

# Isl of Kent - 1631

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

FALL 2020

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## President's Message



Wow! This summer been unforgettable, with challenges and changes affecting nearly every aspect of our lives: major aspects like our health, our social relationships, our economy, and extreme weather to simply annoying ones like traffic and the bay bridge – and more traffic! Still we persist. Fortunately, technology has shown its valuable side and helped us communicate in a beneficial way. I am reminded of our iconic, long-serving heritage society treasurer, Audrey Hawkins, who in her 90's often quipped, "I may not get around like I used to, but I'm hell on the telephone"! ...That's pretty much all of us today.

Regarding that recent hurricane/tropical storm, I'm happy to report that all of our historic sites came through with no wind or water damage. Although at the Kirwan House a huge maple branch crashed down between the house and the dairy – the second close call this year! An evaluation of that tree is on the agenda. Queen Anne's County Public Works and Delmarva Power crews did a great job helping the islanders return to normal. Thanks, guys!

As the pandemic continues, we have extended our closure of all of our sites and activities through the remainder of 2020, i.e., the fall picnic and the December election of officers' brunch. Our top priority remains the health, safety, and welfare of our members and guests. We will decide when and how to convene as the future of COVID 19 unfolds in 2021.

In response to virtual learning in QAC Schools this fall, we are curtailing our Kent Island history program again as we had done in the spring. We shall continue to coordinate with Principal Shrecongost while refining our program. We wish the best to all involved in the virtual learning experience.

Another positive educational opportunity the heritage society offers each year is a scholarship to a graduating senior. This year's recipient is Steve Kougores, Jr. of Kirwan's Landing, Chester. In addition to his academic excellence, Steve's Kent Island ancestry dates back nearly four centuries through the Baxter family line to Rodger Baxter, a millwright, who arrived to join William Claiborne's new settlement at Kent Fort. His picture and essay, in this newsletter, give us an idea of the value he places in his long and important Kent Island heritage. Steve plans to attend Pennsylvania College of Technology

Continued on page 2

## **KIHS Committees**

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Toni Gibson

Gary Haigley

Chris Kilian

Carmen Mendez

Fran Peters

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Marilyn Wilson

Cheryl Valentine

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Kent Island Day**

Jack Broderick, *Chair*

John Conley

Nancy Cook

Carole Frederick

Bob Lowe

### **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*

to pursue a degree in Welding and Metal Fabrication Engineering. Congratulations, Steve, a successful future to you!

One historic site, the Stevensville Bank, is transitioning. Yes that is a "for sale" sign in the window. Owner, Bob Marsteller, has decided to place the bank building on the commercial real estate market. Please see the bank sale article in this issue.

Despite pandemic constraints, the Society has been able to effectively carry on our mission. Maintenance and repair work continue at our sites as well as the outfitting of the blacksmith shop, albeit slowly. Our board meetings have been virtual, effective and productive.

The pandemic has closed the Kent Island Library's doors but the staff has been extremely helpful in retrieving historical material and genealogical files by special request. The Heritage Society and Library have partnered since it opened in 1987. We look forward to seeing the results of the renovation which will include a designated area for the society.

Dr. Darrin Lowery, the famed archeologist, you may recall, was to complete an expanded on-site survey of Parson's Island (previously connected to Kent Island). Our members could volunteer to help Dr. Lowery on this dig. Unfortunately the pandemic and the unpredictability of the weather have caused serious delays. In Dr. Lowery's own words, we have suffered all forms of "pestilences of Biblical proportions," including a viral plague, violent winds and storms, but not the swarms of locusts! (Don't even think it!). Bright skies ahead however, the dig is expected to continue as soon as conditions allow. Two Native American leaders of the Narragansett and Rappahannock tribes, with whom Dr. Lowery has collaborated in the past, will join him also. They share an Algonquian linguistic heritage with the early Kent Island Indians. Our website will keep you informed regarding the upcoming dig on Parson's Island. Additionally, Dr. Lowery has shared the news that the Marks collection of Indian artifacts, touted to be the most significant, documented collection ever amassed, will be returning to Kent Island. (article in this newsletter).

I am sorry to share the news of the death of our dear friend and board member, Lynnda Kratovil. Lynnda was the perfect example of the adage that 'good things come in small packages' – small in stature but looming large in personality, charm, and enthusiasm. Lynnda served as docent at the Stevensville Bank regaling visitors with stories of its history. At our last election of officers' brunch, she was deemed the most famous VIP in the Society so was solicited to swear in our officers and new board members. We are grateful for her friendship and her sharing of wisdom and joy with us. Please see our tribute to Lynnda.

My closing comments from our last newsletter bear repeating here. As we continue to progress through this unusual and challenging time, we are working to keep you updated on our website and through our Facebook and Twitter links. Please check us out regularly at [kentislandheritagesociety.org](http://kentislandheritagesociety.org).

