

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

SPRING 2026

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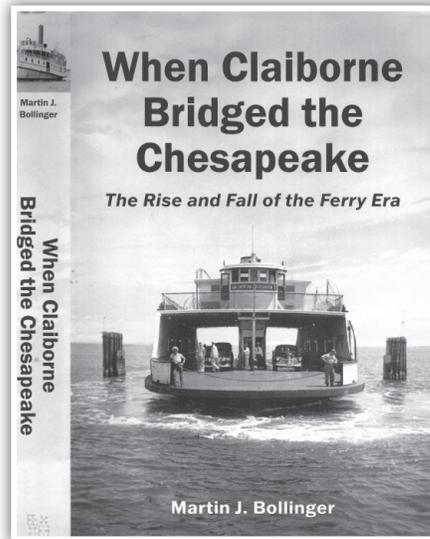
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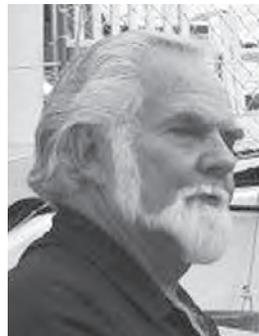
Charles Koegel 93-94

Hugo Gemignani 95-98

Nancy M. Cook 99-08



Learn More About the Chesapeake Ferry System and Kent Island at the March 17 Membership Meeting, 7p.m. Historic Christ Church



President's Message

Wow! What a dose of old-fashioned winter we've experienced this year - that snow and ice combination and long-lasting deep freeze on our Creeks, Rivers, and the Bay itself! It was a reminder of that famous winter in these parts, 76 - '77. That was our first year here in our cottage on Cox's Creek. In addition to two months of ice skating, it was exhilarating to see ice boats zooming up and down on the Creek. They materialized out of sheds and garages - unforgettable images of "red sails in the sunset". However, this year we were a little out practice in dealing with such a winter! I

hope that all of our members were able to stay safe and warm. I'm happy to report that our historic sites made it through mostly ok. We did have an HVAC issue at the Kirwan House, with one of three heating units down, but enough residual heat from the operating units to keep us in the safe zone. The problem is resolved for now, but long-term HVAC work will need to be done at Kirwan's this coming year. We also had some siding damage at our Heritage Center. But our eagle-eyed VP, Bob Lowe, spotted it and we were able to get our hero contractor, L&J Contractors, to go up on the porch roof, remove the ice and snow, and make the necessary siding repairs, forestalling any further damage. Thank you guys!

We outlined our successes of 2025, our 50th Anniversary year, in detail in our last Newsletter. We are looking forward to this new year with renewed anticipation, focusing on celebrating America's 250th. Our work continues on our new Kent Island Heritage Center. We look forward to opening at Kent Island Day in May, sharing unique stories and

(Continued on page 2)

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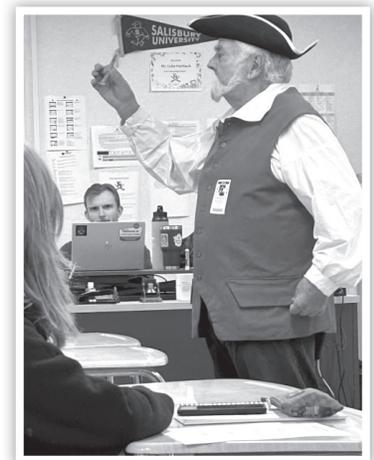
displays of our rich Kent Island Heritage. Meanwhile, in March we'll be holding another Docent Training event at the Kent Island Library on March 14. We thank Hanna Wall for her leadership and coordination of our important Docent program. We encourage our members to consider becoming a Docent to be able to share firsthand our rich Kent Island history with the visitors to our sites. Also, on March 14 we will be participating in the Kent Island Kids' and Family Connection at Kent Island High School, sponsored by the Shore Update. We will have an interesting collection of heritage models, artifacts, and stories to share with the many kids and their young families. We look forward to that annual event. It's a great opportunity to share our heritage with future Kent Islanders.

On Tuesday March 17, we will host our Spring General Meeting at Historic Christ Church in Stevensville. The meeting, open to the public, will feature our guest speaker, local author Marty Bollinger, presenting a fascinating history of the Chesapeake Bay ferry system with a special emphasis on Kent Island. Marty's book *When Claiborne Bridged the Chesapeake, The Rise and Fall of the Ferry Era* can be ordered now on Amazon and other sites. He will be happy to sign copies. Check out the announcement in this Newsletter and consider joining us that evening.

