

Near the end of the 7th grade, school administrators forced Corrina to leave school when she became pregnant, and refused permission for her to graduate with her class. Ms. Kennard noted sadly, “back then they considered it a disgrace”, adding, “Two or three girls were pregnant and they wouldn’t let us graduate, I am so glad that policy has changed.” In that era students from all individual colored schools graduated in one combined ceremony at Swan Creek School near Havre de Grace.

Entertainment

Fun for Corrina during her youth consisted of simple pleasures. One favorite outing for the Williams family was attending horse races with their father at the former Bel Air Racetrack. Riding on the Ma and Pa train to York, PA, to visit family was another special treat. Ms. Corrina said her absolute favorite thing to do during World War II involved watching the white soldiers ride past the house on their beautiful horses as they moved back and forth to their camp a short distance down the road near Forge Hill Bridge. She noted the original bridge was built in 1911 and replaced in 2001. She also attempted to learn to swim in Deer Creek with the help of a friend and an old inner tube.

As she grew older, Ms. Corrina remembered going to dances at Johnny Jaynes

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Sports Arena & Skating Rink. She laughed about peeping through the cracks of the building during boxing matches, because she and her friends were too young to attend.

Of course the advent of electricity and TV in her home led to enjoyment of the many early shows, such as *Ed Sullivan*, *Amos & Andy*, and *Leave It to Beaver*. Life was good back then, she said, noting people seemed to be friendlier, if they met someone in need they would pitch in and help.

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Corrina D. Kennard
Memories of Family Life
Part 1 of 2

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**Bringing Communities
Together Through
Sharing History**

Cover: Ms. Corrina sitting on the rock that served as the front step prior to renovation of her house.

A Place Called Home

Ms. Corrina Druescella (Williams) Kennard of Kalmia, Maryland, at just five-feet tall, is a petite 98-year-old who looks half her age and possesses vivid silver hair and a twinkle in her eyes. Born on February 25, 1918, in an upstairs bedroom of the originally four room home in which she still lives on Forge Hill Road, she is as clear as a bell in her recollections of growing up in Harford County. Ms. Kennard is proud that four generations of her family have lived in this home, to which she returned in 1957 and purchased in 1961 from her aunt, Carrie (Williams) Morris, with a \$1000 bank loan. Ms. Corrina said she worked as a domestic in and around Bel Air in order to repay the loan quickly. Her first order of business as owner was to electrify the house, which the family previously had heated with an old wood stove and lighted with kerosene lamps.

The Family Remembered

Ms. Kennard's father, John Wesley Williams (1887-1954), was also born in this home, which originally belonged to his parents, George Dutton and Sophia Jane (Williams) Dutton who is identified in the 1910 census as a laundress.



(l) Picture of Aunt Emma (r) Ms. Corrina in 2016.

Ms. Corrina's mother, Druescella (Wilmer) Williams (1886-1962) was raised by her aunt Emma Wilmar Barnes, after her mother passed away. Ms. Kennard proudly displays a photo of Aunt Emma in her sitting room. John and Druescella had eight children, of which Corrina is the fourth.

Ms. Kennard speaks fondly of living on the State Road from Bel Air to Kalmia. Her dad worked as a laborer and on the side raised a few pigs, ducks, guinea hens, and a cow for milk and butter. Also, the family kept a garden which supplied the vegetables that her mother canned for use in winter. Most of this work occurred in the basement, which doubled as kitchen, pantry, and general storage area. The family drank from a hand-dug well that produced the coldest water around until it went dry in 2002. Ms. Kennard's youngest sister, Anna Mae Williams (1926-1959) gave her the nick name

“Ena”, to which she still answers. Her oldest sister, Blanch Williams Brooks (1910-2003), looked out for her and made all of her clothes when Ena was a young child.

Fond Memories of School

In 1924 Ms. Corrina began attending Clark's Chapel School (aka) Kalmia's two-room colored school, a short distance from home. Her teacher was Miss Cornelia F. Ruff and later Miss Alberta Ross, and the school bell rang promptly at 9:00 A.M. She chuckled recalling the boys always had the “heavy work” of carrying water from a nearby well, and chopping wood, while the girls were given “easier chores,” like cleaning the outhouse and keeping the school clean. She remembers Fridays when each student would bring a vegetable from home and contribute to a large pot of “community soup”, which everyone would enjoy during lunch. Ms. Kennard said her teachers always saw that the students got a little something for Christmas and birthdays. Everyone had to participate in plays and recitals, but Ms. Corrina recalled that she stuttered and never felt she developed into a good public speaker. She remembers distinctly that in 6th grade she had to recite a poem about the deaths of soldiers in the civil war, titled "The Blue and the Gray", a presentation for which Miss Ruff lovingly helped her prepare.