

SODUS BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Newsletter

Spring 2020

President's Message



I would love to be able to welcome you to the 2020 season at the lighthouse with open arms and a big hug to thank you for your support of the lighthouse and the historical society. That is not possible during this time of Covid-19. This newsletter clearly satisfies the social distancing we need to stay healthy and it will have to suffice for the time being. Check out this link for some fun alternatives to our usual greetings to each other.

<https://www.exploratorium.edu/blogs/spectrum/greetings-time-covid-19>

When I agreed to be one of a triumvirate of presidents for this year, we thought things would be rather calm and quiet during my tenure from February through May. After all, we would be closed until May 15 and there is not much museum traffic until we jump into the July 4th Extravaganza. The museum opening, under Joe's direction, has become a well-oiled machine. We even cancelled our February board meeting because there wasn't much to discuss. Then, all of a sudden Well, you know what happened and is still happening. So much for a calm and quiet presidency.

Fortunately, we have a very dedicated and competent Board of Trustees, director and members who step forward at times of need. Thank you all. Hard decision had to be made quickly, as we realized our revenue stream would be seriously impacted. We immediately instituted an austerity budget to stem the outflow of money as much as we could. Then we took a watchful waiting approach before making further decisions about the season. In the meantime, the government passed the CARES act with the possibility of applying for some assistance in the form of grants and low interest loans. Thanks to our treasurer Sue Bassage, who worked with Reliant Credit Union, we received one from the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) to continue Joe's salary and pay some utility costs and a smaller amount from the Emergency Injury and Damage Loan (EIDL). As the state and nation started to enact measures to control the spread of the virus we recognized that our major events all involved groups of people; that a significant segment of our audience are the most vulnerable; that we could not maintain social distancing in the museum; that we could not monitor bathrooms and gift shop safely; that it was unlikely we could open at all until very late in the season; that, even if we could open, it would cost more to operate than we would raise from drastically reduced attendance; and that our real priority was to the health and safety of all of you who have been our supporters. Once we accepted the reality of all this, we made the very sad decision to cancel the 2020 lighthouse season.

One good thing about history is that it is still there tomorrow, in fact, there is even more of it tomorrow.

(continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Macy by Tom Lightfoot

Bird Stories by Rosa Fox

Story Corner by You

(President's Message continued)

If closing for the 2020 season wasn't bad enough; the saddest reality of all hit us. We realized that, once government support runs out, we would not have the resources to keep Joe, the director of our lighthouse. Sadly, we are laying Joe off as of June 15th until the situation improves significantly. It is impossible to



enumerate all the positive things Joe has done during his nine-year tenure as director. Everything about the museum is more organized and runs more smoothly than ever before. Joe's attention to detail has made the lighthouse and the historical society more professional. With Joe's attentiveness to scheduling and coordination, everything from the library to the gift shop, concerts to historical presentations, fundraisers to the 4th of July celebration ran like clockwork. Every single element of the beautiful and treasured lighthouse entrusted to us has been positively improved under Joe's guidance and care. We will miss Joe's vast knowledge, which he always shared, and his natural exuberance about the lighthouse and life in general, but most of all his quick wit that always had a joke or story appropriate to any occasion. Joe is the lighthouse to many people. Please join me and the rest of SBHS Board of Trustees in thanking Joe

O'Toole for all he has done for us. We wish you well, Joe, and hope that we can welcome you back to the lighthouse soon.

The Board of Trustees will continue to pursue the mission of the Sodus Bay Historical Society during these trying times even if we can't offer our usual schedule of events. This newsletter is one way to do that. Stay tuned for others. We have plans to have on-line versions of some of the History Alive presentations. Virtual tours of the museum are in the planning stages and many other ideas are brewing. You should still be able to visit the grounds of the lighthouse with your families, observing safe practices, of course. Break away from home confinement for a little while and see the new trees Jane Peachy, Nellie Gardner, and Farmer (Nellie's dog) planted with the help of Hoppy and Brad from the village crew to give concert goers more shade and make the park even prettier in the future.