In May, we will again have our Heritage Society wall display at the Kent Island Library, another great opportunity to share our story with Library patrons. Of course, in May we will celebrate our biggest day, our popular Kent Island Day, Saturday, May 16 in Historic Stevensville, with our big KI Day Parade, on-stage entertainment, great local food, and over 100 vendors and exhibitors. This year we will focus on the patriotic theme of celebrating America's 250th. We anticipate that the heritage group, the Sons of the American Revolution will be joining us to help us celebrate. Our Kent Island Day plans are well under way, with professional event planner, Emily Brown of Woven Dreams, again at the Vendor Coordinator helm. For information or registration, the KI Day email address is info.kentislandday@gmail.com. We hope you'll plan to join us on May 16.

Our other big heritage adventure this year is our new partnership with Kent Island High School. As mentioned in our last Newsletter, we were invited by Principal Dan Harding to work at myriad levels to help infuse an appreciation of

Kent Island history and heritage into the student's experience. Our efforts underway this semester include teaching KI history classes on requested subjects, teaching interested students to become heritage site docents, and developing activities for students to perform to earn Community Service-Learning Credits. This could include assisting before and during Kent Island Day and at the new Kent Island Heritage Center. This partnership is an exciting prospect for us. We look forward to developing and expanding our efforts there. Check out the recent picture of yours truly sharing stories and artifacts of the Indians of Kent Island and discussing our Docent program. Teacher pictured is Luke Hartlaub. In late May, we plan to present our annual Kent Island Heritage scholarship to a graduating Kent Island High student. See the application here in our Newsletter.



In working to strengthen and broaden our heritage mission, we maintain an active social media presence and conduct in-person community outreach efforts. We also participate, coordinate and partner with local organizations including: the QA County Economic and Tourism Development Department; the QA County Historic Sites Consortium, the QA 250 Committee; Historic Kent Island; the Kent Island Federation of Arts (KIFA); and the Historic Stevensville Arts and Entertainment (A&E) District, on which I serve as a Board member because the majority of our historic sites are located in Stevensville. I want to offer a particular comment about the new Board Chair, Tom Brady. Tom has brought a wealth of knowledge and leadership skills that will help strengthen the A&E effort to increase the vitality and stature of Historic Stevensville. We look forward to working with Tom.

We learned recently that an important part of our Stevensville history and legacy will be changing. The Denny Family properties in Stevensville are being sold, including the old Denny's garage building, the Old Churchouse Antiques Building, adjacent field, and the adjacent Victorian Denny home. Bill Denny, a long time KI Heritage advocate and true son of Kent

Island died in late 2021. Janet Denny, who had married Bill 30 years ago after he lost his first wife, Joyce, shares Bill's lifelong love of history and historical reenactments. She quickly assimilated into Kent Island's culture. Janet has informed us that she will be moving to Amarillo, TX to be near members of her earlier family. Bill Denny's family members will remain on the Island as part of their community in their current locations as the Stevensville properties are being sold. Janet has graciously offered us a large wardrobe of 18th century period clothing to use for docents or reenactments. We truly appreciate this special gift and extend to Janet our best wishes for health and happiness as she transitions to her new life in Texas.

With sadness we want to mention the recent passing of a friend and former Heritage Society Board Member, Joyce Woodford. Joyce was just at our December annual holiday event and elections, sharing her smile and energy. For years she was one of our principal planners and coordinators for Kent Island Day. We are grateful for the many years that Joyce gave to us and offer our condolences to her family.

In this issue of our Newsletter we have included a detailed article on a fascinating part of our Kent Island history, the unique history of the village of Dominion, based on information shared by Charles Ferrell's family. We hope you find it a great read with new insight into a special part of Kent Island.

A reminder that our historic sites will be open on the First Saturdays, April to November, 12:00 to 4:00. Stop in, bring your family, and enjoy our heritage up close.

Thanks for your support and best wishes for a great 2026 – America's 250th! See ya 'round the Island.

Jack Broderick

MAY 16TH, 2026

KENT ISLAND Day

Looking for Selling/Craft Vendors, Food Vendors, Local Authors and Non-Profits!