Looking to the future, we are exploring the use of technology to keep the sites, characters, and stories of our Kent Island Heritage alive through virtual tours and presentations, as well as the use of other media. We invite you to share your ideas with us. The only limits could be our own creativity. Stay tuned!

We hope you and your families stay healthy and safe as we weather these next several months.

*Jack Broderick*

# CALENDAR 2020

**JANUARY 21**  
BOARD MEETING

**FEBRUARY 19**  
BOARD MEETING

**MARCH 18**  
GENERAL MEETING  
Darrin Lowery, Ph. D.  
Guest Speaker  
Historic Christ Church @ 7:00 p.m.

**APRIL 15**  
BOARD MEETING

**MAY 16**  
KENT ISLAND DAY

**MAY 20**  
BOARD MEETING

**JUNE 17**  
GENERAL MEETING  
Annual Cruise

**JULY 15**  
BOARD MEETING

**AUGUST 19**  
BOARD MEETING

**SEPTEMBER 16**  
BOARD MEETING

**SEPTEMBER 27**  
ANNUAL PICNIC  
@ KIRWAN HOUSE  
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM  
**CANCELLED**

**OCTOBER 21**  
BOARD MEETING

**NOVEMBER 18**  
BOARD MEETING

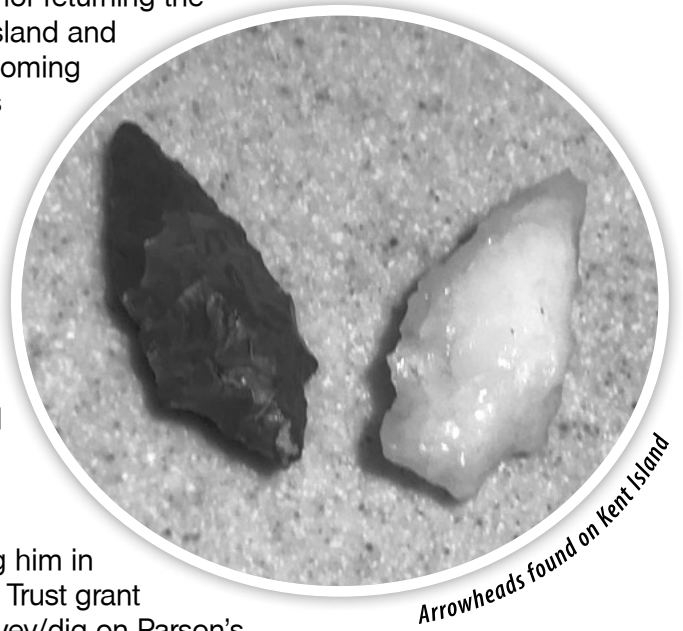
**DECEMBER 13**  
ANNUAL MEETING/BRUNCH  
ELECTION OF OFFICERS  
TBA  
12:30 - 4:00 PM  
**CANCELLED**

## SPECIAL NEWS

### Stunning Archaeological Collection Coming Back Home to Kent Island

We just received word, as we were going to press with this issue, that the most significant, documented collection of Native American artifacts ever taken from Kent Island is being offered to the Kent Island Heritage Society! Our archaeology partner, \*Dr. Darrin Lowery, called with the news. He was contacted by James Marks of Baltimore, formerly of Kent Island, who is offering his family's large collection of Kent Island Indian artifacts to the appropriate Kent Island organization. Dr. Lowery recommended the Kent Island Heritage Society and will serve as the conduit between the Marks Family and the heritage society. He will pick them up in Baltimore, re-document them, photograph each item and deliver them to the society. He has offered to provide advice and assistance on where, when, and how they could be displayed and interpreted. The large number of artifacts, known as the Marks Collection, was amassed by the Marks family at the Love Point area over many decades. Some of them were displayed at the Marks General Store that operated there for many years. When the family moved to Baltimore the collection went with them. This collection was documented in the early 1940s by Dr. Richard Stearns for the Natural History Society of Maryland. Dr. Stearns described them as "covering the entire range of artifacts likely to be found here, with the exception of bone articles and pipes". The collection was described in fascinating detail by Emily Roe Denny in the Kent Island Heritage Society booklet, *The Isle of Kent* (1981), "Indians of Kent Island" chapter. We are grateful to the Marks family for returning the collection to Kent Island and look forward to becoming the stewards of this valuable collection.

\*Dr. Lowery has been a guest speaker at one of our member meetings (standing room only) and displayed and discussed his artifacts at Kent Island Day. We are currently supporting him in a Maryland Historic Trust grant for a significant survey/dig on Parson's Island. This will occur as soon as environmental conditions permit.