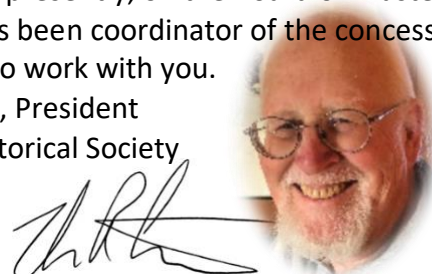


Thank you all for your continued support. This is a financially difficult time for many of us but if you can help a little more, it is needed now more than ever. So many of you have enjoyed the lighthouse for years. Now would be a perfect time to consider becoming a Life Member. Any extra you can donate will assure that we can resume our full schedule next year. Go on-line to <https://www.sodusbaylighthouse.org/> and become a member, upgrade your membership, donate a little extra or just shop in our on-line gift shop. We have always depended on you to maintain the lighthouse, which brings many thousands of visitors to Sodus Point and Wayne County each year. Help us continue to do our part for the lasting vitality and viability of this community.

THANKS, ONE AND ALL!

Finally, join me in welcoming Bill Singer as the final member of this year's presidential team for the Sodus Bay Historical Society. Bill was president in the past and is, presently, on the Board of Trustees, a member of the Executive Committee and, most important of all, has been coordinator of the concession stand for our concerts. Good luck, Bill. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Tom Lightfoot, President
Sodus Bay Historical Society



Sodus Bay Historical Society Newsletter

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In addition to grants, our funding comprises donations and membership dues, which are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

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Tom Lightfoot & Rosa Fox

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The Macy in Macyville

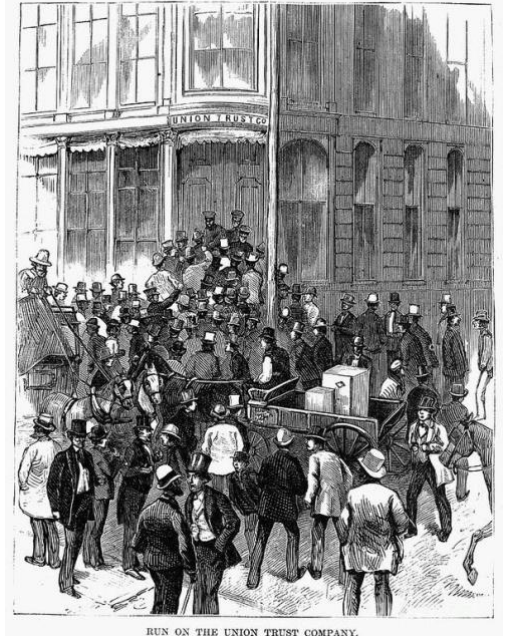
Part 2

By Tom Lightfoot



S. J. Macy

The Long Depression took hold of the country and the world from 1873 until at least 1879. Railroads were especially hard hit with sixty going bankrupt within a year. Railroad construction, which had been expanding since the end of the Civil War, declined precipitously. Sadly, the Sodus Point and Southern Railroad, which



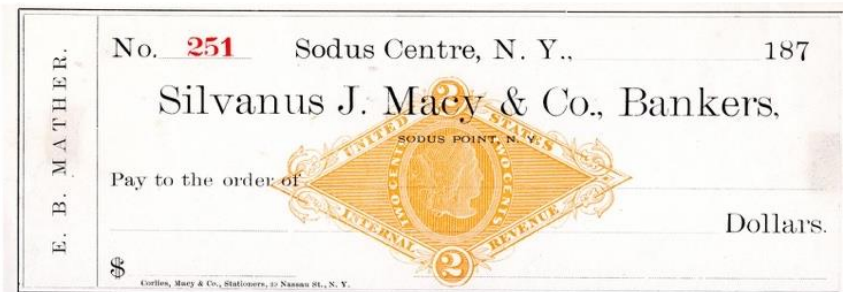
RUN ON THE UNION TRUST COMPANY.

was incorporated in 1852, didn't open until 1873. It only survived a year before being turned over to New York City banker and businessman, 41 year old Sylvanus J. Macy, in 1874 as receiver.

