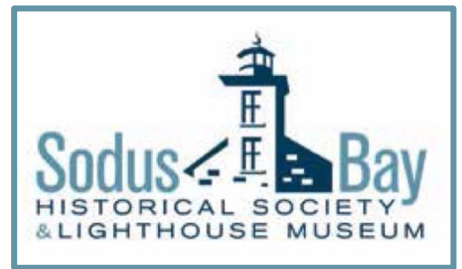


# ***SBHS Newsletter***

*Summer 2024*



## *Summer Concerts at the Sodus Bay Lighthouse*



*Photo contributed by Donna Stern*



## Sodus Bay Historical Society & Lighthouse Museum

### OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	Donna Stern
<b>Vice President</b>	Dave McDowell
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Elaine Comarella

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Rosa Fox

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Facebook – Sodus Bay Lighthouse  
Museum

The SBHS Newsletter is published by the  
Sodus Bay Historical Society, a 501(c)3  
nonprofit organization. In addition to  
grants, SBHS funding comprises donations  
and membership dues, which are tax  
deductible as allowed by law.



## Letter from the President

The Summer Season is in full swing!

Starting right out of the gate with the United Way Day of Caring, we had the most volunteers ever - with volunteers from Paychex, Excellus, and the Rochester Area Community Foundation. Many of the 45 volunteers were repeat workers - because they love the Lighthouse! A great start - inside and out. With the help of our garden club volunteers, the garden was weeded, mulched and edged. The catwalk that was originally located on the channel lighthouse pier has found a home. The volunteers created the base and moved the catwalk to the north outside corner of the lighthouse museum. The Day of Caring volunteers' efforts helped make the Lighthouse shine for opening weekend.

A Summer Solstice Soirée was held on a beautiful Friday evening in June, we had over 80 members and guests join us on our lawn to celebrate our members.

The 4th of July Weekend was a true extravaganza!

We started Friday evening, July 5<sup>th</sup>, with hosting a Finger Lakes Symphony concert on our lawn. Saturday, the SBHS 5K, was held with more than 375 runners participating. The most ever! With new sponsors and a new time-keeping company, the race was a huge success. A new twist was to award prizes to the largest family group of runners, and we had several competing for the honors.

The First Annual Artisan Fair included 17 participants with artwork from all genres. With happy artists and lots of business, the event was considered a big success, and we look forward to doing it again. All thanks go to Lisa DeFeo who had the vision to put this show together.

Sunday, July 7th was the start of our Summer Concert Series, which was well attended and a great way to begin our season.

All this is happening outside the Lighthouse, but inside we have changes happening, too.

Our Mission Statement: Tell the Story of Sodus Bay. We are beginning to reflect the Mission Statement in new curated displays.

*(continued on the next page)*

We partnered with the Town of Huron to tell the story of the Wayne County apple industry. We have a new diorama of a Native American settlement just a short distance from Sodus Point. Children are fascinated by this display.

There is a lot happening at the Sodus Bay Lighthouse. We are proud of the direction that we are moving towards. We want to continue to build on our early success of the season. The Sodus Bay Historical Society and Sodus Bay Lighthouse will continue to "Tell the Story of Sodus Bay."

*Donna F. Stern*

Donna F. Stern  
President of the Board of Trustees

### *Letter from the Executive Director*

Summer is upon us!!

We have had a steady stream of visitors to the museum since its opening. Many of these people are lighthouse enthusiasts and travel nationwide to visit lighthouses. We were delighted to learn that our Sodus Bay Lighthouse & Museum is one of the finest that they have visited. They comment on the beauty of the grounds - thanks to Sue Williamson and the gardening group - and the design of our exhibits inside the lighthouse and the stories that the exhibits tell. That, ultimately, is our mission and purpose....to tell the story of Sodus Bay through our museum, through the dissemination of information, and by maintaining our historic lighthouse.

We will be presenting our Storytelling Series beginning in the next few weeks. Please keep an eye out for further information. We will be presenting various speakers who will tell stories about the rich history of our area. If there is a story you think should be told, let us know and we will make that happen.