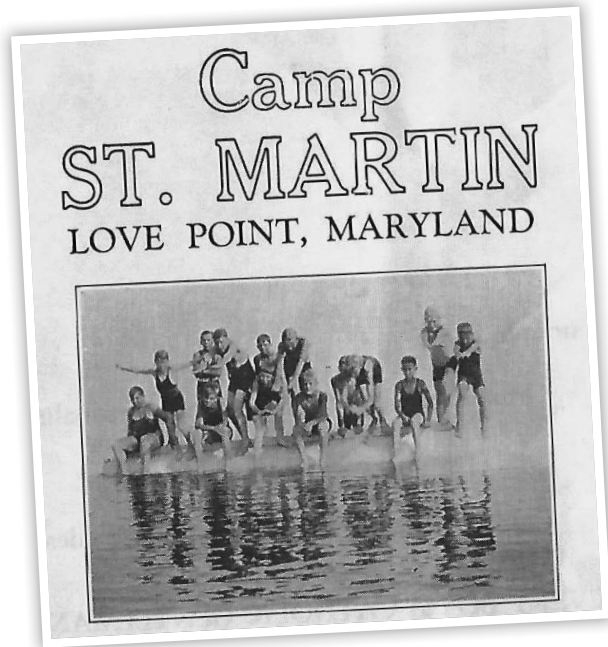


*Arrowheads found on Kent Island*

# CAMP ST. MARTIN AT LOVE POINT WAS SUMMER OASIS FOR BALTIMORE YOUTH

By John L. Conley

“A unique camp Molding fine character and personality providing happiness and healthful vacation with the ideals “Every Boy a Catholic Gentleman; Every Girl a Catholic Lady” was how a brochure described Camp St. Martin at Love Point. The Camp opened in 1922 and lasted into the early 1960s.



The camp was operated by St. Martin Catholic Church which was located on North Fulton Ave. in Baltimore (the church merged with St. Jerome and St. Peter the Apostles in 2004.) It offered an escape from hot Baltimore streets and crowded neighborhoods for 10 to 17 year old boys and girls (at separate times) for a two-week “vacation replete with athletics, health and happiness.”

The camp sat on twenty waterfront acres “on the Chesapeake Bay where a long sandy beach slowly inclines so that the child who does not swim can venture 200 yards into the Bay before the water reaches 4 feet in depth.” It was located on the southwest corner of what is now known as Love Point Road and Baltimore Ave.

The camp was founded by Reverend Louis O’Donovan who was ordained in 1897 and served at St Martin’s for over 30 years. He died in 1949. He is on record in 1947 protesting a Public Service Commission proposal to cease ferry operation from Baltimore to Love Point. He said it would be “a blow

to the many families who visited Camp St. Martin.”

The 1932 brochure in the Kent Island Heritage Society collection said “Camp St. Martin is under the supervision of Mr. John R. Spellissy, A.B., who has specialized in Boyology and devoted ten years to summer camp direction.” Many of the camp counsellors were from local colleges and universities and “are acquainted with the fundamentals of Athletics and the various arts in which they instruct the Campers.”

Francis U. Taneyhill was Master of Activities for Boys and Margaret R. Spellissy was Mistress of Activities for Girls. Regarding food, the “culinary department is under the direction of four ladies of St. Martin’s parish, who are expert dieticians. The vegetables are obtained from the surrounding farms, as is also the milk, which is brought to the Camp twice daily from a healthy and state inspected herd.” Drinking water was from pumps on the property which were “inspected periodically by the State Board of Health.”

A typical day at the camp started at 7 a.m. with reveille, morning prayers and flag raising followed by breakfast at 7:45 a.m. The morning activities included clay-modeling, birdstudy, sketching, group games, swimming and Red Cross diving instructions. Dinner was served at noon, and then followed by mail reading and rest, rifle practice, photography, etc. and more swimming. Call to Council at 5:30 p.m. included saying the rosary, mail reading and flag lowering. Supper was held at 6:00 p.m. and activities continued up to 8:50 p.m. night prayers and Taps included games, hikes, campfires, movies and storytelling.

A July 1931 Baltimore Sun article reported that 150 boys had attended and 68 girls would attend the camp that year. Silver loving cups were presented to the “best camper” and gold, silver, or bronze buttons were awarded to campers based on merit. Records were kept for each camper on the following points: “Health, Politeness, Goodwill, Home letters, Cheerfulness, Co-operation, Behavior, Socialbility, and Athletic activity.” The camp colors were green and white.

Campers slept in “cottages well screened from insects and yet constructed so that none of the pure bay breeze is denied them under a proper ventilation

system.” The brochure includes pictures of the cottage, the chapel, the dining hall, and the Carroll and Curley lodges.

A July 16, 1945 Baltimore Sun article detailed the dedication of two Camp St. Martin buildings to honor two men killed in World War II. The Rev. Joseph Healy, director of the camp, dedicated the chapel to Captain Eugene F. O’Grady who was an Army Chaplain killed in action in Germany while ministering to soldiers on the front lines. A new chaplain’s office and quarters was dedicated to Pfc. Richard J. Barron, Jr. who was killed while serving in the 104th Infantry Division. Both men were members of St. Martin’s in Baltimore.