Macy bought a large block of the railroad's bonds and started investing in Sodus Point. At the time, the railroad had easements through people's property for tracks, and even some small buildings. Macy proceeded to buy the land from the owners, generally 66 feet wide swaths that could accommodate the railroad's needs. Occasionally, he bought a few acres radiating out from crossings and connections. One of these was Wallington Junction where the Sodus Point and Southern Railroad crossed and connected with the Lake Ontario Shore Line Railroad near present day North Geneva Road and Route 104. During the following years, Sylvanus built and improved everything necessary to make the railroad and shipping more successful. The area around the rail hub became known as Macyville. Being a banker in New York City among other businesses, Macy built a bank at Macyville in 1874 that later became the Custom House. One of the checks from Macy's bank, which is now in the Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum, was from E. B. Mather's account. Mathers had a lime kiln in Sodus Center and shipped lime on the railroad. (See **Mather's Miasma.**)



Photo from collection of Frank Grosz, Sodus Point, NY



From the collection of the Sodus Bay Historical Society

In 1875 the line went up for auction and Macy along with other investors bought it, reorganizing it as the Ontario Southern Railroad. He and his family: 36-year-old younger brother, Josiah Jr., his 19-year-old son Charles W. Macy and 16-year-old son George H. Macy bought house lots at the end of Sentell Street and onto Seaman Street in what was known as the Seaman

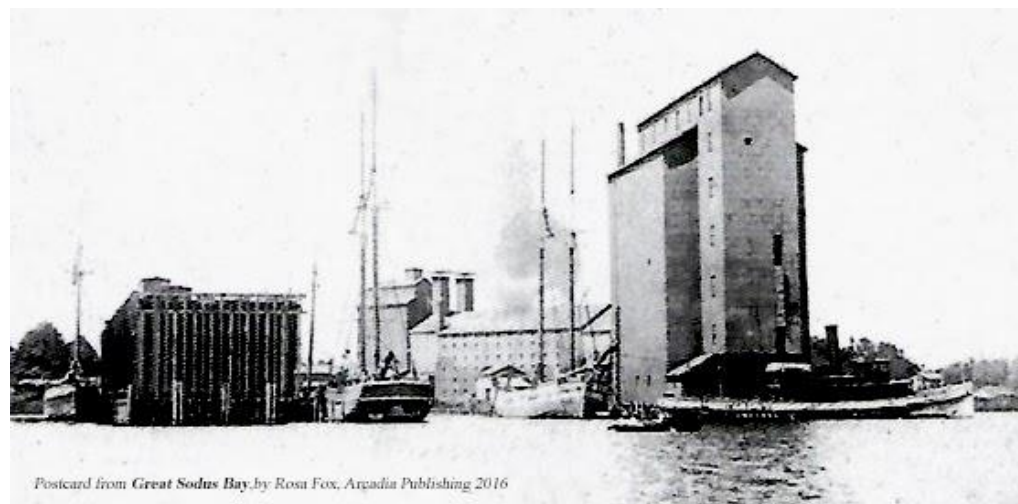
Subdivision. Sylvanus severed his ties with the Macy family businesses in New York City in 1876 to concentrate on Sodus Point. Already a powerful economic driver for the area, he quickly became a prominent Sodus Point citizen.

Even with Macy's great effort and money, it was to no avail. (See **Macy Determination**.) The railway couldn't make a profit and headed toward bankruptcy again. He and his investors surrendered the railway in 1879 to another group of investors who thought they could make it work. A discouraged Macy moved to Rochester early in 1880. Macy's son George moved back to New York City, pursuing his own career, becoming the largest tea importer in the world.

The investors who took over, however, also failed. In October of 1880 Sylvanus decided to try again. With some of his old investors along with some significant new ones, he bought the railroad back renaming it The Lake Ontario and Southern Railroad.

One of these investors was William Averell, who lived in Rochester. Concerned about his investment, William asked Edward H. Harriman to help him. Edward had helped William's father with his railroad. Edward, a stockbroker on Wall Street, was engaged to Mary Williamson Averell. Mary's father, William J. Averell, asked Edward to help him save his financially floundering Ogdensburg & Lake Champlain Railroad. William J. Averell was the president of the railroad and put Henry and Henry's wealthy and well-connected family friend, Stuyvesant Fish, on the railroad's board in 1878. Harriman was very familiar with railroad finances and railroad securities on Wall Street. Harriman married Mary while he and Fish restructured the railroad's finances, helping it survive. With this experience winding down Harriman and Fish decided to help Edward's brother-in-law, William Averell, with his Sodus Point investment.

