



Making Kelleys Island History Everybody's Business

# Kelleys Island Historical Association

Volume 5, Issue 1

Winter, 2008

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## KIHA mourns its dearest supporter

Lydia R. Bechtel was born on Kelleys Island May 21, 1915. She was a graduate of Kelleys Island High School. As an adult, Lydia raised her son **John "Kip" Ohlemacher** in Sandusky and became active in the family's business, **Bechtel-McLaughlin**, where she served on the board of directors. Sadly, on Nov. 26, 2007, Lydia passed away while in the Stein Hospice Care Center, after a brief illness.

Lydia was a founding member of the Kelleys Island Historical Association and one of it's—if not THE—most generous supporters. She was a

life time member but still donated at least \$500 yearly to the association.

She also donated her time to many events, was the association's president for many years, and when needed pitched in to scrub and clean the museum.

She donated many personal items from her home—which were highlighted in last year's winter newsletter. She paid for the annual printing of raffle tickets and she donated several of her



paintings for the association to raffle off.

Last year KIHA raffled off her beautiful "Seagulls" painting, for which the organization printed up just 100, \$5

Cont. Page 3

## The old motorboat

### Roger Williams

During the 1930's, an old motorboat was stored behind **Howard Hamilton's** barn, on the east end of Woodford Road. Howard's nephew, **Roy Hamilton Jr.** kept asking his father and his Uncle Howard why they didn't refurbish the old boat and use it. The boat was about 18 feet long, with an old "launch" style rounded hull, with wooden planking and ribs. The engine was cast iron, single cylinder, water cooled, very heavy and rugged.

When Roy Jr was about 14, his father and uncle said "if you want a boat, fix up the old motorboat." So Roy replaced some rotted planks, and

built a steamer for bending replacement ribs. The entire boat needed refastening of the planks to the ribs, recaulking with oakum, then sanding and repainting the hull, exterior and interior.

The engine was taken to Hamilton's workshop and refurbished, and the propeller shaft "stuffing box", and the rudder rebuilt.

Before the launch, the boat was filled with water to allow the planking to swell. The water for this had to be manually pumped from either the lake or a cistern....a lot of work!

Launch day finally arrived, and things went pretty well. Howard's

Cont. Page 2

## William S. Webb family donates Civil War correspondence—

An ongoing series of the KIHA Newsletter

*Through the generosity of family members of William S. Webb, we were given transcripts of letters that Mr. Webb wrote to his family during his 100 days service in The Civil War. Since the Kelleys Island men left as a company from the island, they, initially at least, stayed together and thus Mr. Webb's letters sometimes include mention of other islanders who were also fighting. It is not often that a person has the opportunity to relive history.*

*William S. Webb was married to Elizabeth Kelley and three children—Sarah, Isabelle and Charles. In 1860, William S. Webb is listed on the Census as a stone mason earning \$8,000 a year.*

*William S. Webb went to war in 1864 and he wrote letters home to his family on Kelleys Island. Captain Webb's daughter Sarah copied his letters into a notebook. William D. Webb is the great-grandson of this Kelleys Island Civil War soldier and his grand-daughter, Katia Duey, transcribed the letters from the notebook. Katia Duey is currently attending Temple University. We sincerely thank the William D. Webb family for their interest in their own family history and that of Kelleys Island—and for the opportunity they have given the Kelleys Island Historical Association to share this wonderful story.*

*William S. Webb was first stationed at Johnson's Island in Sandusky Bay, along with other Kelleys Island soldiers. (Added information will appear in [ ] .)*

*We left Mr. Webb's letters at June 16, 1864 (his birthday). We continue with portions of his June 23, 1864 letter to his daughter Sarah, who apparently was attending school in Sandusky and had just celebrated her 18th birthday.*

**Point of Rocks, (within Intrenchments)  
Thursday, June 23, 1864, 9 o'clock A.M.**

My Dear Daughter Sarah,

Although I wrote yesterday a long letter to Ma, yourself, Belle & Charlie, having a leisure hour now I devote it to holding a conversation with yourself not knowing how my time may be occupied hereafter or what opportunities I may have for writing. I intended to have written you on your 18th birthday (of which under the proper date you made a memorandum in my book), but it was impossible to do so. In my letters to your Mother, which are written to all my dear family as well, I have given a history of all the occurrences of interest up to date... The arrival of the mail yesterday was a welcome one as we had not heard a word from home since Ma's letter of the 8th rec'd at Washington. By this mail I rec'd four letters from Ma, two from yourself and one from Uncle Alfred. You may be sure they were eagerly opened and perused and I felt much more reconciled to our separation with the assurance that all my loved ones at home were well.

