



Making Kelleys Island History Everybody's Business

Kelleys Island Historical Association

Volume 2, Issue 1

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KIHA at the KI Chamber's 2nd Annual Holiday Bazaar

K.I.H.A. had a presence at the Second Annual Chamber of Commerce Holiday Bazaar in the Kelleys Town Hall during Thanksgiving weekend.

Last year was the first year and sales were good enough that we decided to try it again.

This year Sharon McIntire, Claudia Brown, and Annalee took items from the Gift Shop to the Town Hall, set up the booth, and then were present to sell items and talk about the Historical Association.

During the two-day

event, KIHA made \$467.23. Participation in this event finishes the season for the Gift Shop.

The KIHA Board has started discussing the idea of having the gift shop connected with the web site. Let us know if that idea appeals to you.

This year the Board decided to reprint the History of Kelleys Island by Norman



Claudia Brown at the KIHA table at the island's COC 2004 holiday bazaar.

Hills. The cover of this third edition is dark green, close to the original color of the book when it was published in 1925.

President's message

December...it's December already. There is a chill in the air, the weather is changing, and the holiday season is here. It seems as though it was only yesterday that we were anticipating the start of the summer and now the year is rapidly closing.

It was an eventful year and hopefully next year will be even more so. We finally broke some ground for the new museum. The holding tank for the septic system is installed. Hopefully by this time next year a building will be sitting next to the holding tank. We will be

working toward this over the winter months.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the cards and letters during my recent setback. What a wake-up call! I'm doing much better and I am hoping to be back to strength soon.

Once the holidays are past, we'll get back to working on the building again.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a Merry and Joyous Holiday Season. See you next year.

Historically Speaking,
Michael Feyedelem
President

Happy Holidays!



REMINDER

This is the first year for the new membership dates. Membership now runs from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 each year. Members will receive notices in January for their 2005 dues.

Of ice and other winter stories

By Claudia Brown

Charles "Jake" Martin Jr. was born and raised on Kelleys Island, graduated from Estes School, and was a businessman on the island. He served his country by enlisting in the United States Navy as a young man, and his community by serving on the Village of Kelleys Island Council.

Jakie talked about some of his memories of winters on Kelleys Island. He married a school teacher that came to Kelleys to work and he raised his family on the island. He still lives here with his wife **Jessie Martin**. I asked what people used to do around the holidays and during the winter. The island used to be much more isolated than it is today. Now we are fortunate to have boats much later in the year than we ever had in the past.

People would come to the island around the holidays for the **Fireman's Ball**. That is an event that is no longer held. But when the Island had a Fireman's Ball, it was held in the Town Hall on Division Street. Many people used to come from the mainland for the ball. It was customarily held about mid-February, right around Valentine's Day. Some years when the lake was frozen, people came across on the ice. They crossed in cars from Marblehead. One of the last times that this happened was in the 1970's when **Routley** was running the quarry.

This prompted a question about how did they know when the ice was safe enough to cross. Jakie said that the first adventurer would make a trail across the ice from Kelleys Island to Marblehead. The path would be marked with cedar trees so you wouldn't get lost. The cracks would be planked with boards. There would always be two cracks that had to be jumped, one on the Kelleys Island side and one on the Marblehead side. The crack near the island ran from **Ditchey's Point** (East of Kelleys Island Ferry Boat Line—KIFBL) to **Neuman's Dock** (now the KIFBL West Dock). Jakie remembers several cars going into the lake near Neuman's Dock.

Four inches of ice will carry a car, as long as the car is moving. The ice has to be thicker to support the weight of a car

that is stationary. There are also some spots that aren't safe, weak spots, even if the ice is a foot thick, because of water currents under the ice.



Jake Martin

Jack Betzenheimer had a Model A Ford and he and Jakie were out ice fishing one Sunday morning, on the north side of the island. "It was a real nice sun-shiny day, and as the day got warm, the ice started to crack." Jake remembers that he said to Jack that maybe they should get going – off the ice- as there was a lot – too much – rumbling going on around them.

Jack Betzenheimer looked out of his fish shanty and the water was up to the running board of his car. Jack got into his car and drove it out of the water. They all started in and made it off the ice. By 3 o'clock in the afternoon there wasn't any ice left; it had all moved down the lake.

One winter, around January, Jakie went ice fishing with **Bob Kleba** and other island men. There were about six shanties out there and they were halfway to **Middle Island**. Jakie had a pail of fish and he told Bob Kleba that he

...and after he started in he realized that there was open water between them and the shore.

was going in. He got out of the fish shanty, and after he started in he realized that there was open water between them and the shore. The ice had moved out and headed further down the lake.

