

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

WINTER 2020-21

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Gordon Seward	77-79
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Mary White	81-82
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Eva C. White	85-86
C. Gilbert Dunn	87-89
Audrey Hawkins	90-92
Charles Koegel	93-94
Hugo Gemignani	95-98
Nancy M. Cook	99-08

President's Message



The message in this newsletter will echo some of the thoughts included in the mailing for our annual dues. 2020 has been quite a year for all of us. It looks like the pandemic challenges will continue until the vaccine becomes widely available in the coming year. As you know, we cancelled all of our in-person events through 2020 out of concern for our members and our community. However, we remain as committed as ever to our mission to discover, identify, explore, and preserve the heritage of Kent Island. Our board meets virtually and continues with plans to keep our historic properties in good repair.

Our ongoing projects include maintaining the Stevensville sites, refurbishing the Kirwan General Store sign, improving the interior of the Kirwan House, and completing the blacksmith shop. We are in twofold contact with archaeologist Dr. Darrin Lowery in planning for the return and display of the Marks's Indian artifacts collection and in supporting the Parson's Island project, now extended through 2021.

Currently, we are brainstorming the feasibility of buying the Stevensville Bank to ensure its preservation as an historic site. The bank is for sale so we are studying various ways this possible purchase might be funded. Ross Perot famously said, "the devil is in the details". We are also supporting the efforts of the Friends of Historic Christ Church Foundation to preserve the 1880 church in Stevensville.

The Queen Anne's County Comprehensive Master Plan is slated to be updated in 2021, and we anticipate input in that project. Our main focus continues to be the protection of all important historic and cultural resources. Becoming more comfortable in the virtual world, we have compiled stories of events and characters from our history, modeled after the Kent Island High School program developed by board member, Mark Lidinsky. These programs are available upon request and can be tailored to your situation. In addition, we are developing online tours of our historic sites through our website, YouTube, and other platforms, coordinating with QACTV and commercial video companies. Our website, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest are up and running. Your suggestions are welcome.

Since we are not able to host our annual brunch and election of officers, our format is changing. The new slate of board members for 2021 was presented at our November meeting and is in this newsletter. If you have any recommended changes or additions, please respond by December 15. No response will be considered your affirmation of

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KIHS Committees

Membership

John Conley, *Chair*

Budget

Bob Lowe, *Chair*

Jay Gibson

Linda Collier

Lynne Riley-Coleman

Newsletter

Carole Frederick, *Editor*

John Conley, *Managing Editor*

Library/Genealogy

Bob Lowe, *Chair*

Lynne Riley-Coleman

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Gina Cuza

Cray House

Sally Lewis, *Curator*

Post Office

Fran Peters, *Curator*

Docents

Sally Lewis, *Coordinator*

Butch Collier

Linda Collier

John Conley

Nancy Cook

Betty Folz

Carole Frederick

Jay Gibson

Toni Gibson

Gary Haigley

Chris Kilian

Carmen Mendez

Fran Peters

Hanna Wall

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*

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the new slate. The swearing in of the 2021 board is planned for our virtual board meeting in December. We call your attention to the change in our recording secretary position. Nancy Cook will be assuming the role of board member, after having served several years as secretary, and many years in other key leadership positions including president. Many thanks to John Conley for accepting the task as recording secretary.

To help keep the holiday spirit alive, we are hosting a socially distanced Santa event in Stevensville on Sunday, December 13. From 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Santa will be waving from the door of the historic post office where a special mailbox will be placed to accept letters to Santa. Tables will be set up with candy canes and fresh holiday greens from the Kirwan farm to add to your holiday joy. Please stop by with your kids, grandkids, or just your wonderful selves and share our holiday spirit.

We extend our warmest greetings for a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and a Happy New Year to you and your families.

Jack Broderick



ZOOM across the Bay. William Claiborne (aka Jack Broderick) and Senator James Kirwan (aka John Conley) made a Zoom presentation on Kent Island history to the Vintage Ladies of Maryland, Anne Arundel Chapter in October. The women asked several good questions and look forward to visiting our sites in the future. KIHS has speakers on various historic topics that would be happy to make similar virtual presentations to help share our history.