The Lighthouse Sunday Concert Series is in full swing each Sunday from 2-4 pm. Additionally, the SBHS Golf Tournament is on August 12<sup>th</sup>. If you wish to register to play, sponsor, or come for dinner, please go to our website: [www.sodusbaylighthouse.org](http://www.sodusbaylighthouse.org), go to shop, and type "Golf" in the search bar. Thank you to all of our supporters and visitors.

Hope to see you at the Lighthouse!

Sincerely,

*Elaine Comarella*

Elaine Comarella  
Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum Executive Director

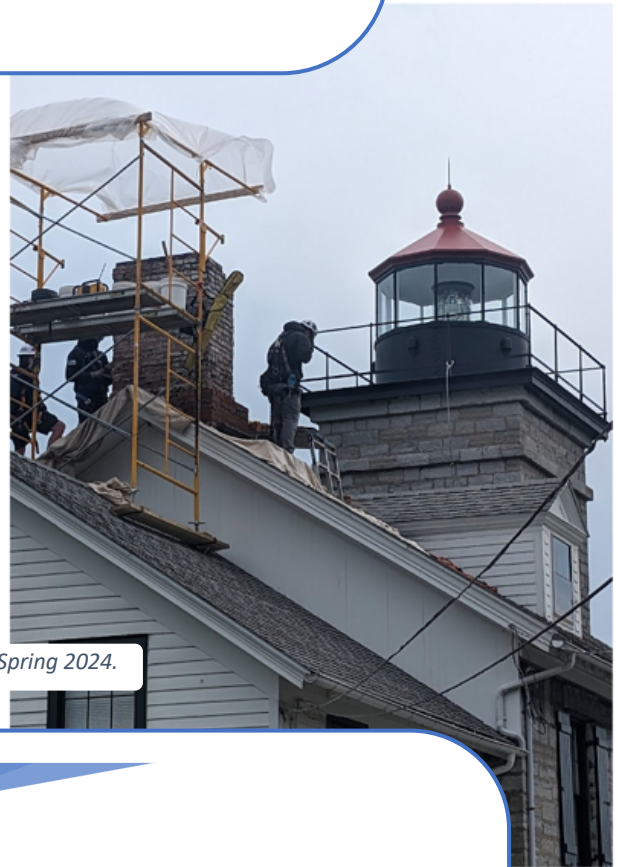
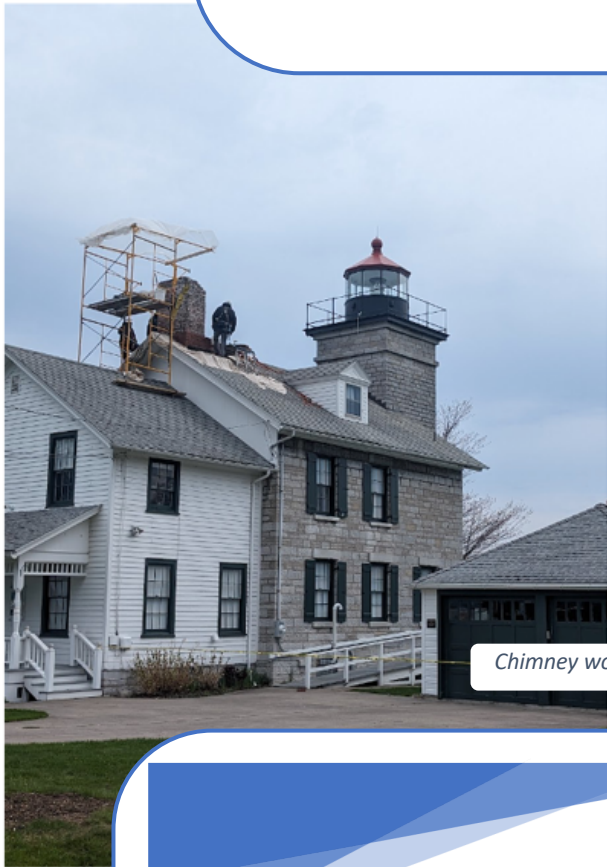


## Sodus Bay Historical Society Mission

### TO TELL THE STORY OF SODUS BAY

#### WE DO THAT BY:

- ACTIVELY MAINTAINING A MUSEUM WHERE WE COLLECT, PRESERVE, AND EXHIBIT RECORDS, WRITINGS, HISTORICAL ITEMS, AND ARTIFACTS
- PRESERVING AND DISSEMINATING HISTORIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SODUS BAY AREA
- MAINTAINING A HISTORIC LIGHTHOUSE.



