

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

FALL 2024

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One of the things docents like to point out to visitors is that the flag on the Cray House has 15 stripes. That is the United States flag, beginning in 1794, that was flying at the time the Cray House was built. The Third Flag Act adopted by Congress in 1818 provided that flags would return to 13 stripes to honor the original 13 colonies and that one star would be added to the flag on July 4th of July

for each new state that joined the union the previous year. It is the same flag design that flew over the flag at Fort McHenry that has been on display, except during restoration, since 1964. See the detailed article on the Cray House in this issue.



President's Message

Borrowing a phrase from Jimmie Buffet, "Yes, it's been quite a summer...!"

This Kent Island summer has had more than its share of memorable challenges and joys - from record breaking heat that taxed most of us with hot dry periods, to torrential rains, to two hurricanes with their threatening flood tides. But then there were to so many gorgeous sunsets, one of the best crabbing years in decades, swimming with few to no sea nettles (how did that happen?!). Here on Cox's Creek, we saw more families enjoying the water out in their boats than ever. And, as far as Bay Bridge westbound traffic, we saw a new solution that actually worked for most Kent Islanders - not perfect, but a huge improvement from previous years. Hats off to our County Commissioners for supporting it, in spite of considerable negative public pressure at the onset. Thank you guys. Let's keep looking for more improvements next year.

In this message, in addition to sharing information about our heritage related events and plans, I also want to focus on several people, who have touched our lives on Kent Island in different ways.

(Continued on page 2)

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First to share some events - In June, at our general meeting we hosted Dr. Darrin Lowery, our archaeology partner arguably the most knowledgeable living expert on Kent Island archaeology. In his presentation at Historic Christ Church in Stevensville, Dr. Lowery described the famous collection of Love Point artifacts recently returned by the Marks family, formerly of Love Point. The artifacts will soon become part of new Kent Island Heritage Center and Museum in Stevensville with Dr. Lowery's guidance and assistance. You can read a more detailed summary of Dr. Lowery's presentation at our KIHS website. (Pretty exciting stuff!). In early July, we partnered with the Stevensville Arts and Entertainment District Board to host the annual Pet Parade on the Cray House Green. However, the weather did not cooperate. At over 100degrees with high humidity, only a couple of dogs and their families showed up. But what unfolded could not have been made up. Inside the Cray House there was a QACTV video set up where folks could come in and tell a pet joke for a local TV special on QACTV. As word spread around the area that you could be on TV and tell a pet joke inside the Cray House, which was AIR CONDITIONED, we had scores of visitors. It was the largest number of visitors ever at one of our First Saturday Historic Sites events – a great opportunity to share our Kent Island Heritage. In late July, we had another event affected by the weather, but with not as interesting an outcome. The QA Center for the Arts "Thursdays in The Park" concert, scheduled for the Cray House Green, had to be cancelled due to rain! We'll look forward to next year for that one. Our sites will be open for docent led tours on the first Saturdays of October and November. The A&E Artoberfest event normally held in October is cancelled this year due to personnel issues. They are regearing for a special event next year.

Of course, our big fall event is our annual Fall Heritage Picnic at the Kirwan House and Farm on Sunday, September 22. It's an old fashion country family picnic with hayrides, live chickens, fresh pressed apple cider, home-made ice cream, fried chicken, and you name it potluck veggies and fixin's that you care to bring – all in the beautiful backyard setting of the Kirwan Place. And the famous Kirwan House will be open for tours. Let's hope and pray for good weather for our picnic. On the subject of the Kirwan House and Farm, we owe a real debt of gratitude to Ms Katherine Kirwan, granddaughter of Senator James Kirwan. She willed the House and Farm to the Kent Island Heritage Society to keep her grandfather's memory alive for his pivotal role in saving Kent Island from becoming the Army Proving Ground in WWI. (It went to Aberdeen instead!), She wisely stipulated that the place be maintained with money generated from agricultural uses of the land. We have three income sources on the farm: a cropland lease to a local farmer, a hunting lease to a group of local hunters, and a conservation easement with USDA where we get paid not to farm marginal land. This month we are engaged with contractors to have necessary maintenance work done in the forest buffer area to keep the conservation parcels in required good condition. Thus, our conservation payments will be continued and we can continue to be responsible stewards of the land and the adjacent Creeks.

