped up as a volunteer to assume the duties to support those sites. In that capacity she serves as chair of the Queen Anne's County Sites Consortium, oversees an appropriated budget to produce information, brochures, and flyers in support of the sites, oversees efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation among the various sites, and advocates on behalf of the sites with the county government and outside organizations. Her positive energy and effective leadership have greatly strengthened county-wide efforts to preserve and celebrate our rich, nearly four-century heritage.

Another impressive example of Nancy's penchant for stepping in at the right time with the right stuff is the Stevensville Arts and Entertainment District. The District, composed of a unique combination of artists, small businesses, antique stores, historic sites and the office of tourism, had struggled for years to try to become an official State-recognized A&E District, with all the tourism benefits and tax advantages of such a designation. Nancy was elected to serve in the position as Chair of the A&E District, working closely with QA County and State officials. Two years later the A&E designation was approved by the state. She continues to lead the District. All activities in Stevensville are now enjoying increased vibrancy and traffic and are looking positively at the future, thanks to Nancy Cook.

A unique individual of rare energy and drive, Nancy is referred to admiringly by local author Mark Lidinski in several of his books as "The Energizer Bunny of Kent Island." It's an accurate reflection of what she is about.



Kent Island Heritage
Society Picnic
September 2016



Picnic Celebration 2016!

Once again the annual picnic had lots of good food and the weather was beautiful at the Kirwan House. The special part of this picnic was sharing it with the Kent Island Rotarians – our brothers and sisters who share the same values of enhancing life on Kent Island.

It has never failed that our members pull together and put on a pretty nice event. The following is a list of people who helped to make this day possible:

Claude Lowery – cut the hayride trail, delivered and picked up straw bales (for the pyramid), provided the pumpkin (guess the weight) and apples (for apple cider)

Jack Broderick – made sure we had the porta-potty and delivered ice plus anything else we needed

Linda and Butch Collier- always make ice cream and serve it, plan games (guess the gadget, guess the weight of the pumpkin, fashion scare crows in the butterfly garden, make centerpieces, and provide a store tour and Butch washes dishes!

Toni and Jay Gibson – provide trash cans, drink coolers and extension cords, stepped in at the 11th hour and found a wagon for the hay ride, helped set-up

Anne Foxx – delivers and picks up her chickens

Rena and Roger Dye – yard preparation, bring the hotdog cooker and return it, help with clean-up

John Patrick – setup, cleanup and parking

Monique and Michael Thomas – set-up and clean-up and provided a sound system and music

Donna and Frank Frohn – bought all of the supplies we needed and brought the T-shirts for selling

Martha Lostrom – displayed Kent Island *Tastes and Tails* to sell for anyone who wanted a good Kent Island story and a recipe

Lynne Riley Coleman – picked up the fried chicken and ran the raffle

Lynnda Kratovil – greeted people and sold T-shirts

Debbie Lukacovic – new to the picnic and just jumped in and helped place the food on the tables and delivered it out of the kitchen

Bob Lowe – helped set up and clean up + anything else that needed doing

John Conley – made the coffee and lemonade, helped set up and clean up

Alex Frederick – brought the tractor to pull the hay ride wagon

Jamie Sasse – supplied the hay ride wagon and drove the tractor

Hal Wilson – helped get the yard ready for picnicking

Mary Campbell – loaned us her apple press

Carole Frederick – chairman of the picnic and simply barked orders all day

The weather could not have been better and, of course, the company was super! New people joined our membership, watched the children feed the chickens (with corn from the corn sheller) and drank apple cider pressed right there on the lawn.



