



# The Henry L. Ferguson Museum

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## From the President

For the first time in many years, the northeast has been blessed with a true spring. On Fishers Island, the cool days and nights have prolonged the bloom time of many of our wildflowers. The mild winter that preceded spring was kind to the island flora and I cannot recall a year in which the shad trees have bloomed so profusely. The trees have leafed out slowly allowing for good glimpses of the many wood warblers that migrate through during the month of May. In short, it has been a lovely spring season on the island.

The year has been kind to the Museum as well and began with the successful completion of our Challenge Grant. The entire Board of Trustees joins me in extending our gratitude to all who helped us attain our goal. I am happy to report that our endowment is now at a level where the income it generates, when combined with funds from our "Friends of the Museum" annual appeal, should enable us to meet operating costs.

We are looking forward to a busy summer with an exciting new exhibition on shipwrecks that is being sponsored by two companies with ties to Fishers Island, Charlie Wilmerding's Altus Partners and Chubb. We are very grateful for their support! The exhibition will be unveiled at our official opening on Friday, June 30, 2006.

Our Director, Pierce Rafferty and the Board of Trustees are also looking toward the future. We want to maintain the high standards of our new Museum and at the same time add exhibits and programs to keep the Museum "fresh." We are working on adding several interactive displays for children and have been visiting other museums and nature centers for ideas on how best to accomplish this. We are also planning to sponsor several children's outdoor programs this summer that will complement a strong speaker series and two planned off-shore excursions.

Although the Museum is open "by appointment" during the winter months, anyone who spends time on the island in the off season recognizes Pierce's Toyota Rav 4 which seems to be a permanent fixture in the Museum parking lot. Pierce has worked long hours during these quieter months preparing for the summer exhibit and performing countless tasks that keep the Museum operating smoothly. We are all grateful for his true dedication.

Among the off-season visitors was a group of birders from

the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center in Mystic. They arrived on a sunny Friday in December and began their visit in the Museum where they learned much about an island most had looked at from afar their whole lives, but had never visited. The day was enjoyed by all and we hope to schedule additional collaborative events with this nearby Nature Center.

As a final note, you will see from Bob Miller's article in the newsletter, the Land Trust has had an extremely busy year and has completed several major acquisitions. The Land Trust is one of the most important components of the Museum. Every acre saved from potential development provides habitat for the flora and fauna of our island while simultaneously protecting our valuable natural resources such as ground and surface waters. Bob and his committee are working tirelessly to continue these efforts at land preservation. We thank the members of the FIDCO board for their cooperation and generosity regarding Land Trust projects.

We are looking forward to a busy and active summer. If you have yet to visit the Museum, you are missing a great opportunity to learn about our island's fascinating history, its archaeology, and its natural history. We encourage you to stop by often throughout the summer.

I look forward to seeing each and every one of you at the Museum!

— Penni Sharp, *President*



Heron Sculpture at the Museum's Sanctuary Pond

The Henry L. Ferguson Museum 2006 Annual Exhibition



*SHIPS ASHORE!* Wrecks and Rescues on Fishers Island



Tug *Shawanese* ashore near Silver Eel Pond, Fishers Island. April 1911. Courtesy of Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Conn.

This year's exhibition chronicles the rich history of shipwrecks and nautical strandings on Fishers Island with a special focus on the private wreckers and US Life-Saving Service crews that responded.

*Opening Celebration to be held on Friday, June 30, 2006, 5-7 p.m. ALL WELCOME*

Exhibition sponsored by:



ALTUS PARTNERS



CHUBB

# ISLAND HISTORY

by Pierce Rafferty

## Venture Smith:

### *African King's Son, Fishers Island Slave, and Connecticut Merchant*

On September 19, 2005, I attended a conference entitled "Documenting Venture Smith," at UConn's Avery Point campus. Sponsored by the Beecher House Center for the Study of Equal Rights and the Wilberforce Institute, the meeting brought together scholars, teachers and interested parties for a series of presentations and discussions about Venture Smith, a colonial-era slave with a remarkable life story both in and out of slavery. I was approached to join the gathering because Fishers Island is at the center of Venture's story: he was brought here as a young slave by the Mumford family who had leased the island for farming purposes from the Winthrops.

Venture worked on Fishers Island from circa 1739 until 1754. As an old man he narrated his life's story to a school teacher which was published in 1798 as: *A NARRATIVE of the LIFE AND ADVENTURES of VENTURE A NATIVE OF AFRICA, But Resident Above Sixty Years in the United States of America RELATED BY HIMSELF*. A passage described his early work history on Fishers Island:

"I was pretty much employed in the house at carding wool and other household business. In this situation I continued for some years, after which my master put me to work out of doors. After many proofs of my faithfulness and honesty, my master began to put great confidence in me. My behavior to him had as yet been submissive and obedient. I then began to have hard tasks imposed on me. Some of these were to pound four bushels of ears of corn every night in a barrel for the poultry, or be rigorously punished. At other seasons of the year I had to card wool until a very late hour. These tasks I had to perform when I was about nine years old."