CALENDAR 2021

JANUARY 20
BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 17
BOARD MEETING

MARCH 17
GENERAL MEETING

APRIL 21
BOARD MEETING

MAY 15
KENT ISLAND DAY

MAY 19
BOARD MEETING

JUNE 16
GENERAL MEETING

JULY 21
BOARD MEETING

AUGUST 18
BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 21
BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 26
ANNUAL PICNIC
@ KIRWAN HOUSE
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

OCTOBER 20
BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 17
BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 11
ANNUAL MEETING/BRUNCH
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

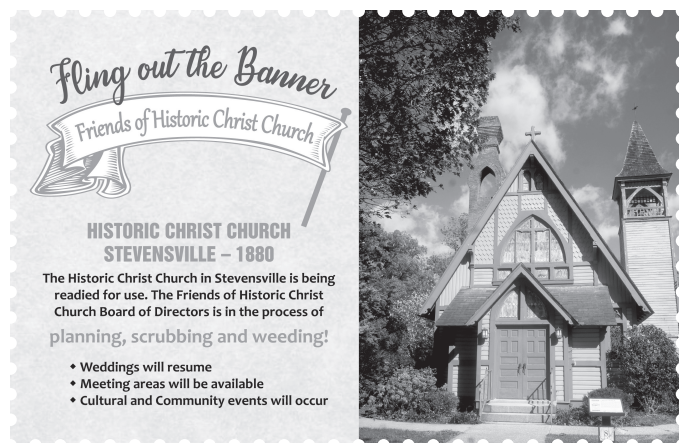
*Other than board meetings,
all other dates depend on
the state of COVID19.*

Thank You, Thank You

Historic Christ Church is now being prepared for use as a community resource for weddings, meetings and cultural events. We are most thankful to the Kent Island Heritage Society, who has donated \$500.00 toward that effort and to the president Jack Broderick, who provided much vocal support at the Queen Anne's County Commissioners' meetings and throughout the community that the church ownership be given to Friends of Historic Christ Church (FHCC).

As the FHCC board plans for community usage of the 1880 facility that needs painting, maintenance upgrades, and operational funds, we will be sending out notification of our existence in December. FHCC is 501(3)(c) component fund of Chesapeake Charities and therefore, donations would be most welcome and could be sent to Friends of Historic Christ Church, 124 Bryce Road, Queenstown, MD 21658.

This venue will be the gem of the community as soon as it is ready for occupancy.



(No events are being held until 2021 and until we can safely offer space in the ongoing pandemic era.)

“Do you see said she, he’s as tame as he can be...”

by Carole Frederick



*Cassie Karns,
daughter of
Kara Davidson.*

Oh no! Wrong reptile! That was a crocodile – this is a terrapin – all 2,500 pounds of it! Russell Kent obtained it from his parents who bought it in St. Michaels, MD. Don’t most U of Maryland alums have a terrapin in their yards?

Russell tells me that Mom and Dad spied it when they went to St. Michaels for dinner and fell in love with it. They went back a month or so later and decided to check on the price of it. On the way they also decided on their top offer which was only half of the selling price. Mom said no. What a downer...maybe.

Several weeks later when Mom arrived home from work, there sat the terrapin in her yard! Dad appeased Mom by also buying decorations for it for every holiday and their favorite sports teams (she’s an interior designer)!

That was years ago and now it is one of Kent Island’s landmarks. Everybody knows the “turtle house”. Random people stop by to get pictures while sitting on it. This is especially true after 2:00 a.m.!

It is made of bronze and took a flatbed truck and a special forklift to transport it from the “other side” to Kent Island to the tune of \$1,000.



Clara Rebecca Bryan Davidson

100 years old in November!!

CHARTER MEMBER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY

By Carole Frederick

Women's right to vote came along and so did Clara! She is a remarkable centenarian: she walks (only sometimes with a cane) she converses (maybe reading lips a bit) and she knows everything about times past and present.

We have all heard stories of dancing at the Matapeake Club House and going to Sheel's Old Mill Restaurant (located at the corner of Duke and Main) to meet friends and have a coke. She used to go to Baltimore on her father's skipjack when he delivered seafood, fruits, vegetables and even holly and pine at Christmas. One unique thing she always said was toMAHto not tomato. This was learned at her mother's knee and all of her children learned it at her knee.

She is the mother of six (all born at home), the grandmother of twelve, great-grandmother of fourteen, aunt of thirty-six and too many cousins and great nieces and nephews to count.

When they lived on a farm (on Old Love Point Rd.) a field away from our farm, we didn't have a telephone so she would put a white sheet out of her window when any of us arrived at her house for our mother to see. She was creative and talented in many ways.



A homemaker extraordinaire, her most impressive attributes were cooking and hand-sewing. She could cook anything from wild game to the basic casseroles. Her recipes have been passed around the family and enjoyed to this day. Most meals were accompanied with homemade biscuits.

Clara and her mother, Cora Bryan, got together every summer and canned vegetables and fruit. Her specialties were pepper relish, applesauce, peaches, pears, pickles, tomatoes, pickled beets, asparagus, red tomato preserves, red and green hot pepper jellies and fruit preserves.

One year, Clara crocheted wool Afghans for her grandchildren and sons-in-law. Over the years she embroidered show pieces for all her children and many of her grandchildren. She framed a sampling of one of her daughter's baby clothes and other baby items. And to top it off she kept a baby book for all six of her children! As you can see, she was devoted to her family, talented and very creative.

