

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. ■ WINTER 2008

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President's Message

What an honor it is to assume the leadership of The Kent Island Heritage Society. I thank the Board and our membership for placing your trust in me for this position, and I look forward to a challenging and exciting year.

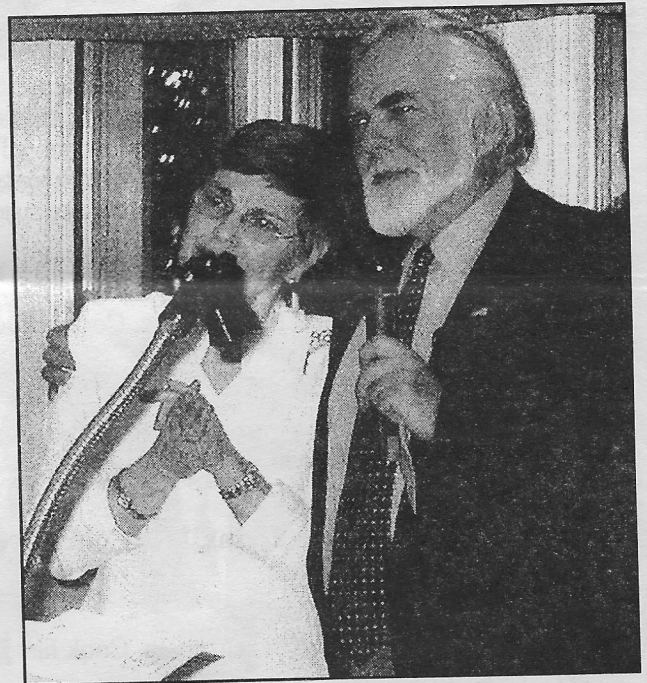
Several folks have asked, "How do you replace someone like Nancy Cook?" ... Well ... simply ... you don't! No one person can do it. Miss Nancy served admirably as our Society President for 9 years and has left her noble imprint on virtually every aspect of our organization. She has led us through some challenging times and has built an institution of wonderful people, with great historic assets and sites, in one of the richest historic places in our country. For that we say, "Thank You!"

My hope now is to build our team of strong, gifted board members and volunteer society members, working together to carry on the legacy which Miss Nancy and others before her have built. (And, yes, Miss Nancy will be part of that team!)

We are planning an active year of stimulating programs; an exciting Kent Island Day celebration and parade — including a Kent Island flag contest; reopening of the Kirwan House and Museum; restoring our caboose; completion of the Kirwan Farm Conservation project; the Fall Harvest

Continued on page 8

The Kent Island Heritage Society installs first new president of this millennium; leadership passes from Nancy Cook to Jack Broderick.



Mark Your Calendar

Kent Island Heritage Society Meeting

Wednesday, March 19

Kent Island Library

7:00 p.m. Refreshments

7:30 p.m. Program

Speaker: Jack Shaum, Bay Times

Topic: Shipwrecks of the Chesapeake Bay

COMMITTEES

Docents

Audrey Hawkins
Kent Island Day
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House/Museum

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Old Stevensville

Train Depot

Florence Dunn

Caboose Restoration

Richard Dadds
 Wayne Humphries
 T. Humphries

Oral Histories

Brent Lewis

Library/Geneology

Files

Myrtle Bruscup
 Mary White

Nominating

Dan Hopkins

Fundraising/Grants

Kerry Lake

Membership

Mae Hutchison

Audit

Lynn Riley-Coleman

Scholarship

Nancy Cook

Website

Carole Frederick

Public Relations

John Bonner



**Audrey Hawkins
 presents
 proclamation to
 outgoing President
 Nancy Cook at
 Annual Meeting**

*Photos by
 Jean Leathery*

PROCLAMATION

Whereas, Nancy M. Cook served as President of The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc. for nine years: 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

and

Whereas, Mrs. Cook served as Vice President for the year 1998

and

Whereas, Mrs. Cook served as Corresponding Secretary for the year 1997

and

Whereas, Mrs. Cook served as Grant Writer for year 1996

and

Whereas, Mrs. Cook has given her time and talent in community service to the Isle of Kent

Be it therefore

RESOLVED that the BOARD OF DIRECTORS grant an HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP to Nancy M. Cook as an expression of sincere appreciation for her years of service.