Longtime Love Point resident J. Edward Yealdhall wrote about his memories of Camp St. Martin in the 1985...”I Remember When - Folk history of Queen Anne’s County” which was published by the Queen Anne’s County Record Observer/Kent Island Bay Times. As a student at St. Martin’s School, he made his first trip to the camp after his sixth grade in 1935. He said the trip on the Smokey Joe from the Light Street Pier in Baltimore to Love Point took about two hours and twenty minutes.

“Looking back, we realize what a treat Kent Island was to young boys and girls who lived surrounded by cement and brick the rest of the year,” he wrote. “The closest many got to swimming was when the Fire Department opened the hydrants for our splashing pleasure on the hottest days during the nineteen-thirties.” Yealdhall eventually became a volunteer counsellor at Camp St. Martin in the 1940s. “Our pay was our food and cigarettes, and, after hours, all the milk we could drink and cookies we could eat.” Mr. Yealdhall died in March 2000.

Fred Wilhelm, who lived across from Camp Martin, recently told Isle of Kent 1631 that, “For a lad living across the street from the camp in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the campers provided relief from summer boredom. Their activities were not excluded from the lad. Many evenings were spent socializing with the campers.”

He recalls that, “A special Wednesday evening event was the huge waterfront bonfire that lit up the sky.” We appreciate Mr. Wilhelm’s contributions to this article.

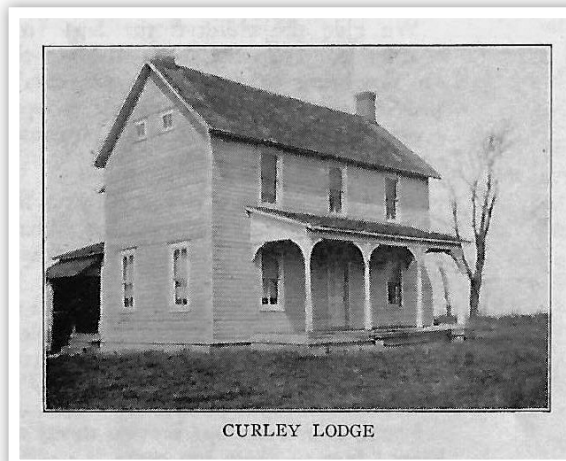
The 1932 brochure listed two, two-week terms for boys and one for girls. The rates were \$17 for a two week term, including boat transportation. Visitors were “welcomed heartily, special groves reserved. Food and lodging can be very conveniently arranged at several inns and hotels nearby.” Parents were assured that “we give the best food obtainable. Help us keep them well! Do not send any food, candy, pickles, etc.” Fare for the bus to the camp was ten cents. More information could be obtained by calling Queenstown 37-F-11.

Kent Island’s St. Christopher Catholic Church can trace its roots to Camp St. Martin. The first formal meeting of its future parishioners occurred there in October of 1952. The first parish Mass was held at St. Martin’s Camp Chapel on September 20, 1953. Groundbreaking ceremonies for St. Christopher’s were held in October 1954 and the first parish Mass was held a year later on October 2, 1955. A summer fair to benefit the church was held at St. Martins in 1958.

While it appears that most staff at Camp St. Martin was from Baltimore, it is clear that the camp provided an economic benefit to Kent Island businesses and workers for many years. We would like to hear other information or stories about Camp St. Martin from KIHS Newsletter readers.

*(Editor’s note: Spellings and punctuation in this article were taken directly from the brochure.)*

Curley Lodge in 1932 and today at Love Point



**It's been a long, hot, quarantined, forever-watering-the-flowers type of summer.**

What did we ever do before air conditioning? Mr. William H. Carrier probably had no idea, in 1902, that his wonderful contraption which cleaned, circulated, cooled and controlled humidity, would be in the homes of 90% of Americans in 2020. What did our ancestors do to survive those long hot summers?

## REMEMBERING THE SUMMER KITCHEN

Beside some of the things we've mentioned in previous summer articles, like shutters, hallways and the position of the house, the summer kitchen is a fond recollection we've never touched on.

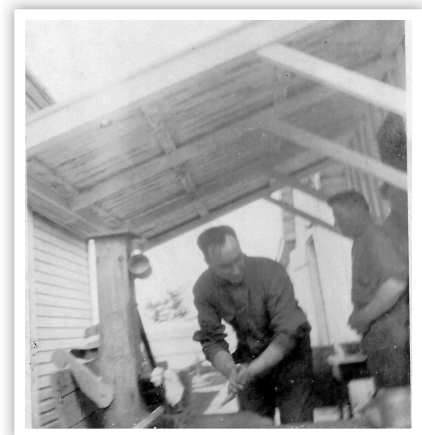
How many of us have said, "We should have sandwiches for dinner or go out to eat because it's too hot to light the oven." I say this all the time even though I've had an electric stove my whole adult life. This summer especially, we just got take-out because of the quarantine and - "it's too hot to turn on the oven." Well, this has been a problem for centuries.