Many friends and relatives gathered in front of her house and sang "Happy Birthday" to her on her birthday as she stood on her front porch.

Happy 100th birthday to one in a million.



Olive Bryan, Libby Hopkins, Clara Bryan and Lulu Scheel sitting on bench at the Little Dutch Mill Restaurant in Stevensville.



Clara Bryan Davidson, Libby Hopkins Thomas and Olive Bryan Lowe in front of Little Dutch Mill Restaurant.

KENT ISLAND ANCESTORS

By Ann Parry Horvath - aphancestors1@gmail.com



I have lots of Kent Island ancestors and as the family historian, I do know a little about them. After reading the most recent newsletter, I decided it was time to revisit those family lines. The nice invitation from John Conley to contribute to the newsletter was hard to resist, so I looked around in my collection of artifacts for something of interest.

My Kent Island ancestors are on my maternal line and consist mainly of Carters, Gibsons and Whites – all very interrelated. These families had early connections to Kent Island, Annapolis, and the District of Columbia. Many photos, some Bibles and a few letters have survived. I remembered that I have letter in my collection addressed to Jacob Carter, Broad Creek, Kent Island, sent by a niece in 1849.

I knew who the niece was but had never really investigated the information in the letter. First, the date originally looked like 1899, but once the letter was scanned, it was clear that the date was 1849 and the author was 12 years old. I have added a little punctuation but here is what she wrote:

Washington City October 19th 1849

Dear Uncle,

As I am now disengaged, I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I have not forgotten you. Though I have no news of importance to tell you I will write merely to let you know how we all are. The family are all enjoying good health at present, except little Reid who has been very sick for nearly a week, but we think he is a great deal better today, the doctor has been to see him two or three times but does not know from what his sickness originates. I expect you would like to see Aunt Miria and Phoebe very much. I saw them about two weeks ago. They were enjoying very good health. Phebie grows very fast and is now quite a large girl, I don't think if you were to see her in a strange place you would know her she has grown so much and is so fat. I suppose you have laid in your store of apples. I expect they will last you to long as I am not there to help you eat them. Indeed I would like very much to come on the Island to see you all. It has been so long a time since I saw you and it seems to me a very long time to wait until next summer. Sister intends to start for Philadelphia next Wednesday. She is going to take Willie and the baby with her. She does not know how long she will remain there. The weather is getting quite cool and has very much the appearance of winter. It is not so cool today as it has been. Dear Uncle I am sorry I will have to close my letter so soon but as I have no more to say to you at present so I will close with the love from all of us and accept a full portion for yourself from your affectionate niece.

Etak Nosbig

This pre-teen had written her name, Kate Gibson backwards! It seems clear that she had a good relationship with her uncle. He certainly knew who the letter was from and perhaps had often teased her. The letter seems to me to be so typical of a girl of that age and a reminder that some things do not change much in families. Many of us remember uncles who loved teasing young girls.

Kate Gibson was the youngest of eight children born to Ann Carter and John Gibson, both of Kent Island. John died in 1841 and Ann died in 1846 leaving their growing family with young adult children and some just entering adolescence. In 1850 Kate was living in Washington, DC with an oldest and married sister, but her six siblings can be seen at the family farm on Kent Island with Jacob Carter.

I have not yet figured out just how Jacob Carter fits into this family, but obviously he was important to Kate, my great-great grandmother (Catherine Elizabeth Gibson, 1832 - 1884). I am still looking for more information on "Uncle Jacob".

BRIDGE CONTROVERSY CONFRONTS KENT ISLAND

By John L. Conley

Do we even need a new bridge? If so, where should it go? Who should pay to build and maintain it? Who really benefits? Could a resolution be reached that would eliminate future bridge disputes? These questions were at the heart of a dispute between Queen Anne's and Talbot counties almost 150 years ago.

In November 1902, a traction engine owned by Hammond & McClements of Kent Island fell through the twenty-year old wooden bridge where it lay in seven feet of water for ten weeks. The company sued both Queen Anne's and Talbot counties for damages. In January 1903, Queen Anne's County Commissioner J. Louis Rhodes worked with civil engineers from Baltimore to determine how and where to build a more substantial steel structure.

In December 1903, the following notice was published by County Commissioners for Queen Anne's County Maryland, Joseph M. Parvis, Clerk:

SEALED BIDS WILL BE RECEIVED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY TO CONSTRUCT A STEEL DRAWBRIDGE ACROSS KENT ISLAND NARROWS.

The Bridge will be 258 feet long and the draw 110 feet. It must be constructed according to plans and specifications on file in the office of the County Commissioners for Queen Anne's County, at Centreville, Md. Cash will be paid for the Bridge upon completion and acceptance of same by the Commissioners. All bids must be filed with the Commissioners on or before TUESDAY, January 12, 1904, at 12 o'clock noon. The Commissioners reserve the right to reject any or all bids.

