

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

SUMMER 2019

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President's Message



Ahh, a successful spring! Kent Island Day, May 18, was better than we could have hoped - perfect weather, no heavy rains to cause a cancellation - just an iconic family event celebrating the heritage and culture of Kent Island

Grand Marshall Nancy Cook has been an energetic force behind the KI Heritage Society and a dynamic contributor to our entire community. A large crowd enjoyed the parade, on-stage entertainment, great local food, open

historic sites, many displays and vendors, as well as animals, birds, and kids' activities. Highlights included the Shriners' Little Boats, the Ft. McHenry Fife and Drum Corps and 1812 Independent Blues, the large collection of artifacts by archaeologist Darrin Lowery, and the driftwood art of nationally recognized artist and Kent Island native, Larry Ringgold. We thank and congratulate our KI Day coordination team headed by John Conley and Bob Lowe. Thanks also to our sponsors: KI American Legion, KI Elks, and Shore United Bank.

On May 4th, as a featured site on the 2019 Maryland House and Garden Tour sponsored by the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, the Kirwan House hosted over 350 visitors who were awed by the interior restoration enabled by an earlier grant from said clubs. The Kirwan House curator, Linda Collier, and the teams of skilled contractors, board members, and volunteers over the past year made the Kirwan house and grounds look new again. The garden area was enhanced by the new gazebo constructed by Eagle Scout, Josh Brown. The setting was a perfect place to hear the story and see the home of Senator James Kirwan, the man who saved Kent Island!

March's general meeting was a presentation by Dr. Darrin Lowery, noted archaeologist. Speaking to a standing room only crowd, he discussed the artifacts he unearthed on Kent Island in the 90s and shared his insights from recent fieldwork on Parson's Island. Enthusiastic attendees brought their own artifacts to be identified by Dr. Lowery. It was an informative and magical evening that brought the distant past of our island to life.

Continuing our partnership with Kent Island High School we gave monthly presentations to further awareness of Kent Island's heritage. Also included were visits to our historic sites. Students and teachers alike have shown a positive response which has been both rewarding and gratifying. We commend Principal John Schrecongost for his outstanding support and look forward to our ongoing affiliation. Also, in

Continued on page 2

KIHS Committees

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PROGRAMS

Kent Island Day

Jack Broderick, *Chair*

John Conley

Carole Frederick

Toni Gibson

Bob Lowe

Jamie Sasse

Picnic

Carole Frederick, *Chair*

Toni and Jay Gibson

Linda and Butch Collier

June General Meeting

Jack Broderick, *Chair*

Annual Election Brunch

Toni Gibson, *Chair*

Continued from page 1

conjunction with the high school we present a yearly Heritage Society scholarship to a graduating KI High School senior. This year we are proud to announce that Casey Elizabeth Smith of Chester is the 2019 recipient. Congratulations, Casey!

In an effort to share our heritage with the community, John Conley, membership chair, has developed a mobile presentation about the society, its sites, and projects. Many groups have participated giving positive feedback. We are looking for more presenters as we would like to be available to even more groups. Recent audiences include the Kent Narrows Sail and Power Squadron, the Jamestown Society (descendants of the original Jamestown Colony), and a community group in Easton.

Our sites are not only open during first Saturdays but also by special request. This spring students from Stevensville Middle and Bayside Elementary schools are visiting the Stevensville sites. We hope their interaction with the docents will not only provide a lesson in history but also inspire them to be good stewards of their heritage. Optimally the docents will serve as mentors to interested students.

Keep in touch with us regularly by visiting our website, kentislandheritagesociety.org. There you will find up-to-date information about our sites, activities and special events. You may even find someone you know in the photo section. Those who are active in social media can link to our Facebook and Twitter accounts through the website.

Consider joining us on our June Sunset Dinner Cruise Wednesday, June 19, 5:00–8:00p.m., aboard the Chester River Packet, sailing from the QA Heritage and Visitors Center at Kent Narrows. Come for a great relaxing evening - members and guests - to celebrate our maritime heritage. The invitation / RSVP card is enclosed. We hope to see you then!