The conference papers included a brief profile that summarized Venture Smith's exceptional life (c.1729-1805). It is excerpted here with permission:

"Venture Smith was an American slave from the north who purchased his own freedom and became a prosperous farmer, merchant and landowner in Connecticut. Although his name is not widely known, his remarkable life is perhaps the best-documented one of the 12 to 15 million survivors of the infamous Middle Passage.

"Born Broteer Furro, he was the son of a West African king, captured at the age of eight. The boy prince was sold to an American slave ship's steward, Robertson Mumford, 'for four gallons of rum and a piece of calico' and was named Venture in recognition of the private transaction.



Venture Smith's Gravestone, East Haddam, CT. Courtesy of Chandler B. Saint

"For the next 13 years, he worked for the Mumford family on Fisher's Island in New York State before being sold to a merchant in Stonington, Connecticut, Thomas Stanton...

"Separated from his wife and three children and after considerable mistreatment, Venture was sold in Stonington to Col. O. Smith, from whom the slave later took his surname. Because of his slave's prodigious work and abilities, Col. Smith allowed Venture to earn money on the side from fishing, selling wood, boot polishing and other enterprises. After five years of toiling for his master at day and for himself at night, Venture bought his freedom for 71 pounds, two shillings.

"At the age of 47, having purchased freedom for his wife and three children, Venture Smith moved to East Haddam, where he remained for the next 30 years until the end of

his life. During that time, without the benefit of formal education, he amassed considerable property, including 110 acres of farmland and no fewer than 20 boats. ‘These I mostly employed in the fishing and trafficking business, and in these occupations I have been cheated out of considerable money by people whom I traded with, taking advantage of my ignorance of numbers,’ he said later, narrating his life story to a local school teacher.”

### Venture Smith's Runaway Slave Advertisement

Venture not only spent considerable time as a slave on Fishers Island, but he also escaped from here with an Irish indentured servant and two fellow black slaves. Jean Harvey Baker, historian, author, professor and Fishers Islander, sent me a copy of a 400-word runaway slave advertisement for Venture and his fellow escapees that had been discovered by Thom Thacker, site director for Philipsburg Manor, Sleepy Hollow, NY. I forwarded it to the conference sponsors who gratefully distributed it to all who attended.

The ad, published in the New-York *Gazette* on April 1, 1754, began: “Run away from George Mumford of Fisher’s Island, the 27th Instant, four Men Servants, a white Man and Three Negroes, who hath taken a large two-mast Boat, with a square Stern, and a large white pine Canoe; the Boat’s Timbers are chiefly red Cedar.” Venture was described as “a very tall fellow, 6 feet 2 inches high, thick, square shoulders, large bon’d, mark’d in the face, or scar’d with a knife in his own country.” The runaways “Stole and carried away with them, a Firkin of butter, weighs about 60 pound, two cheeses weighs 64 pounds, and Bread for the same.” George Mumford posted a 20-pound reward for anyone returning the four men to him.

The reward money was never needed. Venture and his fellow escapees, with an ultimate goal of reaching Mississippi, sailed to Montauk, where the Irishman Heddy promptly stole the boat (again!) and made off on his own. Venture and his other two companions captured him in Southampton, Long Island, and, after reassessing their situation, decided to return to Fishers Island. There they turned themselves in to their master, George Mumford, with the explanation that Heddy had been the ringleader and had induced them to escape. They were welcomed back, but Heddy was sent to the “gaol” in New London. Shortly thereafter, Venture was sold to the Stantons.

A follow-up conference focusing on Venture Smith and many facets of slavery will be held next September with scholars from around the world attending. More than a few have predicted that Venture’s story will eventually be popularized in book and movie form. It may just be a matter of time before Fishers Island becomes best known as the childhood home of the kidnapped son of an African king.

*A copy of the Venture Smith narrative can be found online:*  
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/venture/venture.html>

## Steamer Time Card Reveals Island History

A single piece of paper ephemera purchased on the internet auction site eBay has overturned all previously recorded dates for Fishers Island’s first hotel and for its first regularly scheduled steamer. “Time Card - Steamer *Cygnnet*,” reprinted here, reveals that the steamer began running three trips daily in July 1877 between New London and Fishers Island with the specific purpose of taking people to the Mansion House for dinners and summer boarding.

In 1877, the Mansion House was under the control of the estate of Robert R. Fox who had purchased Fishers Island from the Winthrop in 1863. Previous histories have mentioned that Mrs. Fox, his widow, took in boarders, but there was no evidence that the arrangement included published weekly rates (\$12 a week; \$3 a day), regular ferry service (50 cents each way), scheduled restaurant meals (\$1 for regular dinners at house; 50 cents for clambake or shore dinners). Please note the proprietor with the mysterious name: *Prof. De LaVergne*. Nothing is known about him!

There was some question as to whether this Fox-period enterprise actually got off the ground, but a subsequent discovery removed all doubts.

