

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. ■ FALL 2001

OFFICERS

President
Nancy M. Cook
Vice President
John F. Smigo Jr.
Corresponding Secy
Carole Frederick
Recording Secretary
Florence M. Dunn
Treasurer
Audrey Hawkins

DIRECTORS

Forrest P. Chisman
Deborah H. Clarke
Francis K. Collier
William E. Denny III
Charles G. Dunn
Daniel T. Hopkins
Sharon Hoxter
William N. Hoxter
Claudia E. Jewell
Maurice Sanger
Janes G. Sparks

COMMITTEES

Kent Island Days
Nancy Cook
Docents
Audrey Hawkins
Fundraising
Charles Dunn
Programs
John Smigo
Kinwan Museum
Bill Denny
Maurice Sanger
Nancy Cook
Dan Hopkins
Renee Woodworth
Oral Histories
Dan Hopkins
Jane Sparks
Fran Taylor
Grants
Nancy Cook
Membership
Mae Hutchison
Library Files
Myrtle Bruscup
Newsletter Editor
John Bonner
Scholarship
Claudia Jewell
Social
Janet Denny
Nominating
John Smigo

President's Message

Nancy M. Cook

As you will see, this issue of *Isle of Kent* is concerned with governance of the Society. We are presenting the revised Incorporated Articles and Bylaws for your perusal. These were prepared in conjunction with the Board by the University of Maryland School of Law in Baltimore, under the direction of Professor E. Stokley, Esq. The board has approved the documents, and now the membership must vote to ratify the Bylaws at our annual dinner.

The nomination slate for the 2002 Board of Directors is also enclosed and must be voted upon at the Annual Meeting on December 8, 2001.

You are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Saturday, December 8, cash bar at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m. at the Kent Island Yacht Club.

A silent auction will also be held. This year's chair is Caryn Trinkley, who has graciously offered her services in producing some fine items on which to bid.

Recognition will also be given to those who have been docents and have helped the Society with so many of our projects and activities throughout the year.

We hope to see you on December 8, 2001.

Election 2002

An election of officers and directors to lead the Kent Island Heritage Society in 2002 will be held at its Annual Meeting on December 8. [See meeting box, below.] The following slate of candidates has been nominated:

President	Nancy M. Cook
Vice President	John Smigo
Recording Secretary	Florence Dunn
Corresponding Secretary	Carole A. Frederick
Treasurer	Audrey B. Hawkins
Director	Lawrence Dunn
Director	Wayne Morris
Director	Gregory Nizza
Director	Paul Wilderson

Officers are elected for one-year terms; directors serve three-year terms.

The Bylaws provide that additional nominations may be made 21 days prior to the Annual Meeting. A declaration of intent must be presented to Recording Secretary Florence Dunn, which must be signed by the candidate and two supporting members.

Nominations were compiled by Nominating Committee Chairman John Smigo and members Jane Sparks and Carole Frederick.

Mark Your Calendar

Kent Island Heritage Society Annual Meeting

Saturday, December 8

Kent Island Yacht Club

6:00 Cash bar

7:00 Dinner

Heritage Society Undertakes New Collection

Mary J. White

When Frances and Charles Ford recently sold their Stevensville home, they donated to the Society a large collection of items left by former owners, Frank C. Thomas Jr. and his wife, Lizzie. Stored for many years in a room over the garage, this collection is a genealogical treasure-trove of records from Mr. Thomases' business. He was an undertaker.

This couple could have been the inspiration for the popular nursery rhyme, "Jack Sprat." Kent Island old timers remember Lizzie Thomas as short, stout and jolly; Mr. Thomas was tall, almost emaciated looking, his ruddy complexion made more prominent by the dark and somber clothing of his profession. And the black derby he often wore.

The records include burial permits, cancelled checks and personal pocket ledgers. There also is a heavy metal plaque with the name "THOMAS" that he attached to the side of his hearse.

The burial permits span the period from Dec. 1900 to April 1908. They are incomplete, however, at least in part because Mr. Thomas had competition from Hugh A. Legg, another Stevensville undertaker.

