



Making Kelleys Island History Everybody's Business

Kelleys Island Historical Association

Volume 8, Issue II

Spring, 2011

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The Life Boat

Cindy Herndon

Years ago, I remember my father, **Paul Stueber**, talking about getting a boat out of the **North Bay** woods on Kelleys Island. I remember times on the east side of Kelleys at our 1860's family home, I would turn around and my Dad would meet my friends dressed as Oliver H. Perry. Yikes....that went over well! Dad had a great sense of humor-and loved history-and most people went along with his gig. He was very excited about helping to retrieve the found boat.

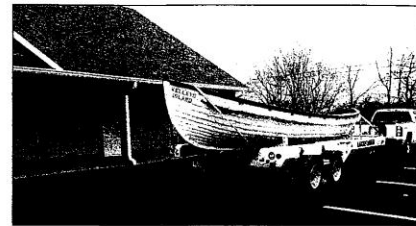
The Life Boat was found on the old **Hamilton Property** on the **North Bay**. It was in the late 60's or early 70's, when a few men from Kelleys Island (my husband Chuck was one of them) helped pull this life boat out of the mud and dirt in the woods. It was not in good shape. **The Great Lakes Historical Society and its Inland Seas Maritime Museum** in Vermilion adopted the boat and did all the renovations on it. After having it on display for several years, they asked the **Kelleys Island Historical Association (KIHA)** if we wanted to house it. At that time there was no room for maintaining the boat, so it went to **Put-n-Bay's Lake Erie Islands Historical Society**

Museum news

The KIHA Board is looking forward to an exciting summer as our first full season of having the new museum open approaches. During the winter, plans were made by the board to hold a lunch for our generous foundation benefactors that donated the many thousands of dollars needed to finish our new museum.

Ways & Means Committee Chair E. Anne Eddowes is coordinating the luncheon, which will be held on July 9 at the Kelleys Island Winery.

Foundations who have helped KIHA



The Life Boat will be on display at KIHA's Museum for the next couple of years. Photo by Sharon McIntire.

Museum (LEIHS). The agreement back in the 80's was, when KIHA had room for the boat, Kelleys Island should have it.

This Life Boat is one of only two left in this region. This type of boat had proven itself to be very useful and productive. It is a **Francis Metallic Life Boat**. It was distributed by the Federal Government to various communities in need. Marblehead had one and so did Kelleys Island. The man that designed the boat was **Joseph Francis**. In the 1890's Joseph Francis received a United States Congressional Gold Medal because of his work with lifeboats. He was known for saving hundreds of lives around the world. He worked in Florida during the Third Seminole Indian War and introduced to our

Cont. Page 3

are: **The Sidney Frohman Foundation, The Sandusky/Erie County Community Foundation, The Randolph J. & Estelle M. Dom Foundation, The Frost-Parker Foundation, The Mylander Foundation, The Millican Family Charitable Trust, and the Wightman/Wieber Charitable Foundation.** Together these foundations have donated over \$150,000 and the architectural plans. The project could not have been completed without them.

Cont. Page 3

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 this up close and personally.

William S. Webb was married to Elizabeth Kelley and had 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. 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, but has been serving in Point of Rocks, Va. For several weeks.

No. 24 In Camp Point of Rocks Va, Tuesday, July 12th, 1864, 11 o'C A. M.

My Dear Wife & Children Sarah Belle & Charlie,

Yours of July 6th acknowledging receipt of mine of 28th is just rec'd. There were about 8 letters from the island today only. I wrote you a short note this morning in relation to the situation of Jackson Eldred, having only a few moments before mail closing to get off a short note. I started to go up there this morning on foot but found the sun quite overpowering, returned, borrowed the Surgeon's horse and rode up there. I have been troubled for a few days with a sort of debility making it a great labor for me to walk any distance. I think it is the effect of the climate and of the diet we have. The Surgeon in charge of the Post Hospital told me it was lack of vegetables, that I must get all the vegetable I can and use them. We have been able to get some new potatoes, and day before yesterday John [?] found beets enough for two meals, we have had onions twice. It is almost an impossibility to get vegetables of any kind. I feel perfectly well but weak and am getting better of that.

