

Isle of Kent - 1631



Newsletter of The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.

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

KIHS members attend 13th Annual Winter Conference of the Small Museum Association

Members of the Small Museum Association gathered once again to share ideas and learn new techniques from a wide variety of professionals.

Audrey B. Hawkins and Mr. and Mrs. William Denny III attended the three day convention in Ocean City as representatives of the Kent Island Heritage Society. They attended many workshops including *Developing and Implementing a Collections Management Program, Utilization of Non-Traditional Space & Artifacts and Wooing, Winning and Keeping Volunteers*. They also learned about small museums for use with KIHS work.

During the annual awards banquet, a variety of prizes were awarded at the FASHION PROMENADE, where participants came fully dressed in historical clothing. Mr. and Mrs. William Denny III (pictured below in costume) were awarded a prize for the best 18th century authentic costume.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Membership dues are \$10 per person per year or \$100 for a lifetime membership.

Name(s), address, telephone number & payment can be mailed to The Kent Island Heritage Society, Membership
P.O. Box 321 • Stevensville, MD 21666

BAKE TABLE - BAKE TABLE - BAKE TABLE

Contact Myrtle Bruscup at 410-643-5596 to donate your baked goods for the Kent Island Days bake table

Remember to send in your patron ad donation card (mailed with your dues notice). Don't forget to include how you want your name listed in the Kent Island Days book.

BOOKS NEEDED FOR KENT ISLAND DAYS USED BOOK SALE

KENT ISLAND DAYS GENERATES NEW EXCITEMENT

Our annual Kent Island Days celebration is slated for Saturday, May 17 (rain date is Sunday, May 18). This year's festival, which will be held on one day only, will be held in historic Stevensville from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This year's Heritage Museum, chaired by Eva Thompson, will be held at the Christ Church and promises to be as wonderful as last year's. Don't miss it! As you leave the church, you'll find great crafts of all kinds and an array of food sure to suit your palette.

Also look for 18th century reenactments outside of Ye Olde Church House, another must stop for the day. As always, the historic Cray House and Train Station will be open for your enjoyment.

Once again, you'll find all day entertainment at the festival. We have the Stevensville Middle School Jazz Band, Dasheil School of Dance, the Kent Island Volunteer Band and much more scheduled.

And if this mix of local history, family entertainment, great food and shopping is not enough to draw you in, our children's area is sure to make you stop by. We'll have something for all ages including a magician, clowns, exotic animals, a petting zoo, free crafts for the children to make, decoy painting and train rides.

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President's Message

Dear friends:

I am really excited about this year. We have applied for a \$40,000 construction grant to repair the foundation of the Cray House. If we are awarded this grant, we must match it by raising an additional \$20,000. Soon, we will be sending a letter requesting contributions. Please help us save the Cray House.

This year, Kent Island Days will be held on Saturday, May 17 only (Sunday, May 18 is the rain date). Thanks to grants from the Queen Anne's County Arts Council and the Kent Island American Legion, we will greatly increase the children's activities.

I am beginning a long range plan in order to enable our society to enter the twenty-first century with a plan of action.

I hope you will attend our meetings and participate in our discussions.

Thank you.

Hugo Gemignani, President

K.I.H.S. members should check it out!

Here is a list of some of the fascinating books in the Kent Island Heritage Society's library (at the Stevensville branch of the Q.A.C. Free Library). They are there for your information and enjoyment, so please check them out!

Face of Maryland

Face of Virginia

Family Album for Americans

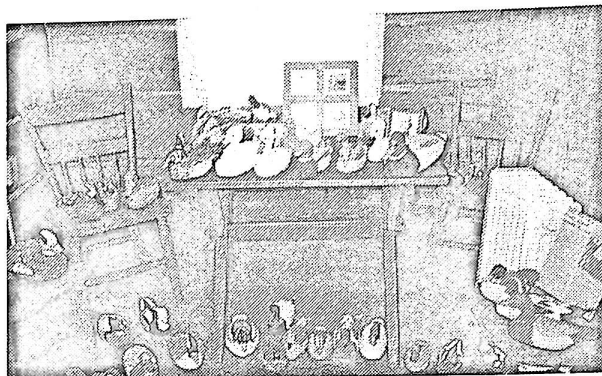
Faraway Time & Place: Lore of the Eastern Shore

Fare Thee Well

Genealogy and History - An Overview

Gone Are The Days

Kent Island Heritage Society President Hugo Gemignani is available for speaking engagements on the Chesapeake Bay and the Kent Island Heritage Society. Call him at (410) 643-1690 to make arrangements.



Decoys carved by Samuel Charles Ringgold, Sr. were displayed at the Cray House

The first public showing of the decoys carved by the late Samuel Charles Ringgold, Sr. of Chester was held at the Cray House last October, courtesy of his son Charles Ringgold, Jr. of Denton and his daughter Pat Ringgold Weston of Queenstown.

Charles Ringgold, Sr. was the son of Samuel Cook Ringgold and Gladys White Ringgold. "Charlie" and his brothers Thomas and Bernie lived on Kent Island all their lives. It was not until he had a heart attack at age 65 that he began carving decoys. "Mallards" were his favorite subject, although he also carved some wooducks. Later, his interest turned to workboats.

We were honored to have these items on display and thank guests for attending this event.

