



# Isle of Kent - 1631

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND  
HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

SUMMER 1990

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

## KENT ISLAND DAYS

Kent Island Days 1990 will be filled with new and exciting events. Festivities are scheduled for Saturday and Sunday June 9th and 10th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Hemingway's Pier One. This year's events coincide with the 7th Annual Bay Bridge Swim from Sandy Point to Kent Island.

The Kent Island Heritage Society will sponsor the Craft Show and Festival both days. 50 talented and original Eastern and Western Shore crafters will demonstrate their skills at chair caning, decoy carving, and blacksmithing under the Lion's Club tent. Displayed with watermen's workboats will be calligraphy, railroad artifacts, crafts, floral baskets, decorated boxes, screen painting, handmade jewelry, Kent Island caps and shirts, and much more.

Both days will be filled with fun and games, a puppet show, refreshments, baked goods, and entertainment. The Kent Island Federation of Art's annual display and the Island Garden Club's floral basket contest contribute to the festivities.

Hemingway's Dave Harper will hold "The First Ever (June) Oyster

Shucking Contest" on Saturday. Where will you get oysters, Dave?

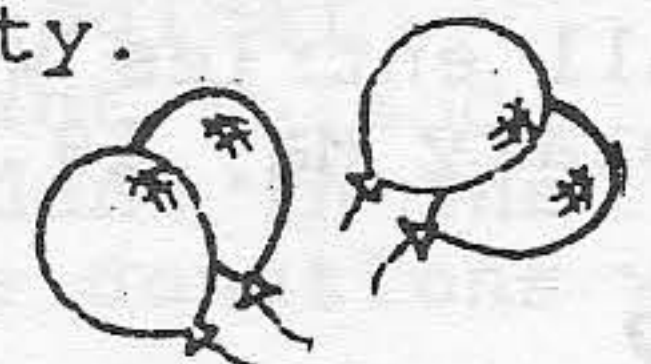
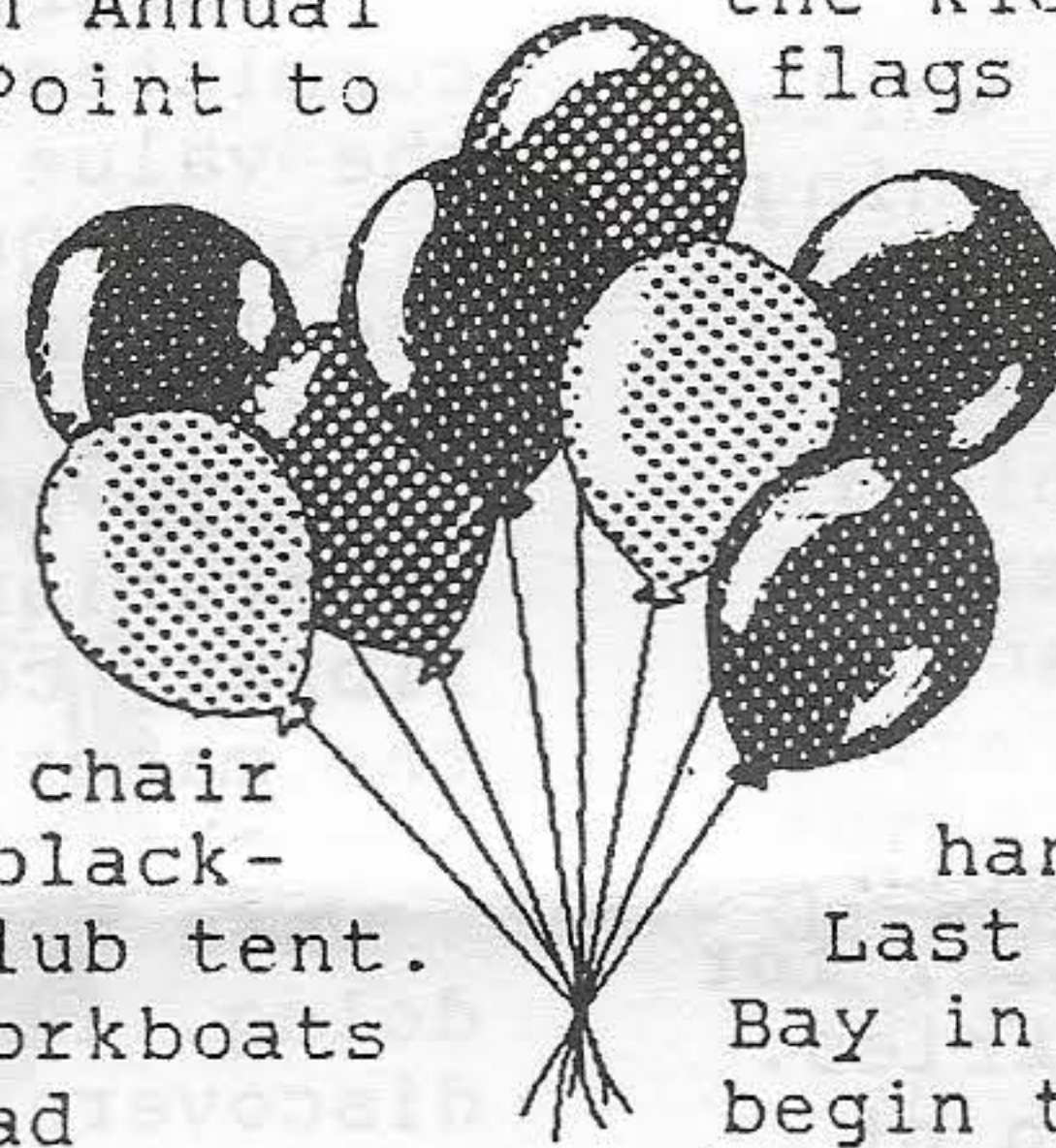
Added to this unique oyster shucking contest to be judged as a prelude to a statewide contest, there will be a seafood bake-out and barbeque, and for the kids, face-painting, balloons, and flags adding merriment.