A major focus of our planning effort during this year is the outfitting and completion of our new Kent Island Heritage Center – our new headquarters / museum / records storage / research center – in our newly acquired historic property at 310 Love Point Rd. in Historic Stevensville. As we have shared in previous Newsletters, our exciting new Heritage Center was made possible by the generous bequest from our former Treasurer, Lynne Riley-Coleman. We anticipate our Grand Opening will be in time for our Golden Anniversary Year, 2025! Stay tuned for progress reports.

And now I want to share some thoughts about some special Kent Island people - two who are still with us and two who are not.

In June, many of us gathered for a unique, large special event at the Kent Island Fire Hall to honor and offer a huge public "thank you" to Wheeler Baker of Kent Island: friend to all, retired local businessman (former owner of Bakers Liquors), former County Commissioner, former District 36 State Delegate, principal of Chester Wye Center, member of Kent Island Heritage Society, national boat racing champion. The event was hosted by KIVFD and Josie Simons, the first professional QAC paramedic. The event was organized to highlight Wheeler's unique role in supporting emergency services in Queen Anne's County, both the volunteer force and the professional paramedic service which he was instrumental in establishing. There's a great Bay Times article documenting the event. Wheeler has had a challenging couple years. He sold his business

and retired, and lost his daughter, his wife, and his sister-in-law in a short period of time. That gathering to support Wheeler Baker was an unforgettable human experience, a huge local community of friends standing up to say thank you, we love you. We add our thanks and admiration, Wheeler, for being an important part of our Kent Island Heritage for the past five decades.

In July, we gathered at Rita's Parking lot on Kent Island for a different kind of tribute to an important Kent Island icon, sponsored by the Kent Island Cruisers. Doug Bishop, who recently retired as a long time reporter for the Bay Times. Doug who was a career teacher in PG County was a part time local reporter for over two decades. Doug wasn't only an insightful journalist reporting stories about his community but has been an integral part of our community sharing membership and active supporting roles in many organizations: the Kent Island Elks, The Kent Island Cruisers, the Kent Island Heritage Society, the Kent Island LDS Church, and many more. We were honored to participate and share in the many tributes to Doug that evening. We are happy to learn that Doug will still be contributing "special assignment" articles for the Bay Times/ Record Observer and Star Democrat. There is also a great Bay Times article on Doug's event in a July issue.

A very special person I want to recognize, a true Kent Island icon, is Ms Wally Dashiell, who died in early August at age 100. Doug Bishop, her special friend had a wonderful front page article on Ms. Wally in the August 30 issue of the Bay Times that is well worth reading. Ms Wally, at her Dashiell School of Dancing, in Historic Stevensville, next to our Historic Post Office, was a legendary dance instructor who taught many hundreds of local children the art of dancing and influenced many lives for over for over 60 years. After her retirement from dance teaching, she became involved in senior Olympics and won gold medals in many events, even as late as last year. She was a breast cancer survivor and had surgeries for knee replacement and hip replacement at 89 and 91. What a role model! A true icon of our Kent Island Heritage! Several years ago, we were honored to have Ms Wally as our Grand Marshall at our Kent Island Day Parade.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the recent passing of a true son of Kent Island, Adam Britt, the beloved son of our own KIHS Board Member and respected Curator of the famous Kirwan House, Linda Collier. Adam endured a number of serious health issues over the last several years, never losing his lifelong passion for the outdoors, especially his love of waterfowl hunting. Linda was the most supportive and loving mother, backed by her loving family, throughout Adam's life, especially in these last difficult years. Our Board extends our deepest sympathy and strongest support to Linda and her family through this difficult time.

