



# ABOUT TOWN

News, events and resources for Kensington Historical Society members and friends

PO Box 453, Kensington MD 20895

May 2010

**MCPS Students can earn SSL hours with KHS**



Page 2

**Perambulating the "Dan" and the Newport Mill Seat**

*KHS Preservationist, William Maury enlightens us with historical tales*

Page 2

**The Society fondly remembers Lorraine Kennedy**

Page 3



**Residents Rally Behind Noyes Library**

*Residents rally to try and keep Noyes Library open.*



Page 5

**Welcome New Members**

*KHS Welcomes our new members*

Page 5



**KHS Membership**



*Join today! Membership form for new & returning members.*  
Page 6

## May 11, 2010 Meeting: The Fascinating History of Forest Glen Seminary Revealed

KHS will host a presentation by noted expert Ms Bonnie Rosenthal on the history of the unique National Park Seminary property and how it has been brought back to life with a new use after years of neglect. First developed as a railroad hotel and Washington area retreat, the property marked by a legacy of transformation is now a model of restoration and commercial reuse.

Ms Rosenthal became acquainted with the National Park Seminary at Forest Glen in 1989, and got involved with Save Our Seminary, the non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, history, and future of the National Park Seminary. She served on the board of SOS and then as president for 6 years. From 1999 through most of 2004, she was executive director of SOS until she was hired as the general property manager of the historic Seminary by the developer. Bonnie is also a former staff member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the D.C. Preservation League.

The meeting will begin on Tuesday, May 11, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Kensington Town Hall, 3710 Mitchell Street, Kensington.

## Kensington House Histories

The Historical Society has mailed a House History Form to every home in Kensington. We are trying to expand our collection of information on the homes and families of Kensington. With this project we hope to get information on every house in Town. The Society's archives, housed in the Armory and available to any interested resident, include information on former residents, house plans, historic area work permits, architects, etc. We are always looking for additional information to include in these files which provide invaluable resources for new residents interested in learning more about the history of their home. Thank you to all those who have sent us

information. We've had a wonderful response so far. This is an ongoing project – there is no time limit for your response. We hope to have a copy of the form on our website shortly. You can write up your response and email it to [info@kensingtonhistory.com](mailto:info@kensingtonhistory.com) or return the form by mail to KHS, PO Box 453, Kensington 20895. We are grateful for any pictures as well, particularly older ones. We appreciate any and all information you can provide. If you would like to help with this project, please include your name and phone number. Thanks!



## GARDEN PARTY ~ May 22<sup>nd</sup>

The KHS Garden Party will be in the Clum~Kennedy Gardens, Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May from 2 to 5. Reservations are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children, with a maximum charge of \$30 per family. The party is open to all residents and Historical Society members. Please see the enclosed invitation for details. If you would like to participate in the Art Exhibit please contact Vicky Surles at [VSurlesGraphics@comcast.net](mailto:VSurlesGraphics@comcast.net). Please see the enclosed invitation for details, page 4.

# Perambulating the “Dan” and the Newport Mill Seat

By William M. Maury

For many Kensington Historical Society members walking is one of life's little pleasures, particularly when combined with a bit of nature and a dose of historical ambience. A stroll around KenGar Park, which lies beyond Kensington's northwest boundary on Beach Drive, provides just the ticket for this.

To get the full flavor of the place, start your ambulatory historical mulling at the eastern edge of the parking lot looking eastward toward the KenGar community. Ahead of you is a bog/swamp that curves several hundred yards creating a bowl bounded by 100 foot tall palisades. For untold millennia, before the red stone arch supporting the railroad bridge came in 1892, the palisades were the banks of Rock Creek, and for about a century and a half of that time, the area was an economic engine for much of the area that was to become Kensington.

As Historical Society members likely know, the town of Kensington occupies a small part of a 1689 land patent given to William Joseph for services rendered. Joseph named this patent Joseph's Park and named an abutting patent he received at the same time, Hermitage. Together these patents comprised some 8,000 acres – roughly 12.5 square miles. But this story is about the 3,700 acres that for the most part abutted Joseph's patents and contained the portion of Rock Creek that flowed through the area. This land was patented to Thomas Brooke about five years after Joseph received his patent and, for reasons now lost in the mists of time, was given the name The Dan, or in some references The Dann.