Sunday's feature will be the 7th Annual Bay Bridge Swim. Organizer Fletcher Hanks' race has grown from two entries in 1983 to the 896 national swimmers who have signed up for 1990 race. Sports media and television crews will be on hand providing coverage.

Last year's 4.4 mile winner swam the Bay in 1 hour and 33 minutes! Swimmers begin the grueling race at 8:00 a.m. at Sandy Point winding up for the festivities at Hemingway's. The race benefits the American Diabetes Association.

Historic Stevensville's Cray House, Christ Church, and the old Stevensville Bank will be open for visitors both days. Stroll through the past in Stevensville, a Nationally Registered Historic Village.

Kent Island Days-1990 promises to be an exciting venture for the Kent Island Heritage Society.



PARKING PROVIDED BY BOY SCOUTS



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Audrey Hawkins

Orlando Ridout of the Maryland Historical Trust was guest speaker at the March 15th meeting. He has outlined a proposal to survey and assess the historical sites on Kent Island, using the latest technological equipment and aerial surveys.

The details are in the enclosed letter. Please read it and plan to attend the June 21 regular membership meeting to hear more about the proposal and voice your opinion. We MUST strive to discover, identify, restore and preserve Kent Island history.

At May 10th's anniversary dinner party at Kent Island Yacht Club, Charlie Koegel was M.C. and Rev. James "Bud" Shand of Christ Church gave the benediction and invocation.

The remaining three KIHS founders, Marian Steuart, Mary White, and Annie May Price, were there. Mrs. Steuart related the simple beginnings of KIHS.

James Brohawn played organ music during dinner and later for dancing. Past-president Eva C. Thompson narrated a "fun" dress parade, while the raffle drawing ended the evening. Violet "Sis" Harris won an original Liz Bukowsky painting, framed by Robert Walters.

## PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Judging the old Kent Island Photo Contest must have been difficult, for there were many fascinating entries.

Lois Cockey's 1918-1920 photo of Old Stevensville High School took first place, and second place by Catherine Jones' entry of Reba and Isabel Roe posing by a wheelbarrow.

Elsie Porter took third place with her photograph of an old Stevensville bus. And we thought "County Ride" was a "first"!

Prizes were donated by the Q.A. Chamber of Commerce. Robert Walters donated the matting and framing of all the entries.

All entries were displayed at the library May 19 until May 30.

## LIBRARY FILES FILLING UP

After 15 years of inadequate and dangerous storage in the Cray house and various Island attics, Mary White, Bill Goodhand, Rose Lane, Jr., Palmer, Myrtle Bruscup, and Bettye Speed began the arduous task of sorting and filing the enormous and continually growing research collections of the Kent Island Heritage Society.

The new cabinets are in the far corner of the Kent Island branch library for researchers and genealogists. One file cabinet contains all the KIHS historic materials while the second file is devoted to genealogy and family heritage, from wills to Bible records.