Event By: The Kent Island Heritage Society

- Parade
- Food Vendors
- Live Music
- Kids Activities
- Selling/Craft Vendors
- Authors Corner
- Local Non-Profit Info

- 📅 Saturday, May 16th, 2026
- 🕒 At 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- 📍 408 Love Point Rd, Stevensville, MD

More Information:
info.kentislandday@gmail.com



2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 14

DOCENT INTRODUCTION EVENT
1:00 p.m. Kent Island Library

MARCH 17

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 7
p.m. Historic Christ Church

Marty Bollinger will discuss Kent Island and other key parts of the Chesapeake Ferry System in his new book WHEN CLAIBORNE BRIDGED THE CHESAPEAKE The Rise and Fall of the Ferry Era

MAY 16

KENT ISLAND DAY Stevensville

JUNE 17

SUMMER MEMBERSHIP EVENT
TBD

SEPTEMBER 27

MEMBERSHIP PICNIC
Kirwan Museum

OCTOBER 3

ARTOBERFEST Stevensville

NOVEMBER 7

CLASSIC CAR SHOW Stevensville

DECEMBER 6

KIHS MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON
AND ELECTIONS

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 kentislandheritagesociety.org and on Facebook , X (Twitter,) YouTube, Instagram, Tiktok, Pinterest, Hashtags, and E-Mail.

Life In Dominion and Kent Island In the 1930s-1950s: Recollections of Charles Ferrell

By Louis Selby Crouch Jr.



Charles Wesley Selby (1864-1930) and Nina (Johnson) Selby (1875-1956) were the grandparents of Charles Ferrell who wrote an autobiography upon which most of this article is based. They operated the general store in Dominion for many years. Charles Selby's father, Captain John W. Selby, came to Kent Island in 1890 where he ran several businesses.

Dominion, the main focus of this article, is one of the three major towns on Kent Island that formed after the first town, Broad Creek, which was founded by the mid-late 1600s and abandoned by the late 1800s. Dominion was a relative late comer, forming at the end of the 1800s largely as a result of the oyster and maritime industries and general economic booms of Kent Island. Prior to 1891, the Dominion area was largely farm fields and forest. The first lots were offered for sale were by Senator James Kirwan according to a plat dated April 18, 1891. These 30 lots were along the southeast side of today's Little Creek Road beginning from the intersection with Dominion road and continuing towards Little Creek.

Many if not most of the of the lots in the plat exist today. Later, Elmer Golt and his son Roy subdivided their farm property south of the Kirwan lots down to Little Creek (more or less a sub-division of Dominion at the southernmost western part of the peninsula) adding to the Dominion population.

The remainder of this article was excerpted from a chapter of Charles Ferrell's autobiography centering largely on his Selby relatives in Dominion. Charles was born and raised in West Virginia but often visited his Kent Island relatives at length from the 1930s to the early 1950s. Charles had a distinguished career as a chemist and physicist and retired from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Charles sadly passed away in 2021. His autobiography is a marvelously detailed description of life in Dominion and Kent Island during that time as well as recollections of older times on Kent Island from his family and the many Kent Islanders he met. The excerpts were rearranged thematically per the bolded sections and edited slightly but are almost entirely verbatim from Charles.

The Kent Island Heritage Society is most grateful to Frank Ferrell, Charles's son, for providing this remarkable account of Dominion and Kent Island life before the Bay Bridges.

The Charles Ferrrell Family:

I was raised in West Virginia but spent my summers on Kent Island before the first Bay Bridge opened in 1952. In those days the only way to reach the island was by the Narrows Draw Bridge on the East, by the Love Point-Baltimore ferry on the north, the Annapolis-Matapeake ferry on the west and the Romancoke-Claiborne ferry on the south. The people on the island still talked with an English accent due to their isolation.

Kent Island is the oldest English settlement in Maryland, settled by William Claiborne in August 1631. We had a number of relatives who earned their living on the water or farming the rich lands inland. The narrow road in front of my grandmother, Mrs. Charles

Wesley Selby's store in Dominion (my mother had told me in the early days it was known as Devil's Dominion) was paved with crushed oyster shells.

My great grandfather Captain John William Selby was born in Worchester Co. MD in 1837. His father and grandfather were both natives of an old family in Virginia who came a few generations earlier from England. Captain John W. Selby went to the high seas as a young boy at the age of twelve years, was a ship builder in Sharptown, Maryland and also a sea captain of several vessels. He built, was master of and finally sold a great many vessels, and made several fortunes in his day. Among the ships commanded and owned were the schooners Sarah Ellen, S. B. Nelson and Annie Lloyd all sailing between Snow Hill, Maryland down the Pocomoke River to the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore. Among those ships he built and sailed were the Eureka, Annie, Hattie and Washington. His first wife, Margaret E. Melson, died in 1858 and is buried in the Old Methodist Church Cemetery on Maryland Route 348 in Sharptown, Maryland. His second wife, Miss Mary Taylor, had two children Charles Wesley Selby, my grandfather and John T. Selby, who was a photographer in Baltimore. Charles Wesley Selby's daughter Mary Ethelyn