Thanks to each of our members for your continued generosity and support.

Jack Broderick

CALENDAR 2019

JANUARY 16

BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 20

BOARD MEETING

MARCH 20

GENERAL MEETING

Darrin Lowery, Ph. D.
Guest Speaker

Historic Christ Church @ 7:00 p.m.

APRIL 17

BOARD MEETING

MAY 15

BOARD MEETING

MAY 18

KENT ISLAND DAY

JUNE 19

GENERAL MEETING

Annual Cruise

JULY 17

BOARD MEETING

AUGUST 21

BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 18

BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 22

ANNUAL PICNIC
@ KIRWAN HOUSE
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

OCTOBER 16

BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 20

BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 9

ANNUAL MEETING/BRUNCH

ELECTION OF OFFICERS
FISHERMAN'S INN
12:30 - 4:00 PM

Maryland Home and Garden Tour

By Linda Collier

The Kirwan House and Store Museum was honored to be included in the 2019 Maryland Home and Garden Pilgrimage. Over the past year we have been working on spiffing up the house and yard as well as restoring three upstairs rooms.

Although it had rained for weeks prior, the force was with us and Saturday, May 4th, dawned a lovely day for the tour.

The Queen Anne's County Garden Club coordinated the event and provided stunning flower arrangements for all the homes involved. Kent Island Garden Club purchased a beautiful bench in memory of past president. Rawle Mannix. It looked lovely in our new gazebo.

The old place was sparkling and our docents were all in costume which added another dimension to a very successful day.

From the greeters to the docents in each room, visitors were informed of the important facts about the property and the family that lived there.

We had over 300 visitors and it was a great day. I think the Grand Old Man of Kent Island, as well as his granddaughter, were smiling.



Rena Dye explains why it was necessary to have a fainting couch in a Victorian bedroom.

POSTCARD from Kent Island: Historic Christ Church and Rectory

Submitted by John Conley

Since its construction in 1880, Christ Church has been one of the most important historic buildings on Kent Island. Initially William Claiborne established the Anglican Church on Kent Island near Kent Fort which was later moved to Broad Creek then to Stevensville.

It represents the Queen Anne style architecture with the lancet style chimney, a style that dates back to the 13th century. The building contains original leaded glass windows, wooden pegs, and some bricks from the earlier church at Broad Creek. The rectory dates back to the 1840s and was once the Chesapeake Female Institution for young women. The church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and purchased by the Queen Anne's County Commissioners in 2003.

Historic Christ Church and its grounds have been deemed "surplus" property by the current Queen Anne's County Commissioners and were listed for sale in April with bids accepted until May 31.



KIHS PARTNERSHIP WITH KIHS - UPDATE -

by Mark Lidinsky

The Partnership between Kent Island High School and the Kent Island Heritage Society is finishing its second session this May. The history and heritage of Kent Island is the key focus for these interactive courses held in the school media center with selected classes. Students from the freshmen and junior classes of teachers Thomas Robbins and Hannah Kapadia showed great enthusiasm and insightful participation in all the spring sessions.

Topics ranged from the founding of Kent Island in 1631 to current issues facing Kent Island today. Speakers from the heritage society shared their unique knowledge and answered excellent questions from the students. Many of the KIHS speakers took on the characters of an historical period. For example, President Jack Broderick presented as the commander of the Oyster Navy, Hunter Davidson, in a lively discussion of the Chesapeake Oyster Wars – which directly impacted the history of Kent Island. Senior, Simon Miller, a KI Heritage member, led a terrific discussion on the impact of trains on our island's heritage.