Be it also

RESOLVED that copies of this RESOLUTION be spread upon the minutes of The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc. and be published in the next issue of the *Isle of Kent Newsletter*. Further, that a certificate and copy of the resolution be presented to Mrs. Cook with appropriate ceremony.

Dated this eighth day of December in the year of our Lord two thousand seven on Kent Island in the State of Maryland.

Audrey B. Hawkins, Treasurer

Kirwan Store Museum Redux

Restoration of extensively water-damaged Kirwan Store Museum artifacts and treasures to museum-quality — which in some cases is better than they previously were — has fallen primarily upon patient and perseverant Linda Collier and Laura Lake, with help from other volunteers. Their most frequently-used restoration tool is the lowly Q-tip. Moistened with spit. "Human saliva," Linda explains, "has just the right balance for grime removal without inflicting harm to our delicate aged items."

Amanda Apple, heritage coordinator for Queen Anne's County, arranged for a timely and generous emergency grant from the Maryland Historical Trust. Funds were used for hiring B.R. Howard and Associates, a Pennsylvania conservators group that provided us with vital technical assistance, training and encouragement.

An unanticipated requirement of museums is the establishment of formal records of accession for *all* items no matter how humble, which also includ-

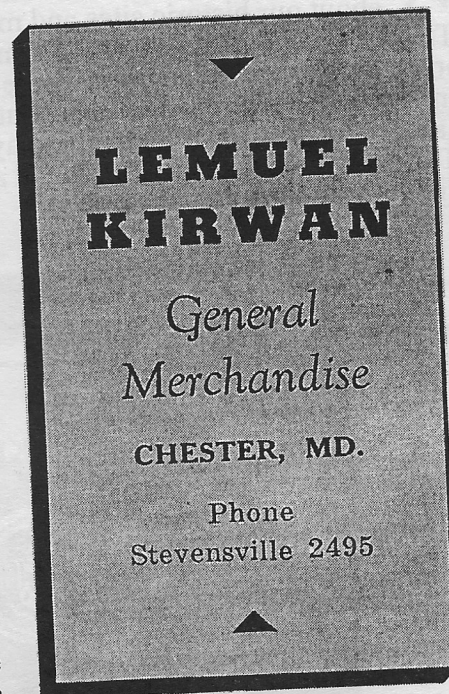
ed uninvolved household furnishings.

Linda and Laura express confidence that the repaired and repainted store will be restocked and ready for its planned spring reopening. Though a bit of help from others would better assure meeting that objective. This is thoroughly engaging work, which they will graciously teach and share with volunteers. One such waiting task for someone averse to "spit" is scraping white paint from two showcases. They can be found at Kirwan Store every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 or 4 p.m. Whether you can spare an hour or the day, please come on in.

They also expressed need for a canister vacuum cleaner with attachments and for a paper cutter. Anyone with one of these items they can donate, please call Linda at 410-643-2731 or Laura at 410-643-4755.

There also remains need for period-appropriate household furnishings and decorations. If you should have something from a beloved relative whose memory you cherish more than the

bequeathed item, you might want to consider mounting a small but tasteful memorial plaque on it and making a guilt-free gift of it. This would free up your closet space, and it's tax deductible, too.



Program booklet, Queen Anne's Co.
4-H Club Fair, Aug. 26, 1944

Officers and Directors for 2008



President Jack Broderick, Recording Secretary Flora Sossi, Corresponding Secretary Carole Frederick, Treasurer Audrey Hawkins, Directors Kerry Lake, Florence Dunn and Hal Wilson. Not shown: Vice President Joel Berger and Treasurer Wayne Morris.