We look forward to seeing you at our Fall Heritage Picnic at the Kirwan Place on Sunday, September 22 and at our Holiday Brunch and Annual Election on Sunday, December 8.

Meanwhile, thanks for your support and best wishes for a great fall! See you 'round the Island.

Jack Broderick

2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 19

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETING/PRESENTATION
7 P.M. HISTORIC CHRIST CHURCH
IN STEVENSVILLE

MAY 18

KENT ISLAND DAY

JUNE 25

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETING AND EVENT TBA

SEPT. 22

MEMBERSHIP PICNIC
AT KIRWAN HOUSE

DEC. 8

MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON
AND ELECTIONS

KIHS HISTORIC SITES ARE OPEN
first Saturdays from April to Nov.

KIHS BOARD MEETINGS
are held on the third Wednesday of
the month at the Kirwan House.
All Society members are welcome
to attend or suggest topics for
consideration.

FOR INFORMATION on these and
other events, visit our website
kentislandheritagesociety.org

THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE
SOCIETY MAINTAINS A SOCIAL
MEDIA PRESENCE ON-LINE AT
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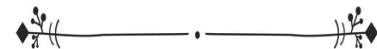
IT'S TIME AGAIN FOR AN OLD-FASHIONED PICNIC

Join Kent Island Heritage Society Members and Guests

The Kirwan House and Farm
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 2024
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Please Bring A Covered Dish and Lawn Chairs for comfort
KIHS Will Provide
Fried Chicken, Hot Dogs, Iced Tea, Lemonade, Coffee
And HOME-MADE ICE CREAM!!!

Join us for Games, Conversation and Displays



PLEASE RESPOND BY SEPTEMBER 19

PROVIDE RESPONSE WITH INFORMATION BELOW
by Email to kentislandheritagesociety@gmail.com
or mail to KIHS P.O. Box 321, Stevensville MD 21666

Names of Adults (for badges):

Names and ages of children (for game planning):

Phone number and email in case of inclement weather:

E. A. EASTBROOK POSTCARD INFO



Thanks to KIHS members Lou Crouch and Dan Phelan, we learned more about Edward A. Westbrook who was publisher of the Love Point pier postcard that was mailed in 1909 and featured in the Summer 2024 Ilse of Kent 1631. He was born in Port Jervis, NY in 1880 and died in 1951 and is buried in Florida. He married Mildred Lida Towers from Cordova MD in 1918, and they later divorced. His occupation on the marriage certificate is as a jeweler. He is listed on the 1910 census as an agent on the Steam Railroad. Interestingly, of the 16 occupations identified on 1910 Census Form portion, eight were related to the railroad. Both of his parents are buried in Baltimore.

History and Contents of the Cray House

By Hanna Wall

The Cray House has a long history here in Stevensville, Maryland. The following dates are a record of the Land Transfers and Ownership for just under the last two hundred years of history.