Fifty-five Juniors graduated from the initial Heritage Course. This second Session graduated fifty students. Each received a Certificate of Heritage Completion and a high school membership to the heritage society. Principal John Schrecongost spoke at the ceremony on April 26th and emphasized the importance of knowing the wonderful history and heritage of Kent Island. President Jack Broderick thanked the principal, the teachers and the students for this unique partnership with the heritage society.

On May 24th, both classes of this second graduation class will visit the Kirwan Museum and the historical sites of Stevensville. Plans are already underway to continue the KIHS - KIHS partnership for the 2019 Fall Semester.



PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

*Kent Island Kids Connection
For kids in need of medical care*

Sponsored by Shore Update



Jack Broderick sets up Heritage Society Table



Captain Gene Herbert, Stevensville's Oldest Man, Looks Back at Past Days From Great-Grandfather on, Family Followed the Water

Reprint submitted by Annie May Price from

Queen Anne's County Record Observer, Thursday, July 27, 1939, 4th Section, pg. 5, Centreville, Maryland

Captain Eugene Herbert, better known to the residents of Stevensville as Capt'n 'Gene, was born on Kent Island in 1853. He was born of a sailing family, his great-grandfather, his grandfather, and his father all being sailing men. He is the oldest man in Stevensville and second oldest person of the town, his age being surpassed by Mrs. Richard Baxter who is just two years older than our subject.

Captain Gene attended school on Kent Island, little one room school house located in what was then known as Little District. At the age of eighteen Captain Gene stopped school and went sailing for his father. However, he hastens to assure us that he knew how to sail long before this. During his sailing career, he has sailed from the rockbound coasts of Maine to the sunny coast of North Carolina. During this time he was captain of more boats than he can remember some of them being vessels of a hundred and fifty tons.

In speaking of the boats which he captained, Captain Gene fondly recollects one boat, a bugeye, in which he made a record trip from Fort McHenry in Baltimore to Shipping Creek. "I remember," smiled Captain Gene, "that the wind was blowin' a gale and I had to have a tug to take us from our pier to Fort McHenry. As the tug cast us off, I recollect looking at my watch. We sailed down the Chesapeake, rounded Kent Point and anchored in Shipping Creek. After anchoring and fixing the sails, I happened to look at my watch as I was going down into the cabin. We had made the trip in three hours and fifty-five minutes by the clock, which I believe is a record for that trip. At least I have never heard of any other boat beating her time."

Freight rates were much better when Captain Gene was sailing. At least they were better for the freighters. Boats were always loaded going and coming from Kent Island and Captain Gene can remember when the freighters received a dollar and a half a ton for coal, phosphate and lime while the farmers paid six and seven cents a bushel to have their wheat carried to Baltimore.

Captain Gene, being the oldest man in Stevensville, and probably the oldest man on Kent Island is able to tell us many interesting stories of their development. He told us of many things which happened before he was born but of which he had heard his parents and grandparents speak.

One of the first questions we put to him was the inquiry as to why Kent Narrows, the site of the bridge to the mainland was often referred to as "the Ferry". According to Capt'n Gene, many, many years ago, long before he was born, and probably before the birth of his grandfather, the only means of reaching the mainland was by an old scow ferry which was pulled from shore to shore. This was the original ferry of Kent Island and the name has stuck to this location all through the ages. No one seems to know just when the first bridge was built across Kent Narrows. In the book "Kent Fort Manor" which is written about this home when it was first built early in the sixteen hundreds, the fact is mentioned that there was a bridge at this site. We do know that the first bridge was a solid one. A race was constructed and a grist mill on the mainland. The race may still be seen around the pier of Mr. Will King's oyster house. This bridge was soon torn down due to its hinderance to navigation and a piling bridge was constructed. It was at this time that Talbot and Queen Anne Counties had the channel dredged through the Kent Narrows.

Among the first houses on Kent Island were the Kent Fort Manor about which books have been written, the most famous being "Richard Carvel" by Winston Churchill. This building was constructed early in 1600 and still stands the other old building of Kent Island is the Old Point Manor, built about the time of the settlement of Maryland. This home, also is still standing and is owned by Mr. Oscar Johnson.

