



Kelleys Island Historical Association

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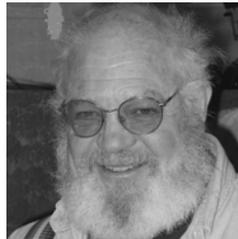
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Meet the President

(from a conversation between Claudia Brown and the new President of KIHA)

At the 2011 Annual Meeting a new president was elected for the Kelleys Island Historical Association. , Charles Laylin Herndon, "Chuck". Chuck has been a



member of the Association for many years and served on the board for a year before being selected to be President. Chuck has a long relationship with the island and has lived on Kelleys Island for many years. His earliest memories are of summers spent on the east side of the island at his family's summer home. As an adult he and his wife made their home on the island, while working off island and since his retirement several years ago, he has lived on the island full time. Chuck has an interest in history in general, even in the oldest history, geology. And when young, roaming around the island, Chuck was instrumental in finding and reclaiming the Kelleys Island Lifesaving Boat, showing an early interest in local history.

Recently, when Chuck became more active in the organization, he reflected on what he had in his background and life experience that he could contribute. Chuck has some unusual insights and experience that are especially useful in the museum environment. He has spent his whole life as an artist and a large portion of his adult life as a teacher. In both his personal work and his professional work he has had many opportunities to set up teaching envi-

ronments and also exhibitions in galleries.

The Kelleys Island Historical Association has grown during the time it took to erect a building and now it is time to evolve once again. The new museum building was erected and the interior was finished enough to start housing exhibits. Since the opening of the building, the board has kept busy and has continued to address exhibition space. The new building now has moving walls that can be re-configured as needed for changing exhibit installations. The walls are also helpful for deflecting noise in the large room. Maintenance considerations also continue and recently a new cradle was constructed under the Kelleys Island Lifesaving Boat which is exhibited under roof on the wide front porch of the museum building. (The boat was highlighted in the Spring 2011 newsletter.)

The Board has begun assessing the church building and the parsonage for repairs, maintenance, and possible uses for the spaces. Decades have passed since the German Reformed Church building was given to the Kelleys Island Historical Association and it received vigorous attention by volunteers to clean it up, repair walls and make it ready for use. Now, once again, the church building needs interior work on the walls and floors. The board is also planning to clean up the property in general, both around the church and museum, and also around the parsonage to the north of the church. In the future, Chuck envisions the church building being used for private rentals,

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.

(a continuation of the July 14th 1864 letter written from Camp, Head Quarters Co. K Pt. of Rocks, Va., from the Fall 2011 KIHA Newsletter)

Nothing short of a general fight at Petersburg attracts the Boys to the Breastworks now, an ordinary cannonading not having much attention paid to it.

My opinion is that we shall be sent home to be mustered out by the 20th of August, unless some "emergency" occurs to prevent. If however Ewell is defeated and the troops now there (are) sent back here, there will be more men than can be used here and we *may* be sent back in the same transports that bring them down, a few days before the time, or may be a few days after the time. At all events I believe the time of our being relieved depends upon the driving back, defeat or destruction of Ewell's expedition. We are now doing just such duty as Veterans would have to do were we not here. Are just as good for Picket and Intrenchment duty and *better* for Fatigue duty than Veterans. Consequently our services will be in demand here as long as the present status of affairs remains. I do not know when this will reach you but *hope* it will not be long delayed.

The sick of our boys are all doing well. James Titus is perhaps the most sick of any. Lester is quite thin and by being watched (as he is about his eating will get along). All the weak ones are getting along.

Why does not someone at the Island write to Holbrook? He complains much that his letters to the Island



Point of Rocks,
Virginia

are unanswered. He writes too many letters to be neglected, say so to those interested. He is a right hand man for one taking charge of the sick in camp, watching their diet &c. He is not in full health himself and I have him kept off duty as much as possible. He wished to go on guard at the Hospital yesterday, but at night I had Corp. Ohlamaker (Ohlemacher) relieve him and he remained in camp last night. He wrote Mrs. Eldred yesterday at my request as he did Mrs. Mitchell. I fear my dispatch to Alfred of yesterday did not get through.

You may not imagine from the length of my letters and their frequency that letter writing here is much of a job. With no convenience we have to use our knees for a desk or else sit squatted on the ground in very conceivable position except one of comfort with the constant interruptions and pestered with flies that fairly swarm unless the wind is so fresh as to compel you to hold your paper down with one hand while you pencil away with the other. I am now compelled to *strain* every liquid I drink, as my moustaches are so long that no liquid can pass without being strained through them, not having shaved since I left Johnson's Island.

Each one accuse the other of being lazy. A good joke is afloat on the Orderly that will sound better told than it would read written—will therefore reserve it for Zina's benefit. He started it himself and is therefore the responsible party. *He* at least will inform her of it when he gets home, if I don't.

We are passing the time here as good naturedly as possible and endeavoring to lighten the otherwise weary hours of camp life and of separation from home and loved friends. Even the growlers and grumblers of camp furnish their share of entertainment as their querulous and unreasonable complaints vary the monotony and they generally only get laughed at and bored for the ill nature. It is not often that I as a Commandant have to "come down" in anger to quell a disturbance, and then only a few words are required, so altogether we get along very well. As I am quite tired with long writing will close for the present.

Cont. on Pg. 5

Meet the President, cont. from pg. 1

for weddings and private parties, and for Historical Association events such as meetings and talks for its members and the community.