*Chimney work - Spring 2024.*

### **SBHS VISION**

Within 3-5 years, our work will have a strong regional focus, including Sodus Bay and the surrounding communities. Our educational activities will involve presentations, speakers, videos, and both group gatherings and opportunities for individual learning. We will serve both children and adults with both interactive and online education, as well as regularly-changing museum displays with helpful docents available. And, in addition to our historic lighthouse, we will feature a multi-use facility with revolving museum exhibits and a place for gatherings three seasons of the year, to support our educational and regional focus.





Library of Congress

## Post-Civil War Local Reflections Across the Waters Part III – Local Soldiers and Sailors Encampments

*Rosa Fox*

**Post-Civil War Local Reflections, Parts I and II**, published in the Summer 2023 and Winter 2024 SBHS Newsletters, recognized General Gordon Granger, from the Sodus hamlet of Joy, who, on June 19, 1865, delivered General Order No. 3 to the people of Galveston, Texas, stating, *“The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.”* Following that event, which was essentially the end of the war, the **Local Reflections** series covered the establishment of the Grand Army of the Republic local activities through the beginnings of the Wayne County Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Association. As a reflection of the efforts to support Civil War veterans, this series, moves into the final segment, Part III - the work of the Wayne County Soldiers’ and Sailors’ – their encampments/reunions, their impact on local veterans, economy, and history of the area.

### First Wayne County Encampment

During the 1870s, Wayne, Cayuga, and Seneca Counties presented what they called “Re-unions” [sic]. The tri-county group disbanded in August 1881, each county forming their own organization. The Wayne County Veteran Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Association held its first meeting August 12, 1881, electing a slate of officers and directors from across the county [see list at right]. “All old soldiers may become members of the Association by the payment of one dollar to T. M. Brown, Sodus, who will issue certificates of membership.” [Lake Shore News, 8/25/1881]

The first Wayne County Veteran Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Association (WCVSSA) Encampment was held August 22-25, 1882, at Driving Park in Lyons. The streets of Lyons were decorated in military fashion with flags everywhere and a large headquarter tent along with 40 other tents pitched at the encampment site. A dancing platform and bandstand were constructed. The musicians of Schuyler’s brass band, a Lyons string band, and a Syracuse drum corps furnished music throughout the encampment. Reports of large crowds in Lyons – of as many as 5000 people – were on the grounds during the encampment. This first WCVSSA encampment, a great success, with speakers, mock battles between the “Rebs” and the “Yanks” and general good camaraderie went on to the wee hours of the morning and began a nearly 30-year tradition of summer gatherings for this group of veterans and their guests.

#### Wayne County Veteran Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Association

##### First officers - 1881

Captain George B. Curtis, Wolcott – President  
Stephen E. Bullock, Wolcott – Vice President  
James A. Merrill, Wolcott – Secretary  
Theodore M. Brown, Sodus – Treasurer  
Reverend James P. Foster, Newark – Chaplin  
Dr. Albert F. Sheldon, Lyons – Surgeon

##### Board Members

Edward H. Sentell, Sodus Point  
Edwin K. Burnham, Newark  
John Tremper, Clyde  
Captain Sebastian D. Holmes, Lyons

## Sodus Bay Encampments

In 1883, the Soldiers' and Sailors' encampments moved to Sodus Bay. The railroad made travel to Sodus Bay much faster and easier. From 1883 through 1886, the encampments were held at Margaretta Grove. The encampments were held in other places in the eastern quadrant of Wayne County over the years [see list below]. The longest run for an encampment venue was Bonnie Castle. However, Bonnie Castle did not meet without resistance from veterans and others on the west side of Sodus Bay. When the WCVSSA decided to disband, an article titled **Encampments at Sodus Abandoned** appeared in the Wayne County Journal on April 18, 1912, providing a brief reflection on the thirty plus year history of the organization.