In simplest terms, patents of the sorts given to Messrs. Joseph and Brooke were really great deals with a catch. The patentee got the land for free but – and this was the catch – he had to pay quit rent to the royal treasury. Thus, as a rule the smart patentee would quickly sell or lease as many lots as he could and build money making businesses that he could lease to operators on the remainder. In other words, royalty or stock companies used patents as speculative jolts to start local economies. As a rule they encouraged both rampant speculation and rapid development.

The Brooke patent included many possibilities for rapid development both as farm land and, with Rock Creek as a constant source of energy, for industrial development. For the first half-century that it owned the property the Brooke family opted to make its money solely from the sale and lease of the Dan acreage. But, in 1744, right around the time Thomas Brooke, Jr. – the namesake of the original patent holder – died, the family leased 5 ½ acres in the palisaded bowl of Rock Creek we introduced at the outset. The lessee was Thomas Clelland, whose name also appeared as Cleland and Clayland on various documents – spelling being a matter of scant significance in those years. The patent knitted together property at the intersection of the Dan, Joseph's Park and Hermitage.

Historians have speculated that given the land package's small size and proximity to Rock Creek, Clelland purchased it as a mill site. In fact, according to Eleanor Cook in a 1991 issue of the Montgomery County Historical Society quarterly, the record is reasonably clear that by 1756 Clelland had established a mill at the site.

By the time Clelland purchased the site, building mill seats – structures whose use for a set period of time would be sold or leased to millers – had become an increasingly popular route to at least middlin' prosperity. But, though the goal was clear, the path to creating a mill seat was not without both work and risk. For example, Clelland's trip to easy street required that he build a partial dam across Rock Creek to divert a fairly even flow of water into a millpond and dig a channel from the millpond for the sluice that would power the water wheel and another that would return the water back to Rock Creek at a point below the dam. Evidently Clelland built well, for his actions were well rewarded.

As was frequently the case, ambitious millers supplemented milling fees with money earned from fruit orchards, and grain from their own fields. Clelland's venture followed this pattern. Over the next few decades it became increasingly successful and, somewhere along the way – no one seems to know quite why – took on the name Newport Mill. In the auspicious year 1776 Clelland's once modest 5 ½ acre tract in the loop of Rock Creek at the junction of Joseph's Park and the Dan – now expanded to almost 48 acres – was patented as the Newport Mill Seat. For much of the next century the Newport Mill seat was a source of regular cash and home to a diverse mix of people including the man who served as the model for the main character of one of this country's best known novels.

We will continue the stroll around this one time mill seat in a future issue.

KHS will again be offering opportunities for Student Service Volunteer hours. We are a MCPS pre-approved non-profit organization and offer many opportunities at varying times.

Email [info@kensingtonhistory.org](mailto:info@kensingtonhistory.org) or call Julie (301-942-8933) for more information.



## THE ARCHIVES ARE OPEN

The Kensington Historical Society Archives have reopened. We are open 9:30 to 12 on Friday mornings and other days by appointment. (Call Ann Pfautz at 240-423-2827.) We are happy to receive donations and have the ability to scan your photos while you wait.

## Kensington Cabin Nomination

The cabin committee is still looking for stories and photographs of activities at the Kensington Cabin over the years. If you have any information you wish to contribute, or know of someone we should contact, please contact Jen Gurney at [jagurney@gmail.com](mailto:jagurney@gmail.com), or call Julie at 301-942-8933.

## Donations

The Society welcomes donations of material about all facets of Kensington life. We accept papers, maps, and photos.

- Bethesda by William Offutt,  
Montgomery County by Michael Dwyer – from Dan Hayes and the family of Charles Hayes,
- Connections, a collection of poems which create a portrait of Kensington, by and from Richard H. Rice.

Please patronize our sponsors. We thank them for their support! Their addresses and phone numbers may be found in our 2010 calendar - links to their websites are on [www.kensingtonhistory.org](http://www.kensingtonhistory.org)

**BENEFACTORS:** Macon Construction (Carl Mahaney), Long and Foster Realtors (Gary Ditto);

**PATRONS:** Samuel S. Case Cabinetmakers, Kensington Pharmacy, Knowles Printing, Safeway;

**SUPPORTERS:** State Delegate Al Carr, Amicus, Chesapeake Framing, David Gregg Tree Services, Hardware City, Johnson's, Jubilee Assoc. of MD, Kensington Caboose, Kensington Row Bookshop, Kitchen & Tile Classics, Logan's Automotive, Mizell Lumber & Hardware, Moose, Green & Korom, P.A., Osiris Books, Patrick realty Co, Sparrow's, Sub\*Urban Trading Company, Textile & Rug Museum and Susan I. Wranik Associates

