



Isle of Kent - 1631

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

SPRING 1990

TO DISCOVER, IDENTIFY, RESTORE AND PRESERVE THE HERITAGE OF KENT ISLAND

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Heritage Society members:

Thank you for the honor of being selected your president for 1990. At the annual Dinner Meeting, December, 1989 with Paul Wilderson serving as Master of Ceremonies, the following officers were installed:

President	Audrey B. Hawkins
Vice-Pres.	Mordecai Gibson
Recording Sec'y.	Marilyn Wilderson
Corresp'g Sec'y.	Eileen Dadds
Treasurer	Violet C. Harris

The Board of Directors:

W. E. Denny III	1989-90
J. Wm. Eckstorm	1989-90
Harold M. Legg	1989-90
C. Willard Thomas	1989-90
Paul Wilderson	1989-91

Entertainment was provided by the Queen Anne's High School Madrigal Singers, directed by Mrs. Nancy Cook.

This year is our 15th anniversary. Looking back at important dates:

May, 1975: The Kent Island Heritage Society was formed.

Sept. 1976: The Cray House was donated by the Cray Heirs.

Feb. 1981: Kent Island recognized as first settlement of English speaking people in Maryland's borders: August 1631.

Fall 1981: First "Isle of Kent" Newsletter printed.

Summer 1982: "Of History and Houses" by Mildred C. Schoch published.

Dec. 1986: Kent Island History brochure published.

Sept. 1986: Town of Stevensville joined Christ Church, Cray House, and Stevensville Bank on National Register of Historic Places.

Mar. 1987: Original railroad depot donated to the Society by Clarence Morgan. Moved to the present site.

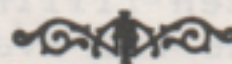
June 1988: Land at the depot deeded to the Society by Stevensville Town Limited Partnership.

May 1989: "Of History and Houses" reprinted for sale by the Society.

This year our dream of a permanent location for the Society's history collection is finally coming true. (See article).

Program Chairman and Vice-President Mordy Gibson plans interesting and informative meetings this year. The first meeting is 7:30 March 15th at the new library. Guest speaker will be architectural historian Orlando Ridout. Refreshments will be served by Elaine Grollman and Florence Dunn. I hope you plan to attend.

Best wishes,
Audrey Hawkins
President



K.I.H.S. PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

We can report progress for the Heritage Society's Photography Contest. Gil Dunn and I will search the Hall of Record's collections for old photographs of Kent Island life. Any noteworthy photographs will be added to the Society's collection. The Bay Times will help publicize the contest.

The success of this project rests with the support and participation of members, many of whom are natives of Kent Island with access to old family pictures. Please search through your own collection and those of your family. We are interested in all aspects of Kent Island life prior to the 1952 opening of the first Bay Bridge.

To create a collection of how the Island looked, the old houses and

schools that existed, carriages, cars and carts, horses and mules, boats, people at work and play: photos can make Kent Island history come alive.

If you are a lifelong resident of Kent Island, do something for history's sake. Help us make sure that these old photographs do not disappear.

There are plans for an exhibit when winners will be announced. Fred Whilden has graciously offered to help set up and judge the contest. All photographs will be submitted to the Hall of Records for inspection to insure that important historical images are preserved in a controlled environment.

Check the Rules and send your photos.

Cathy Turner



PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST RULES



1. PHOTOGRAPHS MUST DATE PRIOR TO 1952.
2. PHOTOGRAPHS MAY DEAL WITH ANY KENT ISLAND SUBJECT MATTER.
3. PLEASE SEND COPIES, NOT ORIGINALS. ALL PHOTOGRAPHS SUBMITTED WILL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY.
4. PRINTS SHOULD BE 8 X 10 OR 5 X 7. PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO SPECIALIZE IN OLD PHOTOS: BILL KEPNER (643-4345) OR ELIZABETH GAULT (974-0736).
5. INCLUDE ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION: NAMES, DATES, PLACES, ETC. IN PENCIL ONLY (NO PENS) ON THE BACK OF PHOTOGRAPHS.
6. ENTRIES WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE HALL OF RECORDS. PICTURES WITH HISTORICAL MERIT WILL BE REPRODUCED FOR THEIR PERMANENT FILES.
7. THERE WILL BE THREE CASH PRIZES: 1ST PRICE \$75.00
2ND PRIZE \$50.00
3RD PRIZE \$25.00

LARUE UPDEGROVE

Longtime Chairman of the Cray House Committee, Larue Updegrave died suddenly February 23, 1990 while visiting her son in California.