In 1881, Macy put together a new board of directors consisting of himself as president, Harriman as vice president, Fish, Harriman's brother William, William Averell and Silas B. Stuart as board members. Silas and Macy worked together in the Silas B. Stuart Company in Rochester. Silas was part of the Stuart family of Newark



Postcard from Great Sodus Bay, by Rosa Fox, Arcadia Publishing 2016

who famously started the Sarah Coventry company. In 1883, they restructured the railroad again as the Sodus Bay and Southern. Harriman and Stuart moved to Sodus Point, living next to each other, and threw themselves into the work. This new group of men continued building and improving the line. Their huge grain elevator towered over the edge of the bay.

Within a year the group managed to get the railroad profitable just long enough for Harriman to broker a deal to sell it to the Northern Central Railroad, part of the Pennsylvania Railroad system. Some of the payout was in Pennsylvania Railroad bonds. This, undoubtedly, launched Harriman into his future as a railroad tycoon and the richest man in America for a while.

By this time, Macy was already very involved in Rochester life, business and banking. He became close friends with George Ellwanger of Ellwanger and Barry Nursery, an important business in the development of fruit farming in upstate New York. Macy became the Vice President of Rochester Savings Bank, a receiver of another railroad, the Rochester & State Line, and helped start the Rochester Homeopathic Hospital with Mrs. Hiram Sibley. Silvanus was appointed president of the hospital, a position he held until his death. His second wife, Juliet Wasson Macy (his first wife, Caroline Ridgeway Macy, died in NYC in 1869), was also very active with the hospital as the first Vice President of the board of directors. This hospital became the Genesee Hospital.



From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.

In 1890, Macy moved to Avon, NY, buying a farm and raising thoroughbred horses. Macy remained active in Rochester and friends with the Rochester elite until his death in 1903 at the age of 69. Juliet died a few years later in 1906. Silvanus J. Macy Jr. inherited the farm and kept raising and racing horses.



From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.

Silvanus J. Macy Jr. in the middle

Silvanus Macy, one in a long line of successful and powerful Macy's, only lived in Sodus Point for a short time. The impact of the eventual success of the Sodus Point railroad, the result of his vision and persistence, lasted for many, many years. Employment and the success of many businesses was the due to the rail line in Sodus Point. The Malt House, Coal Trestle, iron ore dock and grain elevator in Macyville brought commerce to a small town on the bay. The passenger service brought visitors and tourists from all over to appreciate its beauty and enjoy the activities of the bustling harbor and lakeshore. While the train is gone, and the railroad businesses have closed the enjoyment of this unique village by residents, visitors and tourists alike persists today thanks to the potential Silvanus Macy saw in a small bankrupt railroad that only went from Stanley to Sodus Point.



Mather's Miasma

During this time of serious health concerns from a pandemic, it might be instructive to look at a community health issue from the past in Sodus. See what you think about E.B. Mather's problem.

In 1895 a complaint was lodged with the Sodus Board of Health against E. B. Mather by Mr. Coleman (probably Sidney Bellinger Coleman) who owned Empire Mills at Metz pond on Salmon Creek in Sodus Center. Coleman did not appreciate Mather installing a sewer pipe from his house into the mill pond. With a

directive from the Supervisor of the Town of Sodus, J. A. Boyd, Sodus health physician, W. G. Hinkell, made "a diligent inquiry" into the situation.

Hinkell's finding was that Mather had added enough fresh spring water into his sewer pipe to make the effluent safe. He found something much more disturbing, however. So much waste was being dumped into the pond and Salmon Creek, both upstream and down, that Mather's addition was insignificant.



I also find that for years past the inhabitants living near Salmon Creek, at Sodus Center, have emptied their garbage, rotten apples, night soil and other impurities into said creek.

I also find privies located so near the back of a pond at Sodus Center (into which said Salmon Creek empties) that the filth therefrom is either emptied directly into said pond or washed into it by every rainstorm that moistens the surface.

I also find that Salmon Creek receives a good deal of drainage from cesspools, barnyards and outhouses for miles along its banks, and that in its course, it runs through a swamp permeated with decaying vegetables of every description.



The want of a perfectly free outlet for water of the creek, which would otherwise drain this swamp, readily accounts for the attacks of miasmatic diseases so frequently noticed in this section of the town.