Welcome to Our New Website

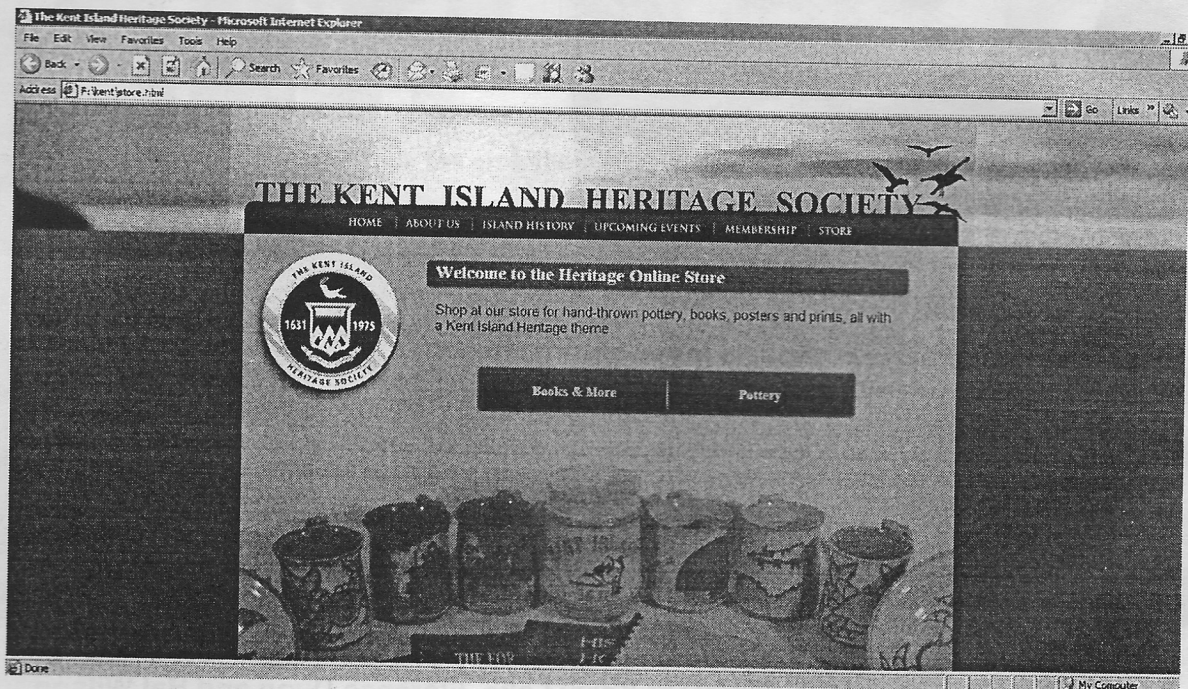
A Most Generous Gift

By Carole Frederick

We have entered the 21st century, and our ancestors must be so proud. The Kent Island Heritage Society now has its own Website: www.kentislandheritagesociety.org. It is up and running with pictures and information about our historic sites and more.

Thanks to the generosity of Thomas Associates Inc., a company owned by Alexis F. Thomas (one of Kent Island's own "native daughters"), we can be viewed around the cyberworld. You may check in to see upcoming events, pictures and information about our historic sites, the homes on the Stevensville walking tour and scenes of the area. You may also shop using PayPal to buy pottery, books of local interest, posters and maps.

The Web site is artistically created and easy to navigate. Welcome to a cruise through The Kent Island Heritage Society's wonderful domain.



Kent Islander Profiles

From The Kent Island Historical Society's oral histories project

Dr. Harry C. Rhodes

By Brent Lewis

Though not officially a Kent Islander, few local public figures have had as positive a direct effect on our whole county as Dr. Harry C. Rhodes.

Dr. Rhodes and Creighton, his wife of 70 years, live in a home that was built in 1896. It overlooks Queenstown Creek with a view straight out to the Chester River. The sunroom is open and inviting. Books and papers, pads and writing instruments are at hand everywhere. There are numerous mementos from a life of hard work, service to the community, family and world travel. It feels like a friendly place to learn a few things. The Rhodes seem as comfortable here as two people could possibly be anywhere. They've lived in this house for 56 years.

Harry Rhodes was born, "so my mother said," on November 23, 1914 to an existence typical of family owned farms in the early 20th century. His Eastern Shore roots are deep. Both sets of Harry's grandparents lived in Queenstown at the time of his birth. Grandfather John Louis Rhodes was a successful farmer and local politician. Harry's maternal grandfather, William Clement McConnor, was a Main Street mortician and furniture dealer. He was also the second president of the Queenstown Bank.

Harry's parents, Louis Kennard and Florence Estelle, had six children. But the first, a little girl named Florence died in infancy, and Tom, the fourth born, developed typhoid fever and passed away at the end of his college freshman year.