The main source of controversy about Kent Narrows crossings between Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties dated well before but continued beyond the construction of the new steel bridge. Kent Narrows was not navigable and had not been since the 1820s. Talbot County wanted the Narrows opened from East Bay to the Chester River to reduce the time required to take produce and other items to and from Baltimore and other locations. Queen Anne's county objected as it had constructed a causeway to connect Kent Island with the rest of the county.

Talbot was successful and the government provided money to dredge the Narrows and clean out obstructions and make it navigable. The causeway could no longer function as a bridge, so Queen Anne's County decided to build a drawbridge that would allow traffic to continue across the water without impeding boat traffic. In an 1874 Act, the Maryland General Assembly authorized the Commissioners of the two counties to "levy a tax upon the taxable property of their respective counties, for the purpose of erecting a Draw-Bridge over said Kent Narrows; Provided That one-half of the costs of erecting the

said bridge shall be levied upon the taxable property of Queen Anne's County, and one-half upon the taxable property of Talbot county, the amount levied upon each county not to exceed the sum of two thousand dollars."

The bill stated that the draw of the bridge should not be less than sixty feet in width. In key language, the bill provided that the bridge "shall be a free bridge, and shall be controlled by the County Commissioners of Queen Anne's county, in such manner as to them may seem expedient." Additionally, the bill granted "authority to the Government of the United States to open and clear out the said Kent Narrows, and to remove all obstructions therefrom."

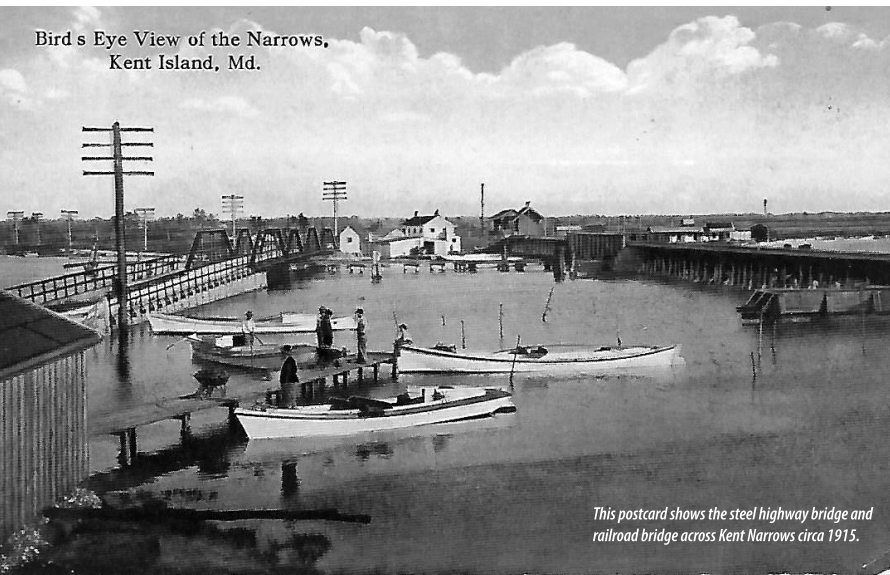
That bill raised strong objections from Talbot County citizens and, especially, newspaper editorial writers who argued that "the Kent Narrows Bridge law is a curiosity in legislative literature" and building the bridge before opening the Narrows "an unpardonable blunder." *Easton Star-Democrat* editor T. K. Robson said the "people of Talbot County are interested in re-opening the Narrows. However he asked "why Talbot County should pay for bridging it for the exclusive use and accommodation of the people of Queen Anne's County?" He argued that commerce did not need a bridge once the Narrows was re-opened and that "Talbot does not need a bridge."

Robson also refuted in a March 24, 1874 column the claims of the *Centreville Observer* that Talbot County was the primary beneficiary of re-opening the Narrows to boats, though acknowledging that it would shorten the route to Baltimore. Queen Anne's county was rewarded because it would add additional steamboat landings and give farmers between the Wye River and Chester River extra advantages, he said. Also, he argued that it was not right for Talbot citizens to pay more taxes "to pay for doubling the value of property holders in Queen Anne's County along the line of this important steamboat route."

He sarcastically observed that the "people of Talbot are public spirited and liberal . . . and ever ready to help the poor and unfortunate and if Queen Anne's is not able to foot this little bill, his paper would do all it could in Talbot to help raise" private subscriptions" for the project. He accused the people of Queen Anne's of fighting re-opening the Narrows and, unable to do so, trying "to throw the expense on Talbot of giving the people of Kent Island traveling accommodation. This is the whole thing in a nutshell."

