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## The Kitty Knight House Ghost

by *Mindie Burgoyne*

Sometime between 1773 and 1783, two brick houses were built on a hill bordering the Sassafras River in Georgetown – Kent County. On May 6, 1813 British forces sailed up the Sassafras River – the river that separates Cecil and Kent Counties - and burned Fredericktown and Georgetown.

Catherine Knight – known as “Kitty” – was born into a wealthy, prominent family in Kent County. Though Miss Knight was from the refined upper class, she had humility and stubbornness that impacted Maryland history. She convinced a British Admiral to stop his forces from burning her town, in particular those two brick houses on the Sassafras River.



The British soldiers were banging on the doors in Georgetown telling everyone to leave as they set fire to the homes. When some soldiers did the same at the houses on the hill, Kitty Knight pleaded with them to stop as she put out the fires. The soldiers ordered her to leave and she said, “I shall not leave; if you burn this house, you burn me with it.” The soldiers continued to try and ignite these houses, and Kitty Knight continued to put out the fires and beg. Finally, she was able to ask Admiral Cockburn, commander of these British forces to halt the burning of these two houses. She claimed there was an elderly woman who could not leave, that would be burned with the house if they were to set it on fire. For reasons known only to those that were present, the Admiral ordered his troops back to the barges, and the two houses and a church were spared destruction.

Today, the Kitty Knight house operates as a full service Inn and Restaurant with panoramic views of the Georgetown Harbor and Kent and Cecil County landscapes. It's a popular place for the local community to dine out as well as a destination that attracts visitors that come by boat and from out of town. But the locals and the staff will admit – as have previous owner and staff – that Kitty Knight seems very much “alive” at the Kitty Knight House.

For years, Kitty Knight House staff and owners have said doors open and close by themselves throughout the building. A dining room manager reported to see the shadowy, ephemeral figure of the former lady of the house standing by the door. The former owner of the Kitty Knight House said when outside the building, he would see lights on in the second and third story rooms that he knew had not been booked. He'd see people walking around in the rooms. Upon investigation, he'd find the rooms empty, and the lights off.

A travel writer who stayed in Room 4 – the room thought to be Kitty Knight's bedroom, - wrote that when the Innkeeper showed her to the room, the door closed by itself as soon as they entered. The Innkeeper said that if Kitty likes you and wants you to stay, she will close the door. The same travel writer recounted a staff member telling her they had to remove Kitty Knight's rocking chair from the room because guests complained it was rocking on its own.

Sandy, the current Manager of the Inn told me that as recently as a week prior to our interview she was with a visitor in the business office and the phone rang. She could see that the call was coming from Room 4 – Kitty Knight's Room. She answered the phone. No one was there. The room was not booked. When staff investigated they found the room locked. They entered the room and found no one there.

I visited the Kitty Knight house yesterday - April 1, 2010 for the Eastern Shore War of 1812 Conference. It was the first time I was ever inside the building, as my research for Haunted Eastern Shore was done via, libraries, documents, newspapers and phone interviews. After the book was published I was asked to speak in Cecil County for an evening event, requiring an overnight stay. I wanted to book a room at the Kitty

Knight House and stay in Room 4 (the most haunted room, thought to be Kitty's own room). I called the Inn and they said they had plenty of vacancy ... in fact, any room BUT Room 4 was available. Since I couldn't get the haunted room, I opted to stay in Chesapeake City where I was speaking.

During yesterday's visit to Kitty Knight House, I was amazed at how readily the staff talked about paranormal activities. Usually ... especially in an Inn, the staff must be coaxed. I finally met Sandy whom I'd interviewed for the book, and she remarked, "It's funny you should come in today. Recently there's been an escalation of strange happenings. Not sure why this would happen now.. but there is unrest here."

During the lecture in the dining hall (which was packed), I needed to use the restroom, but it was across the dining hall and I would have had to walk directly in front of the speaker to gain access. I asked a staff member to direct me to another restroom. She said, "Go through the double doors, up the stairs and turn right."

<http://midshorelife.com/article/kitty-knight-house-ghost>

I got the directions mixed up (and this house is a maze of hallways and doorways, and stairways) and went through the double doors - up the stairs and turned right. This put me directly in front of Room number 4. I knew this was wrong. There was no public restroom in sight. I paused for a moment in front of room 4 and though it may sound trite or sensational ... I got the creepy feeling someone was watching me.

I'm determined to go back for an overnight stay, and this time stay - in Room 4.

*More on the Kitty Knight House and other Eastern Shore haunted tales, can be found in [Haunted Eastern Shore: Ghostly Tales from East of the Chesapeake by Mindie Burgoyne](#).*

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