The farm was called Beverly and was located on Green Spring Road next to St. Peter's Catholic Church. It was a general agricultural operation, raising hogs, sheep, beef cattle and milk cows, chickens, turkeys and ducks. They grew corn and wheat, later soybeans. Harry remembers a disciplined, but happy life there. "You

learned early you have to carry your side of the burden in life and were expected to do so," Dr Rhodes says. "We never had much money, but we ate well and wore good clothes," He's solemn when he talks about the Depression era, "We were better off than many."

The Fourth of July and Christmas were always the big celebrations. Thanksgiving wasn't the major holiday it is today. What Harry remembers most about November is being extra well behaved so he might be chosen to accompany his father on the upcoming annual trip to Baltimore. One day late in the month or early in December, Kennard Rhodes would always need a couple of his sons to go with him to the city on the steamboat. Harry's father had holiday orders for butchered meats and homemade sausages to deliver downtown. He and the boys would carry their wares in baskets along with some produce for sale. After they made the delivery and got paid, they'd head down to Light Street and the offices of grain broker, Frank Dudley. There they'd "settle up on the wheat and corn crop for the year. Our father would take us to lunch and we'd buy Mother a trinket that Pop would pay for. It was always a great expedition."

Harry Rhodes graduated from Centreville High School in 1931 with the Kent Island Heritage Society's own Mary White. Though academically prepared, like most people he was unable to afford college, which cost around \$525 a year back then. Fortunately, his dad had a friend who was an administrator at Chestertown's Washington College. Harry was taken in on a work program. All those years of getting up to toil on the farm before breakfast and school had prepared the young man well.

After college, he got a teaching job in Montgomery County where he met his wife-to-be at a barn dance. Despite

a short break to help fight World War II, Harry excelled and advanced in his chosen profession. He also continued his education, obtaining his Masters of Education degree in 1948 and later his doctorate.

In 1952, Harry and Creighton moved back to Queenstown when he was offered and accepted the position of Queen Anne's County Superintendent of Schools.

Our county school system was modernized under the leadership of Dr. Rhodes. He oversaw programs to improve such diverse concerns as new school construction, improving student reading skills, creating music programs, implementing a process that provided better qualified bus drivers, and better communication with the general public. A compelling and entertaining public speaker himself, many positive changes were dragged to realization solely on the power of Dr. Rhodes eloquence and determined vision.

Teacher recruitment was a priority. Change was in the air, and many long time educators were not prepared to adapt. In the 1960s Dr. Rhodes was a driving force behind efforts to build a centralized county high school and the founding of Chesapeake College. He led through the volatile days of desegregation. A cause close to his heart since his early teaching experiences led to the creation of our first program to provide education for mentally challenged children. Dr. Rhodes firmly believes everyone should have a real chance in life, and he's a champion of those others may have written off. Harry and Creighton have also both been closely involved with the Chesterwye Center and Chesterwye Foundation since their inception.

After stepping down from his position in 1967, Dr. Rhodes served five years as Anne Arundel Community College Dean of Faculty

Continued on page 7

PHILPOT'S FRONT PORCH

Family Un-Planning

By Skeeter Philpot

We'd had a few good weeks in a row, so even though it was Sunday, I took a ride down the slips to check on the Hell's Belch. Felt like a freeze coming and I wasn't planning on breaking the streak no matter what. Wanted to check things out. Turn that old motor over, tighten a few nuts and bolts, throw some new insulated gloves in the cabin. Burle Shoalwater rode with me.

Burle had a hangover. Our culler Ebb Tyde had chauffeured him around the island the night before until almost eleven. Was a time, ol' Burle wouldn't even really get started until midnight. Like everything else he's older now.

"How's everybody this weekend?" Burle growls like a bear. With his scruffy winter beard and all that ballast he carries around he looks like one, too.

"We're good. T.S. has a big meeting tomorrow she's getting ready for. Debra Winger's still doing good in school, still planning on ruling the world by ninth

grade. How about ya'll?"

"Finer'n frog-hairs," he said, but he tensed up when I drove through the roundabout. Burle's still not used to the one at Castle Marina Road. Hasn't even attempted Thompson Creek.

He breathed easier once we neared the new firehouse. "You remember Man O'War?"