The volunteers spent the entire day sorting, creating, and filling hanging files, copying, and typing file index cards cataloguing the Society's collections as well as Mildred Schoch's valuable research from the Hall of Records, the Maryland Historical Society, the National Archives, as well as the Queen Anne's County clerk's office.

A surprise contribution to the committee's strong convictions about the value of the library project was a young Queen Anne's student came to the library with an assignment to write up her Kent Island family tree. Luckily her line is the multi-generational Gibson family. The library committee was busily filing the materials she needed right beside her chair!

When her mother asked what we were doing, imagine her surprise when she discovered that the Kent Island Heritage Society's genealogical collections would be able to fill in all the gaps in her research as soon as the project is finalized. Members urged her to join the Heritage Society.

For researchers, the file key will be at the librarian's desk. Anyone using KIHS's files MUST sign the visitor's book so we have a record of visitors' areas of interest and research. KIHA also requests that researchers be extremely careful with fragile old materials.



## BOARD MINUTES

Marilyn Wilderson

(Editor's Note: The minutes are abbreviated since their news is contained in separate articles elsewhere.)

The KIHS Board met May 22 at Audrey Hawkins' house. Mordie Gibson, Eileen Dadds, Marilyn and Paul Wilderson, Sis Harris, Billy Denny, Willard Thomas and Jean Eckstorm attended.

The letter concerning the Maryland Historical Trust's matching grant proposal for an archaeological survey of Kent Island enclosed with this newsletter is self-explanatory.

All members are urged to attend the JUNE 21 GENERAL MEETING to hear more about this exciting project and to voice their opinions. In the event that the Trust's proposal is accepted, a fund-raising committee will be appointed.

Our thanks to Charlie Koegel for again providing mailing labels for the society's newsletter.



### TREASURER'S REPORT

Violet M. Harris

Feb. 13, 1990-May 22, 1990  
Balance: \$8,553.34

Disbursements: \$3649.92

Balance as of May 22, 1990  
\$4903.42

Balance in 30-Month C.D. Account:  
5/31/1990 \$7498.40

TOTAL ASSETS: \$12,401.82

## NEWS AND NOTES

### CHILDREN VIEW SCHOOLDAYS PAST

In April retired teacher Dorothy Crouch was invited to give the children at Kiddie Academy a view of earlier generations of school children at old Stevensville Schoolhouse.

Looking for something to catch their television-trained attention, Dorothy took a water pail and a stout stick to show how the children in earlier times hauled water from the well into the old school building. In addition to learning their lessons and the "Three R's", those children worked. Imagine how difficult it is for today's youngsters to conceptualize the lack of indoor plumbing. They needed Dorothy's visual stimulus.



### ELKS AND LEGION CONTRIBUTE TO KIHS

On April 3rd, Audrey Hawkins, President of the Kent Island Heritage Society attended a meeting of the Kent Island Elks Lodge #2576 where she was presented with a check for \$750.00 for the Society from Gerald S. Laird, Exalted Ruler, from the Elks Charity Fund.

On April 15th, The Kent Island American Legion Post #278 contributed a \$200.00 check for KIHS.

Mrs. Hawkins said such generous donations from local organizations help defray current expenses. She has written to both the Elks and the Legion to thank them for their contributions to the Kent Island Heritage Society.

Mrs. Hawkins said the costs of the master files for the Society's historical and genealogical collections at the Kent Island library have made a dent in the "piggy bank" so these donations will help considerably.