W. G. Hinkell, Health Physician

(continued on page 8)

Rather than being dismissed, the complaint against Mather was referred to the State Board of Health, which did their own investigation. The board's conclusion was that everything was perfectly safe and that the whole situation was really a dispute between two prominent citizens (competing mill owners) and should be handled by the local authorities not state health officials.

While this may have just been a small-town feud between businessmen, the investigation came at a significant time in our understanding of diseases. The miasmatic diseases mentioned by physician Hinkell was based on the prevalent medical theory that disease was carried by "bad air". This theory goes back to ancient Greece and continued until Louis Pasteur proved in 1881 that many diseases were caused by microorganisms. The first virus was then discovered ten years later by Russian botanist Dmitri Ivanovsky. These discoveries led to the use of sterile techniques, like washing hands, by doctors and hospitals even though germ theory wasn't fully accepted until the early 1900s.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same," said writer Alphonse Karr. When confronted with scary situations, we still tend to blame others.

Editor's note:

Too bad the good people of Metz Pond did not have a "Pond Dredger". This article from the July 30, 1892 **News Gather** of Macedon, New York.

Macy's Tenacity

Silvanus Macy did whatever he could to improve the railroad coming into Macyville and the area around it in order to make the whole venture profitable. The main business of Macy's railroad was shipping. Shipping was certainly in Silvanus' blood from his family's businesses in New York City and his grandfather, Josiah's Nantucket shipping legacy. The main product was coal shipped from the coal trestle to ports around Lake Ontario. One day, Silvanus had a deadline for a shipment of coal that had to get out, yet, he had no ships available. Aware that the DoVille shipyard was building a new ship, Silvanus went over to talk to them. The ship was already finished. Silvanus bought it on the spot and brought it to the coal trestle. He had it loaded and sent it off to deliver coal to his customer. The resourceful and tenacious Macy accomplished all this in one day.



*Detail from Dick Palmer photo
www.histoircsod.uspoint.com*

What Do You Call a Black and White Bird with Dancing Webbed Toes?

By Rosa Fox

Nothing signals the arrival of spring more than the blossoming of snow drops, daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips - other than perhaps the visit of migratory waterfowl. Flocks of Canadian and Snow geese, wood ducks, and the wintering diver ducks are all on the move - headed for more northern grounds to pursue their summer brooding activities. Yet, many of those activities actually begin here - like breeding. Our 2020 spring has been one of - sadly - physically avoiding each other - keeping a safe distance. Well, not so with our avian partners. All our feathered friends could give a care about what is happening in our lives. They are busy with displays of courtship and achieving success in securing a mate.

On March 28, while on a walk in a secluded wood on the east side of Sodus Bay, my husband and I came upon a trio of Bufflehead having some frivolous courtship time on one of our woodland ponds. This was indeed a highly unusual sight. Bufflehead are familiar sites on the open waters of Sodus Bay and Lake Ontario during the winter months and into early spring until they head north to continue their courtship, nesting, and brood rearing activities. To see three Bufflehead in the woods was a new sighting - for us - two drake Buffleheads competing for the attention of a single female Bufflehead. Nearby a pair of wood ducks seemed to enjoy watching the show as much as we did, though they did seem a bit confused with all the ruckus two of these three Bufflehead were creating.



Photo courtesy Cathy Contant.

So, what do we know about these tuxedoed little cuties?

Bufflehead, the smallest of the diving ducks, weigh only one pound and have a wingspan of about twenty inches. Buoyant as a cork bobber, Bufflehead are extremely active, diving and resurfacing repeatedly. They are prone to chasing each other wildly around both above and below the water. The male is black and white, appearing to be dressed in some sort of tuxedo. Depending on the light, the black portion of the male's head will appear iridescent green and/or purple. The female Bufflehead is a drab gray with a soft white patch on her cheek, colorfully diminutive to her flashy partner.

Bufflehead feed on aquatic insects and larvae, snails, clams, and some aquatic plants, all of which they will consume underwater. Rarely seen on dry land, Bufflehead spending their day diving, eating, bobbing, chasing, and frolicking about with each other. The name "Bufflehead" is blend of the original name - Buffalo Head - so-called because of the male Bufflehead's puffy head shape. They are sometimes referred to as

"Butterball" because of their plump shape and thick layer of fat. Explorers, Lewis and Clark, noted the bird in their 1806 journals of their travels west as the "black and white duck."