"Way before my time," I told him, "but yeah. Greatest racehorse ever. Stabled up in Berlin at Glen Riddle Farm. That place was left to rot after old man Riddle died. I think they're putting up a new subdivision on the property."

"Slim Chance found out a great uncle on his grandmother's side helped train Man O' War. Hmmp. Probably walked behind the horse with a shovel."

"Didn't some of your people play ball with Jimmy Foxx or something?"

"Uncle Jimmy hit a fox with a ball once. What about you? Your family ever have one of them so-called brushes with greatness?"

"There was a Philpot woman, a Kent Islander, who had a son named George Eskridge that helped raise George Washington's mother after her parents died. I think he also introduced her to the father of the father of our country." We stopped at the light. "That's about it."

"Won't get you on Entertainment Tonight. But I hear ya'."

"That's the thing about family. You've got zero control over who you're related to. Sometimes you get George Washington's mother's guardian, sometimes you get..."

"Spiro Agnew's tax guy." I chuckled. "Something like that."

Since we were on the subject, I mentioned I'd heard another set of Philpots had moved to the island and I felt a little weird about it..

"Why? You got some kind of complex?"

"Probably, but it's not that. It's just that even though I've got more cousins than a lottery winner on my mother's side, I never knew

any other Philpots. There wasn't ever even another Philpot in the phone book."

"You looked?"

"More than once."

"You are weird."

"The only Philpots I ever knew were those little islands below Shipping Creek."

"You gonna' call them?"

"The islands?"

"The Philpots."

"I intend to."

"They might not like you."

He shifted his eyes my way and grinned a big ol' grin. "Most people don't."

We pulled up to the boat and I made sure to hit the brakes hard. The truck stopped at the edge of the bulkhead like a roller coaster car. My sickly friend grabbed his ample tummy and groaned.

I laughed as I killed the engine. "Like I told you, you can't help who's family." As he was getting out I threw him the new pair of work gloves I'd bought in his size.

"Just because you're family don't mean they have to claim you." Was what he said as he shut his door.

What's Up? Eastern Shore Features Mary White On Cover

By Brent Lewis

Kent Island Heritage Society founding board member Mary White will be featured in the March issue of What's Up? Eastern Shore magazine as one of their Women of Vision.

Mary White, Marian Steuart, Emily Denny, Mildred Schoch, and Annie Mae Price organized our society in 1975 with an aim "To Discover, Identify, Restore and Preserve the Heritage of Kent Island." The stalwart Mary White is the last surviving founder.

The Kent Island Heritage Society

and its members have accomplished much in the last 33 years and What's Up? Eastern Shore is honoring Mary White as an inspiring figure in the group's continuing efforts to have a positive impact on an ever-changing community. Born in 1914, Mary is a meticulous keeper of records with an eye for the everyday happenings and objects that many of us tend to overlook. Among other achievements, she was the driving force in creating the historical and genealogical files at the

library in Stevensville and the original editor of this very newsletter.

Two other Women of Vision are to be spotlighted in What's Up?. Kathleen Wise is a Dorchester County clinician and administrator that for four and a half decades has been a tireless advocate for children's health and family strength. Margo Bailey has been mayor of Chestertown for 15 years and was a leader in the town's epic and ultimately successful campaign against a determined Wal-Mart incursion.

Dr. Harry C. Rhodes Profile

Continued from page 5

before he officially retired.

Faith and service have been vital components of his life. Dr. Rhode has been director or board member of many civic organizations, such as our first Economic Development Commission and Easton Memorial Hospital. He's a century club member of the Delmarva Council of Boy Scouts of America and an honorary member of the Queenstown Volunteer Fire Department. He's Director Emeritus of Queenstown Bank.

Dr. Rhodes has authored two books, "Queenstown: The Social History of a Small American Town" and the memoir "Country Boy Grows Up - Harry in the Nineteen Hundreds." A local bookshelf without them is incomplete.

For all of Harry Rhodes contributions to improving the quality of this life we enjoy, I say we should add Honorary Islander to his long list of awards, designations and titles.

Christ Church Restoration Set to Begin

Work is set to begin on the restoration of Historic Christ Church to its original colorful splendor. Microscopic color analysis has revealed the original color schemes for both interior and exterior, which are completely different from what we see now.

The predominant interior color will be a shade of blue-gray. Interior work of plaster repairing and painting should take about two or three weeks.

