

A Message from the President

Inspiration, Education, and Inclusion

January 16, 2023

Happy New Year to all. I love January. I know that many people dread the month and that it can be a task for some to get through. Since childhood, January has meant beautiful bright moons that reflect onto the snow and ice, it also captured magic with early lambs being born on Alasa Farms. As an adult, and reflecting back, I realized that one of my most favorite gifts that January brings are the early Saturday morning drives. For the past twenty-five years, I would drive from the top of Shaker Heights in Huron to the Southern edge of Sodus Bay. In typical Januarys, the bay would be dotted with colorful shanties and ice fishermen. The drive would then continue past Alasa Farms, the creeks that fed the bay, and through Sodus Point, ending with slow roll around the Loop. The combination of a warm cup of coffee, frigid temperatures and the sun casting wide rays made for countless good memories and inspired me to write and journal on Saturdays. I would love to hear what inspires you in your lives in January. Send us an email or drop us a note.

Museums are more than objects, they are places big or small, that tell stories. They takes us on adventures, allowing us to travel in time. They can also highlight for us various social movements and they can expose truth, however popular or unpopular that truth may be. Ambitious and a mere starting point, our museum is working with members of the curatorial committee, local historians, and authors to create and develop a new exhibit on the Underground Railroad and the Maxwell Creek Settlement. The new exhibit will be in a section of the newly dedicated Marge McCleery Room. Our discussions for this exhibit have been full of ideas. We can all agree that the stories of ancestors and local families would significantly add to the project. So, we hope that over time, those voices become part of our evolving exhibit.

In the meantime, we have been collaborating with local schools to plan field trips to visit local landmarks. Last year, children from Lyons Elementary School came to hear an actor portray Frederick Douglass on the front lawn of Alasa Farms. This spring we are in the final planning stages with 4th graders from Sodus Intermediate School to visit, learn and experience our rich history at the Sodus Bay Lighthouse. Both experiences reflect goals to inspire and educate through inclusion. This is an enormous personal goal that I have as President of the Sodus Bay Historical Society, and I know that it was shared by our good friend, Tom Lightfoot, and is shared by many of you.

I hope you all find some winter solace and inspiration wherever you may be and thank you for your support and dedication to the Sodus Bay Lighthouse and Historical Society.

Best,

Derek A. Poole

President



Sodus Bay Historical Society & Lighthouse Museum

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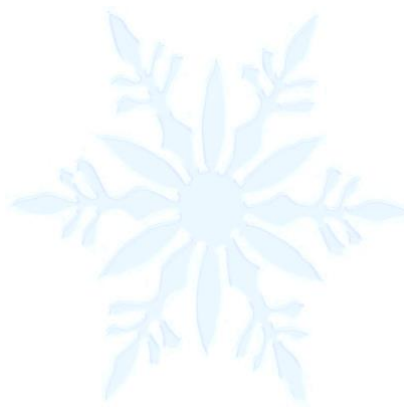
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New Plaque for Lighthouse Garage!

The Lighthouse garage will soon have a new plaque on the outside. This plaque is dedicated in honor of Anne and Keith Ketcham and to all the volunteers who make the Lighthouse shine.

Anne and Keith were long-time dedicated volunteers at the Lighthouse. They spent many years working and organizing the food line in front of the garage selling hot dogs and snacks for Lighthouse-sponsored events alongside many volunteers over the years.

The plaque and a generous donation were given by Mark Ketcham and Werner Lutz, who continue a family legacy of philanthropy.



Welcome to Harold Cheetham

Sodus Point Village Historian

by Rosa Fox with Harold Cheetham

Harold Cheetham was appointed Sodus Point Village Historian in November 2022. A 1972 Sodus Central School graduate, Harold has a lifetime connection to Sodus, Sodus Point, and the Sodus Bay area. Through his amazing array of interests and activities touching upon so many different subjects connected to history, Harold brings a wealth of knowledge and diverse experiences to the historian's position.