### CRAY HOUSE ACQUISITIONS

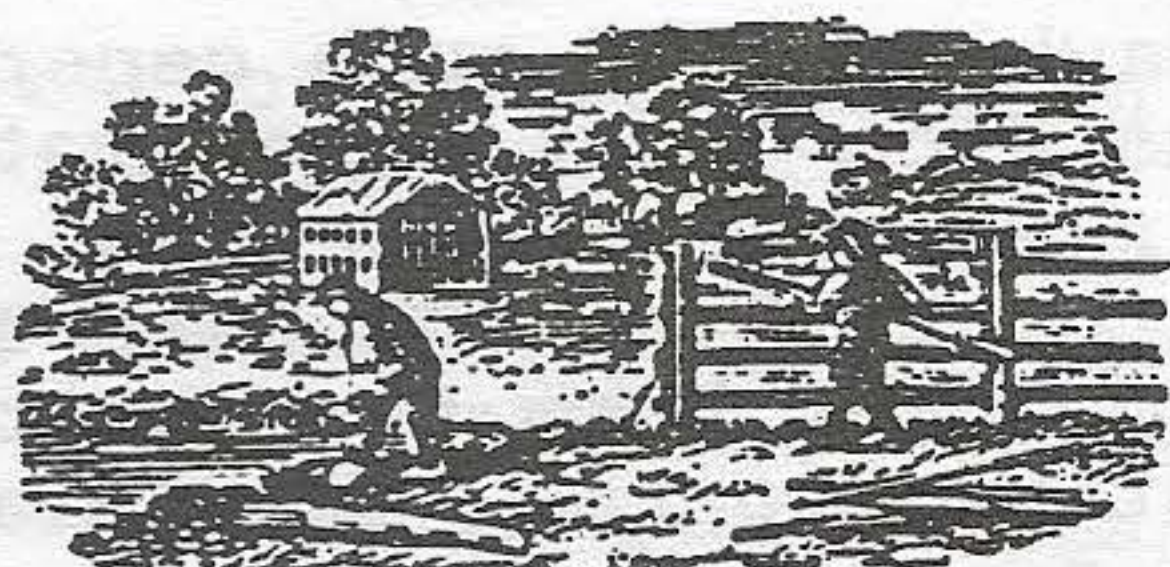
The family of Larue Updegrave, who died recently, has generously donated to the Kent Island Heritage Society Liz Bukowsky's original painting of the Cray House, a beautiful punch bowl set, and two braided scatter rugs. All are fine additions to the Cray House and the Heritage Society is most grateful to the family.

Myrtle Bruscup, who has graciously agreed to replace Larue as Cray House custodian, has issued an urgent call for hostesses for Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. from July through October. Call Dorothy Crouch at 643-6838 or Myrtle at 643-5596 for scheduling.

### LEGG-EARECKSON FARM

Edward "Bunky" Severa, who recently purchased the well known John and Benjamin Eareckson-Legg farm (Jim Coursey's) on old Batt's Neck Road, has contacted Orlando Ridout of the Maryland Historic Trust to discuss the architectural and historic importance of the circa 1795-1815 two-story Flemish Bond brick farm house.

Under absentee ownership since 1970, the old house has been rented, and badly needs restoration. Mildred Schoch's 1982 "Of History and Houses" noted that the famed Flying Camp was stationed here during the Revolutionary War before relocating to Blunt's Warehouse at Great Neck. Since 1982 the front steps have disappeared, replaced by a rose bush. The windows are boarded to eliminate winter drafts. Even some of the Eareckson family gravestones have been relocated to Wye Churchyard, though others remain.



So many important original Kent Island homes, including Indian Springs and the Tolson farmhouse on Kent Point Road, have recently been razed. The Lowery-Kirwan farmhouse

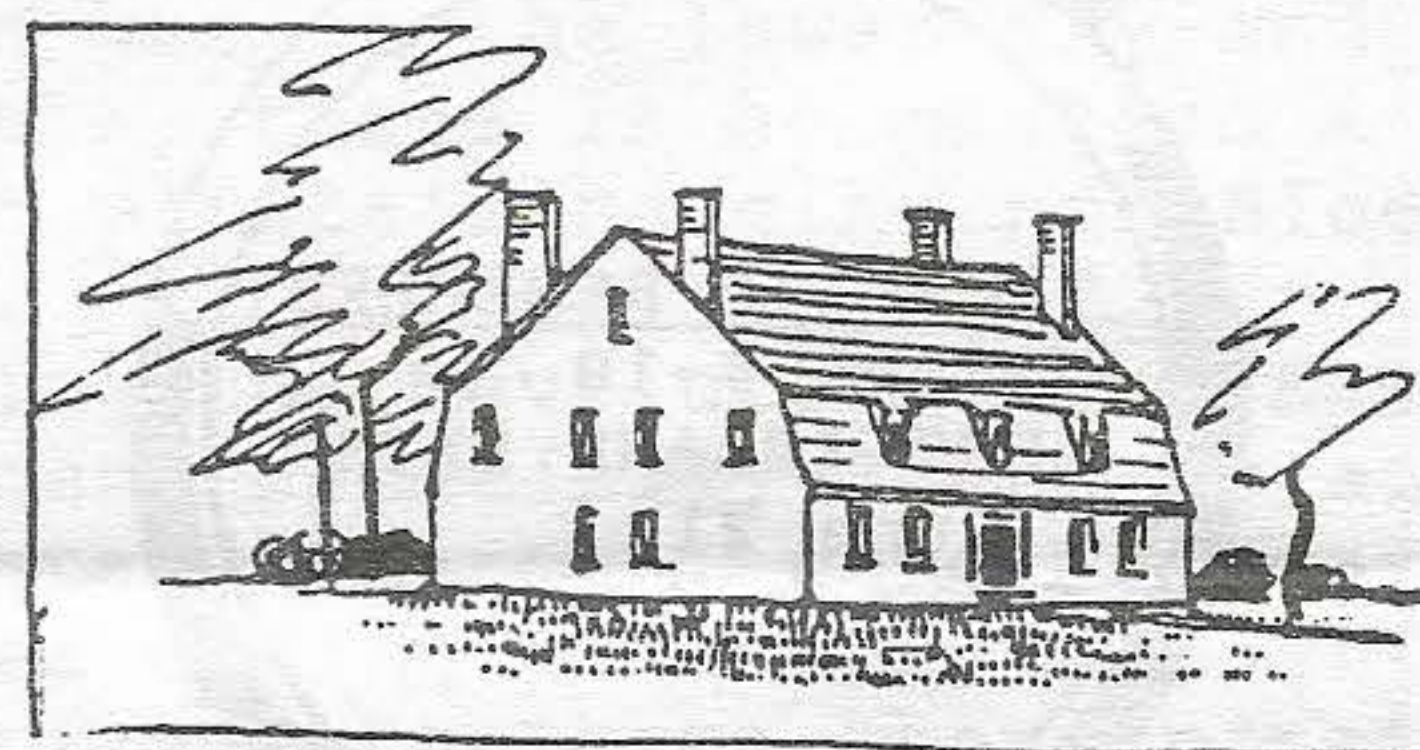
on Dominion Road burned after years of deterioration, while Chester's Goodhand House, the Gardner house at Kirwans Creek, Cabin Neck, and the Glebe, like skeleton ships, disintegrate and decay with wind and weather.