It is very quiet here now, no firing this morning. Last night in the early part of the evening a steady cannonading was kept up off on our left near Petersburg and later in the night a pretty continuous fire of very heavy guns was opened on our right, which continued through the night...This morning opened on a clear cloudless sky and the atmosphere is close and sultry, giving evidence of a very hot day...

Cont. on pg. 5

## Sidney Frohman Foundation grant awarded!!

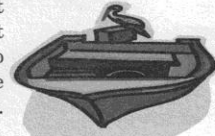
Our Ways and Means Chair E. Anne Eddowes has secured a grant for \$10,000 from The Sidney Frohman Foundation to assist KIHA with the completion of our new building.

This is the first of several grants that Anne has applied for from various agencies and foundations in the Sandusky area. We are all hopeful that a good deal of additional support for our very worthwhile project will be coming in. Thanks Anne! And thanks to The Sidney Frohman Foundation! Look for further updates in our next issue.

## The old motorboat (cont. from pg. 1)

old horse, Ned, hauled the boat on a sledge down to the beach, and she floated...so long as someone kept bailing! The engine ran, and we all had a nice boat ride. Roy named the boat "Endine" after a boat he had read about.

Roy decided to keep the boat nearby so it would be convenient to keep bailed out. There are no docks on the east shore, so the boat had to be anchored out. Things were fine for a few days,



then the inevitable northeaster came up and the anchor started dragging. So Roy and his Dad took the skiff out to the Endine, and Roy got the engine started to bring the Endine to Koster's Dock. On the way, the water inside the hull rose enough to flood the engine, so Roy had to finish the trip with oars, quite a challenge!

A few days later, we were still trying to restart the engine, which meant spinning a cast iron flywheel by hand, when Joe Pohorence, (Frank's father) came by and offered to help. Roy and I could get about 2 revs of the flywheel with each two-handed pull, Joe got about 8 revs with one hand! Strong arms from pulling all those nets! So, we got the engine running and had fun chugging around the south shore at our 6 MPH top speed.

Another day, we cast off from Koster's before the engine was running. That was a serious mistake...with a brisk SW wind we were soon ashore, on what is now the Marina Beach, trying to save the Endine from the rocks. Two boys and a heavy boat were struggling...then a "Good Samaritan," with a motor that ran, showed up and towed us back to Koster's. Lesson for the day..."never cast off until the motor is running."

The next year Roy wanted a faster boat and switched to an outboard, so Endine's restored life was short. WWII followed soon, so the boat laid abandoned again, behind Howard's barn. Of course, Hazel and Howard's house, the barn, Ned the horse, and the Endine, are now long gone. Time marches on, but we had a lot of fun that summer with "the Old Motor Boat."

**Lydia Bechtel passes** (cont. from pg 1) tickets. They went fast.

A talented artist, who enjoyed painting many island scenes, Lydia recently donated a copy of her "Winter on Kelleys Island" painting that she had done years earlier. (see further info on the "Winter on Kelleys Island painting below)

**Her passing is one that the Historical Association will not easily recover from, but through her decades of generosity, we and future members will forever be reminded of her talent and her love of Kelleys Island. She will never be forgotten.**

Lydia was a member of **St. Mary's Catholic Church** in Sandusky. She was also a member of the **Colonial Dames, Sandusky Yacht Club, IAB Club, Providence Hospital Volunteer Association, and Plum Brook Country Club.** She

was a **Providence Fund Trustee.**

Lydia enjoyed fishing and golfing. Last year she sold her beloved island home. In a story that **Claudia Brown** wrote about Lydia several years ago in our newsletter, Lydia described grape picking while a student on the island. An event she felt certain she would enjoy, as her fellow students always spoke of the fun they had. To her dismay, her father was reluctant to have her participate in this labor intensive work. She was insistent and finally garnered his approval.

As it turned out, what she really looked forward to from the work, was the wages, with which she purchased a 22 long shotgun from **Bogart's Store**, that she had her eye on. She bought the gun, learned to shoot and became a pretty good shot. She hunted frequently over the years for rabbit, pheasant and squirrel.