A subsequent bill requiring the citizens of Talbot County to be taxed to help pay for the upkeep of the new bridge further inflamed the consternation of the Talbot editorialists. The *Star's* Robson criticized Talbot Senator Edward Lloyd (1825-1907) and the Talbot delegation for possibly being asleep and of not opposing the bill, but upon

Bird's Eye View of the Narrows,
Kent Island, Md.



This postcard shows the steel highway bridge and
railroad bridge across Kent Narrows circa 1915.

receipt of a strong reply by Senator Lloyd and learning such was not the case, apologized and said, "Our object was simply to stir to opposition to the law itself."

Senator Lloyd, who became President of the Maryland State Senate in 1878, introduced legislation in May 1876 to repeal the 1874 Act requiring the citizens of Talbot to pay for upkeep of the bridge and a tender. In a floor speech, he went back to 1819 when the Legislature "authorized the building of a bridge over the Narrows to connect Kent Island with the main land, but owing to difficulties in its construction, the next session of the Legislature authorized a causeway to be substituted for the bridge."

That causeway prevented the use of the Narrows for navigation to the Chester River. While he supported 1870 legislation and Federal requirements that the Narrows be re-opened, he said the bridge was only for the benefit of Kent Islanders. He also raised the question of whether the Legislature had the authority to require the citizens of one county to help pay for a bridge in another county, arguing that it was "for the accommodation of the people of Queen Anne's and being a public highway of that county, it was right and proper that the expenses of it should be borne by her citizens."

Mr. Robson of the *Star-Democrat* again chided "*The Centreville Observer* (which) is greatly elated over the Kent Narrows bridge robbery. It is enough for Talbot to pay for building bridges in Queen Anne's County without paying to run them afterwards and keep them in repair." He opined that the "people of Queen Anne's county are not wanting in respect to of the laws of good neighborhood, and will not ask of us more than is just." However, if they did support that approach, "they would stultify their manhood, and place themselves on a level with Algerrine pirates . . . The *Observer* had better call home its "missionaries" and teach them that Christian civilization scorns public robberies."

The *Star-Democrat* reported in June 1876 that "the cut through the causeway under the bridge has mostly been completed, letting

the waters of the Chester River into the Wye. However, "the contractor to build the bridge and fix the causeway has not completed the job, and as he reports himself financially embarrassed it is doubtful if he ever completes the work."

Some progress had been made according to an article in the July 7, 1877 *Middletown (Delaware) Transcript*: "A force of some twenty men is now at work constructing, under the superintendence of Mr. William J. McCullough, a fender at Kent Island Narrows bridge, in order to facilitate the passage of vessels through the draw. A portion of the old causeway near the bridge has been dug out, diminishing the force of the current, and it is believed that with the aid of the fenders there will be no trouble in steamers and sail vessels making passage."

The battle over payment continued as shown in a June 1878 "writ of mandamus issued by the Circuit court for Talbot county at the instance of Queen Anne's county for completing the causeways to Kent Narrows bridge, repairing the same, paying a ferryman during the time of such repairs, and for the salary of a bridge keeper for the years 1877 and 1878, being one-half of each item." The Talbot County commissioners directed their attorneys to contest the claim.

The war of words between the *Centreville Observer* and *Star-Democrat* continued with the Easton editors scoffing in October 1884 that "The *Centreville Observer* says Queen Anne's county is able to take care of herself in the matter of bridges. We are glad to hear it. It was not so, however, when Queen Anne's took advantage of Talbot County having a Republican delegation in the legislature, and socked this county for one-half the cost of the bridge which connects Kent Island and the mainland in Queen Anne's county."

In July 1902, Queen Anne's County filed another petition of mandamus against Talbot County to pay \$2,606.53 to be used for repairs to the Kent Narrows Bridge. The *Baltimore Sun* reported that, "About 20 years ago the Commissioners of Queen Anne's County decided to build the bridge that now stands. The Talbot Commissioners, after the bridge was built, declined to pay their portion of the expense. A new bridge is needed, and, it is thought by building it on its original site, Talbot County will have to foot one-half the bill."

In January 1906, the Queen Anne's delegation to the Maryland Legislature introduced a bill to authorize Talbot County Commissioners to pay \$10,000 to pay half the expenses of erecting the Kent Narrows Bridge. That bill led to acrimonious charges of shenanigans by both sides. Senator James Kirwan from Queen Anne's County called the bill to the Senate floor in March after it passed the House. President of the Senate Joseph B. Seth took to the floor and proposed an amendment that said that the bridge is a free one under joint control

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of both counties and that the salary of the bridge keeper be limited to \$400 a year. He said the bill as written amounted to "taxation without representation." He accused the three Queen Anne's Independent Democrat delegates of trading their votes on another bill "in a travesty upon the purity of elections that 47 Delegates voted for the Bridge bill in order to get three votes."