## Farewell to a "Valiant Woman" Lorraine Josephine Kennedy 2-27-1915 - 4-3-2010

Lorraine Kennedy, a native Australian, arrived in San Francisco to be greeted by her American, soon-to-be husband Frank Joseph Kennedy in 1947. For over 50 years they lived on Montgomery Avenue in Kensington. Lorraine was sharp, quick witted and kind hearted, always ready to lend a helping hand. She brought flair and humor to the traditional female role of supportive wife, homemaker and community activist. Her volunteer work included The Montgomery County Thrift Shop, Circle Manor Nursing Home, Noyes Children's Library, The Town of Kensington, The Women's Community Club of Kensington - and fortunately, The Kensington Historical Society. Lorraine, a Charter member, was an alert and cheerful presence at every KHS event - greeting party goers with beautiful name tags she had rendered in calligraphy, working in the KHS archives, on the Calendar, on newsletters, on mailings, sharing Kensington stories with the Cub Scouts and the Presbyterian study group. She was an inspiring example of a life well lived, with integrity, humor and service to her community. We treasure the memories she left for Kensington.

## Kensington's GREEN DAY

This year Green Day falls on Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup> and will be from 10 to 1 PM. As in the past, the Town will have wonderful activities for children. The State Forrester as well as Master Gardeners will be available to answer your questions. Check the Town website for the latest details: [www.TOK.MD.gov](http://www.TOK.MD.gov).

Historic preservation is one of the best methods of sustainable adaptability. The Historical Society's 2010 Calendar, Kensington ~ A Green Perspective, is filled with green ideas already in use by your neighbors and the Town. The August calendar page features a variety of Kensington's sustainable businesses. More information is included at the back of the calendar. In case you didn't get your copy, they are available from the Society, the Town Office, and local bookshops.

## Community

*By Richard H. Rice*

From farmland to neighborhood  
Our houses have become community.  
Boulevards, parks, tree lined streets  
Quaint older homes, spectacular new additions.

As a family nurtures children and grandchildren  
So our neighbors care for one another.  
Helping each other with jobs large and small  
Attune with heart and ear.

Respecting diversities and backgrounds  
Coming together; finding common bonds.  
Holding close values, hopes and dreams  
Seeking plans for a future and promise.

*Reprinted with permission.*

The  
*KENSINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY*  
 Cordially invites you to our  
*Annual Spring Garden Party*

*Enjoy Music, Art and Refreshments in the Town's Clum~Kennedy Park,  
 10212 Frederick Ave. (north end) And Kensington Parkway  
 2 to 5 pm Adults \$10  
 Saturday, MAY 22nd Children \$5  
 (Rain date May 23rd, 301-942-8933) Family of 4 or more \$30*

*This one acre Garden was purchased in 1947 by the three Clum sisters, Mary, Helen and Bertha who lived opposite on the Parkway. Mr. Clum, their father was the Editor of the Montgomery Press (1895-1933) which was located behind the Howard Avenue Park. The last surviving daughter, Bertha, sold the Garden to the Town stipulating that it remain a Town Park. She insisted it be named for her neighbor Frank Kennedy for all his efforts in maintaining the Garden. After her death in 1987, the name was changed to the Clum~Kennedy Park.*

*~~~Art Exhibit and Sale ~~~*

*The Montgomery Art Association is sponsoring  
 An Art Exhibit featuring Kensington Themes!  
 Enjoy the work of local artists on special display.  
 (Cash or checks for purchases.)*

Please mail your party reservation by May 15<sup>th</sup> to Mabel Baker, 10225 Frederick Avenue # 403,  
 Kensington, MD 20895

*~ PERIOD ATTIRE ENCOURAGED ~*

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME (s) \_\_\_\_\_ Reservation(s) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I can help with displays\_\_\_\_, setup\_\_\_\_, check in\_\_\_\_, serving\_\_\_\_, clean up\_\_\_\_\_

I would be happy to bring an hors d'oeuvre\_\_\_\_\_, finger food\_\_\_\_\_, or dessert\_\_\_\_\_.

You may include your dues Jan 1 through Dec 31. Your paid membership year shows on your address label.

Individual \$20, Family \$25

# Warner Circle Project Gets Additional Funding; Residents Rally Behind Noyes Library

By John Doherty, KHS Preservation Chairman

Plans for renovation of Warner Manor received a timely boost from the State Legislature this month as lawmakers approved a \$275,000 grant to the County Parks and Planning Commission for the project.