Harold was the former owner and editor of the Sun and Record before Wilma Young bought it. For 16 years, Harold was the curator of the Sunshine Radio Museum in the village of Sodus at SunRad Appliance Store. Related to this interest, Harold is a member of the Drumlins Amateur Radio Club, presently serving on its board and overseeing membership. He is also a member of the Antique Wireless Association in East Bloomfield.

He was a member of the Advisory Board for the Wayne County Fair, and for six years, served as a local 4-H leader. Harold is a member and Chaplain of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Sergeant Judson Hicks Camp in Palmyra. An ordained minister, Harold has an online ministry – Lake Ontario Ministries. He is a member of the National Rifle Association.

Harold loves history. In 2015, he helped organize the Town of Sodus Historical Society. He has an extensive library of about 1000 books, "which of course being a civil war buff – there are about 150 Civil War books." Harold's interest in the Civil War has drawn him into genealogy, as both his great grandfather and great great grandfather fought in the Civil War.

Harold is looking forward to working with everyone. You may contact Harold by email at haroldcheetham@yahoo.com. He would love to talk history with you!

As a Radio collector, Harold shared a photo of a Coast Guard radio he used to own. (right) It is a model R-138. This radio was intended for use on Coast Guard ships where the power was normally 110-120 VDC. The radio was used at remote ground stations or lighthouses where AC power might not be available. Enjoy this YouTube video about it. [\(1580\) Radio Rebelde on the 1948 R-138 US Coast Guard receiver](#)



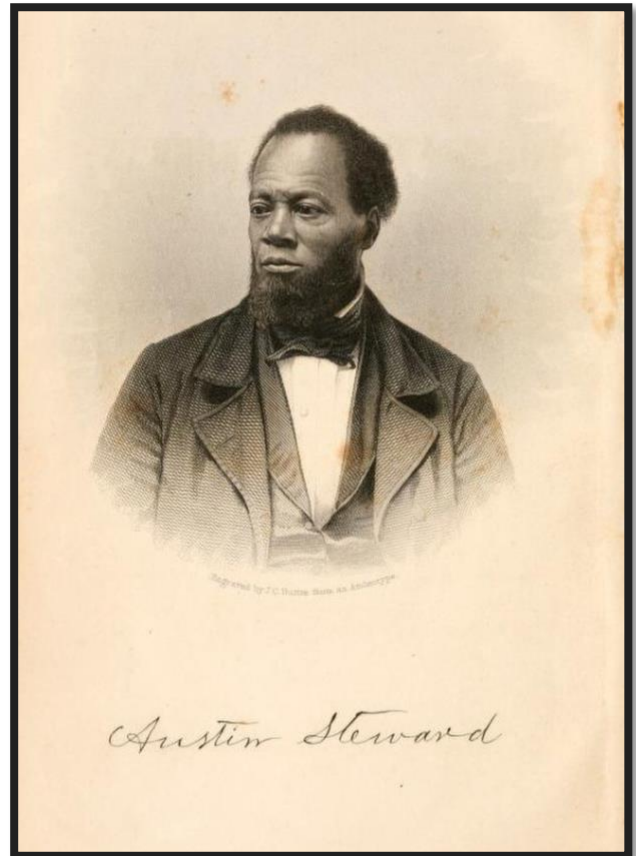
Historic Marker Dedication in Huron for “Unsung Hero”

Austin Steward

by Rosa Fox

The same year Frederick Douglass was born to slavery in Talbot County, Maryland - 1818, a grocery and dry goods store opened on the east bank of the Genesee River in Rochester, New York (then Brighton) on the corner of Main Street across from present-day Riverside Convention Center. The owner and operator, Austin Steward, was the first Black to open a business in this soon to become bustling canal town. Some thirty years later, the two men would meet.