Courtship or The Boys Just Can't Stop Dancing!

Bufflehead are very territorial during the breeding season, a male will attack intruders by chasing them across the water, as well as underwater, where they will pursue their competition, sneak up right behind the rival male, and scare the feathers off them! The chasing male will periodically return to the female to make sure she is still interested in his show of prowess and certain debonair flair. Bufflehead usually mate as a pair for several years in a row.



Photo courtesy Ned Ludd

The nest, chosen by the female, is located near ponds or small lakes. Usually an abandoned Northern Flicker or Pileated Woodpecker nest in the hollow of a tree - 2-feet to 10-feet off the ground - as much as 50-feet off the ground will be selected. The female Bufflehead lines the nest with dried grass and her own breast feathers, laying ten to twelve cream-colored eggs, which she will tend for 28-30 days. Bufflehead will sometimes nest in [man-made boxes](#) similar to a wood duck box. The doorway - hole needs to be about 2.5-inches in diameter.

Hunting History or . . . Why These Butterballs?



Photo courtesy Cathy Contant.

While a highly entertaining waterfowl, birdwatchers enjoy observing and photographing, the Bufflehead is also a duck hunter's treat and invitation for a skill-building challenge. Because of how the little Butterball can so easily fly just inches from the top of water's surface, and with the tremendous speed of their flight, hunters find these waterfowl a highly prized contest. Bufflehead stay around Upstate New York longer - staying well into the second season of duck hunting which lasts through the first week in January after many of the larger ducks (mallards and blacks) have left the area.

Not all has been rosy for the Bufflehead as far as hunting goes. Uncontrolled limits during hunting seasons in the early 1900s led to a decline in bird count for many species of waterfowl, including the Bufflehead. Local newspapers of the 1930s reported "no hunting season" state-wide for bufflehead and other species, and that their populations were in "grave

danger because of overshooting, drought, and other unfavorable conditions." Some of the other waterfowl included in the "no season" restriction era: Snow Geese, Ross's Geese, Wood Duck, Ruddy Duck, Canvasback, Red Head, Swans, and Atlantic Brant. Bufflehead have been fortunate in that their numbers have experienced an increase since around 1950.

Artwork or Black and White on Canvas

These small avian wonders have been seen as the subject on a variety of hunting stamps and are frequent subjects for other wildlife artwork. The artistically inspiring Bufflehead was no stranger to state issued duck stamps, which ran for a short time period from the 1970s to around 2012, the face and fees of which differed in each state. The [United States Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp](#), more commonly known as the Duck Stamp, is the most historic hunting stamp. With a nearly ninety-year history, the Duck Stamp is the longest running single themed U.S. Migratory Bird stamp. In 1934, as part of his "[New Deal for Wildlife](#)", President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act. This legislation was created to protect wetlands and other habitat - vital to the survival of migratory waterfowl. The Duck Stamp is an annually required purchase for everyone 16 years of age or older who plans to hunt migratory waterfowl. Ninety-eight percent of the proceeds go to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, which has now raised close to a billion dollars that helps with environmental causes to benefit birds like clean water, flood control, and soil erosion, as well as enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities for humans.

In addition to the environmental preservation purpose of the stamp, collectors place great value on these stamps. Every year, the [United States Fish and Wildlife Service holds a contest](#) to select the stamp art. These full-sized paintings become miniature works of art and, in turn, valued items to stamp collectors around the globe. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service also sponsor a [Junior Duck Stamp art contest](#) for youth grades K-12. [There is lots of information and curriculum links at this website! Check it out!]

In addition to being a requirement for all migratory bird hunters, the Federal Duck Stamp is a free pass to any National Wildlife Refuge that charges an entry fee. With that, the stamp is now purchased and carried by birders, nature photographers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. The face of the stamp also may feature a non-waterfowl migratory bird to acknowledge all avenues of citizen conservation efforts.

While the Bufflehead appeared on several state migratory hunting stamps during the 1970-2012 period, the popular little bird appeared on the Federal Duck Stamp only once - in 1948. *Duck stamp courtesy of David Fox collection.*



Additional reading about Bufflehead

All About Birds <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bufflehead/lifehistory>

Audubon Guide to North American <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/bufflehead>

University of Michigan, Detroit BioKids – Kids; Inquiry of Diverse Species. A great site for teens!
http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Bucephala_albeola/

The following poem was written in 1982, inspired by Bufflehead antics seen in the open waters of Lake Ontario from atop of Lake Bluff, Sodus Bay that winter. The sentiment of the poem holds true today.