Captain Gene tells us that among the old landmarks of the Island was an old tavern which was kept at Broad Creek. The owner is unknown before the settlement of Stevensville it was one of the most important spots of the island. It was through this tavern that all the mail of the Island came. The building was located on property which is now owned by Dr. Theodore Cook. However, it has been destroyed although bricks from the building may still be found on its site. It was at this tavern that the first known murder of the Island occurred. A man by the name of White was beaten to death here. The two murderers put the victim in his carriage and the next morning he was found at his home. The only witness to the crime remained silent until the two murderers had died but at their death confessed that he was hidden in a tree when the murder occurred.

(to be continued in the next newsletter)

KENT ISLAND DAY PATRONS & SPONSORS-2019

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the names of our members, sponsors and members of our community at large who so generously supported Kent Island Day.

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This 'n That

ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS:

Please let us know the dates that you will be away and/or home so we can send your newsletter to the correct address.

Call Carole Frederick at 410 739 7445 or email to frederickcarole521@gmail.com.

OPEN SITES

Stevensville and
Kirwan House

1st Saturday of every month

Noon to 4:00pm

Through October

Save the Dates

Annual Dinner Cruise

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

Ferry Point



Annual Fall Picnic

Sunday, September 22, 2019

Kirwan House 1:00pm



Join us for an Evening on the Water

**Kent Island Heritage Society
Chester River Dinner Cruise
Aboard the "Chester River Packet"**

Dockside - QA Heritage and Visitor Center
425 Piney Narrows Road
Kent Narrows - Chester

**Wednesday, June 19, 2019
5:00 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

Individual \$50
Chesapeake Dinner Buffet
Cash Bar

RSVP - June 15, 2018 - Seating Limited

Kent Island Heritage Society Chester River Diner Cruise

Please Reserve _____ at \$50 _____
Individuals Total

Name _____

Contact Phone Number _____

RSVP - June 15, 2019 - Limited Seating

Checks to: Kent Island Heritage Society
PO Box 321, Stevensville, MD 21666

Or call Jack: 410-643-6452 --- Or email: jackbb@atlanticbb.net

Kent Island Provides Rich Historical Record

By HANNAH COMBS hcombs@kibaytimes.com

STEVENSVILLE — The Kent Island Heritage Society's March meeting featured a special presentation on local archaeology. To a crowd of more than 100, at the historic Christ Church in Stevensville, noted archaeologist Dr. Darrin Lowery discussed "Kent Island's Archaeological Treasures and What They Tell Us." Lowery, affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution and the University of Delaware, is considered the most knowledgeable living expert on the archaeology of the Eastern Shore.

In the early '90s, Lowery conducted an extensive survey at multiple locations around Kent Island in cooperation with the Kent Island Heritage Society. He discovered and documented hundreds of archaeological treasures, both from the prehistoric and historic eras, including numerous Native American artifacts at locations spread across the Island. He also located melted trade beads on southern Kent Island at or near the location of Kent Fort, William Claiborne's first settlement and fort, established in 1631. The fort suffered an early fire in which those beads melted.

Lowery returned to study the area once again in 2017, excavating areas of interest on Parsons Island in March where he found additional beads in that same area. When excavating the fields on Kent Island in 1992, Lowery said that was the likely the only tangible evidence left of October 17, 1631.

The melted beads, Lowery referenced, were belongings of the Claibornes, who first established themselves in Maryland as the earliest English settlers. Located on Eastern Bay, the fort established by William Claiborne in 1631 was a central part of early Kent Island. However, in the fall of 1631 records describe a fire in the Claiborne store house, which collates to Lowery's findings of the melted beads.

Raised on Tilghman Island, Lowery himself has deep Eastern Shore roots extending back to the mid-1600s. He has both bachelor's and master's degrees in anthropology and archaeology and a doctorate degree in geology from the University of Delaware, where he continues to serve in adjunct faculty positions. His affiliation with the Smithsonian includes a research fellowship, a research

associate position, and a post-doctoral fellowship.