The grant, which will require matching funds from the commission, was part of a 2010 omnibus bond bill sent to the governor as the Legislature adjourned for the year. The funds are designated for "the design, construction, repair, renovation, and reconstruction" of the historic Kensington landmark, the former summer home of Kensington founder Brainard Warner.

State Senator Richard Madaleno of Kensington led the successful effort to fund the grant. District 18 Delegates Ana Sol Gutierrez, Al Carr, and Jeff Waldstreicher led the effort in the lower House.

The funds will supplement a \$250,000 state grant provided for Warner Manor by the Legislature last year. That money, combined with matching funds from the commission, allowed initial design work to begin on restoration of

the circa 1894 mansion and carriage house.

A concept plan approved by the Parks Commission calls for restoring the two buildings and using them as office and storage space for county parks department staff, with public access to the manor after renovation. The surrounding 4.5-acre Legacy Open Space Park will remain open to public use.

## Noyes Library

Meanwhile, Kensington residents are rallying behind an effort to keep the historic Noyes Children's Library open in the face of ongoing county budget deliberations. The library, founded by Washington Star publisher Alfred Noyes in cooperation with Brainard Warner in 1893, is slated to close in July for a two-year renovation to meet federal disability access standards.

The Noyes Children's Library Foundation, which orchestrated a successful drive to prevent closure of the library in the 1990's through a public-private partnership with

Montgomery County, has stepped up with a plan to raise funds to keep Noyes open while the renovation plans are reviewed.

The children's library--the only one of its kind in the county and one of only three public libraries dedicated to children in the US--is located adjacent to Warner Circle Manor and Park, and has been a favorite of generations of area parents, grandparents and young children.

If the Foundation's proposal is approved by the County Council, the Noyes Children's Library Foundation will be looking for volunteers to help organize events and activities, such as a

Storybook Parade for children, and fundraising efforts such as a direct mail campaign and a gala auction. If you would like to

volunteer, or to receive occasional e-mails from the Foundation with news and announcements of upcoming events, please contact Jan Jablonski at [janjablonski@msn.com](mailto:janjablonski@msn.com). You may also look for the latest "News on Noyes" as we post it on [www.kensingtonhistory.org/](http://www.kensingtonhistory.org/)



## KHS Summer Concert Series RETURNS!

We are planning a full season of FREE Saturday morning concerts in the Howard Avenue Park through September. Our concert opener will be the Dixieland Express on June 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 to 11 AM. Please join us



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bridget Collins  
Harley Higgins

## Kensington Historical Society Officers and Committee Chairs

### OFFICERS:

President Julie O'Malley  
Vice President Steve Cohen  
Treasurer Detta Voesar  
Recording Secretary Sheila Dunne  
Corresponding Secretary Janet Barnes

### AT LARGE MEMBERS

Sue Mathias  
Trammell Maury  
Elisenda Sola-Sole

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Gary Ditto, John Doherty, Sigrid Doherty, Jack Gaffey, Leanne Pfautz, Ann Pfautz, Barbara Scharman, Wat Stewart, and Toni Ward

**Kensington Historical Society**  
**PO Box 453**  
**Kensington, MD 20895**

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**KHS MEETING**  
**Tuesday, May 11, 2010**

KHS hosts a presentation by noted expert Ms Bonnie Rosenthal on the history of the unique National Park Seminary property and how it has been brought back to life with a new use after years of neglect.

7:00 p.m. Refreshments  
7:30 p.m. Presentation

Kensington Town Hall/Armory. Lower Level,  
3710 Mitchell Street at Armory Avenue

A KHS business meeting follows the presentation.

**KENSINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Annual dues January 1 through December 31, \_\_\_\_\_  
(Year)

*Please send completed form to KHS, PO. Box 453, Kensington, MD 20895*

INDIVIDUAL Membership \$ 20  
FAMILY Membership \$ 25  
Business (Small & Non-Profit) \$75  
Corporate \$100  
Lifetime \$500

I want to:  Join the Kensington Historical Society  Renew membership

Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Lived in Kensington since \_\_\_\_\_

Please consider getting involved in one of our committees. Learn more about your Society.

I am interested in the following committees: (Please circle)

- Programs    Membership    Newsletter    Socials    Archives    Concerts**  
**Grants    Oral Histories    Preservation**