They looked to the west to see if the ice was together yet in that direction. Jakie could see that to the west the ice sheets in the flow were touching each other. So they worked their way west on the ice flow, heading towards shore. Finally they came to the edge of the ice and there was a couple hundred feet of open water between them and shore. So the men sat on the moving ice flow and ate their lunch. **Eugene "Gene" Riedy** and **Dick Sennish** had gone to church that Sunday morning, but after church they went out and saw their friends on the ice flow. Gene got a row boat and rowed out to the stranded men. Not wanting to lose their property, Gene ended up pulling the ice shanties into shore behind the boat. Jakie said that he "never had any real close calls." And continued to say that those circumstances might have been a close call, but it wasn't, because everything turned out OK. The ice flow that was going through stopped, as it got caught up on **Long Point**.

O. Hugh Lange used to do most of the first ice trips in the season. Jakie told him he had nine lives. Hugh lost a couple of cars over time. One instance was when Hugh Lange and Dick Sennish were in a car and it went down into a crack in the ice, sideways. Dick was wedged down, under the dashboard. Hughie was on the other side of him. Hughie kept hollerin' at Dick to get out of there - that they were going to go down, but Dick couldn't get free right away. He finally managed to free himself in enough time to get out of the car.

Ollie Schlesselman lost a truck load of coal one time, the load went down through the ice. Jakie recalls seeing the pictures of the horses that went through the ice, but he adds that was before his time.

One time, a long time ago, there was an ice push at the north side. **Carl "Colly" Lange** was alive and he was fishing out there. **Nelson Dwelle** was also fishing out there. They literally got pushed ashore as the ice kept piling up. They were ahead of the pile. They were both older men at the time and they were lucky that **Cont. Next Page**

Ice stories continued...they didn't lose their lives. The ice is always moving around. Usually there is open water to the east of the island, very seldom is there ice there. There is a "V" of open water up to the **Marblehead Lighthouse**.

Carl Lange, Jakie's mother's uncle, also had an ice boat and when his niece **Ginny Lange** was born, Carl brought the baby back to the island on that ice boat. When Jakie's sister **Elaine** was born, she was the first baby to be flown back to Kelleys Island in the winter. His mother, **Elizabeth "Lizzie" Martin** was on the boat *The Tourist* when it got stuck in **Sandusky Bay**. The passengers had to get out and walk to shore. "Ice is treacherous," said Jakie. "People today don't know about the ice and they're just lucky."

Islanders sometimes kept special cars for ice travel. They cut the tops off. This made less weight and of course easier exit in a hurry. Jake had an old Plymouth that he cut the top off,

...Every time he came in with a couple of buckets of fish, they would want to go where he had been fishing...

and took the seats out. You sat on wood boxes. He used to ferry some of the regular ice fishermen out to their shanties—**Rosella Beatty**, **Vi Haig**, and his mother, **Lizzie Martin**. Then he would go further out to his own shanty. Jakie says that "those women were something else." Every time he came in with a couple of buckets of fish, they would want to go where he had been fishing. Then he would put them on his hole and go and chop another hole for himself. A lot of men and women used to go ice fishing when the ice was thick.

During the winter they used to haul freight in the ice boats from **Lakeside**, but he never went for frivolous reasons. The cracks were always dangerous. Jakie explains that when the sun comes out, the ice expands. **Schoewe** deliv-

ered ice, and he remembers that because he used to come to **Brown's Farm**. They didn't have any electricity and still used an ice box. The ice came on the boat, packed in sawdust in great big boxes on wheels. They had 100 pound and 25 pound blocks of ice. He remembers where the ice house was on the north side, but does not remember that ice was stored there and he never saw them cutting ice from the lake around Kelleys. Jakie did see horse-drawn and manual ice saws in the **Dock Company** building before it was torn down. They used to use chain nets to get the ice out of the lake. The horse-drawn ice saw would be pulled behind a horse like a plow, and then the saw scored the ice. Once the ice was scored, it could be broken into blocks and hauled out of the lake.

After school fun

One of the after school winter activities when Jakie was young, was to "bander" across the ice. In the spring, when the ice started getting rotten and rubbery was the best time. Bandering was when you broke off a piece of ice and lay down on your stomach on the ice and paddled with your hands—kind of like paddling out on a surf board. You could get a wave going before you on a pond. If the ice was tough, sharp, it would crack. If the ice was rubbery, it was all right. Jakie said that they used to do it all the time in the quarry. The water was only knee deep there. A lot of times the session would end by falling on your face and getting your neck wet.