GONE ... BY ALEX JOHNSON

nothing kept him
she was gone a year now
the boy destroyed by war
nothing left of other days
when full baskets brought him in
mid-morning
the dock alive with human calls
and gulls cries
Canadas wheeling on the wind
smells of fish oil and motor oil
tide running out
nothing kept him

he sat on the sideboard now
in the open
steering with his foot on the wheel
leaving out of the narrows
on a midnight tide
the old diesel chug-chugging out
like him, half crippled up

the man in the full moon mocked him
seeming not to understand
slung up in the west
over Eastern Bay
sliding toward the horizon

passing Hog Island and Bodkin
Tilghman Point went down
a few lights on Romancoke and Kent
came up
he thought of old Claiborne then
the fort burnt
all of them gone
nothing kept him

reaching down along the deadrise
his wintry hand cupped the cold water
clear and clean
nothing out here told the truth
nearby oyster bars once broached
the surface
a trot-line pass could fill a crab basket

in deeper here he took the wheel
circling behind the old bent lighthouse
he cut the diesel and drifted
the wind had gotten up out of the east
and pushed him farther out
in the bay

stooping below the transom
he entered the cabin, closed the door
behind him and threw the deadbolt

he lifted the hatch to the bilge
and used a pipe wrench to batter
a leaky bottom seam
until the trickle became a torrent
He closed the hatch and lay down
on the old bunk
pulled his cap down tight
over his forehead
covered himself with the warm comforter
and waited

outside the moon was now hidden
behind low horizon clouds
all but the keening wind was silent
it came up quickly now
the stern went under
where the weight was
then amidships
finally the bow
gone

what the darkness did not cover
the waters did

... alternate titles from middle school students:
*The Death of a Waterman, the Death of the
Bay, The Death of the Heart*

New Board Member for KIHS Takes on Newsletter, Publicity



New KIHS board member Martha Lostrom will also serve as Newsletter Editor and handle publicity

*Hungry? Grab your crab net and a bucket and head down to Long Island Sound ...from the rural Bronx area of Throggs Neck, Martha would go to the rocky areas of the Sound for a bucket of dinner ... while the area developed fast and houses and highways crowded in, that childhood pleasure was never forgotten. So while these days her water adventures are centered on kayaking and fly fishing, it's still in the spirit of how many grew up on Kent Island. That pleasure turned into a 15-year stint as an editor at *Yachting* magazine, sailing in many places around the world and earning a deep water diver's license; it was followed as editor of *Offshore*, a Boston-area based powerboat publication that one year had her participating in every bluefish tournament on the New England Coast. She also earned her ham radio license as KA1U0 and taught classes to the magazine readers.*

And as her personal situation changed, Martha and her two children, Erik and Adri, headed to northern Michigan. Here, she got a good foothold into weekly newspapering and, after five years, landed in North Conway NH as General Manager and Editor of *The Irregular*, a weekly newspaper of strong colonial heritage. Another change provided an opportunity as Executive Editor & Development Manager for a group of seven weekly newspapers in North Maine - including being the Editor of *Maine Potato News*. Another half-dozen years and she came to Maryland to be near Erik and became Communications Director and Editor of *Retirement Life* for NARFE. Four years later she was enticed away by the National League of Postmasters to get the *Postmasters Advocate* back in the black. That was 14 years ago ... The League, after 122 years, did not survive the whims of Congress and was dissolved this past November.

As owner of InPrint Communications LLC for the past 20 years, she also did book publishing and special projects on the side. "Putting together *Kent Island Tales & Tastes* was a great way to get to know more about the area. This collaboration between the new Rotary of Kent Island and the Heritage Society worked well," she said. Her next book will be *Eastern Shore Breading Traditions*. In the meantime, having a stronger role with the Kent Island Heritage Society is very much welcomed.



Top right: Katherine Price Barwick was Carole Frederick's grandfather Clayland Price's sister. Left: John Thomas Price, brother to Clayland Price Sr., grandfather to Chip Price. Center: Couple and child, unknown.