"I have no confidence in any man, and I will not trust one who will barter his vote on any question," said Seth. "This was an open outright sale of votes and of right for \$10,000 to go to Queen Anne's County." Seth said the deal was between the Queen Anne's Democrat delegates and Republicans to which Senator Kirwan replied that he was "as good a Democrat as any other man and a good deal better than some."

Senator Kirwan countered that Seth had promised him that he would not fight the bill in the Senate. "The people who are opposing this bill are not honest. When a man owes a just debt and tries to evade it, he is not honest." Kirwan said he opposed the Seth amendment because he feared the bill would then have to go back to the House for amendment where it would not survive. "I am not a lawyer," he said, "just a layman but I heard there were 'snakes.'" The Seth amendment failed and the bill passed the Senate on a 20-5 vote.

Alas, Talbot County had the last laugh. In a May 1908 decision, the Maryland Court of Appeals ruled that the 1906 legislation requiring Talbot County to pay an arbitrarily set amount was unconstitutional since the Legislature had assumed a judicial function and set an amount without arbitration or judicial review. "While we would be glad to terminate this prolonged controversy by a final decision in this case," the Court found that the Legislature had fixed an amount for one county to pay for a bridge totally in another county without consideration of the actual costs of the bridge or future costs without regard to what those actual costs might be.

Perhaps all involved hope that there would be no further bridge controversies involving Kent Island. ■

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



Woodsing

by Carol Mylander

Each year before Christmas, near the Winter solstice, my grandfather would round up his older grandchildren for an adventure: "Woodsing" on southern Kent Island. He would arrive at our houses, inform our mothers we were leaving and pile us into his old Chevrolet.

Decked out head to toe in hats, coats, gloves and in my case woolen leggings, we would take off into the woods of Romancoke and Matapeake. Woodsing, the term used for the gathering of Christmas greens was my favorite Christmas activity. Was the word, Woodsing, a carryover from times of old, brought over to the Virginia colony from Merry Olde England? Did it include woodland fairies?

First we were driven to his favorite spot for holly, cedar and pine in a Romancoke woods, where Grandfather followed a deer path through the high grass with us in line formation behind - oldest to youngest, tallest to shortest. We became Romancoq Indians tiptoeing through the woods carrying baskets, loppers and secateurs instead of bows and arrows. We walked around ancient trees, between fallen trees and rotting tree stumps, startling rabbits and deer - the same old paths our ancestors had trod while hunting and gathering.

There was a gaiety among us grandchildren, a day of fun being with our grandfather. My cousin walked ahead of me, holding back tree branches and then gleefully letting them go just as I got there. We were out of the house and Grandfather was guiding us through his childhood stomping ground. A heavy scent of pine arose when we entered the deep sanctuary of the woods; the pine needles covered the forest floor, quieting footsteps and softening voices. Cardinals and Blue Jays jumped from branch to branch in the briars, singing winter songs. The familiarity of scents, colors and singing birds filled our hearts and souls. There was always a brackish scent increased at times by high tide and weather conditions, reminding us that Kent Island was an island in the Chesapeake Bay.

In December the air was cold, tidewater was in the ditches and the pine trees formed a distinctive Christmassy scent. Full berried holly branches were carefully sought and then cut by and older cousin. There would be numerous trips trucking the greens to the old Chevrolet's trunk.

In a very secret place in Matapeake we gathered crow'sfoot and turkey whiskers. We had to carefully rake back the pine needles with our fingers to uncover the treasured groundcovers. Turkey Whiskers (*lycopodium obscurum*) var *edendroideum*, is a soft feathery green plant also called ground pine and clubmoss. It retains its color all through the holidays and is great for wreathmaking. Crow'sfoot (*lycopodium flabelliforme*) actually looks like a crow's foot. It is kind of gnarly and stiff and hard to find these days. Never mind that all these greens were on private property - we entered the woods in absolute delight laughing and giggling.