LaRue's unswerving devotion to the Cray House museum, scheduling volunteers and often filling in herself when no one was available, earned her the continuing Chair of the

Committee for the coming year, which she willingly accepted.

LaRue also served on the acquisitions committee when the Cray House was being furnished with period pieces.

Mrs. Updegrave will be sorely missed by The Kent Island Heritage Society and all her friends and neighbors.

TRAIN STATION VANDALIZED

The February 22 Bay Times reported that vandals smashed the windows of the old Stevensville train station being restored by the Society. Sheriff's Department detectives are investigating the destruction in Stevensville, including damages to the picket fence surrounding the Cray House and station property which was dismantled while wiring is being laid to the restoration.

In 1987 the old station building was donated to the Society by Lt. Clarence "Skip" Morgan. Under the enthusiastic supervision of President Gil Dunn, volunteer construction workers from the Bay Bridge moved the building from its original location at the end of State Street near the old railroad line to its present site. Since then Dunn and his volunteers have been carefully restoring the dilapidated structure.

Additionally, the marauders stole the American Flag donated by the American Legion to Historic Stevensville when a ceremony was held officially naming Stevensville to the National Register of Historic Places.



VOLUNTEERS DESPERATELY NEEDED

The Society desperately needs volunteers to pursue the formation of an Oral History Program. Dr. Camp will advise and assist in the traditional procedures for Oral History as well as helping with grant writing for this worthwhile project. The program would be invaluable for a graduate student working on his thesis.

Get in touch with Cathy Turner (643-2916) or Gil Dunn (643-5414) if you have time and interest in preserving the oral history of early Kent Island.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARCH 15th

The first General Membership Meeting of 1990 will be held on "The Ides of March", March 15.

The Society will meet at the Kent Island library at 7:30 p.m. The new meeting room is on your left as you enter the front hall of the library.

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY

A special Kent Island Heritage Society 15th Birthday Dinner Celebration will be held Thursday, May 10th at the Kent Island Yacht Club. Cocktails will be served at 6:00 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m.



(Editor's Note: Following are the Minutes of the first meeting of the Kent Island Heritage Society.)

...May 9, 1975, a meeting was called by Mrs. Lloyd L. Steuart at her Stevensville home to organize a Kent Island historical society. Those present were principally members of the Kent Island Bicentennial Tours Committee. The objective... was to form a nucleus from which a society might grow.

Attending were Mrs. Steuart, Mrs. Malvern Schoch, Mrs. Alfred White, Miss Annie May Price, and Mrs. Walter Denny. ...

The first motion ... by Mrs. White (was) that a society be formed that will discover, identify, restore and preserve Kent Island's heritage...

Mrs. Steuart was ... elected temporary president of the Society. Mrs. White was ... elected temporary vice-president. Mrs. Denny was... elected temporary treasurer.

Mrs. Schoch proposed that the society be known as the Kent Island Heritage Society....

In a general discussion, projects

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for the Society were tentatively outlined as the securing of a property where such antiquities as can be acquired may be preserved; the fostering of research; the publication of works on genealogy, history, and Kent Island lore; the saving of historical homes from destruction; the attempt through archaeology to identify island sites such as Claiborne's original fort, the oldest courthouse, and the oldest church; and the assistance in the preservation and fostering of Island arts and crafts. ... The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Roe Denny



MINUTES

(The Minutes are abbreviated since reports are included on much of the Board's discussion.)

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 P.M. by Audrey Hawkins, president, at her house. Present were Audrey Hawkins, Mordie Gibson, Eileen Dadds, Marilyn Wilderson, Violet Harris, Bill Denny, Harold Legg, Willard Thomas, and Paul Wilderson.

Mordy Gibson reported on program ideas for general meetings. Orlando Ridout of the Maryland Historic Trust suggested three programs on archaeology on Kent Island. The Board agreed to accept the offer. Ridout will present the first program, to be followed by other speakers.