Chuck's background in education is an important resource in promoting the community and educational aspects of the Historical Association's mission. He plans to expand upon and develop more content in the signage at the museum. Chuck follows accepted historical tenets, one of which is that the provenance of an object is essential to the importance of the object. To address that principal, Chuck is leading the board in developing a submission process for donations that includes detailed information about who owned, used, preserved, and donated the object, and have that information travel with the object when it is exhibited. An acceptance process will allow museum personnel to accept objects that more closely match the mission of the museum. Scholarly information about items on display will help connect them to island history, within American history, and encourage participation with and interpretation by the visitor.

Chuck envisions a future for the museum that includes changing displays of permanent and loaned objects and as host to traveling exhibits from other museums. He hopes to guide the board in a review of past activities with the emphasis on evolving programs and events that will be interesting to the community. Chuck mentions that Kelleys Island is on the National Register of Historic Places and that brings visitors to the island. He feels this is an area that should be addressed directly by the Historical Association in some way. The new President would like to

have the Historical Museum seen as a resource by visitors and residents in a way that will encourage their interaction with the museum and increase the value of the museum for them. He concludes by saying that the Kelleys Island Historical Museum belongs to the people of Kelleys Island and he looks forward to hearing about their interests.

History doesn't stand still. Every tomorrow is very briefly today and forever history. I recently read a quotation from John F. Kennedy that more poetically expresses what I see as a predicament for a local history museum: "History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future. To try to hold fast is to be swept aside." Continuing to be relevant is a daunting task. Members of the board, and especially President Herndon, would like to hear from you, the members. How can they make the museum a special place for you? What would you like to see at the museum? What exhibits? What programs? More social events? Openings for new exhibits? An early summer welcome back social event? More speaker programs? Classes? You can help the board of the Kelleys Island Historical Association make this your museum.

You can contact President Chuck Herndon with your comments and ideas by writing him at: President Chuck Herndon, Kelleys Island Historical Association, P.O.Box 328, Kelleys Island, OH 43438.

Kelleys Island Aviator

Recent News from the accessions department—

Kelles Island had its share of early aviators. With today's travel by large plane it's hard to believe that air travel was a new experience not very long ago. Maybe it was when the barnstormer Hersberger came to the island, maybe it was the "new frontier" that was sweeping the United States after Lindbergh's flight from New York to Paris. When it was a fantastic new experience to fly with the birds, Kelleys Island residents were bitten by the "bug". A number of Islanders, mostly men, learned to fly in open cockpit planes. The early days of flying were a



Cont. p. 4

Kelleys Island Aviator, cont. from pg. 3

real adventure, if a little dangerous. There are many stories of young men flying low over the houses where their girlfriends lived, until they came out of the house to see what the noise was. We don't know if **William McKillips** was one of those young men, but we do know from his daughter Shirley A. McKillips, that he flew before he was married. Shirley recently loaned the Kelleys Island Historical Assn. some of her family's treasures. William "Boy" McKillips went to flying school in the early 1930's and earned a private pilot's license. His hours were certified by his future father-in-law, **Norman Blatt**. It appears that William McKillips had a little time to enjoy his new "free as a bird" skill before he was ready to settle down. He fell in love with **Norma Blatt**, and the family story goes that Norma said "it's me or the plane." We know his decision as he married Norma in 1934. It must have been difficult to give up flying because first they, and then their daughter Shirley, preserved his flight suit, goggles, (you needed goggles in an open cockpit plane), and leather helmet, reminiscent of Lindbergh's attire.

Kelleys Island has had some unique experiences with the fledgling air industry. The island has a municipal airport today because of the concerted efforts of some of the island's early airmen. But that's another story.



William McKillips' Flight suit



Ice Scooter - donated by Florence "Sis" Betzenheimer McKillips

Recently an old shed was cleaned out on the museum property that was left from the Betzenheimer family. Steve James took one more look at the contents and out came two delightful winter toys, a sled and this ice scooter. When asked about it, Sis said she would donate it to KIHA. It is a simple elegant wood shape with a metal runner on the bottom. Sis McKillips said that she and her siblings all took turns on the scooter in the 1920's and - 30's. Ice skating and now we know "ice scootering" were popular winter sports for Kelleys Island children, along with ice sailing and ice boats (covered in previous KIHA newsletters). Thank you Sis.



Who do you know in this 1907 Catholic School Photo ?

Webb Letters, Cont. from Pg. 2

Friday Morn. 6 o’C 15th July

The P.M. goes down for the mail in a few minutes, I shall send this along and trust to chance for its getting to you. None *much* sick this morning but James Titus and he is better.

In haste Your Husband and Father
Wm. S. Webb

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Memorials, Donations and Gifts

Memorials

Milton Blatt -In Memory of **Barbara "Bonnie" Blatt**

Cash donations

Fred Walcott

Polly and Ken Burns

Other Donations

Barb and Bill Coleman— Books for sale in the Gift Shop

KIHA extends our warmest and most sincere thanks to one and all.

Kelleys Island Historical Association

Memory Walk



Buy a brick with your name, boat, or loved one. Own a piece of Kelleys Island and leave your permanent mark.

Price for a small brick (4”x 8”) \$100.00

Please engrave with (13 spaces, 2 lines)

Complete lines above and send with check for \$100.00 to KIHA.

OR

Price for a medium brick (8” x 8”) \$135.00

Please engrave with (13 spaces per line, 4 lines)

Complete and send with check for \$135.00 to KIHA.

Kelleys Island Historical Association
PO Box 328, Kelleys Island, OH 43438

**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.



Kelleys Island Historical Association

We're on the web!

kelleyslandhistorical.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 -----)

Paid: \$

Received by: _____