Jakie doesn't remember skating much on the lake—more on ponds. There was a pond back at the quarry. The quarry quit in that area in the 40's or late 30's. He also remembers seeing **Fred Schardt** skate, and says that he still has a pair of Fred's skates. Fred Schardt wore a skin tight suit when he skated and he made the shapes of fish on the ice.

Memories of Christmas

Christmas dinner might be chicken, duck, or goose. **Becker** raised turkeys for the holidays. **Herbie Pringnitz** also had raised fowl for the holidays. Pringnitz had guinea hens and all kinds of crazy ducks—including Muscovy Ducks, and a cross between a Peking

Duck and a Mallard Duck—called something like Ruen.

Christmas trees came from the woods, cedar trees. Some years Jakie used to send cedar trees over on the boats in the fall for family and friends on the mainland.

In Memorium

John Henry "Jack" Betzenheimer
Paul Leidheiser
Lyle Schnittker
Lawrence H. "Larry" Eaton
Dr. Theodore Grant "Ted" Bickley
George R. Hritsko

Memorials to the Building Fund:

Kimberly Shoemaker for **Jack Betzenheimer**

Theresa "Teri" (Betzenheimer) Behrends for **Jack Betzenheimer**

Caroline DeBoard for **Robert Behlen, Mary Navorska Trum-power, Ronald Beatty, and Dorothy Himmelein Sun**

Lyle & Geri Bickley for **Ted Bickley**

Ila Dick for **Jack Betzenheimer**

Anne Sennish for **Jack Betzenheimer**

JoAnn Broger and the **Mary O'Brien Family** for **Dr. Ramie Dick**
John & Jennifer Neuman for **Larry Eaton**

Lydia Bechtel for **Dr. Ramie Dick**
Lyle & Geri Bickley for **Jack Betzenheimer**

Judy DuShane for **Dr. Ramie Dick & Jack Betzenheimer**

Becky M. Overcashier for **Dr. Ramie Dick**

A special thank you to **Lydia Bechtel** and another special thank you to the **Spirk Family** for their generous support.

An afternoon with Geraldine (Erne) Betzenheimer— Talking about life on Kelleys Island in the winter

By Claudia Brown

Geraldine Betzenheimer was born and raised on Kelleys Island, graduating from Estes School, and serving the Island many years as its Postmaster.

As a kid, Geraldine remembers going skating a lot with her sister **Renetta**. There was no television, and skating was one of the main winter amusements. The skates were kept by the dining room door, and after school she and her sister would run in, grab them, and go to a pond. They had a little pond behind the house next to theirs on west side of Division **Street**, about mid-island. She believes that the pond was the result of stone being removed, perhaps for the foundation of the **Beatty** house next door. The pond wasn't very deep and was perfect for ice skating. They didn't skate on the lake, just on ponds. If you had to shovel snow off, a pond was easier. On the pond out back of their house, they would take the shovel and make paths on the ice, and then skate on the paths. They also skated in the quarry, behind **Mae and Jay Norris'** house, now owned by **Buster Mooney**. **Renetta** and **Geraldine** went alone to their pond, but at the quarry pond there would be a bunch of kids. She remembers that **Hughie Lange** could never go home without getting wet. They also went to the pond across Division Street from the **KIHA Museum** building, which at that time was the vacated **Old Stone Church**. She and her sister had to walk everywhere, so they usually went to the closest pond to skate.

Usually there was snow at Christmas. **Geraldine** remembers that when **Santa Claus** came, they went down to the park (downtown), and **Santa** came on the Fire Engine. Each kid got an orange and a small bag of candy. When she went to her **Grandmother Erne's** house, each child got an orange and a coloring book from **Santa**. All the **Ernes** would go to that house for Christmas Eve, and on Christmas day her family would go to her mother's relatives, the **Riedy** family—**Mae (Riedy)** and **Jay Norris'** house.

The boats always quit just before Thanksgiving,—November 15th—and they didn't start again until March 15th. She adds, according to the weather. The dates were because of the boat line's insurance. So her family, like other islanders, had to stock up food before the boats stopped. You had to think ahead and plan for the winter. They had a coal furnace and you got all your coal in the fall. The coal went into the coal bin and when that was full, it went into a pile in the backyard. The coal came to the store dock by boat. It was in a big pile and then you would get it delivered from there. They had to shovel it all manually. The coal had to be the right kind, not too wet, or too dry, so it would burn right. All the boats came into downtown then, from **Sandusky**, and you didn't have summer people after Labor Day.