One of the ways people in the past fought the heat was with the summer kitchen. A summer kitchen was apart from the house, and its purpose was to keep the house cool. Some have said its purpose was to keep the kitchen from causing the main house to catch fire, but since they heated and lighted their houses with open flame, I think the following is a better theory: plantations often had a separate kitchen building where the help did all the cooking and carried it into the house. Victorian houses usually had a cast iron wood or coal stove that was used for all the cooking. These stoves gave off waves of heat and stayed hot for hours. It was delightful in the winter but hateful in the summer. They either cooked the food in the house and brought it out or cooked it and ate it in the summer kitchen.

A well fitted summer kitchen had tables, chairs, a galvanized tub for washing dishes (sometimes children) and a basin for washing hands. The Kirwan House had a summer kitchen. I don't know when it was built and first used, but I do have an eye witness as to how it was in the late 30s and early 40s as it was still in use. In the picture, the summer kitchen is circled. Located behind the present day kitchen, it had a wooden trough, a pump outside the door and screened windows. The table for six on each side always had a tablecloth and a small vase of flowers from Lemuel's garden. There may also have been a table with water and tea. Every time she was there for dinner in the summer, the meal was outside in the summer kitchen. With all this cooking, the family needed some help and her name was Leitha and that may be her in the photo. There were three buildings directly behind the house and although all are gone now the cement walkways clearly define where they were. I don't know of any summer kitchens still standing on the island and can't find any references to them in our History and Houses book, but surely there were others. Do you remember any of your ancestors having such a place?



*Back yard of the Kirwan House showing the summer kitchen*



*Washing up for lunch at the summer kitchen*

## 50 SHADES OF HAIT

Most of us probably have some recollection of sitting on a front or back porch in the summer time, catching a little breeze when we could. Maybe we even got to shell some lima bean, peas or snap some string beans with our Moms or Grandmoms. Maybe there was a swing or a rocker.

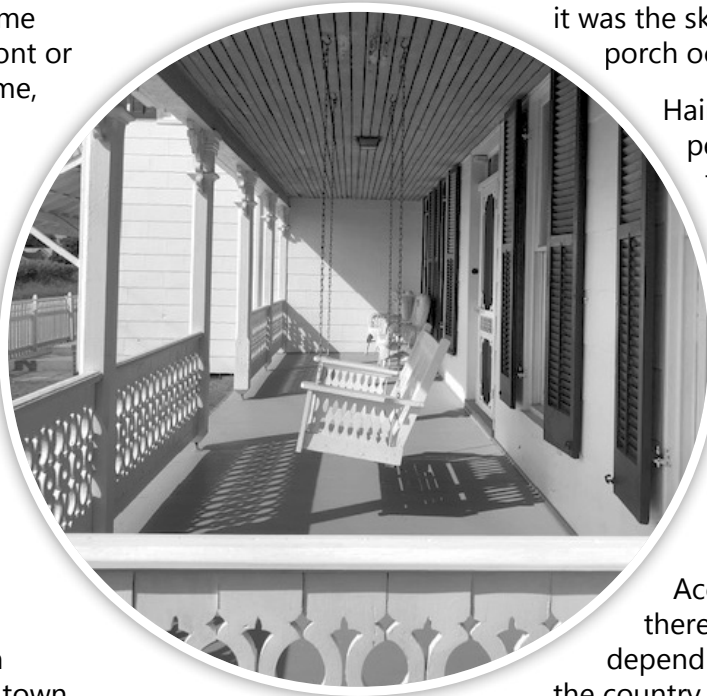
But have you ever noticed that a lot of those porch ceilings are blue? Did you think it was just a coincidence? Well, it wasn't. Blue porch ceilings are as southern as sweet tea.

As you stroll down a street in Savannah or any antebellum town in the South, you will probably see many porch ceilings done this way and it's done for many reasons. First appearing in antebellum mansions, it has continued for generations.

Although they also appeared in the northwest and Colonial and Victorian homes from Boston to Philadelphia, there are more blue porch ceilings in the American South than anywhere else on earth because that is where it all began.

The tradition began with the Gullah and is steeped in superstition. They believed evil restless spirits couldn't pass across water; so if they painted their porches (and even their window sills and doors) a water blue, spirits couldn't get inside. People today keep up the tradition even if they are not afraid of ghosts or haints (as they were called). The word haint evolved from the word haunt. It is believed these restless spirits of the dead, for whatever reason, have not moved on from the physical world. Haint blue is intended to keep spirits out of the house and protect the occupants from being taken or influenced by the spirits.