Upon my arrival at the Hospital I found Eldred still breathing but unconscious. He cannot last longer than today if not already dead. I was up there two hours and was obliged to come away. I left Wm. Kelley and George Wait with him. He has had and is receiving every attention that can be procured. The nurses are very kind and attentive and Miss [Clara] Barton gives him especial attention. The last intelligible words he spoke were to her last night at 12 o'C. She was standing by his bedside, and he observing her, reached out his hand or tried to. She took it in hers, and he signifying that he wished her to sit down, she leaned down to listen distinctly, "I don't know who it is, but"—here words failed him, and she replied, "It makes no difference who it is, if I can do anything for you, I wish to," he looked up so happy apparently and smiled, as she says, a sweet smile," as he replied—"It makes

no difference." She sat by him for an hour but he spoke no more, but by a smile, a look or a pressure of the hand gave her to understand how thankful he was for her sympathy and attention.

George Wait has just come in [and] reported that Eldred is dead.

5 o'C P.M. Have just returned from the Hospital and from performing the melancholy duty of burying the remains of Jackson Eldred. After making every effort to obtain money by borrowing sufficient to defray the expenses of having Jackson's remains embalmed and sent home, and not being able to do it, I was compelled reluctantly to have him buried here. I intended to send down to Bermuda Hundred for a coffin but found that we would not have time allowed necessary for that purpose, as bodies are not allowed to remain very long after decease at the Hospital. If not taken by the friends for burial, they are buried by those attached to the Hospital.

Taking Lieut. [George P.] Bristol, Jerry [Dean], Oscar Dean, D. [Daniel] W. Chapin and M. [Martin] K. Holbrook (Will Kelley was there with him when he died) I obtained the Surgeon's horse and went up. Obtaining the assistance of a carpenter, we made a coffin of hard tack boxes and buried him in the buying ground attached to the Hospital, being what was formerly the family garden surrounded by a row of cherry trees. Upon placing him in the coffin it was at once evident that the remains never could have been embalmed especially after taking them down to Bermuda. I never saw so rapid a change as had taken place from the time of decease to the time we buried him. The embalming process must be done before much of any change takes place. The day was most intensely hot even for this place, and by the time the transfer could have been made, the remains would have been in no state for embalming. All the time elapsed between his death and his burial that should have intervened.

After the remains were deposited in their last resting place and previous to filling the grave, a Minister attached to the "Christian Commission" at my request, came down, read a chapter in the Bible (one of the Psalms, the number I have forgotten) and made a very beautiful and appropriate prayer. The sad burial was also attended by my new friend and acquaintance, Miss Clara Barton, who had requested me (before Jackson's death) to let her know when the burial took place. After everything was ready I called for her at her room and she walked down with me to the grave, attended the services and then we returned to the house. She was deeply affected, and though she has been on all the great battlefields of the war during their progress, and has witnessed human suffering and misery in every form, still has she lost not one particle of womanly sympathy and feeling. As I threw the first shovel full of earth upon Jackson's coffin the tears coursed down her cheeks. No stranger hands performed the last sad rites of our deceased friend and fellow Soldier, but loving mourning friends placed him in his coffin, carried him to the place of burial, and cast the first and last earth upon his grave.

This sad letter will be continued in our Summer newsletter...Remember 2011 is the 150th Anniversary of the start of the Civil War.

New book about Kelleys Island and the Civil War

Leslie Korenko

On April 15, 1861 **President Lincoln** issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 militiamen. A week later the first Kelleys' Island men answered with 100 men serving before the Civil War ended. The South had seceded from the Union. Before the war finally ended, 100 men would be sent from the shores of Kelleys Island to fight for the reunification of the country serving in the 3rd Ohio Cavalry; the 38th, 100th, and 101st Ohio Infantries; 1st Ohio Heavy Artillery; and the 130th Ohio

Volunteer Militia. By 1864, 100 of the 600 residents of Kelleys Island had enlisted.

These turbulent times are featured in the new book about the island's history: *Kelleys Island 1862-1865 - The Civil War, the Island Soldiers, & the Island Queen*, by islander **Leslie Korenko**, which will be available this year in the Museum's gift shop.