She is survived by **Kip** and

daughter-in-law **Barbara Ohlemacher**, of Huron; grandchildren, **Critt (Carol), Chuck (Lisa), Chris (Barbara), and Craig (Mary) Ohlemacher**; 17 grandchildren; four great-great grandchildren; a step-daughter, **Barbara Galloway**; step-grandchildren, **Jackie Finger** and **Gary Galloway**; three sisters-in-law, **Orma Call, Eleanor Pfeiffer** and **Bernadette Rogers**; beloved friend, **Sue Stamm**; and numerous nieces and nephews survive her.

Her first husband, **John H. Ohlemacher**, who died in 1951; her second husband, **Ronald W. Bechtel**, who died in 1992; her parents, **Nelson and Rose (Fedderson) Dwelle**; sisters, **Henrietta** and **Neva Beatty, Florence Martin** and **Patricia Rotsinger**; brothers, **George, Myron** and **Sylvester Dwelle**; great-grandson, **Tyler Ohlemacher**; and step-grandson, **Grant Galloway**, preceded her in death.

## Winter on Kelleys Island

During the Butterfly Festival this year, **Lydia Bechtel** showed **Ila Dick** and others, a painting "Winter on Kelleys Island," which she had done for her son **Kip Ohlemacher** and his wife **Barb** many years earlier.

In describing her winter ice skating painting she said **Fred Schardt** was teaching her as a young girl how to make "bunches of grapes" on the ice at the location of the current **Seaway Marina** where islanders used to skate.

Included in the painting are other children, an ice fishing shanty



and an ice boat she said belonged to **Jack Betzenheimer**. According to **Lyle Bickley** the boat's name was *Redwing*.

Lydia had liked what the association had done with **Joe Corso's** painting last year making cards and prints from it. She and **Ila** discussed doing that with her painting after **Ila** explained how it was done via commercial scanning.

Lydia liked that idea and had the painting scanned so the **KIHA Board** could have the rights for reprints of postcards, note cards, and pictures for sale in our gift shop.

These postcards, note cards, and frame-able prints are unique to our island and make wonderful winter notes and cards. These cards and prints are already available in our gift shop.

## Gift shop volunteers make 2007 success story

### Sharon McIntire

I would like to thank all volunteers, members, and customers for making this a great year in our gift shop.

The 2007 total sales were \$11,093.65 and donations in the donation jar totaled \$1,774.92.

These numbers are almost 100% profit as we are still selling out old stock to prepare for the move to the new building. Because all of our workers are volunteer, the shop's only expenses are the electricity, phone and port-a-john.

## OOPS

We accidentally missed two names in our listing of members last issue.

We're sorry. Please know that **John Sabol** and **Debbie Miller** were among our members of 2007.

### William S. Webb letters (cont. from pg. 2)

We this morning for the first time for nearly a week can plainly hear the sound of R.R. trains on the Petersburg & Richmond R.R. showing that the Rebs have repaired the damages our troops inflicted on the road a few days since. They cannot however run into Petersburg as our forces hold all the Rebel fortifications on the East side of the town.

Neither party are properly in Petersburg, our men being on one side and commanding the entire city, while the Rebs are on the other side across the Appomattox River and command the city with their guns, also.

Never was a body of men more astonished than was the 130th Reg't when they read in the papers that "they had voted to go to the front and fight." It is a lie from beginning to end. If a vote had been taken it would have been unanimous against it and it was with difficulty that the officers of some of the companies could control their men against an open outbreak and refusal to move at all and this too before it was known that we were ordered to Bermuda.

We knew nothing of going to see the President until Ashley informed us that he had obtained the President's consent to our marching up to see him. Not a word was said about "volunteering." The president's short speech was garbled. In the published reports of the speech he is represented as saying, "You may stay here and take the place of others who will be sent to the front or you may go there yourselves." He said, "or may go part way there yourselves." I stood within 20 ft. of him and noted particularly what he said.

However, we are pretty well to the front now and I hope to see every man do his duty. As far as danger is concerned there is probably no more to be encountered here than there would be guarding lines of R.R. I am far more concerned about the health of my command from the effects of the climate and exposure as well as indiscretion in eating than from battle...