- ★ **1694 FRANCIS STEVENS** received the grant of "Stevens Adventure." In his will of 1705, he left the property to his son, John, who had it resurveyed in 1746. John's son, James, willed it to his son, John, in 1790.
- ★ **1809 JOHN DENNY**, a ship carpenter paid \$43 for the land, and shortly thereafter, it is believed he built a structure.
- ★ **1817 WILLIAM PATTERSON** of Baltimore bought the property for \$400. The increase indicates there was improvement such as a structure. Two, historian-architects, Mr. Orlando Ridout V and Mr. James T. Willon Jr. fixed the date of the older portion of the house at about this time and no evidence has indicated that the house has been move from another location. The heirs of William Patterson sold the property.
- ★ **1839 WILLIAM CALVERT** of Wilmington, Delaware bought the property.
- ★ **1842 MARY E. CARVILLE LEGG** bought the property. She had the southern portion of the house built and at this time, the roof changed to a gambrel-roof. In her will of 1866, she left all her estate both real and personal to her nephew, Joseph F. Cook, who was postmaster of Stevensville. After J.F. Cook's death, the property transferred to his wife Lucy, who married John Stelle (or Stehl). They had no heirs, and the property went up for auction.
- ★ **1914 NORA DIXON CRAY** bought the property, which then included both the Cray House and the property next door, at public auction with money from her husband's life insurance. She lived in the house with her sons William Richard (Buddy/Dick) Cray and John Eareckson Cray until her death. After the death of the two sons, local families in Stevensville rented the house, leaving it in need of repair. It was her last direct heir Anna Catherine Cray Ewing's (1897-1973) wish that the House be a living memorial to her family. In 1975 the heirs of Nora Dixon Cray stipulated that extensive restoration take place within two years, or the property would revert to the heirs. At that time the property was deeded to the newly founded Kent Island Heritage Society.
- ★ **1976 THE FOLLOWING LIVING HEIRS DEEDED PROPERTY TO KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.:** Thomas Ewing, James Ewing, Ray Ewing, Milford Brown, Madison Brown and Leonard Brown, all of Kent Island and Catherine Osborne, Edgar Sapp, and Tom Cray, all of New Jersey.
- ★ **1983 THE CRAY HOUSE AND PROPERTY WERE PLACED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.** Grants for purchase and restoration of the property were obtained by our founding Kent Island Heritage Society members Mrs. Lloyde (Marian) Steuart, Mrs. Alfred (Nellie) C. White, Mrs. T. Walter (Emily Roe) Denny, Mrs. Malvern (Mildred C.) Schoch, and Miss Annie May Price.
- ★ **2003 HOUSE REOPENS AFTER EXTENSIVE RESTORATION.** The house and interior are interpreted in the period time of its construction 1809-1817.

The Cray House is a gambrel-roofed wooden house of 1 ½ stories, facing almost due east on Cockey's Lane, formerly Down's Lane, constructed in at least two stages. The northerly three bays (two windows and a door), measuring approximately fifteen ½ feet by twenty-two ½ feet, appear to be original. Added later the southerly three bays, measuring approximately fifteen ½ feet by sixteen feet. There is evidence of a missing north wing.

CONSTRUCTION:
MISSING NORTH WING used as a summer kitchen and laundry room. It was twelve ½ feet deep and one ½ stories with a gabled roof of steep triangular shape. A small door, used to access this wing, can be seen in the kitchen to the left of the fireplace.

MAIN/NORTH SECTION (built by John Denny a ship's carpenter after 1809) is of an exceedingly rare, or unique construction having had three bays (two windows and a door) with gambrel-roof, measuring fifteen ½ x twenty-two feet and is part of the original structure. Posts support a top wall plate which in turn, supports the second story. The posts and wall plates



An herb garden is maintained by the Kent Island Garden Club behind the Cray House. The Kent Island Heritage Society was gifted the property by the Cray heirs in 1976.

seen as protrusions within the rooms are a Post and Plank construction, using wooden mortise and tenon instead of nails. The boxed stairs leading to the second floor are located next to the fireplace. The architraves, the trim or finish around the windows and fireplace, predate the removed plaster. The newly exposed whitewash on planks appears to be the original finished surface. The molding may date from 1805-1825 and the doors are of vertical boards. The upper rafters are made of reused materials indicating the original roof may have been gable.

EXTERIOR walls sheathed in plain shiplap siding, 2-3 inches thick, 10-14 inches in width and fastened with cut nails. The siding material dates from 1825-1850. There is no apparent joint in the siding between the two sections on the east front but is clearly visible on the west rear outside wall.

WARMING KITCHEN: A water bucket was used to get water from the well in the back yard. It was one of the only open wells in the area. The children would have been the ones to bring the water into the house.

Washing the clothes required heating water in a large kettle over the fire. They used lye soap that is made from beef tallow and lye and can be very harsh to the skin. Irons made of cased iron heated by the fire and were used for ironing clothes. They would have had only had one change of clothes.

The fireplace was used for cooking and heating. The children would have to split and bring in the firewood. They would use a Dutch oven to bake pies and biscuits. Placing the Dutch oven over embers near the fireplace and putting hot embers on top of the oven, would bake a pie or biscuits nicely in about one-half hour.