Selby, my mother, married my father, Benjamin Franklin Ferrell of West Virginia, in 1924. Captain John W. Selby's third wife after the death of his second one was Margaret E. Burford of Sharptown. Children of this marriage were Mrs. J. Walter (Annie) Crouch of Dominion, Mrs. Edna S. Higdon of Baltimore, Misses Hattie and Mamie Selby and Edward Selby, the only child of Captain Selby born on Kent Island. Captain Selby had moved to Kent Island in 1890 where he conducted a good business in the building and contracting line and ran a sawmill besides. His son, Charles W. Selby, my grandfather, was a flourishing merchant on Kent Island owning the Selby store. Captain Selby died on April 15, 1910 and is buried in Sharptown in the Methodist Protestant Cemetery. My grandmother, Mary Wilhelmina (Nina) Johnson, was raised on Johnson's Island which is several hundreds of yards from the lower end of Dominion called Little Creek. Her father was William E. Johnson, who had earlier moved to the Eastern Shore from the Western shore of the bay. Her brother was Cleveland and her sisters included: Carrie, Viola, Annie, Daisy and Iva. (NOTE: Much of this section was taken from Captain Selby's biography in *Portrait and Biographical Record of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Chapman Publishing Company, New York and Chicago 1898*).

stove for both cooking and heat. Baskets of cantaloupe sold for a quarter and were bought from local farmers on the island. My grandmother had chicken coops and pens for both eggs and fresh chicken. The store had all types of hardware for both homes and boats. Nails, hinges, hammers, hatchets, oar locks, oakum and rope were stored in the back room. Paint and kerosene were stored in a small room off of the back porch which was connected to the living and dining rooms. Several shelves in the main part of the store held medications for "what ailed you" and all types of gook for use on your hair. There was a small supply of ammunition for rifles, pistols and shotguns. The store sold clothing ranging from coveralls to shoes. There was a locked glass front oak cabinet full of Case pocket knives of all sizes and shapes. Back in those days all boys carried pocket knives which were used in school to sharpen pencils and playing mumble peg. My main interests while a youth were the two glass showcases of candy, the freezer with ice cream of several flavors, the clear glass cookie jars and cake racks. Meats and cheese were stored in a large two-door refrigerator in the back room with chicken feed and hardware. Mr. Edward Turner, an attorney who had represented three generations of my family, told me in the early days he had political campaign gatherings on the front porch of the store. The store had seen some unusual events earlier in time. In the store there was a doorbell that was used by my grandfather or other clerks in the store to ring in the house when additional help was needed during busy times. At one time the bell rang continuously and it occurred at the exact time that my great grandmother Mary E. Johnson had died in 1931. What made it unusual was that the bell had not operated for several weeks due to the lack of batteries for the system. During my grandparent's lifetime on Kent Island they had to depend occasionally upon Mr. Smith & Wesson and Mr. Iver Johnson to defend their home and store. In one attempt to break into a storage building behind the store that was illuminated by a gas-light, my grandfather was awakened one night by the noise and fired his pistol through the window and screen on the second level bedroom window. They both went to find the intruder but he had disappeared in the darkness. The next morning, however, they found a rear section of a pair of blue coveralls, a portion of cotton underwear and some white skin from the back side of the rascal on the top strand of barbed wire on the high back yard fence used to keep in the chickens which he almost cleared on his rapid retreat to parts unknown. A number of years after the death of my grandfather in 1930, my mother, sister and I would spend several weeks each summer visiting my grandmother. Early one morning my grandmother came rushing into our upstairs bedroom next to the store and indicated that the previous night someone had robbed the store and set it on fire. I remember going to the front of the store to see where someone had thrown a large rock



This Selby store was the center of social and business life in Dominion since the turn of the 20th Century until 1950. The Selby family home was attached to the store. It was one of several country stores on Kent Island where, "If they didn't have it, you didn't need it." As the sign shows, Christmas was an exciting time to shop. Dominion is located south of Chester off Rt. 522 along Little Creek Rd.

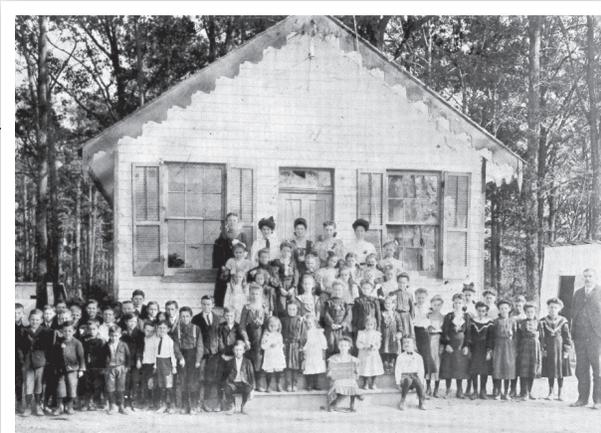
The Selby Store and Home: The Selby country store in those days sold almost everything that a family needed to survive on the island. There were four country stores between my grandmother's store and Route 50. In those days in the Selby store a single dip of ice cream was three cents, candy bars came in a one-cent size, chewing tobacco (Brown Mule) and soft drinks were a nickel and cigarettes were sold individually. The store sold kerosene (sometimes called coal oil) for lamps and cooking in the summer. In the winter they had a wood-burning kitchen