The stories are told through the first-hand accounts by the soldiers themselves. One soldier, **Jacob Rush** of the 3rd Ohio Cavalry, enrolled when he

was just 15 years old. He was wounded twice and just before the end of his enlistment, he was captured as a spy and sent to Cahaba Prison.

Remember, KIHA members get a 10% discount on gift shop purchases. This book contains 420 pages and over 250 photos and illustrations. Leslie's first book, *Kelleys Island 1810-1861 - The courageous, poignant & often quirky lives of island pioneers* is also available at the gift shop.

Stop by the museum and discover the extraordinary history of Kelleys Island.

The Life Boat, from Page 1

government the idea of a metal boat. It worked out well and withstood more abuse than a wood boat. After his success with lifeboats, he created a life car, an amphibious duck boat, which was a military vehicle that was a precursor to the landing craft used in World Wars I and II.

The Great Lakes Historical Museum, which has far outgrown their space in Vermilion, is currently building a new museum in Toledo. They would like this life boat as their focal point when they open in a year or two. Rightly so, as they did the "grunt" work and financed the repair jobs. But in the meantime, KIHA has the proud honor

of displaying it at our new facility.

Over the years, it has bothered me that we haven't had this life boat on Kelleys Island. I started talking with **Christopher Gilchrist**, the executive director, at The Great Lakes Historical Museum, and then to **Susie Cooper**, director, at LEIHS. There was a need for more space at Put-n-Bay's museum, and they were supportive and helpful in facilitating this life boat's return to Kelleys Island. In the summer of 2010 I visited LEIHS and met with Susie. I was able to see the boat and was taken aback at how big it was. We started talking about the different alternatives in getting it back to Kelleys Island.

One option was to have a crew from Kelleys come over and row it home ...we

all laughed and were enthusiastic, but **Chuck** thought it might sink. **Chris Walcott** was then hired to trailer it to KIHA from Put-in-Bay. It arrived the day before Thanksgiving and **Jim McIntire** and **Sharon** built a frame to cover it in the museum's parking lot. A Big Thanks to Fred and Chris for their efforts in bringing the boat to Kelleys Island, and to Jim and Sharon for getting it under cover for the winter.

KIHA will have the boat on Kelleys Island until the Great Lakes Museum opens in Toledo. Then it will go back to them. We thank them for the renovation and the trust that we will take care of it, enjoy it, and share it with our many visitors.

Be sure to stop by and see it!

Life Boat facts

The Kelley Island Life Boat was owned and operated on Kelleys Island by the US Coast Guard during the years of 1939-1943. The Coast Guard stationed a man on the island during those winters and gave speeches at the school. Its main purpose was to rescue ice fisherman in the winter, although it brought in ice shanties on its stern at least three times.

Its dimensions are 20 feet long and 8 feet wide. It is made of corrugated metal, a process that **Joseph Francis**, of Boston, perfected. It was always a row boat and never had an engine. It was docked at North Beach by the Lime Crusher and was put into the water by the **Tomchos, Schultzs, and Ruffners**.

Museum notes, from Page 1

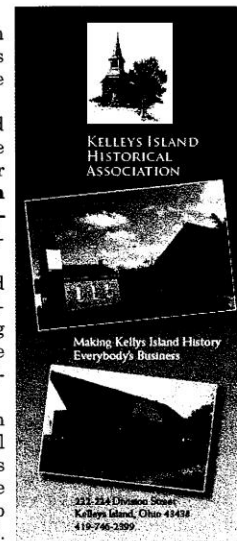
In addition, on that day, the museum will be open for free to all islanders and island visitors. Islanders and others have volunteered and donated toward the new museum for nearly 30 years.

In late fall, at the suggestion of board treasurer and Gift Shop manager **Sharon Brunell-McIntire**, the board asked **Jacquie Kranyak** to create a brochure for the museum. Jacquie, along with her niece **Meghan Kranyak Wotsch**, and graphic designer **Steve Farkas**, designed a four-color brochure that is now available at the museum and at the Chamber.

The Old Stone Church which has been cleaned and restored back to its original purpose and will be available for rental for weddings and meetings. Final pricing and details are being worked out by the board. Anyone interested in leasing the facility should call: 419-746-2399.