In April 1908, Mr. Thomas became sub-registrar of the local Board of Health and issued all burial permits. From then through Nov. 1922 he recorded in three books all deaths on Kent Island.

The Society plans to create a database to make information from these records more readily available to anyone doing genealogical research for that period.

Daily notations in Mr. Thomases' personal ledgers are very revealing, both of himself and of the times and lives of those around him. For instance, he rented out his hack and team of horses. Some students who rode horses to school stabled their mounts in his

barn.

He also appeared to be a soft touch for persons in need of a quick small loan. Ledger notations range from 25¢ to \$1. He also signed notes for people for amounts up to \$150, a princely sum in those days.

Mr. Thomas also offered a service for the living: He transported passengers and freight between the train station and the post office. The collection features this handwritten notice:

NOTICE

Stevensville, Md.

June 22, 1903

I hear By Notify the Public again that a Charge of Ten Cents will be made to the Conveyance of Passengers from Stevensville to the Q.A.R.R. Station. I also wish to Notify them that they Can Reach Chester River Warfe Kent Island free of Charge.

F.C. Thomas, Jr.

Mia Culpa

Isle of Kent apologizes profusely for the ruined photos in last issue, especially to Mark Odell, who was given special credit for having enhanced their quality.

Your editor humbly accepts responsibility for the mishap, offering only the inadequate excuse that the pressure of impending deadline contributed to this regrettable oversight.

I also must seek absolution from Carole Price Frederick for mangling her fine article about the *Steam* (not *Stream*) Mill Bridge.

Remberances

John Frank Hines worked for Mr. Thomas in the 1940s and confirms his generosity. Hines was a teenager then. He says that Mr. Thomas would let him use his car on Saturday nights to take friends to the movie. This attracted the girls and made the other boys envious, he said.

Hines' job was to pick up bodies in a little black van. He recalled returning from Fredericktown one dark and lonely night. The rough road—or perhaps excessive speed—caused the body to roll over and bump the seat back.

"It scared me so," he exclaimed, "that I drove right in the ditch."

Julius Grollman says he often assisted Mr. Thomas carry bodies in and out of the upper story of the garage. This is where the real business was located.

Julia Kibler recalled that Mr. Thomas was an avid baseball fan. This was confirmed by a 1924 seasons ticket to Stevensville High School's baseball and volley ball games, price 50¢.

Ruth Foster remembers that her parents, Tilghman and Maggie Eaton, were often called on to render cosmetic assistance.

Isle of Kent

John Bonner, Editor

Isle of Kent is published quarterly by The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc., a non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Maryland, P.O. Box 321, Stevensville, MD 21666. Every effort is made to assure the accuracy of published information, but no responsibility is assumed by The Kent Island Heritage Society Inc. or the editor in the event of claim of loss or damage from any article. Statements attributed to individuals do not necessarily reflect official policy of the KIHS. Send correspondence regarding newsletter to Editor, 324 Columbia Lane, Stevensville, MD 21666. [e-mail: jlbanner@toad.net]

Pathways to Our Past

This countywide event was celebrated October 6 and 7. Under the auspices of the Historic Sites Consortium and Queen Anne's County Business and Tourism Department, all member organizations opened their historic sites to the public.

Sites included Wye Grist Mill, Queenstown Court House, Museum of Eastern Shore Life, Wright's Chance, Tucker House, the Queen Anne's County Courthouse, Dudley's Chapel, Church Hill Theatre, Sudlersville Train Station, Jimmy Foxx Memorial, St. Luke's Church and Academy, 1880 Christ Episcopal Church and the 1652 Cemetery, the Cray House, the Stevensville Train Station and the Old Stevensville Post Office.

Prizes were awarded to both children and adults who visited all the sites. There were special displays and entertainment at each sites. About 320 visitors participated.

Kent Island Heritage Society President Nancy Cook, standing, and Treasurer Audrey Hawkins staffed the Old Kent Island Post Office for the Pathways to Our Past celebration.