through the glass door that landed near the potbelly stove in the center of the room. My grandmother showed me where the thief had set the rack full of wax paper covered bread on fire and burned the paper but not the bread. Just a few inches behind the bread rack was a counter covered with men's pants and coveralls. The burning wax paper failed to ignite this combustible clothing. My grandmother said that the good Lord was watching over us that night since the burning bread wrappers scorched the linoleum floor but did not ignite it. I was there when local police took visible dirty fingerprints from the glass door and front store windows. Even with these prints the arsonist was never caught. My mother then sent a request to the governor of Maryland to get the State Police to further check into the identity of this arsonist and potential killer. No one was ever identified by this additional investigation. A letter from the Maryland Governor stated that due to the relationship of the people on Kent Island it was impossible for an outsider to obtain sufficient information for a conviction. No one was talking. My mother thought that it was a good possibility that the rogue was one from the neighborhood that she used a buggy whip on the seat of his pants for cussing her out on the front porch of her father's store many decades earlier. There was a small third floor storage area over the main part of the store. It contained a museum full of articles. One of my great uncles, John T. Selby was a photographer on West Lexington Street in Baltimore and must have stored some of his belongings at his brother's home. There were a brand new horn for a Ford Model T still in the box, two disassembled pistols, a boy's bicycle 22 rifle, unopened boxes of old Tootietoy cars and trucks with solid metal wheels, a stone tomahawk and a shotgun or two. My Uncle Willie's World War One uniform was in the upper level attic in a sealed bag. There were many kinds of old clocks and ship building tools and even a cow hide from one of the cows that stayed in the barn back of the store.

The Selby home attached to the store had electricity and a hand pump in the kitchen but my grandmother grew up with the three-hole outhouse about 100 feet in the rear of the store and never had indoor plumbing installed even in the early 1950s. The environmental conditions in the outhouse varied with the seasons of the year. In the summer it was hot and had aroma, flies, gnats, dirt daubers, and mosquitoes and in the winter it was very cold with a strong colder breeze up through the three holes. A person could always tell of a "Northeaster" without leaving the main part of the house by looking at the waves in the wash basins on the second floor bedrooms from air infiltration through the horizontal wood siding and the plastered walls. A toy sailboat floating in this basin would have been quickly blown aground into the rim. During winter any heat on the second floor diffused up the closed stairway or through small metal heat grate

openings in the bedroom floor from the pot-belly stove in the living room. Before the days of refrigeration, the home had a concrete cellar house that was cool in the summer. The enclosed porch made it a good place to play when we were children. Next to the cellar house was a large pear tree which would drop ripe fruit all over the place and draw yellow jacket bees that were not exactly friendly. The backyard had several plum trees near the fenced chicken yard. My grandmother Selby's home parlor held an upright piano and a pump organ on opposite walls. The fireplace mantle was covered with pictures of relatives, glass art ware and clear glass kerosene lamps. A large gold leafed mirror was directly above the mantle. Dark walnut furniture lined the walls along with a round glass faced bookcase and desk which held books published in the last century. There were numerous outbuildings including a small barn in the back yard. Two sheet metal covered garages held a Model T Ford four-door sedan and an early Model T Ford truck which we played in while kids. The car had been placed on blocks after the death of my grandfather and kept in the locked part of the garage. The truck was used by my grandfather to bring supplies for the store from Baltimore. The car was sold during the Second World War for ten dollars by my grandmother for someone to convert to a truck to haul oysters to market. The wash house directly behind the kitchen held tubs and a hand cranked washing machine with a crank driven wringer.

Students attended this one-room schoolhouse beginning some time before 1893 when it was deeded to the school system. A new school was built there in 1917 and served until 1927. Today, a portion of the old school still stands and is home to the Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage at 1201 Parson Island Road.