The Bufflehead Trot

By Rosa Fox

Jumping to the tips of their small webbed feet,
These drakes in their tuxedos,
A funny dance do make.

They are up and across, the length of a stone's throw,
And down with a thrust
Of their breasts like snow.

One, to see these birds, would think their act strange.
But low and behold,
They are playing the mating game.

This dance goes on for hour upon hour.
What better thing to do in January's cold sun,
'Lest they appear to be having some fun?

What would those hunters do to see an act like this?
They'd probably be as mystified as me,
And be mostly likely to miss.

It is a lucky hen who wins one of those,
With that black and white tux
And those dancing webbed toes.

Forecastle Explorations

The forecastle of a ship is directly aft (behind) the bow of a ship and forward of the foremast - used for shelter and storage for lines, anchors, machinery, or – uncomfortable as it may seem - quarters for sailors. The SBHS Newsletter Forecastle Explorations will provide additional sources of information relevant to the featured articles and more, and to further discovering the vast history of our Great Sodus Bay and surrounding region.

Historic Site Virtual Tours and More

Given the current social distancing and stay home practice we are all getting accustomed to – some, perhaps a little antsy over – there are options to getting out and about from within the comfort of your own home.

Explore Wayne County's historic sites – online. Take or plan a tour, read about local history, and visit local sites. The *Wayne County Historians Organization* (WHO) is a group of municipal historians, historical society representatives, and other individuals interested in local history. Wayne County Historians members have created an online database of historic sites which includes museums, historic markers, architectural treasures, churches, schools, industries, cemeteries, murals, and so much more. Check out *Wayne Historic Sites* at <http://waynehistorians.org>. There is much to discover in Wayne County!

The *Museum of Wayne County History* provides an interesting collection of materials - virtual tours and historic writings on its website to aid the home-schooled students of Wayne County during the COVID-19 - New York Pause - time frame. These materials are terrific for everyone to learn more about our *Museum of Wayne County History* and local history like The Viking (Norse) Spearhead (discovered on Charles Point, Sodus Bay by Augustus Hoffman in 1929) which includes a link to the Science Channel's episode about the Norse Spearhead, found on Sodus Bay. https://www.waynehistory.org/Virtual_Tour_%26_Education.html
If you happen to get into the Viking Spearhead and want to take you exploration further – check out the Historic Sodus Point page - <http://historicsoduspoint.com/artifacts/viking-spear-head/>.

Happy travels!

Did you know –

Wayne County will be celebrating its 200th Birthday in 2023?

Yes! Wayne County was established on April 11, 1823. At that time, Wayne County consisted of eight towns.

Palmyra – established from Ontario County January 16, 1789

Sodus – established from Ontario County, known then as the “District of Sodus” January 27, 1789

Williamson – established from Sodus February 20, 1802

Wolcott – established from Junius, Seneca County March 24, 1807

Ontario – established from Williamson March 27, 1807

Lyons – established from Sodus March 1, 1811

Galen – established from Junius, Seneca County February 14, 1811

Macedon will be celebrating its 200th birthday in 2023, as well.

Macedon was established January 20, 1823 from Palmyra.

What about the other towns? Stay tuned! More to come on Wayne County's Bicentennial in future issues of the Sodus Bay Historical Society newsletter. A Bicentennial Planning Committee is busy working on various projects in preparation for the Bicentennial. Be on the lookout for ways you might be involved.

Story Corner

By You

Great Stories from Around Great Sodus Bay

A Special Invitation: We are very excited to invite you – the reader, and your friends and neighbors to submit stories about unique reminiscences, events, experiences, news, and any other Great Sodus Bay related tales. This is a new endeavor to encourage members to share their amazing stories from around the bay that may be a just little different, as well as foster some creative writing. Please send your stories to Rosa Fox – foxmuse@aol.com. Our newsletter team will review submissions for inclusion in future issues. The first “tale” was submitted in the Winter 2020 issue by Town of Huron Historian and longtime Sodus Bay resident, Rosa Fox.