Austin Steward was born circa 1793 to Robert and Susan, slaves of Captain William Helm of Prince William County, Virginia. A habitual card playing and horse racing gambler, Helm was in dire debt. To escape his obligations, he sold his Virginia plantation. At the encouragement of friend, Colonel Charles Williamson, Helm journeyed north to Genesee Country, temporarily leaving his family, but joined on the journey by his seventy enslaved. Historic records are in conflict as to the date Helm arrived at Sodus Bay. Most writings put Helm arriving around 1801. Steward would have been eight in 1801, more ready for his job as Helm's errand boy. Steward's autobiography, **Twenty-two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman**, details his life as a slave, his transition to freedom, and becoming an activist for the cause to end slavery.



Helm and his enslaved spent a night or so at Moses and Jabez Sill's inn at Troupville in 1801. (Troupville's named changed to Sodus Point in 1826.) Helm bought considerable property at the head (both the east and west sides) of Sodus Bay. Setting his camp up on the west side and his enslaved on the east side of the bay, Helm is considered Huron's first white settler.

Steward writes in his autobiography: "Provisions were scarce and could not be procured for cash in that section. There was no corn to be had, and we had but little left. We had no neighbors to assist us in this trying time, and we came near starvation. True, the wild, romantic region in which we were located abounded in game — elk, deer, bear, panther, and wolves, roamed abroad through the dense forest, in great abundance, but the business of the slaves was not hunting or fishing, but clearing the land, preparatory to raising crops of grain the coming season."

Helm's slaves lacked the skill and physical stamina necessary for the work of felling trees or living in such a wilderness. This nearly impossible living condition resulted in Helm moving to Bath in Steuben County, where he purchased two farms and brought his family north, settling there to a life more akin to his tastes, in a territory considerably more tame than Sodus Bay.

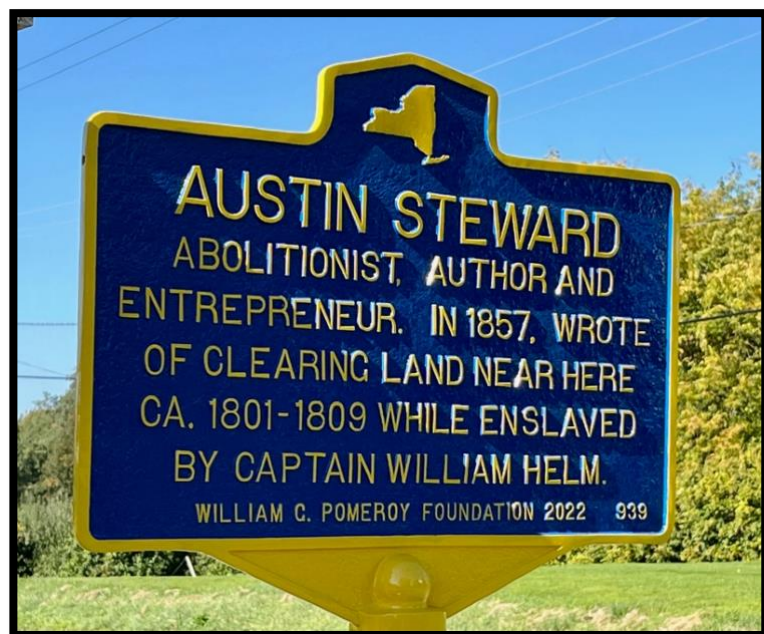
The tale of Steward's fortunate escape to freedom in 1814, and the people who assisted him along the way is a long journey. Through much desperation and determination, Steward eventually worked in Farmington for Otis Comstock, a notable Quaker abolitionist, who treated Steward kindly and helped him become a free man. While staying with Comstock, Steward "acquired quite a knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic."

In 1817, Steward began a new business — "that of peddling in the village of Rochester such articles as my employer, Mr. Comstock, desired to sell: the products of his farm - wheat, corn, oats, butter, cheese, meat, and poultry - all of which met a ready sale, generally for cash at liberal prices. That market was then but little known to the generality of farmers, and the enterprising gentlemen of that place, were desirous of encouraging commerce with the surrounding country, offered every encouragement in their power. Hence, we found it a profitable business, which I continued in for several months." Though it pained Steward to leave the Comstock family, he went into business for himself, building a store on land he purchased in the town of Brighton (soon to become Rochesterville, and finally Rochester) where he sold goods supplied by his friend Comstock.