Her mother, **Iva (Riedy) Erne** did preserving in the fall: a couple of bushels of peaches, tomatoes, grape jelly. There were no longer orchards on Kelleys, so the peaches came from the mainland. Her mother made jelly out of both **Concords** and **Catawbas**. They also made peach jam and canned peaches, and some pears. They also canned pickles, all kinds—sweet and mustard pickles and the peeled kind—called **sloporra**. At Christmas her mother made cookies: **Lebkuchen**, **Springerlies**, **S-lies**, all family recipes. **Geraldine** branches out more in her own cookie recipes.

They also had water-glassed eggs. **Geraldine** described "waterglass" as a white gooey stuff that you put in a crock. Then you put your eggs down in there to preserve them. When the chickens were laying a lot, you put the extra raw eggs in the waterglass. Later when you didn't have enough eggs, you would use some of the water-glass eggs for baking. Waterglass is sodium or potassium silicate, which is dissolved in water, and one of its uses was for preserving eggs. **Geraldine** remembers that getting the eggs out was like putting your hands in a bucket of wall-paper paste, but more watery, kind of slimy.

Her family would also make a crock of sauerkraut out of cabbage. Her mother used to can pheasant and meat. When they had the pigs, she canned the pork. They didn't have freezers like we do today. They just had a refrigerator with the little suspended freezing compartment, just big enough for two ice cube trays. The family always stocked up on groceries ahead of winter. Her father **Roy Erne** kept chickens, so they had eggs and chickens to eat. They had chicken every Sunday. Her father also fished, and they had fish Wednesday and Friday every week, and sometimes a third day. She adds that this was wartime, too. **Geraldine** said that you used to get a can of pineapple with canned chicken a-la-king. When her **Uncle Gene (Riedy)** came home from service, he would eat chicken a-la-king from the cans. **Geraldine** says that he would eat that lousy stuff, "It was terrible," so that they could have the pineapple.

Geraldine's father had pigs one year. The pigs were slaughtered for food. **Geraldine** and her mother decided to make head cheese. They cooked all the meat off the head and they didn't have enough to hardly do anything. So they had to cook other meat to go along with it. Then all the meat went into an aspic, then into bread pans, and was weighted down. It was quite a job. **Geraldine** remembers that after all that work, it tasted good. One of the pigs got away and **Donnie Beatty** chased it through the quarry and all around the island. After **Geraldine** and **Lawrence Betzenheimer** got married, in 1964, they used to get half a beef from **Marchkys**. They would buy a cow together, she and **Lawrence** and the **Marchkys**. The **Marchkys** would take care of it and feed it. **Lloyd**, and especially **Jim Marchky** were both butchers, but **Geraldine** remembers **Jim** was a real good butcher. When it was time to slaughter the cow, **Lawrence** would go down and help them. **Continued next page...**



Geraldine Betzenheimer

Geraldine remembers, cont. They would each get half. One day, she and her mother went to Marchkys and saw the cow hanging up on a tree, with a cat perched on top of it. Her mother asked her if that was her cow to which Geraldine could only reply "yes."

The men fished the lake as late as they could, then switched to ice fishing to feed their families. In the spring the fishermen were out on the lake as early as they could be. They could start March 15th, but if the weather was real nice they might start a little earlier. Her father, Roy Erne had fished for **Art Lange** and also for **Henny Beatty**. Later he gill netted with **Jack Sen-nish**. Mostly he worked for Henny Beatty, with **Jack Betzen-heimer**. Her father would go real early in the morning, about 5:00 am to fish. One day, her Uncle Jay (Norris), took them all out in his car on the ice. Then he made them all walk back because they made too much noise. That was the only time that Geraldine was ever in a car on the ice. She never crossed on the ice. Her father had a Ford that he took out on the ice, but it wasn't cut down. When the ice got safe enough, they would use their regular car to drive on the ice. They had chains for the cars. Geraldine says that the biggest fishermen, or should we say "fisherwomen", were **Vi Haig** and **Lizzie Martin**.

The snow might be quite deep in the winter, but she and her sister walked to school. If there was too much snow on the sidewalks, they walked in the road. They had ditches along the road, and "that was fun." Ditches were fun in the winter because they would fill up with snow and you could slide down into them. Geraldine and Renetta also went to the screening dump to slide. One year, they were pretty young, and had snow suits, they wore the seats out by sliding down the screenings pile. She remembers that her mother wasn't happy about that.