Exterior work will begin as soon as weather permits and should take a few weeks to complete.

New landscaping and work on the church's old bell is also included in the contract with Harper & Sons of Easton.

The next restoration phase will involve the fellowship hall, added to the church in the 1950s. The county anticipates that the fellowship hall will be suitable for such events as theater and music performances and for classes.

CASTING CALL! Make Someone's Kent Island Life A Legacy

Kent Island Heritage Society raconteur Brent Lewis is looking for people with tales to tell of their personal slice of Kent Island's past.

He wants to preserve first-person accounts of Kent Island life and work and play and strife on digital video that will be a permanent legacy for future generations.

Be they waterman or teacher or farmer or poet or famous or infamous, if they did it on Kent Island he wants their story.

Since Brent's involvement in this initiative began three years ago, he has done 18 video interviews. He hopes to do 6 to 10 more soon.

If you know of such a person, Brent would like to hear from you. You can call him at 410-827-8187 or email him at bfranklinlewis@msn.com.

Grape Salad

by Myrtle Bruscup

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 8 oz. cream cheese | 1. Mix with electric mixer. |
| 8 oz. sour cream | |
| ½ tsp. vanilla | |
| ½ cup sugar | |
| 4 lbs. seedless grapes | 2. Fold in grapes. Put in large serving dish. |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 3. Sprinkle on top. |
| 1 cup chopped walnuts | |

In Memoriam

BERTHA MAE ABBOTT

GRANDDAUGHTER OF THE LATE
STATE SENATOR JAMES E. KIRWAN

EDNA MAY LEWIS

MOTHER OF MEMBER NANCY SADLER

The society is very thankful for and will miss the interest and support shown our organization by these members. Continuing our shared mission honors their memories.

Welcome New Members

Daena P. Feldman
Annapolis, Md.

Tracie & Tony Holtman
Stevensville

Patrice P. Preston
Baltimore, Md.

Geoffrey M. Price
Stevensville, Md.

Terry Price
Stevensville

Tilghman E. Price
Potomac, Md.

Ralph & Barbara
Robinson
Stevensville, Md.

Pamela Sawyer
Stevensville, Md..

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President's Message

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Picnic for our members, and a Victorian Christmas at the Kirwan House. We also plan to reach out in partnership to like-minded organizations who share an interest in the history and heritage of our County and our Island.

We need ideas, passion, energy and teamwork to help make it work. If you appreciate our Kent Island heritage and would like to be part of our effort, consider volunteering for one of our committees on page 2. Or if you would like to share an idea, an old picture or an artifact, give me a call at 410-643-6452 or email me at jackbb@atlanticbb.net.

Looking forward to a great year.

Jack Broderick

Lucky Pharmacist

By Gil Dunn

The year was 1953. The word was out in Baltimore that a pharmacist was needed on Kent Island to open a drug store.

A pharmacist was interested, but where in God's name was Kent Island?

A friend advised that it is on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Take a trip over the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge. When you get to the other end, you will be on Kent Island.

The pharmacists took the trip, found Kent Island, looked around the area and liked it. Finding no other drug store there, he decided that he would open one. Soon afterward, native residents became his friends and were glad to

have a local drug store.

Like all newcomers, he was branded a "chicken necker." Not an unpopular weekender "chicken necker" whose crab lines get tangled with local watermen's trot lines. Just a non-local newcomer. The pharmacist, to the best of his knowledge, never caught a hard crab in his life.

After a short time, the "chicken necker" pharmacist became known as "Doc." Doc's wife and children enjoyed living on Kent Island. Time took some of the older children from Kent Island; two remained to make Kent Island their home.

Doc was an active Kent Islander and an avid baseball fan. He spent many hours with the young boys of little

league age, teaching them how to play baseball. Those were happy days.

Kent Island had no musical band, so Doc, who played the clarinet with more enthusiasm than style, organized the Kent Island Band and enjoyed many hours playing with it.

Today, the band has many members and is requested to play for special occasions both on and off of Kent Island.

The children who moved away years ago come home with their families to visit Kent Island. It is a happy homecoming, like a festival.

Kent Island became home for the chicken-necker newcomer a long time ago.

He calls himself the "Lucky Pharmacist."