Roland Bruscup was docent at the old Stevensville Train Depot. Behind him is a model of the original railroad line. He explained to visitors that passengers would arrive at Love Point on the Smokey Joe ferry boat, then board the train to continue their eastward journey, some going to destinations as far away as Lewes, Delaware.

Photos courtesy of Bay Times

Honorary and Life Members

Honorary and Life members are elected by majority votes of the Membership Committee and the Board of Directors. Honorary members have performed meritorious service to the Society. Life members have contributed a substantial sum of money to the Society.

HONORARY/LIFE MEMBERS

	Mrs. Jennifer S. Lichtenstein Atlanta, Ga.
Mrs. Elizabeth Bukowsky Stevensville, Md.	Mrs. Sandra M. Massie Flint Hill, Va.
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Davidson Stevensville, Md.	Mrs. Nancy H. Massie New York, N.Y.
Mr. William E. Denny III Stevensville, Md.	Jane McCullough Chester, Md.
Mr. Charles G. Dunn Stevensville, Md.	Mr. John H. Mears Jr. Annapolis
Hugo G. Gemignani Easton, Md.	Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Morris Stevensville, Md.
Mr. Darrin Lowery Tilghman, Md.	Mrs. Catherine Osborne Margate, N.J.

LIFE MEMBERS

Miss Suzanne Bennett Baltimore, Md.	Miss Annie May Price Stevensville, Md.
Mrs. Michael J. Bennett Baltimore, Md.	Mildred Price Stevensville, Md.
Mrs. Lois Cockey Chester, Md.	Miss Anne K. Reifsneider Oxon Hill, Md.
Mr. & Mrs. Percy Dyes Stevensville, Md.	Matilda B. Sauce Towson, Md. 21204
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Eisinger Potomac, Md.	Oscar Schulz Grasonville, Md.
Mrs. Gertrude T. Guthrie Oxford, Md. 21654	Tracy Schulz Chester, Md.
Mrs. Nancy C. Lichtenstein Brussels, Belgium	Mr. & Mrs. Fred Williams Annapolis, Md.
Mrs. Elizabeth Lichtenstein Brussels, Belgium	

TREASURERS REPORT

Audrey B. Hawkins, Treasurer

Balance on June 30, 2001 \$39,436.62

Receipts

Dues	\$50.00
Bank interest	83.72
Sales	152.70
Sales tax	7.80
Stock dividends	2,047.80
Donation	3.00
Total receipts	\$2,345.02

Disbursements

Purchases for resale	80.00
Insurance	1,344.00
Printing/office sup.	163.63
Postage	24.52
Kent Island Days	1.32
Meeting exp.	116.68
Scholarship	500.00
Storage Fee	612.15
Calendar of Events	30.00
Petty cash	100.00
Headquarters Bldg.	
Mowing	260.00
Sewerage	79.88
Electric	31.18
Repair	281.00
Cray Hse/Depot.	
Mowing	805.00
Sewerage	113.12
Electric	12.27
Appraisal	450.00
Architectural	3,286.51
Kirwan House.	
Painting	16,531.00
Plumbing/Htg	532.58
Topsoil	50.00
Appraisal	425.00
Co. permit	90.00
Property tax	911.50

Total disbursements 26,831.34

Balance on Sept. 30, 2001 \$14,950.30

Certificates of Deposit \$17,463.83

Cray House Bldg Fund

Savings acct bal on Aug 30, 2001 19,259.55

Genealogy Records

Myrtle Bruscup

Of particular interest to new members—but also to others who may not be aware of it—is an extensive collection of Kent Island historical records maintained by the Kent Island Heritage Society in a special section of the Kent Island library.

These files include information on:

- Early settlers' family history charts.
- Booklets of births, marriages and deaths in Queen Anne's County dating from the 1800s.
- Newspaper clippings of vital statistics, including births, marriages and deaths.
- Claiborne history.
- Historic structures: homes, churches, schools, the railroad, bridges, ferries.
- Historic folklore.
- And much, much more.

An adjacent reading room provides numerous books on Queen Anne's County's early years, its oyster wars, and a rich variety of other compelling topics.