Audrey reported that she, Roland Bruscup, Cathy Turner, Gil Dunn and Fred Whilden met to discuss the photo contest to be held by the Society. The contest will run from March to May first...Gil is approaching local businesses to raise the cash

prizes. A panel of three to five judges will include Fred Whilden...(See Report.)

Audrey announced...that the Kent Island library will give space to KIHS (for) two 4-drawer, legal sized file cabinets of historical materials from the Heritage Society in the library. (See Report.)

The Board authorized (funds) for the purchase of the cabinets.

New Business

The brochures depicting the history of Kent Island that were printed in 1986 are almost gone. The board discussed reprinting them and finding ways to fund the printing costs. Bill Denny will talk to Marcia Burgoon about who might want to absorb the cost of the tourist brochures. Presently they are given out in restaurants, at the state capitol in Annapolis, by the libraries, and by real estate offices.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Wilderson, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Violet M. Harris

NOV. 30. 1989-FEB.12, 1990

Balance: 11/89 \$3789.48

Receipts: 2/90 \$3108.06

Total: \$6897.54

Disbursements 11/89 to 2/90

Total: \$2685.24

Balance as of 2/12/1990:

\$4212.30

Balance in 30-Month C.D. Account:

12/31/1989 \$7360.80

TOTAL ASSETS: \$11,573.10

SOCIETY'S RECORDS FIND A NEW HOME

An inventory of the books and records stored in the Cray House revealed that we own a considerable amount of valuable resource material, but availability is limited because the house is open only three hours a week from May through October. Therefore use of the material has been almost non-existent.

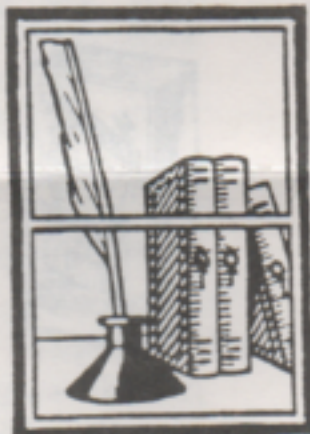
Due to atmospheric conditions in the Cray House, we've long felt the material should be stored in a controlled environment since weather extremes can damage our material.

Added to our growing collection, the Society received Mrs. Mildred Schoch's extensive files through the generosity of her husband Malvern. It was imperative to find proper storage for the records. Therefore, arrangements were made with the Kent Island Library for the Society's collection to be permanently housed there, under proper conditions and for increased availability to researchers. K.I.H.S. assumes responsibility for the files, cabinets, and supplies to maintain them. All records and materials remain the exclusive property of the Kent Island Heritage Society.

Supplies are on order and the task of coordinating fifteen years of collecting has begun. The records will be used for research only and will not leave the library.

The procedure for researchers will be to register at the Library desk for the file cabinet key on a sign in-sign out basis, thus insuring control over the records, and enabling the Society to determine the degree of use of the records.

The records will be divided into two main categories: Genealogical files will contain family charts, wills, cemetery records, burial permits, etc. The Historical collection will include Kent Island history, Kent Fort, Claiborne's landing, schools, historic homes, bridges, ferries, and railroads.



We will follow library procedures as they apply to such materials. No date for completion of the project can be named since it will require considerable volunteer time to properly inventory, index, and file all materials. Announcements of availability will be made when possible.

Our thanks to Charles Powers, Director of the Queen Anne's County Library and Kim Baklaarz of the Kent Island Library for their help and kindness. A special thanks to Frances Hilary and Sarah Towers of the Queen Anne's Historical Society for information and advice on setting up our files.

Mary J. White, Coordinator

HE-E-E-RE'S AUDREY...!

The new president of the Kent Island Heritage Society, Audrey Bruscup Hawkins, her husband Jack, and daughter Virginia moved to Kent Island from Baltimore in 1957.

Jack, a third generation movie projectionist, was an airplane buff, hence the appeal of the open spaces of Kent Island. They bought Windy Knoll Farm on Old Love Point Road.

Despite commuting to Baltimore to full time jobs, Audrey and Jack, helped by Alfred White, farmed their 36.5 acres.



Jack died in 1971.

Virginia and her husband Allen Ingling live in College Park. Their son attends University of Maryland.