*This issue’s story is an excerpt from a travelogue by Lewis Morris Philo (1851-1922). A prominent Alton postmaster and grocer, Philo opened a second grocery store on Sand Point in 1896. Philo published his circumnavigation, **Sodus Bay, The Beautiful** in 1902. Many thanks to Frank Burt of Geneva for sharing this wonderful little volume with me. Rosa*

Note: This excerpt is from the middle of the travelogue.

Sodus Bay, The Beautiful (an excerpt)

By Lewis Morris Philo

Soon we were headed for the east and were passing over the route of the old ferry, which we well remembered as the only means of crossing the bay at one time. Making a turn to the north we were riding over the natural bed of beautiful and famous lilies, a species of lotus, noted for its size and beauty. This handsome flower is said to bloom in but one other part of the United States, and its beauty defies description, and is the delight of all who visit here during its season. It reaches perfection during the month of August and presents the most beautiful sight to be seen on the bay, covering the entire eastern half of the water from the old bridge to the home of Mr. Stacy, near the dock. No pen can describe the beauty of this flower. It must be seen in its own home on the water to be appreciated.

We were now before the village of Resort, formerly known as Port Glasgow. Older people tell us that it obtained its name from a former resident of Glasgow, Scotland, who located here. It now contains two hotels, two stores, a post office, and quite a number of residences. Here we found a long dock running well out into the bay for the accommodation of the steamers. It is owned by Mr. Stacy of Resort, who keeps a boat livery in connection with his store. We were now on our return trip by way of the east shore and were soon passing before the burial place of the once prominent and respected Loomis [sic] family. It is located near the shore between Bonnicastle and Resort on a slight elevation and shaded by the original forest chestnut trees. We were soon at the dock of Bonnicastle, and as we saw the sun descending beyond the western hills, we decided that no better place could be found for our night’s rest. We then ascended by the stairs and wended our way up the hillside very tired, but with a feeling of satisfaction with our day’s outing. On reaching the level above we were greeted by Messers. Catchpole and Cole in such a friendly and gentlemanly manner that we were at once made to feel perfectly at home.

After our supper at their boarding house we walked out over their broad and well-kept lawn, which descends through a grove of grand old chestnuts, which, with its semi-circle of pretty cottages, presents a

very handsome picture. Standing on this fine elevation we had a clear view of the beautiful scenery of the bay and islands and western shore, with its coves and sloping hillsides. As we looked about us it seemed to us that the management of the place had well in view the comfort of their guests. We noticed the large and commodious pavilion, the perfectly made croquet ground, the large swing, comfortable seats and substantial main point at which all steamers stop, thus calling many to this handsome place.

On the following morning we again started on our trip and were soon passing the old dock and mill formerly owned and managed by William Lummis of New York. We were informed that on these grounds was once located a small village, known as Sloop Landing, which was destroyed by the British in the war of 1812. As this was on the line of the original state road, the two shores were connected by a ferry at that time. Rounding this point, we were soon passing the ruins of another old mill, which, in connection with the large farm adjoining, was on the property of the Rev. Mr. Purdy, who at that time was the owner of what is now known as Lake Bluff. It will be remembered that Mr. Purdy first presented that place to the notice of the public by holding camp meetings there when it was nearly a wilderness, about 25 or 30 years ago.

Sailing along we were soon confronted by quite an extensive bridge, which we noticed connected LeRoy's Island with the mainland on the east.

*And LeRoy Island is where we will leave Mr. Philo's **Sodus Bay, The Beautiful** tour for this issue. If you liked this arm-chair tour from days long ago and would like more, let us know. (foxmuse@aol.com).*

Post note: I originally thought Mr. Philo's given name – though often abbreviated as L. Morris Philo – was Lexvus! How disappointed I was – but interestingly amused – when I found his given name was Lewis. Some typo!! Lexvus = Lewis! Enjoy! And always look for the humorous side of any story!

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In addition to our loyal members, the Sodus Bay Historical Society relies on the generous contributions from area businesses and foundations for support of all its events. Given the economic toll the COVID-19 virus continues to take on our local businesses, it is important now, more than ever before, to show your appreciation by supporting these businesses. Their continued support will help the Sodus Bay Historical Society and Lighthouse Museum get through this difficult time and make possible the events and activities of post-COVID-19 seasons. Thank you!

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