Geraldine was a big reader. She used to get her books from the Sandusky Library. For three cents, library rate, she could mail three books. She would write the library and ask for specific titles or sometimes just say the kind of book that she wanted and let them choose the book. Her mother used to let her do that because Geraldine had already read everything available on the island. One of her favorites was **Ellery Queen** mysteries. For as long as Geraldine can remember she has crocheted and knitted. She can't remember when she learned. She would make clothes for her dolls and when she was in high school she started sewing for herself. Geraldine learned to cook from her mother. She also remembers playing a lot of games. They had board games like monopoly, checkers, and they played pinochle. Geraldine also can't ever remember not playing pinochle and rummy. Before Geraldine got married, and maybe a little after, she and her mother would play two-handed pinochle. Her **Uncles Mike (Riedy)** and Gene (Riedy) lived with her family before they were married. So they would all play pinochle together. Her **Grandmother Erne** loved to play cards, so Geraldine would go after school a lot of times and play double solitaire or rummy with her. When she and her sister were older, they started to play cards with the adults at night. A big round table was pulled out from the corner of the room, **Uncle Floyd (Erne)**, her Grandmother Erne, her father and mother, Roy and Iva Erne, and the kids would all play cards together.

They also had puzzles for entertainment. Mostly they did them at their grandmother's. With three kids and two uncles,

she said there wasn't much space at home for leaving puzzles out.

Both her uncles were home until they went into military service. **Mike** had a boathouse on the south side, currently **Kelleys Cove**. Mike would let the kids go down to the boathouse with him, and there they would jump ice cakes. Upon coming home one day, her mother quizzed them about what they had been doing. Geraldine said she remembers that her mother yelled at Mike for letting them jump ice cakes.

At Christmas they got one or two gifts. She remembers the year when she and Renetta got their Cupie Dolls. That was all they got, but her mother had made a lot of clothes for them. When they ate Christmas dinner at home, many times they had goose. The Ernes came to their house for dinner, and then her family went to her Aunt Mae's (Mae & Jay Norris) house for the evening.

One of the big differences between being young on Kelleys Island in Geraldine's time is that they did a lot of walking and skating, much more than is done today by youngsters. If nothing else, you just went for a walk around the island. There were also fewer cars than people have today. Everyone was walking more. A lot of families had one car. There were also times when her family didn't have a car.

The Ernes had a player piano. Geraldine says that as children they weren't allowed to touch it, but The Ernes always played it for them. When the family gathered, they would play the piano and drink beer, and the more beer they consumed, the more they sang. Christmas Eve, they would go to Grandma Erne's, then to the protestant church for a program, then by the time they got back home it was time to go to Midnight Mass at the Catholic Church. Christmas was in the morning at their house and **Santa** had always come during the night.

Another amusement was playing ping pong in the Sunday School room at the protestant church. They had two or three ping pong tables set up. They also played pool downtown. Before the Island Market expanded, there was a pool hall in there. They also met to play basketball in the evening in the Town Hall. The older kids had basketball teams, but by the time Geraldine was growing up there weren't enough kids to form teams.

Geraldine thinks that the Christmas potluck might have started about when she was in high school. Santa has always come to the potluck. That is one tradition that still continues strong. Each December, we all meet at the Town Hall at an appointed time, each with our covered dish in hand, and wait for Santa to appear.

Museum visitors up from 2003

The museum and gift shop were open to the public from May 29th to October 30th this year. With the help of many volunteers and Annalee guiding it along, 2,532 people came through our door and signed the guest book. During the 2003 tourist season, we had 2,249 signatures in the book. While there is a slight increase from last year's count, it is still far below 2002 and 2001.

**MAKING KELLEYS ISLAND HISTORY
EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS**

Kelleys Island Historical Association
P.O. Box 328
Kelleys Island, OH 43438

A 501(C)3 organiza-
tion. All contributions
are tax deductible.



Kelleys Island Historical Association

We're on the web!
kelleysislandhistorical.org

**Kelleys Island Historical Association
P. O. Box 328
Kelleys Island, Ohio 43438**

Membership Application

Name: _____

Summer address: (from / / to / /) P.O. Box _____

Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** ____ **Zip:** _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____ - _____

Winter address: P. O. Box _____

Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** ____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ - _____

Individual Membership (annual) \$10.00
 also check here for 2 or more Individual memberships but just one newsletter sent to one address

Family Membership (annual) \$25.00

Patron Membership (annual) \$100.00

Life Membership \$500.00

(office use only below this line -----)

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