You say your school term is to be shortened. I do not wish you to study so hard as to injure your health for the purpose of Graduating. You must not do it. I wish you would see Bill of the Register and have him send me the Register if he can. There will I think be no difficulty as papers come through I see...I wish you to write me often without reference to my writing as I cannot tell one hour where we may be the next. Just as I penned the last

### KIHA mourns another loss—Robert Erne

**Robert A. Erne**, 66, of Kelleys Island, died , Nov. 23, 2007, in **Admiral's Pointe**, Huron, after a lengthy illness.

He was born Dec. 7, 1940, on Kelleys Island, the son of **Roy and Iva (Riedy) Erne**. He was a 1958 graduate of Kelleys Island High School.

He was employed by **Seaway Marina, Kellstone Quarries**, and retired from **The Village Pump**. He was a lifelong member of **St. Michael's Catholic Church**, and was also a member of the National Rifle Association. He enjoyed following the **Pittsburgh Steelers**.

His sisters, **Renetta Matso** of Sandusky and **Geraldine Betzenheimer** of Kelleys Island; nieces, **Pam Betzenheimer** of Kelleys Island and **Renee (Timothy) Dee** of Sandusky; nephew, **Richard (Caroline) Matso** of Sandusky; a great-niece; two great-nephews; and best friends, **Michael Dwight** and

**Will Stoup** survive him. He also leaves behind his faithful Boston terrier, **Bandit**.

His parents; brothers-in-law, **Lloyd Matso** and **Lawrence Betzenheimer**; and niece, **Carolyn Matso Ahlers**, preceded him in death.

He donated many wonderful photographs to the KI Historical Association, including a series of photos taken by Stuart Schaefer who spent a day out on the *Chappie* a fishing boat owned by the **Henry Beatty Fisheries** of Kelleys. The photos show a number of islanders working hard to haul in fish. The series is entitled "**A Day in the Life of a Trapnet Fisherman**."

He also donated a pair of wood with metal blade ice skates he found his parent's garage.

These treasures can be seen at the **KIHA Museum**. Robert Erne was an island treasure who will be deeply mourned.

word of the preceding sentence a shell from a rebel battery came shrieking along and struck the ground about 40 rods in the rear of our camp. **Jerry** saw it strike the ground and the cloud of dust it raised was just floating up when I saw it. They are firing at our Signal Station not over 80 rods from our camp. The line of flight of their shells is just in the rear of our camp. The shell did not explode. We are awaiting another. They usually throw three or four when our batteries open and they quit. For the last two days our batteries have not noticed them. Whip! There goes another, it went clear over.

Ten minutes later another shell. Boys all run out to see the shells strike. The last was very wide of the mark it struck far to the right.

The object of the shots is to stop the man in the signal station from signaling other stations. He is at it now and pays no attention to the shells. Well I must finish my straggling letter.

I do hope my dear daughter that your health will remain good that you will not over do yourself in your studies. Should Ma be sick, leave everything and go home.

Send this home after reading. I fear my pencil writing must be quite dim when it reaches you, but I can write so much faster and with far less strain on my eyes. They are well as usual now. My general health is very good. I only weigh, however, 123 lbs.

Whip! Another shell! Good shot, hit close to the station, no damage done. I live on the plainest fare. Tea, Hardbread & bacon. Have a splendid appetite. Sleep on the ground with India rubber blanket on pine brush for a bed, can sleep anywhere. Have no desire for a soft bed, sleep sound & never felt better. Keep out of the sun as much as possible.

**Your Aff. Father**  
**W. S. Webb**

*We will continue this incredible series of letters in our next newsletter.*

## Island memories over the web

*The following piece was an e-mail received by the association late last fall. We tried to contact Mr. Akers to find out more about him, but were unable to. His letter, however, was just too interesting not to share. We hope he does come this summer and that he looks us up.*

### Ken Akers

I was exploring your web site last night. I got a lump in my throat when I saw my great grandfather's name, **John Stokes**, on the "head of household" list from the **1880 Census**. The map from that census also shows his large plot of land, near today's airport.

I have millions of fond memories of KI. My mom was born on the island as were 3 of her 4 siblings, children of **Charles** (John's son) and **Byrd Stokes**. Mom was born in a house on the road northwest of the airport that later served as the rectory for the **Blessed Sacrament** priests who served **St. Michael's**. Of course the street didn't have a name.