We earnestly hope the important Eareckson-Legg house can be preserved and restored.

### FOREMAN CREATES CONTROVERSY

In his 1989 Early Buildings and Historic Artifacts in Tidewater Maryland, H. Chandlee Foreman culminates a long career of finding and recording historic houses. In 1934 he published Early Manor and Plantation Houses in Maryland, recording with his camera Island houses such as Cabin Neck, Kent Fort Manor and the Price House at Queen Anne's Colony as they appeared around 1932. Other books include Old Point and an undesignated "old house at Bat's Neck".

Foreman's photos and sketches are invaluable since many historic homes have disappeared or been so renovated as to be unrecognizable.



HCF's reconstructive sketch of the Carter/Price house at Queen Anne's Colony before late 18th or early 19th century additions. (From "Early Manor...")

In his latest book, Foreman expresses controversial opinions on some of his areas of study. One of them is "Old Christ Church, Kent Island, and its Place in History".

In 1967 he published detailed drawings of the 1959 archaeological excavation of the early Christ Church foundations at Broad Creek spearheaded by Dr. Reginald Truitt.

Continued next page



Foreman refutes Kent Island's claims as "the oldest English settlement in Maryland", and Christ Church as "the oldest continuous congregation in Maryland", saying Palmer's Island was established in 1629, after being purchased in 1624 by Virginian Edward Palmer for a university. In 1629 Claiborne's outpost there, he says, included a library.

Further, he rejects the connection between the Anglican Church at "Virginia's Kent Fort in 1636" with the "Maryland Christ Church nine miles north at Broad Creek 54 years later." Foreman says there was a definite hiatus between the two, noting the lack of evidence of an Anglican minister until 1692, and prolonged parish vacancies from 1637 to 1721, and in 1820 (after two wars with England), citing Dr. C. P. Gould and Emory.

#### LEGION HONORS LEM

Kent Island boatbuilder Lemuel Thompson Jr. was honored at the Benedict Palmer American Legion Post's annual Sportsmen's Banquet May 20. Lem was recognized for his contributions to power boat racing and building on Kent Island.

Well known Island boatbuilders, like their father before them, Lem and his brother Calvert both competed in what was known as "backyard" power boat racing on Kent Island.

In 1953 group of local enthusiasts formed the Queen Anne's Boat Racing Association. Running "wildcat" (non-sanctioned) regattas in Cox's Creek before Harbor View was developed, locals Alton Pierson, Bob Lawrence, Calvert and Lem, Billy and Garret Ruth pioneered the sport that became the Chesapeake Bay Boat Regatta. It was held annually through 1987 at the Kent Island Yacht Club.