The wooden dough trough is used to mix bread and allow the dough to rise before being baked in a brick oven on the outside fireplace. Assorted crocks were used for storing food. The 12-gallon crock was used for making pickles. The Betty Lamp is usually hung by the fireplace and, when it was lit with oil or lard and a wick, would provide a safe flame when going up the stairs at night to light the tallow candles upstairs.

BACK PARLOR: This room along with the kitchen measuring fifteen ½ x twenty feet was part of the main or north portion of the house and has three bays and a gambrel-roof. The corner and intermediate posts, with wall plates support the second story.

In the early 19th century, the main meal was served at midday. The types of meat served were smoked or salted pork, fresh game such as rabbit and squirrels. They would have had vegetables that were in season. Fresh green beans strung and hung to dry for winter were known as "Leather britches". They also served "Bubble and Squeak" a one pot meal made of sausage or pork, potatoes, cabbage, and onions. They commonly used pewter dishes, which are now known to be poisonous. Furniture was very rudimentary such as the table, corner cabinet and pie safe.

On the table is the guest book which guests should sign as our grants and other funding depends on the number of guests.



Architectural experts with a knowledge of colonial construction find the walls with horizontal planks and ceiling beams of special interest.

Visitors to the Cray House enter the main room in the north section which includes a fireplace and warming kitchen. A missing section housed the kitchen and laundry.

The staircase to the second floor clearly does not meet today's standards. There is another staircase at the south end.

CRAY FAMILY MUSEUM CORNER:

Nora Dixon Cray bought the property in 1914, which then included both the Cray House and the property next door, at public auction. with money from her husband, James Franklin Cray's (June 1851- Feb 19, 1913) life insurance. They had nine children together. It has been said that all nine children lived in the house, but the three or four older girls may have already been married when the house was bought in 1914. The 1920 Census list Nora Cray as "Head of Household" living with four sons, William 32 years old, John 22 years old, Thomas 14 years old and Amos 10 years. She continued to live in the house with her two unmarried sons William Richard (Buddy) Cray, and John Eareckson Cray until her death in 1937. After the death of her son John in 1964, the house was rented to several local families in Stevensville, leaving it in need of much repair. It was the last direct heir Anna Catherine Cray Ewing's wish that the House be a living memorial to her family. The Property was deeded to the Heritage Society in 1976 by the heirs of Nora Dixon Cray with the stipulation the extensive restoration take place within two years, or the property would revert to the heirs. There are pictures showing the house before and after the first restoration.

On display are pictures of Mrs. Lenora (Nora) Dixon Cray* (May 1858- 1937) and Mr. James Franklin Cray (June 1851- Feb 19, 1913) and a plaque listing the 9 Cray Children and their immediate heirs. [The age of the children at the time Nora bought the house is in brackets]. (* lived in house until death). The small document contains the following information:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eva Cray Brown (1879-1957) [35 years old] <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Milford Brown b. Madison Brown c. Leonard Brown 2. William Richard (Buddy) Cray*(1882-1947) [32 years old] 3. Martha Mae (Mattie) Cray (1884-1930) [30 years old] 4. James Franklin Cray (1889-1935) [25 years old] 5. John Eareckson Cray* (1892-June 5, 1964) [22 years old] 6. Helen Georgianna Cray Sapp (1894-1963) [20 years old] <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Catherine Osborne b. Edgar Sapp | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Anna Catherine (Katie) Cray Ewing (1897-1973) [17 years old] <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thomas Ewing b. James Ewing c. Ray Ewing 8. Thomas Dixon Cray (1900-1964) [14 years old] <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thomas Cray 9. Amos Linwood Cray (1904-1957) [10 years old] |
|--|--|

Note according to Holly Ewing Baker at the death of William Richard Cray the undertaker "had not realized Richard was so tall and there was no coffin to fit him. One had to be ordered from Baltimore before the funeral could be held."