Charles's Kent Island Experiences: During our summer visits to Kent Island we did a lot of swimming at a boat yard not far from one of my cousin's, Katie Crouch's home. They had a whole house full of children near the same age as my sister and me. My worst swimming experience was diving headfirst into a large jellyfish and getting some of that burning material in my eyes. They took me to the shore and held my head under a hand pump in the front yard for several minutes washing the jellyfish residue from my eyes. We normally swam from one of the two narrow piers at the boat yard to a Skipjack, a single mast sailing vessel used in the winters to dredge oysters under sail, which was anchored not far offshore. We had to wear old tennis shoes while swimming in that area to prevent cutting our feet on oyster shells that had been dumped in the water during the past centuries. Sometimes while my dad was there we would drive to Matapeake to watch the ferryboat landings and to swim on the sandy beach that did not have many oyster shells to cut our feet. Another activity that we pursued was air rifle shooting at a frog pond about a half-mile from the store and across a narrow dirt road from an old one-room schoolhouse that my mother, and uncle Willie and cousin Roy Golt, had attended in the early 1900s. Most of the targets were floating beer, whisky and pop bottles, light bulbs, pipe tobacco and snuff cans, and an occasional

frog or dragon-fly. Dirt dauber nests on the sides of my grandmother's barn and outbuildings made good targets which would explode with a puff of dust when hit but often they would get their revenge by chasing and stinging the shooter on his rapid return to the house. My air rifle, which I still have, is a Daisy "Buck Jones" pump gun while all of the others had the lever action type. During one of our visits to the Island I remember taking a bus trip to Tolchester Beach to visit the amusement park with a large number of local Methodist church members. The narrow county road to route 50 was covered with oyster shells in those days and in places was quite rough. When the bus hit one of the pot holes, the false teeth from one of the rapidly talking older ladies went out of her mouth and slid under the seat in front of me. Being a Boy Scout, I did my good deed for the day and quickly retrieved them for her since she looked and talked funny without her teeth. About the only ride that I remember at Tolchester was spending the most of my time driving the electric bumper cars. The return trip to me was uneventful for I slept the whole way back to my grandmother's. When in the US Army in the early 1950's every once in a while I would take one of the GIs from Edgewood to visit Kent Island on a weekend. Brooks Jackson, a distant relative of Stonewall Jackson, went with me on one weekend. It was a much different world than on an army post and one could relax and read, there was no TV there. Business started to decline at my grandmother's store due to the opening of some supermarkets on the island. Sometimes only a dozen or so people would come into the store on Saturday afternoons. During the Second World War, when one of my cousins, Carl Johnson from Kent Island, was missing in action after the Normandy invasion of Europe, great aunt Iva had spent a considerable amount of money on fortune-tellers trying to find his whereabouts. They continued to tell her that he was alive and to take her money until he was reported dead by the war department. Summertime was the best time for a visit since there were all kinds of fresh vegetables, fruit, fried chicken, fish and crab cakes at the meals that were a far cry from our standard army mess hall food. One advantage of staying on Kent Island on weekends was that there were no bugles or cannon firing to wake you up in the morning. We could sleep as long as we wanted. However, in the fall, there were low flying ducks and geese that would wake me way before daylight. It was my favorite place for R and R (Rest and Relaxation). Since my grandmother did not drive a car, I would take her to various places she needed to go on weekends both on and off of the island. The farthest trip off of the island was to Centerville, the county seat, to visit her attorney or the Centerville National Bank where she did her banking and was also a small stockholder. On one of our return trips I asked her if she had ever ridden in a car at 60 miles per hour (one mile per minute). She



This church at 1202 Little Creek Rd is one of the remaining buildings from the early days of Dominion. It was a Methodist Church for many years and is today used by the Church of the Apostolic Faith.





(Top) The Chester Service station opened by Edward Severa and his brother Monk upon his return from WW1 was located in Dominion where the building still exists. The station was open for vehicles and boats and, as the sign reads, "Small Jobs Done While You Wait." Pictured from left are Ed Severa, an unknown gentleman, Ethelyn Selby (Frank Ferrell's grandmother,) Monk Severa, and Joseph Severa.

(Bottom) These five local musicians are playing hits of the day during the Ragtime era in front of the Selby store. In the front row are Monk Severa (l) and Albert Roe; in the rear from the left are Smity Crouch, Albert Thomas, and Willy Selby.

indicated that she had not so I accelerated to that speed and drove a few miles on a straight stretch of the road in an unpopulated area. This was above the speed limit at that time. Later in the store with my grandmother she told one of the local police officers of her first trip in a car at over 60 miles per hour. I thought for a minute that "now I am going to get it" but the officer only grinned at me. I really enjoyed talking to the local residents of Kent Island of which a lot were related to the Selbys and Johnsons. They were all hard-working watermen, merchants and farmers and of high moral character.