Without their enthusiasm and community support for the sport, there would be no Kent Island Yacht Club today. A membership vote citing "economic reasons" canceled the Island's traditional yacht club races before the 1988 season. The *raison d'etre* behind the Kent Island Yacht Club was forgotten, a fact not lost on native Islanders.

Lem won in 1956 in the old Pacific One Design, "Splinters". A P.O.D. was similar to what is known now as a "Crackerbox", a small hydroplane. Prizes in those days might be a set of salt and pepper shakers!

The history of local boat racing starts with sailing craft like log canoes long before power was available. Thompson says they took the basic log canoe - five logs, split them, widening them by two feet. Power was the next step. More sophisticated specs were added as the sport grew.

Catching the "racing virus", master boatbuilder Lem Thompson built his own boats, racing for 18 years. A serious accident ended his racing career in 1971, but he still faithfully follows the circuit.

#### GENEALOGY

By Mary White

Genealogy activities have taken a back seat in the past few months as intense efforts went into preparing records to be placed in our new Kent Island branch library.

However, members Myrtle Bruscup, Bill Goodhand, Edgar Pyle, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Collier, Jr., and I attended evening genealogy classes at the Middle School conducted by a very knowledgeable young lady, Teresa Kilian of Love Point.

The classes were very informative and helpful for the beginning researchers and extremely useful to those of us who had already been involved in this activity. We learned how to organize all the material we have collected. There were several field trips to Annapolis and D.C. which were quite productive for most of the students.

Incidentally, Mrs. Kilian is now a member of our Society and I heartily  
Continued next page



recommend her classes to anyone interested in Family History.

We would like anyone who has an old Family Bible to please allow us to have a copy made of the records they contain for our files. The process does not hurt the Bible. We would like to see who has the oldest Bible on the Island. If you are interested, contact me and I will arrange to have your Bible records copied.

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The following "Genealogical Beatitudes" (Anonymous) reveal the importance of this kind of information:

Blessed are the great-grandfathers  
who saved embarkation and citizenship  
papers,

For all to tell when they came,

Blessed are the great-grandmothers  
who hoarded newspaper clippings and  
old letters,

For they tell the story of their  
time.

Blessed are all the grandfathers who  
filed every document,

For they provided the proof.

Blessed are the grandmothers who  
preserved family Bibles and diaries,

For this is our heritage.

Blessed are the fathers who elect  
officials that answer letters of  
inquiry,

For to some they are the only link  
to the past.

Blessed are the mothers who relate  
family tradition and legend to the  
family,

For one of their children will  
surely remember.

Blessed are the relatives who fill in  
family sheets with extra data,

For to them we owe the family  
history.


Blessed is any family whose members  
strive for the preservation of  
records,

For theirs is a labor of love.

## BLOODY POINT AND ITS LEGENDS

By Bettye Speed

(Continued from Spring 1990 Issue)

Tracking the tale of an Indian massacre, Nathaniel Claiborne Hale's "Virginia Venturer" describes a foiled attack on the new Ile of Kent settlement in 1631 by the warlike Wicomesses from the mainland. The Islanders having been forewarned, called their bluff with a simple charade indicating they were heavily armed. The gullible and intimidated Indians beat a hasty retreat. 

Emory's History records that three Islanders were killed in a 1634 joint attack by the Susquehannocks from the north and Wicomesses from the south.

Since the Island's native Mattapeakes were friendly, living in peace until the early 19th century, a slaughter seems highly unlikely. No "massacre" has been recorded.

Many of the written histories of the Bay country include stories of the French pirates during the four English-French wars from 1689 to 1763. Due to lack of protection from the British for the Maryland-Virginia coastal regions, privateers were commissioned to augment the few warships available. While most of the action was in the lower Bay and Virginia, there is no mention a French pirate's hanging nor Bloody Point.