Researching your family history is both interesting and fun. It is great to find out who your great-grandparents were and where they came from. Who knows, maybe a lot of answers to questions about your heritage are in our files. Question your family about your past relatives and get busy on your family history.

Over the years we have answered many letters and phone calls from people seeking information on their family. We answered with the information we had and would advise them to come to our library and meet with us for further information.

Our sources of information were used by Nick Hoxter when he was writing his books, titled "Growing Up on Kent Island" and "A Walk Back in Times." Both of these books can be found in the reading room.

Janet Nash Freedman also used our files for a book she was writing on the history of Kent Island to earn her master's degree from Johns Hopkins University. After reading her manuscript, the Maryland Historical Society was so impressed that they asked her to expand it for publication. When it is

published she will provide a copy to the Heritage Society for our reading room selections. We are so glad they used our files and the material they needed was there for their use.

Visit our files and see all the information we have accumulated. Also visit the reading room and scan all the books on the shelves. All information from these files can be used and photocopied, but they may not be removed from the library.

Articles are collected from local newspapers weekly and put into folders according to category.

Since the start of these files by Mary White, Rose Lane, Betty Speed, Bill Goodhand, June Palmer and me, we all have helped in the sorting and filing of the great amount of information we have collected over the years.

We are very much appreciative of any and all assistance in keeping up the files. Just call me at 410-643-5596 if you can lend a hand. We'll get together to discuss it.

We urge everyone who has not already done so to please submit a copy of your family history and also bring in your family Bibles so we can photocopy the family history pages and add them to our files.

Welcome New Members

Daryl G. & Sally Boden
Chester, Md.

Shirley Chapplear
Stevensville, Md.

Beverly Halvorsen
Stevensville, Md.

Janice Hassell
Stevensville, Md.

Chris & Gillian Bardwell Jones
Chester, Md.

Michael Kovall
Chester, Md.

William E. & Sarah W. Morgan
Stevensville, Md.

Julie A. Pedersen
Stevensville, Md.

Nicholar & Joan Stoer
Chester, Md.

Know Your Board

Dan Hopkins is a descendent of several generations of Kent Islanders on both his father's and mother's sides. He has ties to many of the old Kent Island families. "Growing up with extended family on Kent Island and having the opportunity of hands-on experience fishing, hunting, working on a farm has given me a unique perspective of Kent Island life that should be passed on to future generations," he explains.

Dan and his wife, Sharon, divide their time between their house in Baltimore and their home on Thompson Creek, where they take advantage of living of the water and the open space around them.

"I look forward to using my business skills in marketing and advertising to promote existing KIHS programs, while developing new ones such as video taping oral histories, chronicling and exhibiting past farming methods and the evolution of equipment and techniques used by local watermen," says Dan.

Jane Golt Sparks and her late husband, John, are both native Kent Islanders. She is a charter member of the Kent Island Heritage Society and was its first corresponding secretary.

Jane is a graduate of Stevensville High School and received a B.A. from Washington College. She was a social studies teacher in Queen Anne's County for 25 years, the last 17 of which were at Queen Anne's County High School.

Jane's family owns the Kent Island Mobil and Old Pointe office complex.

She serves on the Board of Trustees of the Kent Island United Methodist Church and is a member of the Board of Election Supervisors of Queen Anne's County.

She is actively involved in the Stevensville High School Alumni Association. She belongs to the Kent Island Yacht Club, Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce and the Retired Education Association of Queen Anne's County.

She has a daughter, Lauren Sparks Ball, who lives in Fredericksburg, Va. and a son, Dudley Golt Sparks, who lives in Queenstown. She also has three granddaughters.

THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. Box 321 • Stevensville, Maryland 21666-0321

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I wish to become a member of the Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.
Enclosed is my check to cover dues of membership indicated
below: Life Membership ... \$250.00 Single Membership ... \$10.00

Name _____

Name _____

Street _____

Town/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

*Dues and contributions are deductible on income tax returns.
Membership period January 1-December 31*

The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.

Post Office Box No. 321

Stevensville, Maryland 21666

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
Stevensville, MD
21666
Permit #11