

## Star Island

by Sandy Wright

Although I have canoed past it and viewed it from the observation deck, I have never set foot on the 10-acre island located in the Old Woman Creek estuary. After meeting Jodie Daniels Logan of New London, one of the descendants of the family that lived there in the early 1900's I decided to find out more. My search included visits to several local historical societies, libraries, and newspaper articles. I even attended the Daniels' family reunion in Berlin Heights this summer.

The island, once part of a farm owned by James Anderson, was purchased by Charles Hardy in about 1880. He built a shack there and during the winter when the creek was frozen, he built a log bridge so he could remove the timber off the island. He later transferred the deed to Jerome Hine of Berlin Heights.

In 1899 or 1900, Martin Lee Daniels and his wife Emma, purchased the island and built a house and barn. They raised their family on the island. Five children were born there, but two died in infancy. William was born in 1904, followed by Lydia in 1913 and Chester in 1915.

Emma named the island Star Island when she noticed it had five distinct points. With a horse and hand tools, they cleared the land to start a fruit farm. Several artifacts from the Indigenous people who lived there before were found in the plowed fields



The berries were hauled by boat to the bridge over the creek where the Lake Shore Electric cars ran. They transported the berries to the Cleveland market.

By 1910, help was hard to find so the hillside was terraced and grapes were grown as well as fruit trees on level ground. Summer cottages began to appear along the lake and Old Woman Creek became a popular place for rowboats and canoes. The Daniels began to retail fancy table grapes and other fruit. On weekends, there would often be a dozen or more boats landing on the island to buy fruit and honey from their bees.

Life was not easy for the Daniels family. Emma died in September 1922 in a mental institution at the age of 47. Martin was left to raise two young children. William, the oldest, had left the island and married Rachel Pierce in 1925. In November 1931, at age 16, Chester drowned when the boat he was in with two others, exploded and caught fire in the Vermilion River. The US Coast Guard rescued the other two.

After WWI, the price of grapes and peaches dropped so low that it would not cover the cost of baskets to ship fruit to Cleveland. Also, a disease destroyed their apiary. Their income could not pay living costs and the island went to someone in Cleveland who proposed to open a fur farm. The Great Depression arrived and there was no fur market so the island was deserted. The grapes and fruit trees were overrun by weeds and brush and for 50 years, the island was uninhabited.

Lydia Daniels married Chester Kushman in 1934 and they settled in Vermilion. Martin moved in with them in the early 1940's and died in 1944. Lydia and several cousins signed papers to give the island to the state of Ohio which formed the Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve and State Nature Preserve in 1980.

We have the Daniels family to thank for their contribution to the Old Woman Creek Reserve as well as their continued support of the Friends of OWC.

## Donations Honor Educator

by Sandy Wright

Thanks to the donations received in memory of our former board member and friend, Pam Leszynski, the Education Program was able to purchase several pairs of binoculars for students who come to learn about nature at OWC.



Pam, a former teacher, served on the board from 2007 to 2017 and became an Honorary Trustee in 2018.



## Photo Contest Winners

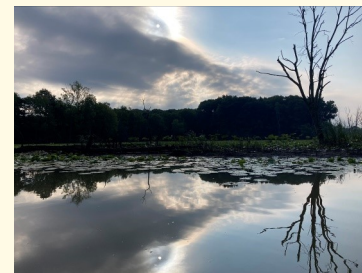
by Sandy Wright

The Friends of Old Woman Creek held its fourth annual photo contest. The winning photos were displayed at the visitor center during our 25th Anniversary event and National Estuaries Week. Then they were in the gallery at the Huron Public Library in October. Cash prizes and ribbons were awarded.



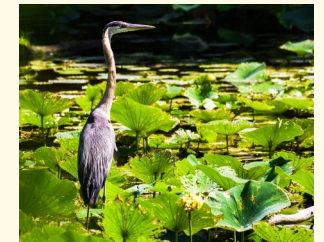
Adult First Place was Katie Myer "Fintastic Catch"

Adult Second Place was Rhonda Watt "Dark and Stormy"



Adult Third Place was Michelle Bock "In The Eyes of the Beholder"

Teen First Place was James Daneker "Patience"



## Board Members

**President**—Sandy Wright  
**Vice President**—Rosie Kovacs  
**Secretary**—Char Schuman  
**Treasurer**—Nancy Smith  
**Trustees**—Nate Fuller, Marian Hancy, Gail Hess, Jaelyn McLean, Subha Nagarajan, Gary Toll, Elaine Waterfield, Rhonda Watt  
**Past President**—Sandy Burris  
**Honorary Trustees:** Barbara Berg, Sue Cloak, Linda Feix, Pat Krebs, Rich Parilla

## Seeking Heroes

by Sandy Burris

The Hero Award will be presented at our annual meeting in February. Nominations are being accepted until December 31st. This award was established by the FOWC to honor those groups and/or individuals who have made significant contributions to the preservation of the Old Woman Creek estuary and watershed.

Previous recipients include: Dr. David Klarer, Gene Wright, Floren James, Linda Feix, Dick Boyer, the Glen Bernhardt family, Dr. Ken Krieger, Elaine Waterfield, Gary Obermiller, Frank Lopez, Sue Cloak and Breann Hohman.

If you would like to suggest a recipient of this honor, you can get a nomination form at the OWC Visitor Center or by email at [fowcreek@gmail.com](mailto:fowcreek@gmail.com).



**Happy Holidays to all!**



To promote public awareness and appreciation of the uniqueness of the estuary and to support stewardship programs that sustain the ecological integrity of Old Woman Creek.

### MISSION STATEMENT



**Newsletter December 2022**  
**Volume 15 Issue 3**

**Friends of Old Woman Creek**  
**PO Box 247**  
**Huron OH 44839**

## Grant Received

by Sandy Wright



The FOWC received \$1200 from the Erie County Community Foundation in order to purchase polo shirts for OWC volunteers who work in the Visitor Center, as well as a display case for the Nature Shop. Thank you for fulfilling our Wish List!

## Annual Meeting 2023

Our annual meeting will be held Saturday, February 25th - location to be announced. Watch your email for the invitation. If we do not have your email, you will receive it by regular mail.

## Office of Coastal Management Moves to OWC

by Sandy Wright

The Office of Coastal Management has moved from its office in Sandusky to the Old Woman Creek Reserve. The program provides grants, technical assistance, outreach and management of coastal resources along Ohio's 312-mile Lake Erie shore. The office also runs the OWC National Estuarine Research Reserve which is part of a nationwide network of 30 state-federal reserves. According to ODNR spokeswoman, Stephanie O'Grady, the move was part of a "tax-payer cost-savings, staff retention, increased responsiveness, and improved efficiencies."