

# MENOKIN



# A FIELD

**A periodic newsletter chronicling the preservation of Menokin Plantation.**

## **KING CENTER IS DEDICATED - AND OPENED!**



More than 150 guests, supporters and donors attended the dedication of the Martin Kirwan King Conservation and Visitors Center at Menokin on the afternoon of Sunday, October 17. And the King Center is now open for scholars, students, and visitors!

Menokin Foundation president Helen Turner Murphy welcomed those who attended the dedication and thanked the entire "Menokin family" for its help and support. "The Menokin family is diverse, large, and multi-talented," she said. "We are tremendously grateful to all members of our family."

She said the opening of the King Center "represents a great leap forward in establishing Menokin as a place where we can welcome visitors, demonstrate and exhibit our treasures, promote research, celebrate history and be the dynamic learning place that we have long envisioned."

Carter King, son of the late Martin King, told the audience that "My father seeded us all with a love for this project and with a passion for its goals. We honor him best by holding his vision close and grafting our own with it; the Past joining hands with the Present and marching smartly forward."

Keynote speaker was W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr., Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources. "The mission of the Menokin Foundation is vitally important to our future welfare," he said, "for it seeks to reveal for us from whence we sprang, and it is only in knowing where we have come from that we will be able to determine the right direction in which to proceed."

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"We are rooted in this soil, as were those earlier Americans who bequeathed to us this great nation. Their legacy, like the legacy of Martin Kirwan King, is an important part of our life today," Murphy said.

"Although rooted in the 18th century, the King Center is a 21st century structure equipped with computers and databases and digital reconstruction programs and other advanced technological equipment that today advances the learning process," he said. "We are ready to get about our work."



Also welcoming guests and saluting Martin King at the dedication were District 28 State Senator John H. Chichester and Northern Neck Delegate Albert Pollard.

*The King Center is open Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and other times by appointment.*

## **MENOKIN WOODWORK COMES HOME**

Some 235 years ago local craftsmen, carpenters, and most likely slaves constructed the Menokin manor house, adorning its interior with intricately crafted woodwork. Nearly 40 years ago the woodwork was stripped out of the house to better protect it by members of the Omohundro family, Menokin's owners at that time. Nineteen years ago the APVA persuaded the Omohundros to allow the APVA to move it to a barn at Bacon's Castle for safekeeping. In September 2004, it came back to the conservation room of the King Center.

Now that the woodwork has returned to Menokin, the Foundation's task is to sort, document and analyze the hundreds of pieces, consisting of a mass of shutters, doors, mantels, and molding.



This phase of the project is being headed by consultant Matt Webster, director of restoration at Historic Kenmore in Fredericksburg.

"The exciting thing here is that you have a building that's been completely torn apart," said Webster. "From a visitor's standpoint, this is a unique experience, seeing the back side of things that you don't normally get to see, the complexity behind the construction, the tool marks and how multiple pieces are laid out and put together as one."

Thirteen pieces of the woodwork, including two mantels and the frame of the great arched front door to Menokin, are on display in the King Center library. Entitled "Pieces of Menokin," Menokin's vice president and director of architectural research at Colonial Williamsburg, Ed Chappell, has prepared an interpretative pamphlet describing the exhibit for visitors.

Conservation and documentation work is ongoing.