January 17, 1997 - Board Meeting

Minutes

Topics covered included:

Don White from Post 278 of the American Legion in Stevensville presented the Society with a check for \$838.25 (proceeds of a recently held bull roast) which will be used for restoration of the Cray House.

The president announced that a vice president for the Society needs to be elected.

Committees for 1997 were announced.

The president requested that the bylaws revision be completed by June 30, 1997.

The Kirwan property, legalities thereof and estimates for repairs were discussed.

Treasurer's Report

**November 16, through
December 31, 1996
Audrey Hawkins**



Beginning Balance in Checking Account
..... \$1,405.54
Accounts Receivable
Included membership dues, donations, bank interest,
sales income, sales tax, 1997 patron ads, silent auction,
dinner meeting, scholarship for new high school
..... \$5,255.25
Total Receivables & Checking Acct. Balance
..... \$6,660.79

Total Disbursements
Included purchases for resale, Cray House electric &
maintenance, postage, printing, loan payments, dinner
meeting, Kent Island Days supplies and camcorder
..... \$3,694.59

Balance in Checking Account as of 12/31/96
..... \$2,966.20
Balance in CD Account
..... \$10,063.37
Balance in CD Account
..... \$650.09
Balance in CD Account
..... \$2,615.00
Ending loan balance
..... \$7,687.14

Fashions in Bloom

A Fashion Show & Luncheon
Wednesday, April 16, 1997
Kent Manor Inn, Garden House Pavilion

\$20 admission
Lunch, Door Prizes, Raffle, Craft
Boutique, Baked Goods, Cash Bar

Presented by the Island Garden Club
Call Florence Morris at 410-643-8044
for more information

As We Say Good Bye...

*The Kent Island Heritage Society has recently lost some
very special friends...*

Mary Evelyn Price, Treasurer - 1983 to 1986
Evelyn treasured her family and dearly loved Kent
Island. She was also an officer of the American Legion
Auxiliary. She died at her home on January 7, 1997 at
the age of 87.

Reba Coleman, died Friday, January 17, 1997
Reba was a devoted member of the Kent Island United
Methodist Church, a member of the Society and a native
of Kent Island who lived here most of her life in her
family home across from the Kirwan Property. She was
also an active member of Chapter 69 Order of The
Eastern Star.

Curtis Benton, died Tuesday, October 22, 1996 at his
home at the age of 77. Curtis, one of the original mem-
bers of the Society, served on the Cray House restora-
tion Committee (1985 & 1986) as an excellent carpen-
ter.

Edward Taylor, died Tuesday, February 11, 1997 at
Memorial Hospital at Easton at the age of 74. Ed served
as a board member from 1985 to 1987. He also served
as an officer of the Kent Island Yacht Club. His ties to
Kent Island were very strong as his ancestors lived here
long ago.

Captain Lester Lee, a local "icon" who began a career
on the water at age 8 by working during summers. He
was a devout Kent Island Methodist and was known for
living life to its fullest. A lifelong waterman, he died
Tuesday, February 4, 1997 at his home at the age of 86.

John Claude Lowery, Sr. died Saturday, February 15,
1997 at Anne Arundel Medical Center at the age of 63.
He was born in Chester on February 23, 1993. He was a
founding member of the Kent Island Volunteer Fire Co.

Mrs. Louis L. Goldstein (Hazel) of Frederick, MD

Mr. Thomas W. Jones, Jr. of Wayne, PA

Mrs. Charles A. Frampton of Chester, MD

The Society is very thankful for the interest and support
shown over the years by these people in our organiza-
tion and our community. We will continue to honor their
memory by discovering, identifying, restoring and
preserving the heritage of Kent Island.

Save the Cray House

One of the most important projects of the Kent Island Heritage Society is now taking place — plans to restore the Cray House, reportedly one of the only two existing post and plank buildings dating from the early nineteenth century in the state of Maryland.

The Cray House, placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, was built by John Denny sometime between 1809 and 1817. The original two room dwelling was fabricated according to the post and plank method. Such a building involved mortising hewn and pit-sawn horizontal planks into similarly styled corner posts. Once joined together, the wood was then reinforced with light intermediate stabilizing posts. Known for its sturdiness, this style was used throughout the Tidewater region in the 19th century.

Around 1845 a single room was added to the original structure's south gable. It was also at this time that the original steeply pitched gable roof was replaced with the present gambrel. The Cray House, located on the west side of Cockey's Lane in downtown historic Stevensville, stands one and one half stories high.

Various owners came and went over the decades but it was not until 1914 that the house took on its name — that belonging to Nora Cray. The Kent Island Heritage Society



was given the house in 1976 by Cray heirs and not long after undertook it as our first renovation project.

More recently, an architectural study conducted in 1994 indicated the collapsing of the first level floor system, especially on the front side of the building due to rotting plates, sills and beams. The second floor has already been declared unsafe for visitors.

This brings us back to one of the most important projects of the Society — saving the Cray House. We are mailing letters to all members explaining the Cray House situation, including grants we are eligible for and how you can help. Your support is needed more now than ever.

The Kent Island Heritage Society

P.O. Box 321

Stevensville, MD 21666

Address Change Requested

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Stevensville, Md.
21666

The next general membership meeting is March 20th at the library in Stevensville. Light refreshments at 7 p.m.; business meeting at 7:30 p.m.; John Fountain Davidson as guest speaker at 8 p.m.