Our Fascination with Old Cars

By Carole Frederick

Many pictures during the 20s, 30s and 40s had old cars as their background. Here are a few that showed just that. I would love to show pictures of your old cars or ones in your family. Scan them and email them to mlostrom@aol.com or if you send the actual pictures by USPS, you may send them to Carole Frederick, 521 Love Point Road, Stevensville, MD 21666. These pictures will be mailed back to you as soon as they are copied. Please include any information as to the year it was taken, who is in the picture and if you know, the year and make of the car. Our next issue will include these pictures and the information you send me. This will be one way to have a history of old cars in our area.

Membership Form

I/We wish to be a member of The Kent Island Heritage Society.
Enclosed is a check to cover dues of membership
for one calendar year:

- \$15 Single Membership
- \$25 Family Membership
- \$25 Organization
- \$250 Life Membership per person

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Interests: History _____ Genealogy _____
Photography _____ Docent Program _____
Property Maintenance _____ Special Interest _____

Mail to: The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.
PO Box 321, Stevensville, MD 21666

*Dues and contributions are deductible on your income tax.
Membership period is January 1 to December 31.*

Welcome New Members

Betty Baker (Life)

Barry Donadio

Tom Mullaney

Blackbeard's Bluff

in Queenstown

By Carl Arthur Gerg

A solitary figure leans against an ancient oak patiently observing the waterway. This tall, spare mariner is dressed for a cold breeze off the northern Chesapeake Bay. The bluff affords a commanding lookout post for the Chester River just east of the Isle of Kent Narrows. The shipping lanes below are busy with pelts, tobacco, and luxury goods trading. A hurricane lamp, an impressive long glass, and a small salt-pepper colored watchdog, ever present at his feet, are his only comforting companions.

A low growl from Maxwell alerts his engrossed master to a closer matter of interest, Blackbeard snaps his spyglass close on his knee and stows it in his black oilskin coat pocket.

Following Maxwell's intense stare down the well-worn path up from Walsey Creek, his powerful right hand grasps the hilt of a sheathed cutlass. Blackbeard relaxes the defensive posture as a familiar face enters the dim light of his lamp.

"Israel, what is the condition of my ship this fine evening?" The sloop *Red Drum* had been careened in the natural dry dock of Walsey Creek during the past two weeks.

Israel Hands stiffened to military posture and reports, "Aye, Captain! She is sea worthy, and provisioned for getting underway!"

"Very well, Mister Hands, Well done! Inform all hands; we sail with tomorrow's tide!"

This scene played out on many occasions on Blackbeard's Farm just west of Queenstown. The year would be at the beginning of the Eighteenth century, just six years before Queen Anne's County was established. By 1709, other lookout points had also been established by pirates on the Chesapeake Bay including Point Comfort and Cape Henry. At anytime, a ship could suddenly be confronted by another ship that might seem to be friendly and perhaps just looking to exchange mail. Then the seemingly friendly ship becomes an attacking pirate ship or privateer. The Queen Anne's County population of about 3,000 souls was settled mostly on the Isle of Kent. The further growth would spread eastward as new tobacco lands were needed to meet the swelling worldwide demand for the golden leaf.

There are current residents of Kent Island who have family members that have passed down oral history about local pirates from 1635 until the mid 1850's. For two centuries, pirates roamed



There are current residents of Kent Island who have family members that have passed down oral history about local pirates from 1635 until the mid 1850's. For two centuries, pirates roamed the Chesapeake Bay. Some pirates made their way up to Kent Island, the Narrows, and Queenstown.



the Chesapeake Bay. Some pirates made their way up to Kent Island, the Narrows, and Queenstown. They used the abundance of local crops, seafood, and freshwater harbors to outfit and repair ships. With the seasons, these merchant adventurers transitioned from plantation occupations in the summer to seeking gold on the Caribbean Spanish Main in the winter.

During one of these seasonal transitions, a pirate ship returning from a successful cruise was caught unexpectedly by the spring thaw and sunk by moving ice. Unable to reach shore, the Chester River claimed the ship and crew.