"We are excited and honored to have Darrin Lowery join us to share his passion and expertise," said Heritage Society President Jack Broderick. "It's safe to say that Dr. Lowery knows more about the archaeological history of Kent Island than any living person".

Revisiting Parsons Island and the circumstances surrounding his most recent discoveries were fortuitous,

said Lowery. Island erosion exposed more of the land including a well that had been previously covered. Lowery's interest in coastal shoreline erosion has led his exploration of much of the coastal areas of the Chesapeake region. He often targets his research and investigation from a geology standpoint, Lowery said. Islands have been disappearing for a long time, but some have surprisingly grown, he said.

Fisherman's Island has had a net gain of 1,800 acres.

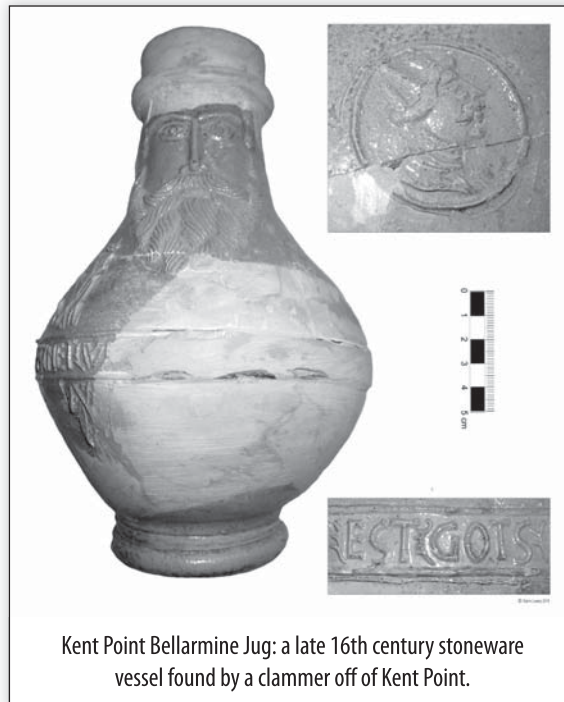
That is not the case for Parsons Island, which has an eroding shoreline of 10 feet per year, Lowery said. However much earlier predictions thought Kent Island would be disappeared by 1907.

"What does that tell you?" Lowery asked. "Predictions can be wrong."

Lowery's philosophy on sea level rise is colored by his understanding of the winds, sediment and erosion.

In some cases, such as Parsons Island, it is bad geology in a worst setting, said Lowery, who gave a brief overview of sediment creeping into the Bay causing rising water levels. Land also has shifted through prehistoric ice melt that pushed or buckled land upward. The breadth of impact on the coastline from catastrophic events may be farther reached than most realize. Traces from a documented volcanic eruption on the Pacific Coast 24,000 years ago have been found even yet in the mid-Atlantic, Lowery said.

24,000 years ago it was the coldest it ever was in the northern hemisphere, said Lowery, who dated soil on



Kent Point Bellarmine Jug: a late 16th century stoneware vessel found by a clammer off of Kent Point.

Continued on page 10

KI Provides Rich Historical Record

Continued from page 9

Elliot's Island in Dorchester County. His more recent research also led him to identify on Kent Island the teeth of now extinct giant musk oxen, the stag-moose (who are believed to be the pre-cursor of the plains bison), large-headed llama, horse and coyotes.

Through the soil layers, Lowery and his team identify what kind of animals and plant life existed at that point in time. Plant life helps determine the then existing climate, he said. Presence of fires also gives an indication of the presence of people in that particular area, said Lowery, who with this knowledge can reconstruct what people were eating and how they were living in that climate.

42,000 years ago, the climate of Kent Island was cool and dry, Lowery discovered. He noted, "No other place in the entire Mid-Atlantic has this type of record."