Audrey, who served as Treasurer of the Society, has a long career in money management; in Baltimore and with the state in Annapolis. Though she retired in 1982, Audrey's skills are still in demand at tax time.

A active member of Kent Island Methodist Church, she has volunteered for church committees in addition to serving the Society through the years.

The Society welcomes Audrey Hawkins as President.

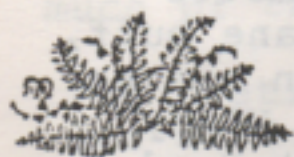
KENT ISLAND GENEALOGY

By Mary White

"Oh, a hundred years
Ain't a very long time
On the Eastern Sho!"
(Waterman's song)

Researching your family's history is fascinating. Have you ever thought of doing just that- not necessarily to find out who your great-great grandparents were, but to find out where YOU came from? Its amazing what you can find out about yourself by finding out about your ancestors.

For instance, in 1848 Marmaduke Goodhand White married Mary Elizabeth Carville. According to the family, before they were engaged, Marmaduke gave her a tangled skein of silk to unravel to determine if she possessed proper housewifely skills. But she outfoxed him- she had her maid do it!



This trait persists down through the generations. If an unwelcome chore must be done, descendants are adept at finding someone else to do it, a common trait in many families.

To return to family research, I must warn you - it's addictive. Like a jigsaw puzzle, you constantly look for the next piece. You are really hooked when you try to interest your friends. A case in point--

Several years ago, in the county courthouse looking through the Will Index for the Bright family, I spied the name "Bruscup". We know Bruscup may be an old Prussian name, but we don't expect to find it in Eastern Shore records. I immediately thought of Audrey Bruscup Hawkins and her brother Roland. Could they be

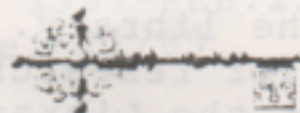
related to James Bruscup who died in Centreville?

Being a "genealogical junkie", I enticed Audrey and her sister-in-law Myrtle to go to the courthouse with me. They were initiated into the mysteries of the old files. Not only did we find James, but his wife Harriett who died in 1844. Her will gave their Centreville store to his brother in Baltimore, John Bruscup. This excited Audrey whose grandfather was Baltimorean John Bruscup!



Since then, she has accumulated a considerable amount of information. Furthermore, she has completed one of the Family Charts for our records. We would like every family to be represented in our files, regardless of where you are from, or how long you have lived on Kent Island; you have become part of our heritage. Our goal is to preserve as much genealogical information as we can.

We will offer Family Charts at the March meeting to help you start your search. Someday your grandchildren will thank you for setting down this information. Don't you wish your grandparents had done the same for you?



(A clue to where to start is contained in the frustrating tale of the woman who spent years searching for her great-grandparents. Visiting a genealogist with her mother, 85, she was asked if she had found a Family Bible. "No, but I've tried everything else", she said.

"But I have their Bible", her mother said. Aghast, the woman asked why she had never mentioned it.

"You never asked!" Mama replied.)

BLOODY POINT AND ITS LEGENDS

By Bettye Speed

(Editor's note: The April 28, 1966 Bay Times published the following poem from Stevensville's "Toots" Baxter, now deceased. It was written in 1908, according to Baxter, by his friend Josh Thomas, a Rock Hall waterman.)

A TALE OF BLOODY POINT

Down where the waves of the great blue bay
Kiss the shores of Kent Island, then dance away,
Lies the little point with its sinister name,
Seeming to all the world proclaim
The deeds so dark laid at its door,
Close by the edge of the Chesapeake shore.
A hundred snaws have glistened white,
Since the horrors of that fateful night,
But, still when winter hovers near,
And Kent Isles round the fireplace cheer,
The children gather with eyes aglow,
To list this tale of long ago.
Long ago, when 1812's grim smoke,
Hovered o'er our land like a giant's great cloak.
How an English merchantman passed this shore,
Of old Kent Isle bound for Baltimore.
The storms of fall had changed her way
Til' she stood well into Eastern Bay.
The sails hung idly on their spars
As she rose and fell beneath the stars,
Moving gently with the blue bay waves,
First on water mount, and then in briny caves.
How a sailor murdered a captain and mate
To settle a long deep feeling of hate.
How he swam to the mainland where he knew
He'd be safe from the mad revengeful crew.
But the goddess of justice still held sway
Until at last he was brought to bay;
Then placed in a case secure and strong
And swung to a tree limb high and long,
And there he stayed 'til death's grim hand
Called his guilty soul to the mystery land.
And to this day 'neath the place he died
Every blade of grass is bound to hide,
Seeming in horror to turn its face
From the spot of murder and dire disgrace.
May no bloody deed our land anoint
Such as there was at Bloody Point.
And the spot still tells with silent breath
That the wages of sin is surely death.