The house where my family spent summers was also on a street with no name. Now it's known as **Dwelle Lane**. The house belonged to my grandmother's sister, **Mame**. For decades, cousins, aunts, uncles all shared the summers in the house. It was a big place - especially to a little boy. The house had a wrap-around front porch, a huge side yard where we played baseball and badminton. The house was filled with old

furniture - most solid cherry - a player piano and beds so tall we needed to climb a chair to get in them at night.

The home place had a barn with all sorts of treasures probably from Ireland (I was too young to appreciate them). I wasn't allowed in it - but, don't tell anyone, I managed to sneak in and explore. There was a collection of Dodges and Plymouths from the 30's and 40's sitting idly in yard with a distinctive smell of wool seats. In their heydays, these cars crossed a winter frozen Lake Erie back and forth from the mainland. When I knew them they were only homes to nests of yellow jackets. The house had no electricity, no running water - and no indoor plumbing.

It was a real treat.

Every summer, we'd drive from Cleveland to Sandusky. The **Neuman** pier in Sandusky was an exciting place for us kids. It meant KI was less than 45 minutes away. We'd set sail for our summer adventure on Neuman's **Challenger** or **Commuter**. Later when we started crossing from Marblehead, it wasn't nearly as much fun on the **Corsair**.

I learned to swim at **Sandy Beach**, took my first airplane ride (including several **Tri-Motor** trips to **Put-In-Bay**) and sat in my dad's lap and steered the car up and down Dwelle Lane, scaring pheasants from the bushes along the side of the road. We climbed **Glacial**

**Grooves**- I see from pictures that there's a lot more of the grooves exposed now. We also climbed all over **Inscription Rock**.

Since it was a vacation for Mom, too, we ate most meals out. Many days we ate breakfast at the **Marine Grill**, owned by **Charlie and Liz Martin's son [Jake Martin]**. For lunch we went to **Martin's Bar and Grill** (now, I think, The Pump) - for perch sandwiches - freshly caught that morning. My two sisters and I had flaming red hair and were the favorites of Charlie and Liz. She'd pinch our cheeks and call us her little "poopindeckers."

Dad would often ask me to go to the bar and get him a beer. I'd climb up on a stool and ask Charlie for a Carling. He'd lean over, look me straight in the eye and say, with all the sincerity he could muster behind a suppressed smile, "Red, when you can see over this bar, you can have a beer."

My family sold the house and all the contents when my grandfather died in 1964. I haven't been back to KI since 1961. This year I turn 60. I'm coming to visit. When I do, I'm going to walk into The Pump, stand at the bar and say, loudly, "I can finally see over this bar. I'd like a beer, please."

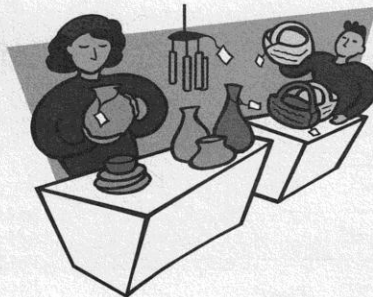
I hope when I come this summer, I can spend time at the Historical Society to learn more about my ancestors and about the place that made so many summers so magical.

## Holiday Bazaar 2007

Once again the KIHA booth at the Town Hall at the KI Chamber's Holiday Bazaar was successful.

**Sharon McIntire**, on behalf of the Board, would personally like to thank all the islanders and KIHA members for shopping at our table.

The new books on Lake Erie, and the winter postcards and note



cards by Lydia seemed to be a hit with shoppers this year.

As a result the association made \$524.70 in sales and sold 13 more chances on **Joe Corso's** donated painting.

Thanks to all who visited, attended the **Sandusky Bell Choir Concert**, and shopped.

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

Kelleys Island Historical Association

P.O. Box 328

Kelleys Island, OH 43438

A 501(C)3 organization.  
All contributions are tax  
deductible.

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*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—Membership runs from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31**

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: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Categories**

All fees are annual except Life membership

( ) Individual Membership \$15

( ) also check here for 2 or more Individual memberships but just one newsletter sent to one address

( ) Family Membership \$25

( ) Business Membership \$30—includes business card size ad in one issue of newsletter

( ) Patron Membership \$100

( ) Life Membership \$500—once

All memberships are annual except Life Membership.

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

Paid: \$

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_