FRONT PARLOR:

The southern wing addition has three bays with a gambrel-roof measuring fifteen ½ x sixteen feet. At the time of this southern addition the roof of the main section may have been changed from a gable roof to a gambrel. The interior doors of this room date from about 1840-1850 and have two long raised panels which are unmolded. The exterior, which is sheathed in plain shiplapped siding, fastened with cut nails, dates from about 1825-1850. From the back of the house one can clearly see where the southern wing was added

This room was seldom used, only on special occasions. The men would gather to play games such as cards and the cards do not have numbers on them. They would smoke their clay pipes using tobacco twists. When they finished smoking, they would break off the moist end and discard it. The pipe would then be placed on the hearth to dry out for the next use. If not, the clay would remain moist and become soft.

On the table is a display of children's toys, such as a Jacob's Ladder, and Flash Cards for learning the alphabet.

The Declaration of Independence had been signed only 33 years earlier and the Spanish pieces of eight were used as currency in the early years after the America Revolution. This coin would be cut in half, into quarters and into eighths to be used as change. Our 25-cent coin is called a Quarter because of the ¼ of a piece of eight. The American \$ sign also comes from the pieces of eight because on the front of the coin there are two columns with ribbons around them. These columns represent the Pillars of Gibraltar. Children in the early 1800's would have had toys and flash cards like these on display. The desk is a ship captain's desk and would have been used on board ship, dating from that time period. On the wall is a copy of a letter with William Claiborne's signature to Charles II (1660-1682), King of England and the copy of the Claiborne Family Coat of Arms.

The large book on the pew is The Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men Maryland and of District of Columbia. Baltimore; National Biographical Publishing Co. 1879. It presents a brief description of John Denny's family and his son William Denny, MD of Kent Island.

Women would spin wool from sheep on spinning wheels. The wool would then be knitted into clothing. Linen made from



(Top Left) Docent in Colonial garb.



(Top Middle) Young visitors enjoy "hands on" items like the clay pipe, "pieces of eight," a tobacco plug, and playing cards with no numbers. This is a favorite stop of students on KIHS hosted school visits.



(Top Right) Early occupants of the Cray House had to be self-sufficient in spinning yarn and collecting wood for the fireplace in the parlor.



(Bottom) The second floor children's bedroom features period furniture and toys. There are two other bedrooms with quilted beds and all important chamber pots.

flax was also used for clothing. Cotton was very expensive and very labor intensive. See the photo of the docent outfit. A mob cap would be worn on the head. This was a way to keep the head lice to oneself. Women would wear their chemises (white long shift) day and night. During the day a petty coat (skirt) would be put on over the chemise. Then the bodice or vest would be cinched up very tightly. An apron would also be worn. They did not have pockets in their clothing. Rather the 'Lucy pocket' would be tied under the petty coat and could be reached through slits on the side. The saying "Lucy Locket lost her pocket" comes from these pockets. Men would wear a white long shirt both day and night. During the day they would put on a stock which are ruffles worn around the neck. They would wear a vest, knee breeches, stockings and a tri-corner hat. Men would shave their heads and wear wig to avoid head lice. They would carry a haversack.

MASTER BED CHAMBER:

People would use the Chamber pots, which were kept under the beds. People used the chamber pots during night instead of going outside to the Necessary in the back yard. In the morning, they would just empty the chamber pot out of the window. Washstands and washbasins were used to wash their hands and face, but not the body. Tubs for bathing would be used in the kitchen. Children would cut the firewood and heating the water in large kettles over the fire was extremely laborious. The father would bathe first, then the mother, down to the youngest child. The expression "don't throw the baby out with the bath water" originated because of this process. They also believed it was unhealthy to wash the oils off their body. They used lye soap which was made of lye, potash and beef tallow. It was very harsh on the skin.

The fireplace was used for heat. The bed had either a straw or feather mattress. The expression "Good night, sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite." comes from this period, when there weren't any box springs. They had ropes on the bottom of

the bed, which would have to be restrung or tightened periodically. Bothersome and biting bed bugs would be present in the bedding, which was not cleaned often.