Another enduring legend about the origins of the ominous "Bloody Point" name was printed in a 1977 Talbot Banner by Gloria George:

"Legends Enhance History of Kent Island":

At the southern tip of Kent Island, "Bloody Point conjures up many possible tales, but the one repeated

most often involves a ship and a mutiny.

"As the story goes, a ship was sailing up the Chesapeake bay when a few of its sailors became restless; frustrated, they say because of their mistreatment by their captain. They planned a mutiny. However, not everyone on the ship was so inclined.

"The four leaders of the rebellion were rounded up by the Captain's loyal men, sent to shore in a skiff and hung from the highest tree.

"The nearest tree happened to be on the tip of the island they now call Bloody Point.

"A matter of history, though, tends to discount that legend, says J. Calvert Jones, who is writing a book about the island that will include its folklore.

"When William Claiborne, a Virginian, was fighting Maryland's Lord Baltimore for the rights to the Island back in the 1600's, there ensued the country's first naval battle. The blood of the battle ran from the waters offshore to the sands of Bloody Point.

"...rebellious sailors will never be part of an empirical history of the island, but their tales are as much a part of its evolution as each new house that was built."



(Editor's note: Mr. Jones may have missed the fact that the "First Naval Battle in Maryland history" was not fought at Bloody Point, but at the mouth of the Pokomoke River on April 23, 1635. William Claiborne's Isle of Kent men aboard the Cockatrice were met by Governor Leonard Calvert's Captain Thomas Cornwallis commanding the St. Helen and the St. Margaret. The Cockatrice surrendered after its commander and two men were killed.

Claiborne sent out another vessel under the command of Captain Thomas Smith on May 10, 1635, evidently near the site of the first battle. Andrews' "History of Maryland" says

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few details of the second encounter are available but "Smith was apparently successful." A more complete, though biased, version of the battle can be found in Maryland Archives Vol. 4: Cornwallis' testimony in Provincial Court.



Later when Governor Calvert with Thomas Cornwallis and George Evelin in February 1638 captured Kent Fort by stealth and surprise, apparently no fight was put up by the leaderless Islanders. (Claiborne was in London.)



An additional piece of folklore published at an unknown date says:

"Tradition says that Bloody Point derived its name from a massacre of Indians by colonists there.

"There is another tradition that the Point received its name because of the execution of a French pirate who was hung there in chains and whose skeleton is said to have swung from the gibbet for several years.

"Around 1642, all of Kent Island was known as the "bloody ground" of Maryland due to the jealousies between Maryland and Virginia and the resulting struggles over them."

Another fable heard on the Island is that a battle was held at Bloody Point during the Civil War between two ships, raging til the last man was killed, the seas running red with their blood.

Researching the basis for the folklore concerning the name "Bloody Point," uncovers neither a definitive record of a "bloody" battle at the southern tip of Kent Island, (despite the legendary animosity over their respective turf between Governor Calvert and Captain Claiborne), nor a record of an official sea battle between the North and the South.

However sympathizers with the Confederacy were those on both sides of the southern Chesapeake Bay while Union partisans inhabited the northern reaches.

The canny watermen, deprived of a living during the Civil War, took to running the attempted blockade of the Bay to Virginia with supplies provided by unscrupulous New England merchants; a dangerous past time, but only the watermen could nevigat the shallows of the Bay at night, only the watermen knew the myriad creeks and small bays where they could avoid Union patrol boats.

Continued next issue



ISLE OF KENT is published quarterly by the Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc., a non-profit corporation, P.O. Box 321, Stevensville, MD. 21666.

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Effort is made to publish accurate information, but no responsibility can be assumed by the Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc. or the Editor in the event of claim of loss or damage from any contribution. Statements attributed to individuals do not necessarily reflect official policy of the Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.

Annual membership dues are \$5.00.

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