Sharon McIntire has been opening the museum on weekends in May, regular hours, starting in June, will be posted on the sign out front. As always, volunteers are needed. Please consider volunteering for a three hour shift weekly in the museum's gift shop, or to help out for one of the museum's events—listed on Page 5.

We can't do it without your help.



Interview with Sabra Hamilton

The interview below was transcribed by Anne Sennish from a family scrapbook compiled by Frank E. Hamilton, grandson of Sabra Hamilton. It is from an un-noted newspaper on June 21, 1921. Sabra was Anne's great-grandmother. Thanks Anne!

When **Mrs. Sabra Hamilton**, widow of **James Hamilton** of Kelleys Island, was asked, "What did you do for entertainment in the early days?" recently, she answered: "Oh, work, I guess - in the earliest early days."

Mrs. Hamilton, the daughter of **John Titus**, one of the first settlers on the Island, is in her 93d year. She is blind, but intellectually alert, pleasant-voiced and keenly interested in the affairs of today.

She lives upon the same site to which her husband brought her as a bride in her teens. The first home was a two-room house of hewn logs; that in which she now lives is a large modern structure surrounded by vineyards and orchards, and with an outlook over Lake Erie from the southeastern part of the Island. In the first home she cooked by a fireplace. Eleven children have called Mrs. Hamilton "Mother."



Sabra Hamilton outside her home.
Photos from Anne Sennish.

The recital of the interesting days lived by this revered woman includes the migration of her family, when she was a wee child, to the mining region of Michigan from New York state; their distaste of that region and settlement near the Marblehead lighthouse in 1836.

From Marblehead they went to Kelley's Island.

Island in Old Days

"At that time there was one road upon the island, running from south to north. It was a terrible road. There was a small dock belonging to the Kelley family. Father worked hard to pay for our place on the west bay. Both father and my husband chopped wood on our places and hauled it to the Kelley dock on the north side of the island as pay for the land.

"It was interesting to watch the planting of the vineyards. We have vines which have been in bearing more than half a century.

"There were no churches. The people met at each others' houses for worship. Everyone was strictly reli-

gious and quite proud when we got a regular preacher. We felt we had progressed. There were no schools when we came. The first teacher hired was a man who taught during the winter and spring months in a small frame building on the south side.

"We raised corn from the beginning for our own use. There were some cattle on the Island; and many wild hogs whom anyone was permitted to kill. They had been brought to the Island originally by a man named 'Napier,' and tasted fine: although the meat was oily through their having lived on hickory nuts principally.

Islanders' Entertainment

"After the Island became really settled by a number of people we had splendid times. One of these was spelling bees. I was never a good speller but I got lots of fun, however. Then there were corn roasts on the different farms. We also had a 'lyceum,' mostly by the Islanders. Sometimes there would be an outside speaker and a band before **Lincoln** was president. Whoever spoke brought in patriotism as about the chief end of man. This was as it should be. The 'lyceums' were held in the town hall donated by **Datus Kelley** to the Island. We used to write a 'piece' as we called it, and then either read or 'speak' it. Everyone attended.

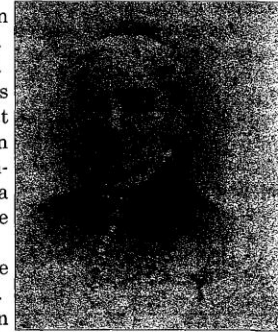
"A steamboat ran from Sandusky, touched the Island, went to Put-in-Bay and as far away as Toledo. These steamers were as nice as the ones today and just as popular. Frequently they were chartered for excursions. The **Island Queen**, built on Kelleys Island, was a favorite boat. It was later a tug.

"No runaway slaves ever stayed on the island, although some passed over on their way to Canada.

Mrs. Hamilton comes from a long-lived family, one sister, **Mrs. Joseph Lincoln** living to be 99 years of age; another sister, **Mrs. Edmond Ward**, also passed the 90th birthday; still another sister, **Mrs. Lydia Dwelle**, lived to count 96 years; and another sister, **Mrs. James Watkins**, counted more than 81 years. John Titus, their father, lived to be 96 years of age.