The Sunburst Nine Block Quilt which measure 106 ¼ "x 109 ¼" was appraised by Phyllis Twigg Hatcher and make circa 1830. The colors are yellow, blue, brown, pink, tan, white, red and green. The quilt was made by Harriet Waters. Her daughter Rachel Sophia Waters Hall gave it to her daughter Virginia Hall in March 1875. The quilt was donated to the Society by Francis Hall and Mary Ester Hall Dyes.

MIDDLE BEDROOM:

The walls of a gambrel-roof (a ridged roof with two slopes on each side, the lower slopes having the steeper pitch) yield a much more usable space and the steep pitch of this roof adds almost a whole second story compared to a gabled roof line.

Washstand with bowl and pitcher were used for washing oneself. In the 1800's they only took a bath once or twice a year. They were unaware of germs and the causes of diseases. Taking a bath was very labor intensive.

The picture on the nightstand is of Melvin Clark's father, who was one of the many people who lived in this house before Nora Cray. This room was used by one of the two bachelor brothers.

NORTH BEDROOM:

This room was used by one of the other bachelor brothers. This type of bed is known as a Handyman's or Journey's bed.

Compiled by Hanna Wall,
May 2014 | Updated August 2024
Using the following sources:

Mildred C. Schoch, "Of History and Houses, A Kent Island Heritage," Second Edition, originally published by The Queen Anne Press, 1982. (The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc., Stevensville, MD 1989) pg. 34-35.

Holly Ewing Baker, "My Reminiscences of Cray House", Newsletter of the Kent Island Heritage Society, Spring Issue 2003, pg.4

Barbara Marmion, "Grand Opening of the Cray House Kent Island Days", Kent Island Bay Times, April 27, 2004, pg 31

Queenstown Bank of Maryland Newsletter, "The Cray House", May 1993

"A Walking Tour ... Historic Stevensville, #14 Cray House", Brochure published by Kent Island Heritage Society

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and sharing Kent Island history in 2025.

THE ONGOING SEARCH FOR FORT CRAYFORD

By Carol Thomas Mylander

"A double row of palisades stretched across the island on both sides of Fort Crafford"

In the early nineties while sailing across Chesapeake Bay from the West River in a catamaran with friends on a clear day with good breezes, I looked at Kent Island from a different perspective. About halfway across I thought I spotted a very large house that I did not recognize. Only as we got closer, I realized it was Crafford (Crayford), a house and farm I had known all my life, being the home of my Uncle Arnold and Aunt Clare Carvel.

It gave the appearance of a greater height because of the lay of the land being higher than surrounding farms, Kentmoor airstrip, and development. Afterward I compared it to a nautical chart and Augustine Herman's old map published in London in 1673. Easily seen on the old map is the original shape of the island in the 1700s. It shows an exaggerated curved shoreline along the bay. Herman's map is considered to be very accurate for his expertise and that his daughter was married to a Thompson who at the time lived on the island.

I am going out on a limb and saying that "Brickhouse Bar" shown off Kent Island below today's Kentmoor Marina on the 1943 map and Fort Crayford are one and the same. Studying Brickhouse Bar on the 1943 map, I see on the southern end "hrd" (bottom texture hard) which I believe to be the fallen bricks or brick foundation of an early seventeenth century house. (Oyster rocks are marked as "oys")

Archeologists have not found any evidence of the seventeenth century on Crafford (Crayford) but some might not have considered the great erosion we have suffered on Kent Island. Just look at Parson's Point which is now Parson's Island and Bodkin Point which became Bodkin Island and last year it went under water. Perhaps the archeologists are looking in the wrong place.