Slavery was fully abolished in New York State on July 4, 1827. In Rochester, Steward was chosen to deliver the Emancipation speech on July 5, 1827, at Johnson's Square, now Washington Square Park near the Strong Museum. An advocate for voting rights, temperance, and the abolition of slavery, Steward hosted reform meetings. He was a subscription agent for **Freedom's Journal** distributed across upstate New York via the Erie Canal. Steward was elected Vice President of the first national "Colored Convention" in Philadelphia in 1830.

In 1831, Steward left Rochester to work at the Wilberforce Colony in Canada. Named after William Wilberforce, who endeavored to abolish slave trade in England, the Canadian colony was established in 1829 as a refuge for American fugitive slaves. Steward spent six years at Wilberforce, returning to Rochester in 1837, a decade before Frederick Douglass would arrive. During the years prior to the Civil War, abolitionist activities brought the two men together. Steward served as a strong and inspirational mentor to the younger abolitionist.

Steward's store was destroyed by fire in 1838. He moved "home" to Canandaigua where



he taught school, lectured, wrote, and worked with anti-slavery groups. Steward's autobiography **Twenty-two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman** was published in 1857, nearly a decade before the end of the Civil War. Austin Steward died in 1869 - four years after the Civil War ended.

A William G. Pomeroy Foundation Grant was secured for a historic marker for the Town of Huron to honor Austin Steward. A dedication for that marker was held Saturday, October 22, 2022, at the Jim Thomas Farm on Ridge Road near Resort.

Appreciation for their support and contributions related to this historic marker go to: Chester Freeman, Jim and Marie Thomas, Scott Marshall, Gerrit Reyn, Phil Eygnor, Jim Wood, Reverend Earl Greene, and Susan Hughes of the Pomeroy Foundation.

Chester Freeman referred to Steward as an "Unsung Hero." Steward's role in history, his moral strength against adversity, and his capacity as a reform leader truly places Steward in a family of great individuals who have had a positive and lasting impact on our nation.

To learn more about the life of Austin Steward - please visit www.historichuron.org.



Sodus Bay Historical Society Presents

2023 Summer Season Sunday Lighthouse Concert Series

July

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 2 | Gap Mangione |
| 9 | Chris Wilson |
| 16 | Don Griffin and Friends |
| 23 | Mitty & the Followers |
| 30 | Li'l Anne and Hot Cayenne |

August

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 6 | Brass Inc. |
| 13 | Dean's List |
| 20 | Letizia and the Z Band |
| 27 | Johnny Bauer |

September

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 3 | Towpath Volunteers Fife & Drum Corps |
|----------|---|



Hoffman Foundation Grant For Sodus Bay Historical Society

by Sue Bassage

We are pleased to announce that SBHS has received a grant from the Hoffman Foundation. This year's award will fund a project to repair the aged Seaway Trail sign beside the driveway outside the museum (see photo below). Since the sign is the first thing visitors stop to look at when they approach the building, we feel it is important that it be in good repair.