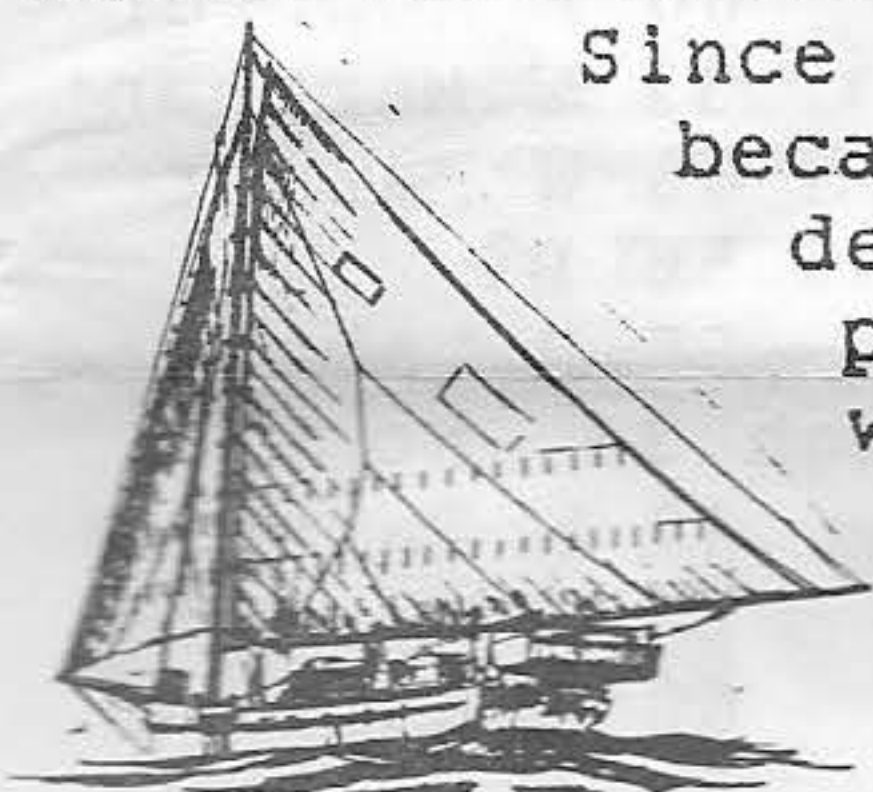
During the Revolution many Eastern Shoremen, especially Somerset and Worcester watermen, were Tories pirates siding with the British. Some historians attribute these pirates as unemployed privateers left after the French wars. They pillaged Bayside plantations, once as far north as the Wye River. Vulnerable Kent Island was well protected, but no British incursion or Tory piracy was recorded, although Tory "pirate" Cheney Clows apparently lived on Kent Island when captured and hanged in 1788.

Recently a new story has been added to the age old legends. "The Last Waterman" by Glenn Lawson, published in 1988, tells of lower Bay oyster drudgers "paying off with the boom".



Recruiting a crew from newly arrived immigrants in Baltimore, captains put them to work, promising payment at the end of the season.

Some unscrupulous captains would abuse the crew by ordering them "to work on deck while running the boat into the wind. Then they would change course slightly, just enough for the wind to catch the other side of the sail. The sail suddenly whipped across the deck, and the heavy boom swept the crew overboard to drown. One place on the Bay was known as Bloody Point since so many crews were drowned there."



Since the oyster trade became a major economic development in the Bay prior to the Civil war, expanding greatly after 1863, adoption of the name "Bloody Point" during the 19th-century becomes more convincing as hard bitten oyster boat captains scoured Bayside towns and bars for their labor force.

Kent Fort Manor contained 2,000 acres until 1787 when all of the southern end of Kent Island was divided into two 1,000 acre farms by the heirs of Samuel Chew. Mildred Schoch wrote: "by 1825, Robert Cray bought the southern half from his father-in-law Robert Tait."

In July 1861 Richard Cray's will (Will Book STW) says, "all my real estate...Kent Fort Manor...1,000 acres.. to wife for 20 years.. educate children, pay debts, etc." In deed book JW 5: 622, April 1875:

"...1861, widow of Richard Cray lost farm Sedgefield/Bloody Point ...retained widow's dower, 175 acres Kent Point Farm", not Kent Fort.

Quoting B. C. Steiner's 1957 Maryland History Magazine article, "Kent Fort Manor", Mrs. Schoch goes on: "By 1861 the area was divided into 5 separate farms which were owned by Richard Cray's descendants during the rest of the century." His widow sold both "Sedgefield" or "Western Bay" and "Bloody Point" or "Muddy Creek" farms for debts, retaining 175 acres at Kent Point Farm or "Widow's Dower". Apparently these names were given the 5 farms after their sale.

An 1868 application for a lighthouse at "Bloody Point Bar" is the earliest documentation found of the name "Bloody Point" so far.

Therefore, it appears that of the many "Bloody Point" legends, two contain the most basis for fact: 1. the story about the shanghaied sailors being "paid with the boom" or 2. the charming 1908 ballad of a mutiny against a despised sea captain which began this investigation of the genesis of the name "Bloody Point".

"Pirates of the Chesapeake" author Donald G. Shomette said he has found no records of grisly battles near Bloody Point. However, he wryly noted that "the names Hollica Snooze (Holligan's Noose?) and Scaffold Creek in the Bloody Point vicinity create ominous images of the area."