This account of a maritime pirate era disaster is handed down by the Blunt family, who are long time Kent Islanders, as related for this article by Ms. Carole Frederick. Carole is corresponding secretary of the Kent Island Heritage Society. In 1649, the King of England granted 330 acres to the Blunts on which they built the Great Neck Manor in 1650. By 1706, the property known as Blunt's Marsh became "Great Neck Manor." The family lived there for over 200 years. In the mid-19th century the Blunts moved to the property known today as Blackbeard's Bluff on Blackbeard's Farm Road just a mile east of the Kent Narrows. Carole's family tilled Blackbeard's farmland and received this story from the Blunt family.

Little is known about Blackbeard's early life. It is commonly believed that at the time of his death he was between 35 and 40 years old, and thus born about 1680. On November 22, 1718, Blackbeard met his death in a fierce battle off Ocracoke. In contemporary records his name is most often given as Blackbeard, Edward Thatch, or Edward Teach and it is the last that today is most often used. However, several spellings of his surname exist -Thatch, Thach, Thache, Thack, Tack, Thatche and Theach. One early source claims that his surname was Drummand. Residents of

North Carolina believe that Blackbeard's real name is James Beard, the son of a Bath, North Carolina farmer. Pirates habitually used fictitious surnames while engaged in the business of piracy, so as not to tarnish the family name, and this makes it unlikely that Blackbeard's real name will ever be known.

The first recorded account of the source of Blackbeard's cognomen and age came from Captain Henry Bostock, captain of the merchant sloop *Margaret*. Captain Bostock and his crew had been held as Teach's prisoners on the *Queen Anne's Revenge* for eight hours and then returned to the *Margaret*. Captain Bostock gave a deposition to Walter Hamilton, the Governor of Saint Christopher Island in 1717. Captain Bostock stated that Teach was a "tall spare man with a very black beard which he wore very long." Later descriptions mention that his thick black beard was braided into pigtails, sometimes tied with small colored ribbons.

Since the end of the so-called golden age of piracy, Teach and his exploits have become the stuff of lore that have inspired books and movies. Much of what is known of him can be sourced to Charles Johnson's "A General Historie of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates," published in Great Britain in 1724. Others state that Charles Johnson himself may have either been Charles Johnson, the English playwright, the British publisher Charles Rivington, or the writer Daniel Defoe. In his 1951 work, "The Great Days of Piracy," author George Woodbury wrote that Johnson is "obviously a pseudonym," continuing that "one cannot help suspecting that he may have been a pirate himself." This is the lore that pirate tales are made of.

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- Remembering Kent Island*** - Brent Lewis
 - Bloody Point*** – Brent Lewis
 - Captain Boyle’s Treasure*** – Mark Lidinski
 - The Headless Oysterman*** – Mark Lidinski
 - 1831 Reprisal – America at a Turning Point** – Bert Hubinger
 - A Taste of Salt*** – Harold O. Wilson (A Kent Island native weaves a mysterious tale.)
 - This Changing Island*** – Nick Hoxter - (The local author’s fourth book.)
 - Mason’s Retreat*** – Christopher Tilghmann
 - Beach Plums*** – Alex Johnson - poems
 - Kent Island Blues*** – Alex Johnson - poems
 - Home Before Dark*** – Alex Johnson – poems
 - Lost in the Fun House*** – John Barth
 - Kent Island Tales & Tastes*** - Rotary and Heritage Society collective - great stuff!
 - The Right Hand Shore*** – Christopher Tilghman - (These are the best novels written about early Queen Anne’s County.)

Here are some books to wile away your winter nights by the fireside, compiled by Alex Johnson.
All titles are available at the Kent Island Library.

WINTER READING BOOKSHELF



News in Brief

Dues notices will be sent out before the end of 2016 for the year 2017. Please check your information and update if necessary.

Restoration of plaster moldings has been completed in the downstairs rooms of the Kir-

wan House.

We need more members participating as docents. It would involve two hours of your time or less on the 1st Saturday of the month from April through November. Please call Sally Lewis at 443 249-3293 if you are interested.