Charles and Kent Islanders: When I was a kid, my great uncle Elmer Golt who married Annie Johnson, my grandmother's sister, used a Model A Ford coupe with a rumble seat to travel around the island and to the county seat at Centerville. He owned a large waterfront farm on the southern end of the Island on Crab Alley Bay as well as many other pieces of land. When I was a child, I remember that lightning destroyed his large barn while we were visiting Kent Island. His sons were Roy and Medford.

Medford and his wife, Lola, had two daughters, Jane and Ann who are about the same age as my sister, Mary Lynn, and me. Medford lived in a large home in those days in Stevensville that had a "Captains walk" on the roof

The Selby store was one of the local establishments frequented by Lester Lee, a distant cousin, who was made famous in the Chapter "Lester Lee and the Chicken Neckers" in the classic book by William W. Warner entitled "Beautiful Swimmers" about the blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay. One of my sons, a professional photographer, kept his small cabin cruiser at Lester Lee's son, Ted Lee's dock in Little Creek. My great uncle Cleveland Johnson lived only two houses from my grandmother's place but for some unknown reason he didn't talk much to my grandmother and I do not remember of ever talking to him as a small child.

Chaney Clough, an oysterman, rented the small house from my grandparents on the lot between my great uncles and the store. I was told that in earlier times this building had been used as a sawmill office. Chaney would often take Dad and me fishing in Eastern Bay each summer we visited Kent Island.

Walter Crouch and his wife Annie, (daughter of Captain John W. Selby of Worcester, MD by his third wife) lived in the first house on the right-hand side of the store. About halfway down the row of homes lived another cousin, George Crouch. We used to play with his grandson Gerald when we visited each summer. Fresh fish, oysters and crabs were in abundant supply and my grandmothers cook "Tiny" who could not read and write but could outperform modern cooks at the current expensive seafood restaurants.

I had a great aunt Daisy Johnson Coulter who lived on the end of the road past my grandmother's store at Little Creek. She ran an oyster house and a small store close to her home near the inlet used to tie up the fishing boats.

One of my cousins, Walter "Smitty" Crouch had a small tavern and an oyster house nearby. His son Gordon recently sold the crab house that now included a small store. This crab house is directly across the water from Johnson's Island. Another cousin, the sister of Smitty, Pearl Jones, lived on the water on another inlet across Crab Alley Creek from Dominion.

After graduating from Washington College with a BA degree in 1915 and serving in the army at Fort Meade during the First World War my uncle, William Wesley (Willy) Selby, drowned on December 31, 1921 during a duck hunting accident while rowing a small boat to a blind in the waters off of Kent Island. His friend John Coppage survived the icy swim in the cold bay and made it to shore. About a week following the funeral, both my grandmother

and my grandfather were awakened one night by someone playing a violin in the parlor downstairs. They both went to room where the music originated. The music had stopped and no one was there. My grandmother, a very religious Methodist, called such events "tokens". My grandmother also told me of a ghostlike figure of a young girl in a long dress who was seen several times in her childhood home on Johnson's Island. It has been so long ago that I have forgotten the details of the sightings except that they occurred in one of the upstairs bedrooms.

Johnson Island: Sometime after the death of Great Grandmother Johnson in 1931, Johnson Island was offered for sale. The following is from the real estate listing describing the property at that time: The 22¾ acre island was located 600 feet from the public landing at Little Creek. The owner's home is a substantial wooden structure with large attic used as a children's playroom and bedroom, three bedrooms and second floor with closets and large storage room. First Floor held a large bedroom, hall, parlor, kitchen, bathroom and three screened porches. Four open fireplaces. Running water Electric lights. Completely furnished for family and guest use. The island has a caretaker's cottage, outhouses with an underground ice storage container, tool and harness house, chicken coop and stable. Livestock includes a milk cow, certified by Maryland authorities, and a good working horse, also gentle for saddle. The equipment includes two wagons, two sets of harness, ladies and men's saddle and bridles and tools for house and garden together with agricultural implements. The island has a main boat landing on the southwest side and two small boat landings at the northern end. The boats include one boat with an outboard motor, two rowboats, one sailboat and a large scow for transporting heavy materials. The island drinking water is supplied by a artesian well using an electric pump and a hand pump. The electric power is supplied by a two-year old Delco light system, 110 volts, direct current. The island has a private telephone connecting the owner and caretaker houses. The fruit trees were supplied in the fall of 1931 by the Bountiful Ridge Nurseries of Princess Anne, MD. Dynamite was used and the orchard planted according to recommendations from agents of the Dept. of Agriculture. The fruit included apples, pear, cherry, plum, and apricot. Other plantings included raspberries, blackberries and gooseberries. Records in the Centreville Court House for a period of over one hundred years indicate that the island was owned by one family up to the end of the Civil War. From then on several families settled

there. The island once had a bridge to Kent Island that belonged to a storekeeper who removed it when he found that other occupants crossed the bridge to purchase their needs in other stores.