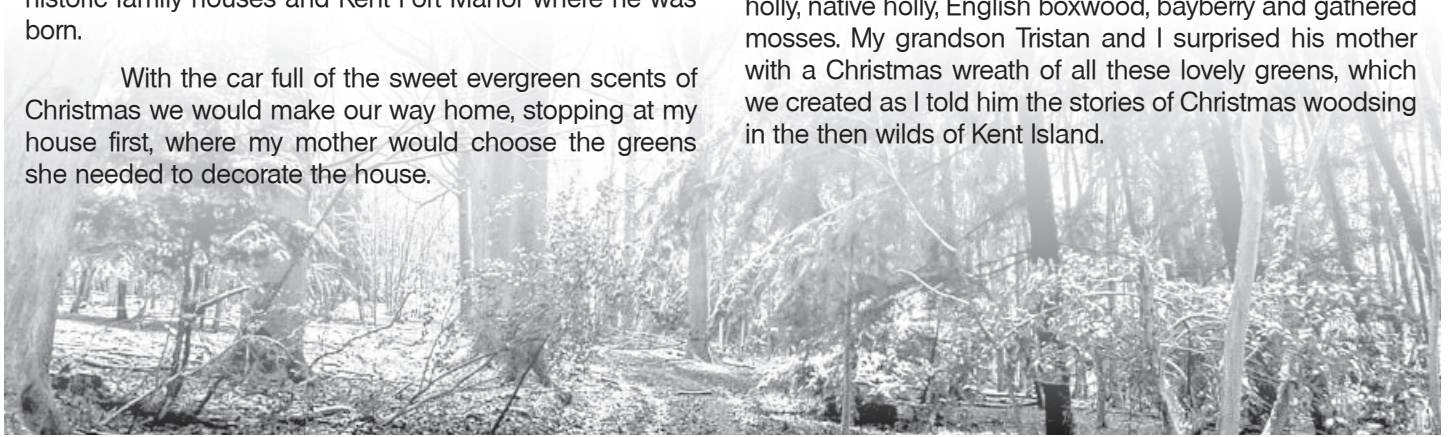
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My grandfather claimed ancestral rights. In fact, most of these farms were still owned by relatives and old family graveyards were still on these properties.

While we searched and found, picked and cut, my grandfather would tell us stories of his childhood, point out historic family houses and Kent Fort Manor where he was born.

With the car full of the sweet evergreen scents of Christmas we would make our way home, stopping at my house first, where my mother would choose the greens she needed to decorate the house.

Pine boughs were placed over every painting and mirror. Crowsfoot and turkey whiskers lined sideboard and piano and cedar and holly were placed on tabletops and the staircase. This Christmas season I'll enjoy Woodsing at home. My garden in Chestertown was planted with this in mind. I have already cut loblolly, winter berry, yellow berried holly, native holly, English boxwood, bayberry and gathered mosses. My grandson Tristan and I surprised his mother with a Christmas wreath of all these lovely greens, which we created as I told him the stories of Christmas woodsing in the then wilds of Kent Island.



THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. 2021 SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

An election of officers and directors to lead The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc. in 2021 will be carried out virtually. Officers are elected for a one-year term and directors for a three-year-term.

The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate:

Any objections to any of the slate should be made to the chairman of the committee, Bob Lowe at 863-259-9120 or rclowesr@aol.com by December 15, 2020.

**President
Vice President
Recording Secretary
Corresponding Secretary
Treasurer**

**John (Jack). Broderick
Robert (Bob) Lowe
John L. Conley
Carole P. Frederick
Lynne Riley-Coleman**

Directors

**Nancy M. Cook
Mark Lidinsky
Captain James F "Rick" White USN (ret)**

Additional nominations may be made prior to December 15, 2020 by the members at large. A declaration of intent must be presented to the chair of the nominating committee, **Bob Lowe, 257 W. Goldfinch La., Centreville, MD 21617**, signed by the candidate and two supporting members of The Society.

The 2020 Kent Island Heritage Society Incumbent Board Members

**Linda S. Collier
Louis S. Crouch
Antoinette (Toni) Gibson
John (Jay) Gibson**

**Kristin B. Green
Leslie G. Moore
Linda S. Moore
Annie May Price**

Get to know the Board Members

ANNIE MAY, KIHS Board Member

I was born at Fifer Hospital, located in Ridgely, Md., (yeah, there was a maternity hospital located there back then, the building today is the town office) and was raised in Stevensville, on a dairy farm. Attended Stevensville Elementary School and graduated from Stevensville High School. Then graduated from the University of Maryland, and worked in various positions and agencies of Maryland State government.



It wasn't until retiring, that I had time to dig into genealogy research. I signed up for a course that started the Monday after I retired. I've also tried to research the homes and farms, on Kent Island and in Queen Anne's County where family lived. Some of the homes are still standing, and have been remodeled, others have been torn down.

About my name: A few of the original organizers of KIHS thought I was named after the other Annie May Price, but I wasn't - I was named Annie (after my father's mother: Annie Richardson Sparks Price) and May (after my mother's mother: May Denny Price).