On the practical side, people swore the blue paint kept the insects away. When this style was first practiced, milk paint had lye in it, a known insect repellent, which would explain why the wasps and mud daubers didn't make nests there. Milk paint also faded quickly, calling for a fresh coat with lye every few years. Others think it was because the insects were fooled into thinking



it was the sky and flew up and away from porch occupants.

Haints and insects aside, many people chose to keep up the tradition because blue has a calming effect. Our ancestors probably spent a fair amount of time porch-sitting. Porches were often where we went to read or relax when it was hot or just watch the world go by. Blue also looks like the sky and maybe extends the feeling of daylight a little longer.

According to Sherwyn Williams, there are many shades that work depending on your home, your part of the country and the light. There is Aurora Blue (used mainly in the North), Haint Blue, Dirt Dauber Blue and Atmospheric Blue (mostly found in the South) and Pool Blue, just to name a few. Is there a blue porch ceiling in your past? There is one that I know of in our present. Both porch ceilings at the Kirwan House are painted sky blue (or is it Haint?). We have yet to see a ghost and we are asked this quite frequently. I guess our blue porch ceilings are getting the job done. At my childhood home we had a varnished beadboard ceiling. The house was built for my parents in 1931. Since it was new, I guess they were pretty sure it was free of haints. I spent a lot of time on that front porch and sometimes under it. The porch was also shaded by some big maple trees making it the coolest spot on the property. There were some great conversations there with friends, relatives and a few boyfriends. When grandchildren came long, my mother put a gate across the steps and it served as a giant playpen. Probably in the 60s my brother gave Mom a porch swing for her birthday. Well, that was the best gift ever! Mom sat on the porch a lot in her later years and almost always someone would see her and stop by for a visit and most likely, some reminiscing. Before we all stayed inside with the AC there was nothing better than a front porch, a glass of iced tea, and some good company.

The long, hot summer of 2020 will go down in history for more reasons than one, I'm sure. Keep Cool!



## ***Historic Stevensville Bank – For Sale!***

*by Jack Broderick*

Yes, the Historic Stevensville Bank is up for sale. The future of a beloved Kent Island relic is in question. As renters, The Kent Island Heritage Society has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with owner, Mr. Bob Marsteller. The Society has leased the Bank for a number of years at the nominal rate of \$1.00 a year. We show it as an historic site and take care of covering basic utilities and limited maintenance. We have known for some time that Mr. Marsteller planned to sell the Bank in the future. Well, that future is now. He has stated his desire that it remain in the realm of the Heritage Society, either as owner or renter. At the asking price, frankly, we can't afford to buy it outright. We are requesting an appraisal and are exploring any and all options to keep the Bank building in historic preservation, including grants, partnership, mortgage, etc. If you have an interest in being part of the future of the Historic Stevensville Bank or have a suggestion for us to pursue, please contact Jack Broderick at 410 829 7760 or 410 643 5462 . This is a fluid situation as of this writing. Check our website for updated information.

## **Historic Grollman Store Building Re-do**

*By Jack Broderick*

At the corner of Love Point Rd. and East Main St. in Historic Stevensville, the iconic Grollman Store stood and served Kent Islanders for decades. In recent years it was the site of Trade Winds Antiques. The building has recently been purchased and is being restored by Nick Neboshynsky who restored the blue house between the store and the Historic Post Office. He donated the wrought iron fence that was around the yard to the Kent Island Heritage Society. Nick's plans for the Grollman Store will add vitality to downtown Stevensville. He plans to serve Kent Islanders in a new and different way – with an ice cream parlor.

Here is Nick's enthusiastic message to us: "Sweet deliciousness is coming soon! Handmade ice cream and Paleta pops made with all natural ingredients right here in Maryland, delivering an incredible, creamy texture and fullness of flavor you won't find anywhere else. It's our mission to be the place where great times and good memories get shared with friends and family; a place to take a break and enjoy the good things in life. Visit our website for what is to come and sign up for notifications at [www. TastyToucan.com](http://www.TastyToucan.com)."

The heritage society wishes him good luck with the restoration and the new ice cream shop!

### **LET US HEAR FROM YOU!!!!**

**Please contact KIHS if you have comments on items in Isle of Kent 1631 or if you have questions about Kent Island history that we can try to answer. We welcome topics you would find of interest and especially information you can provide for future issues.**

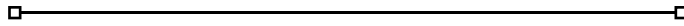
**Contact:        John Conley  
                      concomm@atlanticbb.net  
                      Cell: 703-216-0449**



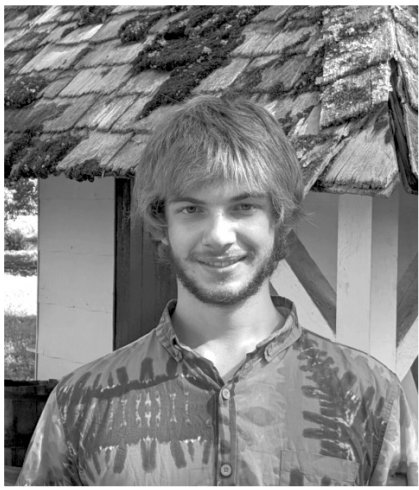
# The Kent Island Heritage Society Scholarship

Each year The Kent Island Heritage Society offers a one-year scholarship to a graduating senior from Kent Island High School who plans to attend college. To be eligible, the applicant must be at least a second-generation Kent Island native, at least one parent born on Kent Island; have a 3.0 GPA or higher; and have performed community service. This year the scholarship was awarded to Steve Kougoures who plans to attend Pennsylvania College of Technology to pursue a degree in welding and metal fabrication engineering.