*Originally, the idea was to hold a sort of campfire, and this was conducted in the old warehouse of E.H. Sentell at Sodus Point. The association grew to such large proportions that it was decided to hold weekly outdoor reunions. They were a success from the start.*

*[A]ttendance grew into the thousands. Sodus Bay was the liveliest part of the county for a week in August each year. Many of the best speakers and musicians that could be obtained were secured to entertain the large crowds. Hundreds of veterans came from other counties. Rochester was always well represented.*

### Wayne County Veteran Soldiers' and Sailors' Association

#### Locations

Year	Place
1882	Lyons
1883 - 1886	Margaretta Grove
1887	Lake Bluff
1888 - 1889	Margaretta Grove
1890	Woods Island, Port Bay
1891 - 1892	Eagle Island
1893 - 1898	Bonnicastle
1899 - 1901	Bonnicastle & Margaretta Grove
1902	Margaretta Grove
1903	Sodus Point – in area of Furst Field.
1904 - 1910	Bonnicastle
1911	No encampment (due to GAR National Reunion in Rochester)
1912	Disbanded

The article went on to reflect on the “dissatisfaction” of the facilities at Sodus Point, and a decision to move the encampment, trying several other venues – Lake Bluff, Port Bay, and Eagle Island – before landing on the east side of the bay at Bonnie Castle for a six year run between 1893 and 1898. But, as things go, the encampment on the east side of the bay was not convenient.

*It was proposed the reunion be held on one side of the bay one year and on the other side the next year. This did not result in harmony, but finally led to the organization of the Empire Organization of Veterans and Sons of Veterans. Rival encampments were held the same week.*

*Bad weather affected both, and finally the veterans from both camps got together and decided to reunite, the younger organization giving up the ghost. The attendance at the Empire encampments was much larger than at the present organization reunions, owing to the fact that the programs were made more attractive and the newly constructed Rochester & Sodus Bay trolley ran within a short distance of the grounds.*

The article concludes by relaying that by 1912, soldiers were passing away, many being in their late 60s and 70s. There were only a few who were still active enough to organize the reunions. For that reason, and that there were other “amusements” drawing attention away from the encampments, the Wayne County Veteran Soldiers' and Sailors' Association disbanded in April 1912.

## Programs and Special Guest Speakers

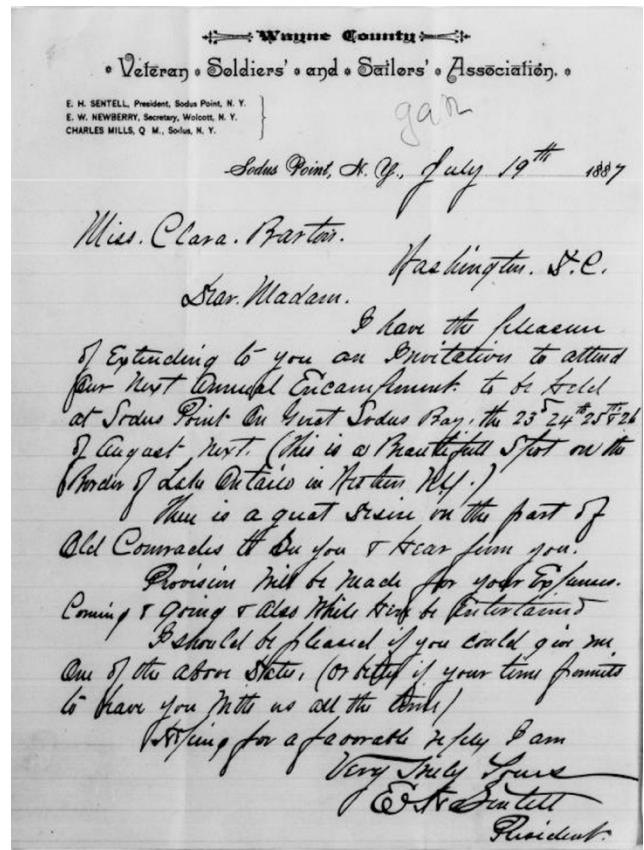
Soldiers' and Sailors' encampments provided a wide range of programming – educational and entertaining. Over the course of four days, which grew in duration over the years (by 1908 encampments were six days long), as well as attendance, there was something for all ages. There were plenty of re-enactments of storming and capturing a fort and other acts of battle – the “Yanks” always winning. Instrumental and vocal music ensembles provided listening and dancing enjoyment. Each day included the veterans' vivid reminiscences well into the evening around campfires. Reunions of specific units were held at different times throughout the encampment. Grange and other organizations had the opportunity to present informative programs on a variety of subjects.