Concluding Remarks: The entire towns of Stevensville and Chester are documented by the Maryland Historical Trust, Stevensville also becoming a National Historic District largely by the efforts of the KIHs in the 1980s. The Stevensville and Chester town buildings were described in brief detail in town-wide MHT documents and in addition some historic buildings are described in detail in separate MHT documents. However, town-wide documentation of Dominion was not performed by the MHT. Instead, eight individual homes were described in some detail. All of the MHT documents referred to can be found on the Maryland Historical Trust web page using the Medusa Map link currently on the main page.

The Selby store and home was built on one of the lots sold by Senator Kirwan not far from the intersection with Dominion Road. After the closing of the store in the 1950s the store section was later demolished leaving the home until it was demolished sometime from 2016-2019. The property on Little Creek Road where the store and house can today be seen as an empty lot next to the J. Walter Crouch house which is now dilapidated and unoccupied for many years before.



Life in Dominion revolved around the water as it did in the circa 1939 photograph of children playing in Little Creek. Boats like those shown were likely built in one of the boatyards in the Dominion area. Charles Ferrel, who wrote an autobiography upon which this article is based, is the boy in the water at the far left of this photo. The other kids included members of his and the Crouch family.

The Little Creek Public Landing at 1901 Little Creek Rd in Dominion gives boaters access to the water and photographers a great view for waterfowl and scenic views, including Johnson Island where Nina Johnson Selby was born.



KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP

The Kent Island Heritage Society is offering a \$1000 one-year scholarship to a graduating senior from Kent Island High School who plans to attend college.

TO BE ELIGIBLE THE APPLICANT MUST:

- Have a 3.0 GPA or higher, and
- Have performed community service.

Please submit for review:

The application form a letter of recommendation from a teacher or guidance counselor accompanied by your high school transcript, and a one page essay on the importance of preserving the heritage of Kent Island (the first paragraph of which should contain a brief biographical sketch.)

Application Form

Complete the following and return it with the recommendation, transcript and essay.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Brief explanation of Community Service: _____

All applications must be postmarked no later than **APRIL 1st**. Send to:
The Kent Island Heritage Society Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 321, Stevensville MD 21666

BECOME A DOCENT TO HELP SHARE KENT ISLAND HISTORY

If you have received this newsletter and are reading this article, it means that you are a member of The Kent Island Heritage Society. We have a large membership, but we need your help! I have heard members say, "I am not a native Kent Islander, and I don't know the local history." Neither did most of our current docents. I am inviting you to learn more about how you can help share the enjoyment of visiting our Historic Sites.

We are planning a training session at 1 p.m. on March 14 at the Kent Island Library for anyone who will consider becoming docents or other activities to support our mission of researching, preserving, and sharing Kent Island History.

Please contact Hanna Wall 410-924-1069, hwall506@gmail.com for more information about being a docent and dates for the training sessions.

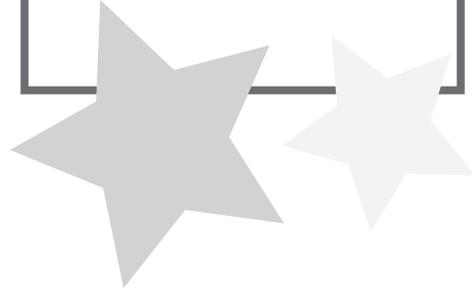
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SCAN KIHS QUICK RESPONSE (QR) CODE TO REACH OUR WEBSITE

You can reach our Kent Island Heritage Society website with most Smartphones which are equipped with QR Code readers in their cameras. Hold your Smartphone camera over the QR Code so that it is clearly on the phone screen. The phone will scan the code and connect to the site. Some phones might require you to take a picture of the QR Code.

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

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POSTCARD from Kent Island: Calling All Cars (and trucks) from Early Kent Island

From John L. Conley Collection

This postcard shows Willie Porter in his truck in front of the Stevensville train station. Rubber wheeled vehicles began replacing horse and wagons after the turn of the century. It would be interesting to create a collection of pictures from the early years (at least until 1940) and early gas and service stations like the Chester Service Station shown in the article on Dominion in this issue. There are several such pictures in the various Nick Hoxter books on Kent Island that can be found in the Kent Island Library. Please send any pictures or scans of early vehicles for a future article in this Newsletter or for a display in the new Kent Island Heritage Center scheduled to open in Stevensville this year. Send to jconcomm@gmail.com.



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