LOUIS SELBY CROUCH, JR, KIHS Board Member

- ♦ Native Kent Islander - born in the Herbert House in Stevensville, to Dorothy White Crouch and Louis Selby Crouch in 1949
- ♦ Mother's family dates back to 1600s on Kent Island
- ♦ Brother: Donald and Sister: Beverly
- ♦ Wife: Cristina (also a research scientist) from Brazil
- ♦ Daughter: Grace, graduated from UVA medical school and is currently in residence at Massachusetts General Hospital
- ♦ Daughter: Alexis currently studying environmental sciences at Rutgers in NJ
- ♦ I graduated in first graduating class of Queen Anne's County High School in 1967
- ♦ BA in chemistry from Johns Hopkins (1971), a BA In biology from Towson (1980), and a PhD in biochemistry from Virginia Tech (1984).
- ♦ Served in US Army from 1971 to 1973
- ♦ Analytical chemist for the Schluderberg-Kurdle Company, R D w/agrochemical division of Merck Veterinary, R D w/ Schering-Plough, veterinary pharmaceutical R D after Merck and Schering-Plough merged
- ♦ Retired in 2015
- ♦ Moved to Easton, Maryland in August of 2017, enjoying the Eastern Shore life and look forward to our future here.



KRISTIN GREEN, KIHS Board Member

I have resided on Kent Island for the past thirteen years where I am employed as the Public Service Librarian at the Kent Island Branch of the Queen Anne's County Library. I graduated from Mary Washington College, in Fredericksburg, VA, with an undergraduate degree in historic preservation and from Simmons College, in Boston, MA, with a master's degree in library science and a concentration in archival management. Previously, I worked for the Indian River Historical Society in Vero Beach, FL. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling and sewing historical costumes.

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Visit the Old Post Office in Downtown Stevensville
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In Memoriam

Robert (Bobby) Aaron
(July 18, 1935 to April 23, 2020)

Patrick Goss
(October 5, 1955 to April 6, 2020)

Welcome New Members

Andrea and Rick Brenner
Sharon Dobson
Lorri Krozack
Sally and John Prasues
Margaret and Bob Tessier

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

- | | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Life Membership | \$250.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Membership | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organization Membership | \$40.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership | \$50.00 | | |

Name(s) _____

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

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Telephone (Home) _____

Membership period:
January 1 to December 31

(Cell) _____

Email address _____

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

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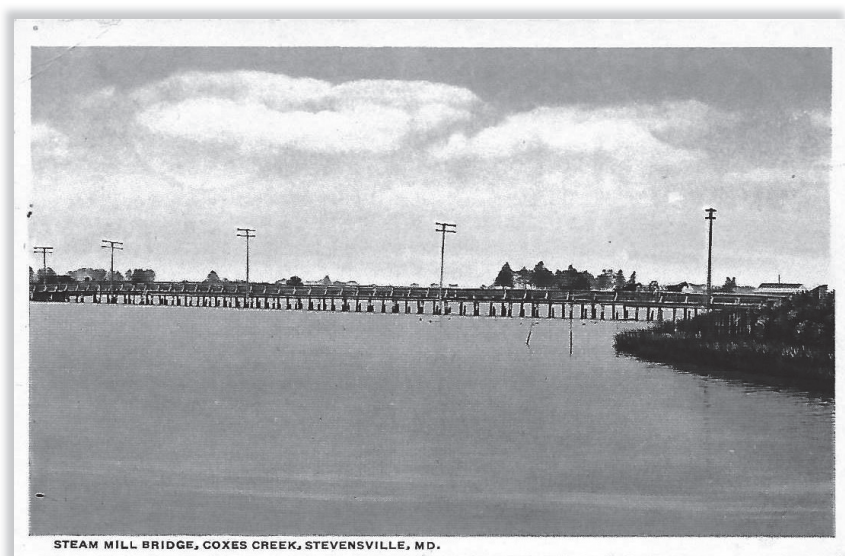
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POSTCARD from Kent Island: Steam Mill Bridge

Submitted by John L. Conley



This postcard, mailed in 1925, shows a site but likely not a name known to today's Kent Islanders. An Act of the Maryland General Assembly approved on April 3, 1894, incorporated The Kent Island Cemetery Company and gave its Board the power to "lay out, sell or dispose of burial lots, to contract for and purchase way or ways to and from said cemetery . . . lying on the public road leading from Stevensville to Kent Island Narrows, between said Stevensville and the bridge known as Steam Mill bridge, and lying partly in Coxes' creek, for the purpose only of keeping the said graveyard in repair." The corporate body of the company included J. B. Bright, J. E. Lewis, E. G. Callaway, Charles B. Downs and William Denny.

Research by the late Mildred Schoch, a founder of the Kent Island Heritage Society, reported that the first Steam Mill Bridge was built in 1860, when some Kent Islanders built a steam mill on Coxes Creek. A September 1876 *Easton Star-Democrat* article said a big storm "caused much damage-but not seriously" to the bridge spanning Cox Creek. Over time, there was a public landing and the showboat Adam's Floating Theater moored there for shows. The bridge has also been known as The Cox Creek Bridge and Main Street Bridge.

We would appreciate hearing from anyone who might have information on the steam mill which was at least partially located on the site of the Stevensville Cemetery until the 1890s. Be sure to read the article in this issue about a certain controversial bridge to and from Kent Island.