Having the encampment at the bay allowed for boating and other water recreation. “The large side-wheel steamer, “City of Rochester” and numerous sail and row boats were on hand and at the service of the crowd . . . . There must have been at least five or six thousand people on the grounds on each of the middle days of the encampment.” [Lake Shore News, September 4, 1884] One wonders how many may have been in the bay or lake! Of note from this article is the fact that a total of eighty to ninety tents were raised for the encampment.

Effort was made to secure a variety of speakers, musical groups, and other performers. In July of 1887, Soldiers' & Sailors' President, Edward H. Sentell wrote a letter to Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, requesting she speak to the attendees during the 1887 encampment. [see letter at right] “There is a great desire on the part of Old Comrades to see you and hear from you. Provision will be made for your Expenses Coming & Going & also while here be entertained. I should be pleased if you could give me one of the above dates, (or better if your time permits to have you with us all the time).”

There is no record of Clara attending the reunions of 1887 or 1888. Sentell must have written to Clara again in 1889, as a local newspaper reported that Clara would be speaking at the Women's Relief Corp meeting in the afternoon of Saturday, August 17, 1889. [Democrat and Chronicle,

August 16, 1889.] Clara was unable to attend that encampment. She was still working at Johnstown, PA where a devastating May flood required her continued presence to oversee the Red Cross operations. Clara did send a letter to the attendees at the encampment, which was read during the meeting.