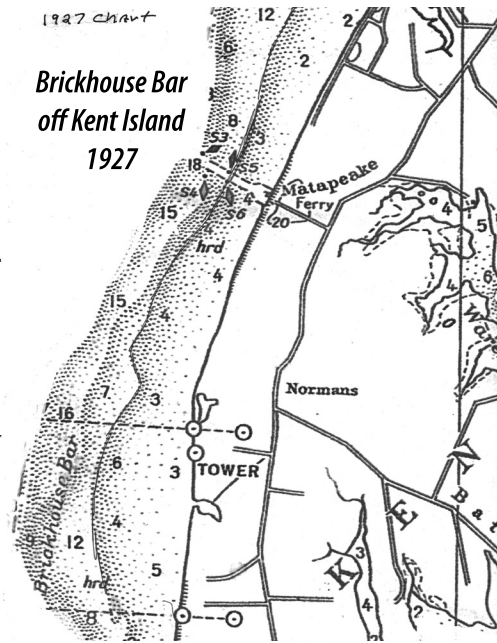
When William Claiborne first sailed by and around Monoponson (he soon named it after his home in England) in 1627, he saw a bluff at Crafford of 12 to 18 feet and there was a deep grassy savannah fronting a deep forest and a fresh water source from Craney Creek. In the Claiborne biography, Virginia Adventure by Nathaniel Hale, he quotes Claiborne "built house on a slight rise" on Kent Island. Claiborne had sailed from Accomac or Kecoughtan (now Hampton), or both. Kecoughtan had originally been an Indian village, and then Claiborne's own plantation. The April 3, 1627, exploration was the second trip Claiborne took. The first was made in 1626 in the lower bay.

King James I made William Claiborne the official surveyor of Jamestown. King Charles I and Virginia Governor George Yeardley commanded Secretary Claiborne to "discover any rivers or Creeks within the Bay up to the heads of the Same and trade with the Indians for Corn, Skins, or any other committees whatsoever" (Minutes of the Council. 3, April 1627, p.147.) He was chosen because he already was familiar with the bay, could communicate with the Indians (his companion was Constantine, a native Indian,) and an excellent tradesman.

Claiborne journeyed in a shallop with a troop of men and truck (goods) for trading. He and his men took soundings and made sketches of the 1627 voyage. Claiborne, representing Cloberry & Company of which he was one-sixth owner, came back to the island in 1629 with goods including BRICKS to build a fort. This is from a long list of goods sent to Claiborne.

All around the island there is extremely shallow water. It is especially interesting on the bay in that the deepest part of entire bay is at Bloody Point at a depth of 174 feet. The east channel is the drowned Exmore channel. There being three drowned channels, the Exmore west of Kent Island, the Eastville channel which is under Coxes Creek and on the west of Love Point, and the Cape Charles channel which is in the middle of the bay. A recent sale of a farm on Love Point shows a reduction of five acres from the 100 acres of 1952. Some geologists estimate that the Calvert Cliffs have eroded 300 feet since 1607 (Chesapeake Bay Program.)

I will finish with a quote from Of History and Houses. A Kent Island Heritage (page 32) by Mildred C. Schoch: "... in a deposition given by Elizabeth Ellis Formand in 1731 (when she was 73 years old) when she stated that when she was a girl she 'heard tell of a Fort and that on the left hand of the Path (Kent Path) ... lay some mauld timbers which she thought might be the fort.' The house was fortified and palisaded and known as Crayford Fort.



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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 | jconcomm@gmail.com | cell: 703-216-0449

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POSTCARD from Kent Island: School is Open at Love Point

From John L. Conley Collection

Kent Island students are back in school just as these kids were at Love Point. Hopefully, some of our KIHS history detectives can help us learn more about the people in this photo that says "school photo taken at Love Point"

on its reverse. According to the KIHS booklet *History of the Schools of Kent Island*, "School #8, District 4 Love Point White School was authorized in 1914 and closed in March 1928 when students were transported to Stevensville Elementary School. Some of the teachers were Edith Clark, Jean Herbert, Mildred Palmer, and Elizabeth Rapp. We do not know at this point where the school was located or if the building still exists. If you have any information, please send it to jconcomm@gmail.com. The publication is available for purchase.



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