### FULL CIRCLE

Hegel wrote that "...history teach(es) that...governments never have learned anything from history.."

This is true of the current DNR proposal to dump Baltimore harbor dredge spoil into the Bay off Kent Island.

In 1968 the Department of Water Resources announced a public hearing on a State Roads Commission proposal "to dredge 350,000 cubic yards of mud from the Bay Bridge pier locations and "dispose of the dredge" in the Kent Island Dumping Grounds. Attorney Richard White, Jr. represented the Bayfront landowners who protested the dumping, having seen 10 or more feet of land erosion and muddy silting of their beaches. The Q.A. Watermen's Association and the Charter Boat Association, with the Kent Island Citizens Association attended the hearing.

Fred Seiling of the Department of Chesapeake Bay Affairs asserted that the material "is the same as normally on the bottom". He didn't anticipate "any harmful effects to the natural resources."

This statement sets off alarms. Only ten days ago newspapers quoted a DNR official saying "that the dredge spoil from Baltimore harbor would not have a harmful effect on natural resources" at a dump site off Kent Island.

What goes around, comes around



## CENSUSES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

In 1982, The Newsletter published the 31 inhabitants of Kent Island in 1631 and the 120 heads of household in 1790. This census year Kent Island population is expected to reach over 14,000 souls. We thought a reprint of 1850's 223 heads of household might be of interest for 1990. Space will not permit printing entire families. The single 1850 census taker was W. J. Gibson, Assistant Marshall.

Pere Winchester	49	W	Farmer
William Davis	50	B	Laborer
Emeline Green	20	B	
Samuel Ringgold	46	W	Farmer
Oliver Elliott	31	W	Farmer
Jacob T. Denny	27	W	
James Hassett	32	W	Farmer
William Lowery	48	W	Farmer
Eliza Robinson	45	B	
Daniel Watkins	70	B	Laborer
Edward Hopkins	47	W	Farmer
Samuel Johnson	60	B	Laborer
John G. S. Thomas	40	W	Constable
Charles E. Skinner	46	W	Farmer
Charles Stevens	49	W	Farmer
William K. Goodhand	30	W	Farmer
Sarah Lee	35	B	
Samuel Green	40	B	Laborer
Edward F. Browne	30	W	Farmer
Thomas H. Kemp	42	W	Farmer
John C. Tolson	34	W	Farmer
Samuel Harper	45	W	Doctor
Charles Downes	43	W	Farmer
William S. Thompson	30	W	Farmer
Thomas Murphy	26	W	Farmer
Charles Grimes	33	W	Laborer
John Denny	38	W	Farmer
Hiram Goodhand	33	W	Carpenter
James Wright	49	W	Farmer
John Lewis	60	W	
Jacob Lewis	35	W	Farmer
Mary Clayton	32		
James Tolson	57	W	Farmer
James L. Bryan	65	W	Farmer
Lewis Bryan	32	W	Farmer
Joseph F. Bright	25	W	Farmer
Jacob T. Walters	39	W	Shoemaker
Richard Gardner	58	W	Farmer
David Gardner	30	W	Laborer
Elizabeth Green	35	B	
Benjamin Tolson	33	W	Farmer
William H. Hoxter	30	W	Farmer
John Robinson	45	W	Miller
John Cook	39	W	Farmer
Lloyd Smith	43	B	Laborer
William C. Ringgold	28	W	Farmer
Edmund Carvill	51	W	Farmer
Alexander Thompson	33	W	Farmer
George W. Porter	34	W	Farmer

Jane Honey	45	B
James Denny	34	W Farmer
James Bullen	37	W Laborer
Benjamin Seegar	53	W Farmer



Edward H. Sewell	32	W	Laborer
John B. Greenbank	40	W	Laborer
Richard Jeffers	60	B	Laborer
William H. Miller	32	W	Merchant
Rhoderick Earickson	63	W	Farmer
Phillis Baynard	56	B	
Daniel Tolson	65	B	Laborer
William Goldsborough	34		None
Samuel White	40	W	Farmer
Jacob W. Legg	44	W	Farmer
James Turner	60	B	Laborer
Henry Bordley	50	B	Laborer
Simmons Nicholson	55	B	Laborer
James Bailey	35	B	Laborer
Harriett King	35	B	
Minta Wilson	38	B	
John K. Murphy	46	W	Farmer
Benjamin W. Earickson	46		Farmer

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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