Letter to Barton from Sentell 1887 – Library of Congress

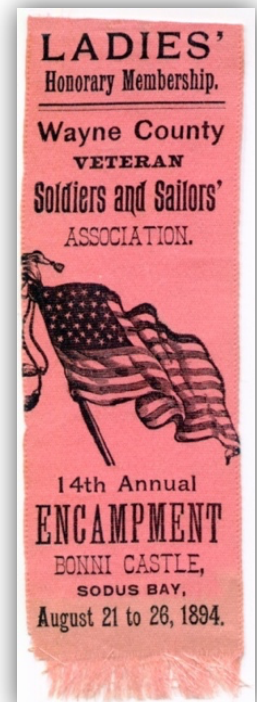
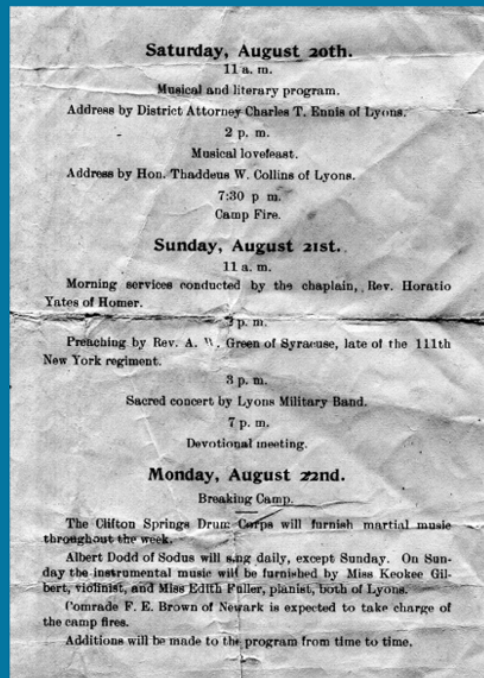
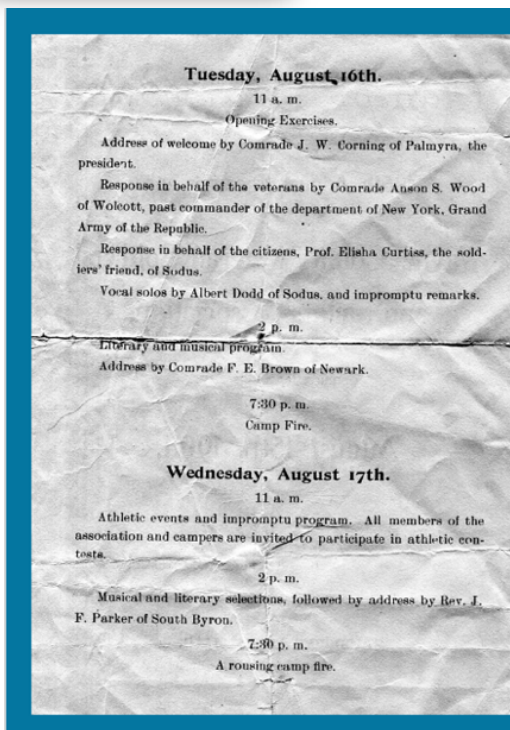
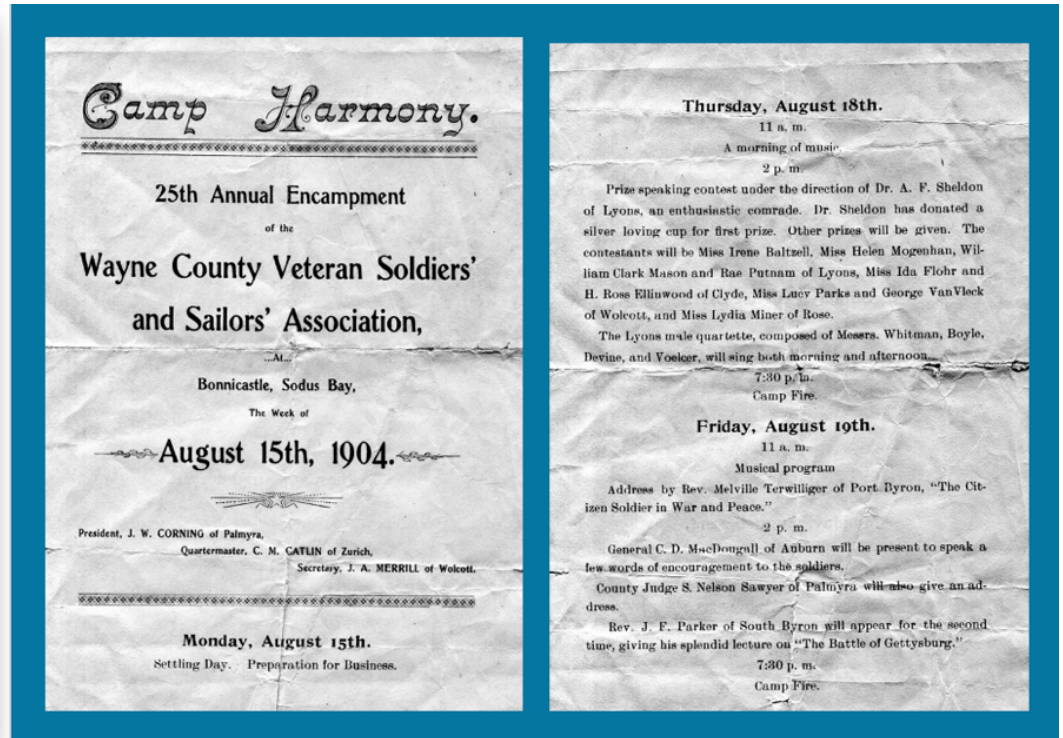


Clara Barton circa 1900  
Library of Congress



## Memorabilia

Many people collect event ephemera – concerts, festivals, musicals, fairs, etc. This was true of the Soldiers' and Sailors' encampment/reunions. Programs, buttons/pins, and ribbons were commemorative items saved from these encampments. The Sodus Bay Lighthouse and Huron History Center have collections of some Soldiers' and Sailors' memorabilia. The samples shown below are courtesy of the Huron History Center from the John Powell Collection.