Lowery dates not only the soil layer the artifacts are found in, but also uses a process where rabbit blood helps identify the animal DNA type. In instances such as the llama, they were found to have migrated toward Florida, Lowery, said, acknowledging the coyote population on the island native since many thousands of years ago still remains.

For Lowery, his work is about "validating what you know, and challenging what you don't know." Lowery will return to Stevensville in May for Kent Island Day and will be available to meet residents and help identify artifacts through the Heritage Society.

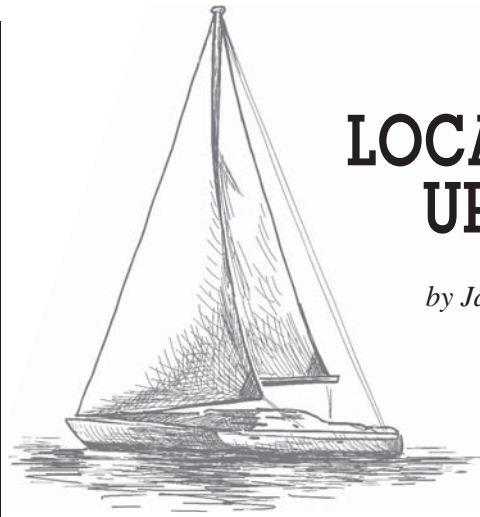
Reprinted with permission of the Bay Times



A 17th century brick cluster discovered at Kent Point, in 1992. In this excavation, Lowery found the melted blue glass beads.

LOCAL NEWS UPDATE

by Jack Broderick



The good news concerns our Kent Island Library expansion plans. We enjoy an outstanding partnership with the Kent Island Library, including the housing of many Heritage Society documents and files, and thus we have consistently spoken out in favor of their plans to expand the facility. We're happy to report that our County Commissioners have voted to support a \$1 million grant request this coming budget year and a \$2 million grant request next year. We look forward to the expanded facility in our future!

In the "not good news" category is the surprise decision by the County Commissioners to declare the Historic Christ Church Stevensville as "not necessary or needed for any public purpose" and offered the property for sale. It is a disturbing development which could jeopardize the future preservation of the iconic, historic Kent Island landmark. It is a complex issue which in our opinion has not been well handled by our County leaders.

The sudden sale appears to favor the private (pre-school) business that occupies the rear meeting room space of the building and intends to remain there permanently. The Kent Island Heritage Society is strongly advocating that the property be owned or controlled, as a public-use facility, by a local entity within the heritage preservation community with ties and grants from state level heritage preservation organizations, vs. being owned by a private business or an entity that intends to operate private business(s) there. As of this writing we do not know what may happen. Stay tuned for further developments in the local papers or on our website.

Welcome New Members

Christina Dorset
Fred G. Garrison
Daniel Harding
Donna Hoyt
Allen L. Ingling, Jr
Hanna Kapadia
Meaghan Kline
Ericka Kriegisch & family
Lacey Phelps
Thomas Robbins
Suellen Bryan Hopkins Ruby
John Schrencongost
Lynn Snyder
Anne K. Tyler
Cheryl and Kenneth Valentine
Christine Walters
Christine West



Visit the Old Post Office in Downtown Stevensville
for this and many other localized gifts

Welcome New Businesses

Four Seasons at
Kent Island

Lundberg Builders

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Enclosed is a check to cover dues for the membership indicated below:

- ☐ Individual Life Membership \$250.00
☐ Organization Membership \$40.00
☐ Business Membership \$50.00

- ☐ Single Membership \$15.00
☐ Family Membership \$25.00

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Telephone (Home) _____

(Cell) _____

Email address _____

*Dues and contributions are tax
deductible to the fullest extent of the law.*

Membership period:
January 1 to December 31

The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc
P.O. Box 321, Stevensville, Maryland
www.kentislandheritagesociety.org

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