The following essay outlines his attributes required for this scholarship.



*KIHS Scholarship Winner Steve Kougoures*



## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION ESSAY

### Steve Kougoures

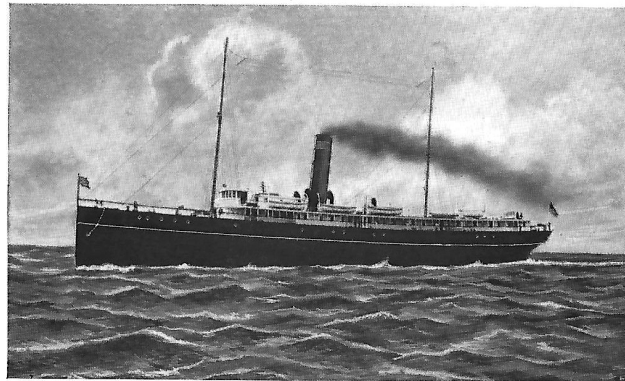
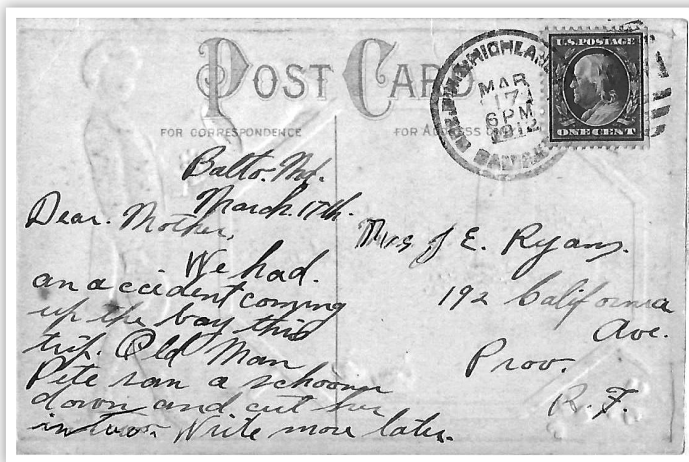
In 14 years my family will celebrate 400 years of Kent Island heritage since Roger Baxter came to Kent Island and started building a family in 1634. It's important because each person in my family has built a part of Kent Island history from 1634 to 2020 and things are always changing. People are born, they live and they die. The things they do when they're alive create a legacy and that's their little part of history.

Being that my family has continued on the island for nearly 400 years is incredible. The Baxters were here on Kent Island 142 years before the U.S. became an independent nation.

They were some of the original settlers and the Baxter family has taken a role in building Kent Island history. Throughout the years they took part in building what Kent Island is today. My Great Grandfather took a role in construction of one of our most important pieces of infrastructure, the Bay Bridge. My family has also taken roles in wharf building and the local seafood trade. Over 75 years ago, they had a packing plant at the Narrows where they would pack seafood to sell all over the East Coast.

Over the past few generations my Grandma, Virginia Baxter, has kept documents of our relatives and lived a long life alongside many of them. She told me stories of life on Kent Island when only a few cars would pass on route 50 in a day and the difference in the way life was all those years ago. When I had a project in scouting for genealogy my Grandma was able to help me in earning that merit badge. Many of my relatives are buried on the Kirwan's Store property in the Kirwans/Baxter cemetery. My Grandma taught me who our Kent Island relatives are that are buried here. She has been so caring, loving, patient and helpful. I've since become an Eagle Scout and she's been a great help my whole scouting career.

Modern day my family and I still participate working on the water. We crab and fish and enjoy boating on the creeks and in the Bay. Although we have a commercial crabbing license we do not participate on a level that the packing house did, we mostly share crab feasts with our family and friends. I believe the importance of heritage is learning where I come from and what we have in common and how to continue our like-minded adventures going. I come from a very large Kent Island and Eastern Shore family. I am extremely close to my family. One of the traditions we follow is celebrating together for Thanksgiving dinner. Every year more than 70 people come and we all bring food to share. It's great to be loved by such a big family and have them so close. I'm so happy to be a part of the Baxter family as I make my own legacy here on the Island.