## Conclusion

The Wayne County Soldiers' and Sailors' Association Encampments held on Sodus Bay from 1883 to 1910 brought many visitors to the area and provided a unique community, social, and cultural experience for attendees. The encampments also contributed to Sodus Bay becoming a major destination during that era through the present. As you go about the bay this season (and years to follow), think about those who were here before us. Consider their limitations in travel and resources. Then think about how their dedication, enthusiasm, and desire to share through the variety of activities helped create a community. Envision these hardy and brave ancestors dressed in their uniforms of blue, reveling in the August weather about Great Sodus Bay, reliving the wretched horrors of their war memories through re-enactments and sharing stories of the war – and surely some offering great tales of humor. All this from these soldiers and sailors in blue - giving tangible life and meaning to the word freedom.

## References:

*Lake Shore News*, 25 August 1881

*Lake Shore News*, 31 August 1882

*Lake Shore News*, 4 September 1884

*Democrat and Chronicle*, 16 August 1889

*Wayne County Journal*, 18 April 1912

Additional reading on Clara at Johnstown, PA:

<https://www.nps.gov/jofl/learn/clara-barton.htm>



## Military Memories: Our County for Our Country

*Museum of Wayne County History*

*21 Butternut Street, Lyons, NY*

*Through November 30*

*"Our nation, comprised of people from all around the globe, formally began its quest for independence in Massachusetts, embattled at Lexington and Concord, on April 19, 1775. Our ancestors and the founding citizens charted an historical enclave of documents and stories that have become our history. Through many military conflicts, campaigns and warfare, Wayne County citizens have enlisted, supported, fought, and died for the nation they called home. Despite the controversies that came before and extend beyond the battlefield, and rather because of the ongoing efforts of these local men and women through times of national strength and weakness, we now commemorate their contributions."*

The Museum of Wayne County History invites you to contribute Military Memories from Wayne County residents, past and present. This can be through oral or written recollections or writings as well as through photos, documents, or artifacts on loan to the museum for public display. Please visit the Museum of Wayne County History website to learn more about how you can participate in the Military Memories project.

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



## Photos from the Season

## Photos Contributed by Harrison VanDeWalle



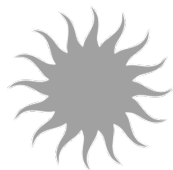
### ***United Way Day of Caring May 24, 2024***

*Volunteers working on the grounds of the Lighthouse Museum. Photo on left shows volunteers moving the heavy steel catwalk that was originally located on the channel pier to its new location on the north side of the lighthouse museum. See photo of Sodus Bay channel pier catwalk on page 11.*



### ***Summer Solstice Soirée June 21, 2024***

*Sodus Bay Historical Society members enjoy an evening of refreshments and good camaraderie at the lighthouse.*



### ***Sodus Bay Historical Society Fourth of July 5K Race July 6, 2024***

*With a focus on Family – this year's 5K race had 375 participants.*





## Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum Golf Tournament



### SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**Dinner Sponsor** \$800

- ◆ Name featured in the Dining Room

**Cart Sponsor** \$500

- ◆ Name featured on each golf cart

**Beverage Sponsor** \$500

- ◆ Name featured at all beverage stations

**Putting Contest Sponsor** \$400

- ◆ Name featured at putting contest

**Lunch Sponsor** \$500

- ◆ Name featured at lunch window

**Hole Sponsor** \$125

- ◆ Name featured on a course hole



**To Register:**

[Click Here](#)

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

11:00 AM Registration/Lunch

12:00 Noon Shotgun Start

5:00 PM Cash Bar

6:00 PM Dinner/Prizes/Raffles

### Location:

Sodus Bay Heights Golf Club

7030 Bayview Drive

Sodus Point, NY

### Questions:

Help celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Sodus Bay Heights Golf Club!