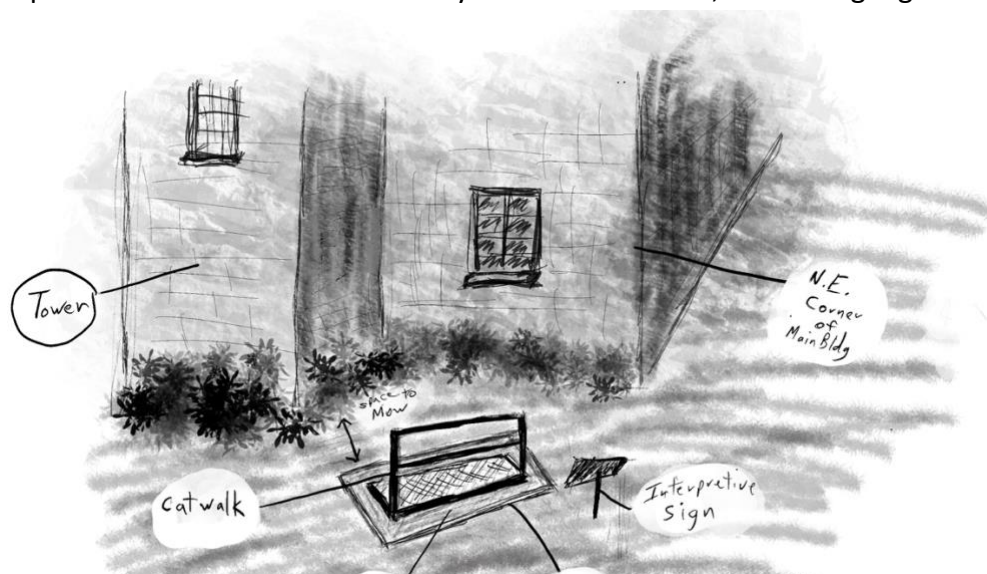


The second part of our project involves the metal structure that's located behind that sign, a section of the catwalk given to SBHS when the structure on the pier to the outer light was removed. Lighthouse keepers used the catwalk in inclement weather until the outer light was automated in 1988. We will move the section to the northeast corner of the building, set it on a stone pad, and erect a sign explaining its significance. Visitors can stand facing the outer light while they read the sign and think about the hardships of being a lightkeeper.

SBHS is grateful to the Hoffman Foundation, established in 1954 by Augustus and Jenny Hoffman, for their continued support of our mission. For many years the Foundation conducted an essay contest that resulted in more than 600 essays on a variety of historical topics. It continues to provide support for the Hoffman Clock Museum, located inside the Newark Public Library, and allots funds to historical societies and historians in Wayne County to support their work of promoting Wayne County and local history.

SBHS has received Hoffman awards in the past which have been used to fund restoration of an original oil painting, to purchase sash locks for our newly restored windows, and for signage for new displays.

Sketch of new location for sign and catwalk was drawn by past president Tom Lightfoot.



SBHS/Lighthouse Museum News

Membership

Happy New Year!

Membership in the Sodus Bay Historical Society helps achieve the important society mission to preserve and promote the history of the Sodus Bay area. As an SBHS member, you can experience first-hand the history, community, and beauty of one of Lake Ontario's greatest treasures – the Sodus Bay Lighthouse. In addition, you may take pride in knowing your contribution helps maintain this historic lighthouse and all its contents, continues the care of the beautiful gardens on the lighthouse grounds, and provides social, educational, and entertainment programs – like the Sunday Concert Series and 5K race. You also receive unlimited museum admission, invitations to members only events, and a 10% discount in the Museum Gift Shop.

If you are not already, perhaps you would consider becoming a member. Maybe it is time for you to renew your membership or upgrade your membership level. Simply visit: <https://www.sodusbaylighthouse.org/collections/membership> and join today.

Sodus Bay Historical Society Welcomes These New Members!

Elaine M Comarella & Brian Smith

Robert DeCook

Joseph & Marian Deitrick

Teresa DiGregorio

William B Dixon

Marcia Fowler

Ann & Peter Ghyzel

John & Joy Grow

Robert J Henry

Doris & Dave Hoey

Michelle & Gary Keim

Jeff & Susan Leenhouts

Michael Mullan

Alan Ramsay

Ann Sass

Wendy Schneider

Cynthia Showman

Ken & Tammy Stauffer

Martha H Tolen



Masons working
on the lighthouse
tower during
summer of 2022.