The wonderful Persian lilacs which are such an attraction throughout the Island were started by Mrs. Joseph Lincoln. Today **Long Point** resembles a fragrant semi-forest as the result of her planting sprigs about her home many, many years ago.

Mrs. Hamilton has as companions during these later years her grandson and his wife, **Mr. and Mrs. John Moysey**.



Sabra Hamilton

Extra notes on the Sabra Hamilton interview

The 1921 interview with **Sabra Hamilton**, that **Anne Sennish** has so generously shared with us from her family's archives, is a real treasure. It gives us an interesting look into island life from the latter part of the 19th Century and the early part of the 20th Century.



Sabra & James Hamilton home on North Bay, just north-east of Kaempfe Allotment.

Sabra was the granddaughter of a Micmac Indian—from Nova Scotia. One of her mother—**Mehetable Titus**—parents was the Micmac. Her father **John Titus** and her mother are the ancestors of many island families including the **Hamiltons, Dwelles, Wards, Lincolns, Hughes**, to name a few. Sabra died on May 19, 1926 at age 101, and had been the oldest surviving mother of a Union Army veteran. In fact, adds Anne, she and her sister **Caroline DeBoard** are the granddaughters of that Union Army veteran. A fact that is certainly a rarity today.

Sadly, Sabra's home, which was built by her husband James, is completely gone—towed to the dump. Anne wasn't sure of exact circumstances that led to its being abandoned, but surmised that Sabra had moved to be cared for by her children. The home was next owned by a **Mrs. Meeks**, who had a notable flower garden, recalled Anne. It was later owned by **Grace Church of Sandusky** and run as a camp. Anne remembers being in the home as a child, even though it was abandoned at the time. She reports that **Bob Bickley** used to store his fishing nets inside.

James Hamilton's brother **Robert Hamilton's** home was known as **The Villa** and it remains as part of **Camp Patmos**, where it has been well-maintained and is currently used as a dining hall and staff quarters.

Think Spring!

Memorials, Donations and Gifts

Memorials

Anne Sennish in memory of **Tim Ahner** and **Janice Bertsch**.

Judy DuShane in memory of **Nick Bianchi, Fran & Walt Johnson**, and **Toni Mullins**.

C. Ann Brown memorials were received from **Erie County Genealogical, Robert & Jan Ransom**, and **Roger & Madeleine Williams**.

Jim Sennish memorials were received from **Ila Dick, Judson Spore, Robert & Jan Ransom**, and **Roger & Madeleine Williams**.

Kay Herndon memorials were received from **Lydia Oppmann, the Yoakum Family, Florence McKillips, Dr. & Mrs. Bruner, Charles Pascoe, Cindy LaMarca, Steven Mack, Betty Baskin, Martha Hickey, James Brien, Hollis Hall, Ila Dick, Roger & Madeleine Williams, C. L. Nash, Jr., Frances White Gale, Judy DuShane, John & Judith Kobs**, and **Elizabeth & Fred Stueber**.

Cash donations

Were received from **Nancy Logan**, and **William & Mary Ann Player, E. Anne Eddowes, John & Judith Kobs**.

Other donations

Artifacts were loaned to us by **Ted Blatt**. We also received artifacts from **Patti Johnson Muryani** and a tier display table from **Gary & Jackie Finger**.

Carol Vogler Bright donated a handmade quilt entitled "Monarch Migration" to be raffled off during the year, along with 18 copies of her "**Making Waves**" book for resale in our gift shop.

Teri Betzenheimer's handmade quilt donation for 2011 is entitled, "**Island Memories**."

Tickets for both quilt raffles will be on sale at the gift shop.

A huge thank you to **Greg Ritchie** for doing our federal taxes for this year.

2011 KIHA Dates to Remember

MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE—Sat., July 9—
11 am to 5 pm—Free admission to all.

ART SHOW - Sat., Aug. 6

Please come display your items. Artists and crafters welcome.



ANNUAL MEETING - Sat., Aug. 13

BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

- Sat., Sept. 10

**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

Please give us the address you want your newsletter sent to:

Name: _____

Street: _____

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

E-mail: _____

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

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

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