MERCHANTS AND MINERS TRANSPORTATION CO.  
S. S. "GLOUCESTER"

## POSTCARD from Kent Island: Schooner Sank off Matapeake

Submitted by John L. Conley

Victor J. Ryan, a crewmember on the S.S. Gloucester, sent this written postcard from Baltimore to his mother on St. Patrick's Day in 1912. "We had an accident coming up the bay this trip. Old Man Pete ran a schooner down and cut her in two," he wrote. "Old Man Pete" was Captain C. C. Peters, the Gloucester's first officer and the schooner was the Herbert D. Maxwell which had left her Sandy Point anchorage with a load of fertilizer bound for Wilmington, North Carolina.

While the schooner's captain and owner William J. Quillen and the Gloucester's officers had different versions of who was at fault for the 4:35 a.m. crash on March 16, the facts are clear that Captain Peters had the watch when his steel hulled, 2,500 gross ton ship, cut the wooden four-mast Maxwell in two as both ships altered course to avoid the collision. The incident occurred about a mile off Matapeake on Kent Island. Four members of the Maxwell crew were lost. Captain Quillen survived by climbing a mast that hung over the Gloucester's bow.

Initial attempts to raise the Maxwell by the Atlantic Coast Syndicate commenced in August 1912 with the plan of pumping off the fertilizer cargo and bringing the ship to Annapolis for repair. The challenge of floating the ship proved to be too much, so the bow sprint and four masts were removed in January 1913 to reduce the wreck as a navigational hazard. Markers were placed at the scene and notations added to maps. Captain Quillen sued Merchant & Miners Transportation Company, owner of the Gloucester, for the value of the schooner of \$55,000 and his personal effects for \$1,750.

Things clearly moved more quickly in the judicial system than they do today. Captain Peters was found to be at fault at the first trial and his license was suspended for nine months. He appealed that

decision and in August 1912, just five months after the incident, the Supervising Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor "handed down an opinion absolving Captain Peters from all blame, placing the sole cause of the collision on the schooner and directing that Captain Peters be reinstated and his license returned to him. (Baltimore Sun, August 10, 1912.) Captain Quillen's log from the Maxwell was found by divers in the mid-1930s and given to his daughter.

S.S. Gloucester crewmember Victor J. Ryan was the son of Captain John E. Ryan who served as captain on many Merchants & Miners Transportation Company ships during his 36 years with the company. Victor J. Ryan had a long career at sea, as did his son. The company was founded in Baltimore in 1852 and was liquidated in 1952. It transported people and cargo along the East Coast with a large fleet of vessels. Many of those ships were taken over by the government to transport troops and equipment during World War II.

The Dorchester, a sister ship to the Gloucester, was built in 1926 and in 1941 was converted to an Army troopship. She was sunk by a German U-boat off Greenland in February 1943. Onboard were four chaplains of different faiths who gave up their life jackets so other shipmates would survive. Their heroism is still celebrated today.

The SS Gloucester was built in 1893 at the Maryland Steel Company at Sparrow's Point and scrapped in Baltimore in 1936. The wreck site is listed on maps and is accessible for divers. More information on the Merchants & Mariners Transportation Company can be found in Queen of the Sea Routes Merchants & Miners Transportation Company by Edward Mueller.



*Lynnda Lee Skinner Kratovil*  
October 2, 1935 to August 8, 2020

Lynnda’s retirement from The Kent Island Heritage Society’s board caused a bright spot to vanish. We were always glad to see that she still attended our events where we could enjoy her warmth and congeniality. Her positive attitude and wisdom made her one of our greatest assets. Lynnda was a longtime docent at the historic bank in Stevensville. Every time she shared the history of the bank with visitors, it was with the same enthusiasm as if it were the first time.

As we have seen from her biography (Isle of Kent, Summer 2013), she was a woman of many hats – both literally and figuratively. (We never saw her appear in public without wearing one of her hats!) Married and raising a family of three children, she worked full time and always in nurturing or administrative positions leading to the improvement or comfort for someone else, i.e., homelessness, teenage pregnancy, under-privileged children, adoption, foster care, parenting... the list goes on and on.

In her retirement life, she was ever devoted to her family: attending little league games, college games, concerts and other school events. She was honored that her son and two of his sons attend(ed) her college alma mater – Western Maryland College. This speaks volumes regarding their high regard for her. It would be impossible to grow up with someone like Lynnda and not have that kind of admiration.

WE SHALL ALL MISS HER KINDNESS, CHEERFULNESS, ENERGY  
AND ABOVE ALL JUST BEING IN HER COMPANY.  
OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HER FAMILY.



*Welcome*  
**New Members**

Rose and Don Broderick  
Travers Devine and Family  
Matthew Lidinsky  
Charles Wood and Family

Sharon Dobson - **Life Member**

In  
*Memoriam*

Lynnda Lee Skinner Kratovil  
(October 2, 1935 – August 8, 2020)

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership        | \$50.00  |  |         |

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

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**Membership period:  
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