2023 Bicentennial Calendar of Events

April 11 - Official Anniversary Celebration

11 AM Ceremony Courthouse Steps in Lyons
12:30 PM Luncheon at Lyons Community Center
(Reservations Required)

May 13 - Bicentennial Gala at Carey Lake

5:30 PM Dinner, Dancing, Fireworks
Keynote Speaker - John Kucko

August 14-18 - Torch Relay through Wayne County

5 days - 200 Miles - 200 Plus Runners (and more)

August 19 - Bicentennial Family Fun Day

at the Wayne County Fair

Company on Route 104 in Williamson. The building's south wall will be developed into a seven-panel mural, depicting the history of Wayne County from pre-settlement to the present and into the future. Mural Mania artists and the Bicentennial Committee are thrilled this project is underway!

Wayne County Bicentennial Minutes

created by former Sodus Point Historian, Bruce Farrington have been posted to various media outlets since April. The 52 segments cover local history topics of every town in the county. To view past "Minutes" please visit: <https://web.co.wayne.ny.us/547/Bicentennial-Minutes>

Copies of the *Bicentennial Commemorative Calendar* (2022-2023) are available for purchase online through the Wayne County Museum of History.

<https://www.waynehistory.org/shop>

Bicentennial Activity Books (for kids of all ages) are available at historical society museums and public libraries throughout the county. FREE! The book is an overview of the history of each Wayne County town, with puzzles, coloring pages, and more.

Bicentennial Information
Wayne County Bicentennial Email Contact:

Bicentennial@waynehistorians.org

Website:

<http://www.waynecounty200.com/>

Facebook: [Wayne County NY Bicentennial 2023](https://www.facebook.com/WayneCountyNYBicentennial2023)

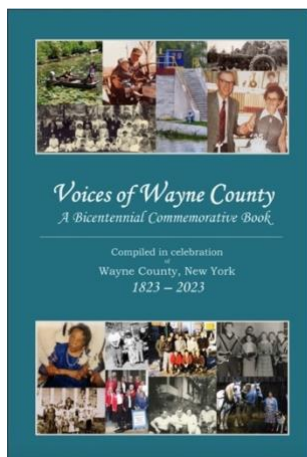
[Bicentennial 2023](https://www.facebook.com/WayneCountyNYBicentennial2023)

Instagram: [@waynecounty200](https://www.instagram.com/waynecounty200)

Voices of Wayne County: A Bicentennial Commemorative Book

Now Available from the Sodus Bay Lighthouse, and other selected local retailers, and historical societies, this 400 + page volume is filled with memories, poetry, artwork, and photos from across all 15 Wayne County towns. To get your copy

visit: <https://www.sodusbaylighthouse.org> Search "Voices"



The **Wayne County Bicentennial Photo Quilt** is on tour around the county! Check the Bicentennial Facebook Page to arrange the quilt's visit to your town. Unveiled on November 5th at the Patchwork & Pies Quilt Show in Williamson, the quilt is the creation of Walworth photographer, Bob Mogray and stitched together by the Reverse Curves Quilt Club.

The **Wayne County Bicentennial Mural** was started this past fall at the Thatcher



Thank You!

to these

Sodus Bay Lighthouse Sponsors

In addition to our loyal members, the Sodus Bay Historical Society appreciates the generous support from area businesses and foundations. Their ongoing contributions help the Sodus Bay Historical Society and Lighthouse Museum move forward with the summer concert series, student activities, exhibits, and other programming. Please be sure to show your support by visiting these local establishments and let them know how important their support of Sodus Bay history is to you!

Thank you!

Diamond

*C.H. Stuart Foundation
New York State Council on the Arts,
Statewide Community Re-grants
Robert G. Boehmler Community Foundation*

Platinum

*Town of Sodus
Village of Sodus Point*

Gold

*Northwind Harbor
Wegmans
The Wright Family Foundation*

Silver

*Neighborhood Association of Sodus Point
Fowler Brothers Farm
Marshall Farms Group*

Bronze

*The Bay Street Hotel
Captain Jack's
Cole Income Tax
El Rincón Mexicano
Patricia Paprocki
Youngman Orchards Farm Market
Ward Steel*

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Davenport-Hatch Foundation
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