### REGISTRATION

Secure your spot today! Please complete the registration form below and mail with payment **no later than August 5, 2024** to:

Sodus Bay Historical Society, P.O. Box 94

Sodus Point, NY 14555 Attention: Helen Dunlap

### SPONSORSHIP

- \* Yes, I/we would like to sponsor the Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum golf tournament as:

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### GOLF

- \* \$135.00 per golfer (includes lunch, dinner, golf/cart fee)

### Team or Individual Player Registration

Team Leader Name/Sponsor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Player 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Player 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Player 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Player 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dinner Only** \$50.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## The 2024 Summer Storytelling Series

Presented by the Sodus Bay Historical Society

**Date: August 7, 2024 6:00-7:30 PM**

Topic: Indigenous History at Sodus Bay and its Relationship to the Block House in Clyde

Presenter: Tom Sawtelle

**Date: August 14, 2024 6:00-7:30 PM**

Topic: The History of the Commercial Fishing Industry at Sodus Point

Presenter: Chris Arney

**Date: August 21, 2024 6:00-7:30 PM**

Topic: The Underground Railroad and Maxwell Settlement at Sodus Point

Presenter: Marjory Allen Perez

ALL PRESENTATIONS WILL BE AT THE SODUS POINT VILLAGE HALL AT 8356 BAY STREET, SODUS POINT, NY 14555



*Sodus Bay Channel Lighthouse Pier Catwalk.*

A section of the old pier steel catwalk (built circa 1901) has been on display outdoors at the Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum since the 1980s, after the catwalk was removed from the pier. This past May, United Way Day of Caring volunteers moved the catwalk to a new location on the north side of the museum – where one may view the channel pier and think about days gone by, when lighthouse keepers braved all the elements – including ice - to tend the lights! Note: The original wooden catwalk from 1870s was replaced several times due to storms and collisions of ships on the pier before the steel walk was constructed.

# **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!***

***Auburn Public Theatre Regrants Program  
with Support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature***

***Bay View Bed & Breakfast***

***Robert G. Boehmler Community Foundation • Joe and Darleen Contario***

***Big Dog Country • Captain Jack's • The Shoppe at Jack's***

***Davenport - Hatch Foundation • Dunkin Donuts • Dynalec Corporation***

***Embark Craft Ciderworks • Empire Tree Surgeon • Fire Research and Technology***

***Fowler Brothers • The Heights Restaurant • JT Storage • Scott Johnson***

***Mark Ketcham & Werner Lutz • Krenzer Marine • Landmaster • Leone Timing***

***Leone Landing • McDonald's • Marshall Farms Group Ltd.***

***Morgan Stanley • P.A.T.I. Fire & Safety***

***Reliant Community Federal Credit Union • Rubino's at the Point***

***Ryan Phelps Auto Sales • Sodus Bay Heights Golf Course***

***Town of Sodus • Village of Sodus Point***

***C. H. Stuart Foundation • Ward Steel Company • Doug & Marianne Taylor***

***USA Racing • Vanderwalle Fruit Farm • WACK Radio***

***Wegmans • The Wetmore Family***

***Claude G. and Geraldine Wright Family Foundation***

***Youngman Orchards Farm Market***

***Sodus Bay Historical Society Members***

*Sodus Bay Historical Society presents the*



# 2024 Free Summer Concert Series At The Lighthouse

**NEW** Friday Evening,  
July 5th 6:30-8:30 pm  
Finger Lakes  
Orchestra

## JULY

- 7 Midnight Storm
- 14 Don Griffin & Friends
- 21 The Dady Brothers
- 28 Brass Inc.

## AUGUST

- 4 Johnny Bauer
- 11 Li'l Anne & Hot Cayenne
- 18 47 South
- 25 Flint Creek

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 Chris Wilson



**Sundays 2:00-4:00 p.m.**

♪ 7606 North Ontario Street, Sodus Point, NY ♪

**Concerts are FREE**

**Bring your own seating for the lawn**

**Refreshments are available at the**

**Lighthouse Concession Area**