### Further Details Unearthed in Utility Co. Files

Confirming evidence that steamers made regular runs to Fishers Island between 1877 and 1885 surfaced within an unrelated 500-page transcript of testimony given in 1896 and 1897 before the Condemnation Board that was convened to set the price for proposed Fishers Island fort land (Fort Wright area). The testimony that follows was given by Mr. Morris W. Bacon, a prominent New London realtor and businessman, who had previously worked on steamers. The questioner was DeLancy Nicoll, a Ferguson lawyer who would later in his questioning try to cast doubt on Mr. Bacon’s familiarity with Fishers Island real estate. In this section he was probing Mr. Bacon’s early work history:

Q. From 1849 to 1879 you were then purser on the

New London and Fishers Island.	
TIME CARD STEAMER CYGNET.	
COMMENCING JULY 1ST, 1877.	
<b>WEEK DAYS.</b>	<b>SUNDAYS.</b>
Leave New London for Fishers Island: 10:30 A. M., 1:30 P. M., 5:15 P. M.	Leave New London for Fishers Island: 9:00 A. M., 1:30 P. M.
Leave Depot House for Fishers Island: 10:45 A. M., 1:45 P. M., 5:30 P. M.	Leave Depot House for Fishers Island: 9:15 A. M., 1:15 P. M.
Leave Elipson House for Fishers Island: 10:30 A. M., 1:30 P. M., 5:15 P. M.	Leave Elipson House for Fishers Island: 9:25 A. M., 1:25 P. M.
<b>RETURNING.</b>	<b>RETURNING.</b>
Leave Fishers Island for New London: 11:45 A. M., 2:45 P. M., 6:30 P. M.	Leave Fishers Island for New London: 9:15 A. M., 6:00 P. M.
Leave Elipson House for New London: 12:30 P. M., 5:15 P. M., 7:15 P. M.	Leave Elipson House for New London: 10:00 A. M., 12:30 P. M., 6:00 P. M.
Leave Depot House for New London: 12:30 P. M., 5:30 P. M., 7:15 P. M.	Leave Depot House for New London: 10:10 A. M., 12:45 P. M., 6:55 P. M.
	Leave New London for Depot and Elipson only at 12:30 P. M.
25¢ Fare each way 50 cents. Excursion Tickets to go and return same day 50 cents.	

Time Card - Steamer *Cygnnet*, 1877. Museum Collection



Steamer *Osprey* Courtesy of Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Conn.  
 The *Osprey* was one of the three steamers of the Pequot and Ocean Transit Co. that carried excursionists from New London to Fishers Island between 1877 and 1885.

Norwich line of steamers; is that right?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And from 1874 to 1894 what were you?

A. From 1874 to 1877, I took charge of the three steamers that we had – well we had two at the time when we started, and ran over to Fishers Island in 1877. Then we built another one—first we had one little boat.

Q. You mean the Norwich Line?

A. No.

Q. What line was it?

A. Well, it was the Cecil Company.

Q. And you ran a line of steamers to Fishers Island?

A. We ran steamers in the summer from 1877 to 1885...

Q. Now from 1885 have you been running any line of steamers to Fishers Island?

A. No sir; we sold out all our lines and I have not been

interested in steamboats at all since then.

Q. How often did the *Cygnets* run over?

A. We ran two and three trips a day, but we only ran in the summer time; we did not run in the winters at all...

Q. Did your boat, the *Cygnets*, carry the mail over there?

A. I don't think there was any mail carried at that time. *We used to carry a great many people over there.* (Emphasis added)

Further research has determined that the New London-based steamship company that ran to Fishers Island between 1877 and 1885 was the Pequot and Ocean Transit Co. Its three vessels were Steamer *Cecile*, length 60.6', built in 1872 in Noank, Ct.; Steamer *Cygnets*, length 62.2', built in 1876 in Noank, Ct.; Steamer *Osprey*, length 78.4', built in 1882 in Mystic Bridge, Ct. The *Cygnets* made regular runs to Fishers Island, the other two ran sporadically.



Mansion House, Fishers Island NY, Circa 1880  
 Museum Collection. Donated by Linda Lyles Goodyear

# NAUTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

## George Bass Dives for His Own Past

By John R. Eastlund

Summer, 2004, New York—So what does the retired “Father of Nautical Archaeology” do now that he’s no longer excavating ancient shipwrecks in Turkey? He dons his wetsuit and scuba gear, joins his son, for their first dive ever together, and goes to look at the remains of a wreck in Long Island Sound.

The Sound has been full of wrecks since pre-revolutionary days, but George Bass is interested in a particular wreck—the steamer *Atlantic*, which sank in a terrible November storm in 1846. The 1,112-ton ship was on its way from its homeport of New London, Connecticut, to New York City, where it had been built four months earlier. Minutes out of New London, the side-wheeler suffered a boiler casualty. The ship’s crew cast out anchors, but all day the anchors dragged as the worst storm in local memory raged unabated. No other steamer could approach through the high waves close enough to render assistance.

“I would give a thousand dollars for another anchor today,” Captain Isaac Dustan was heard to exclaim.

About four o’clock the next morning, *Atlantic* was driven onto the rocky shore of Fishers Island. Within minutes the most luxurious of Long Island Sound steamships, the first to be lit by gas lamps, was little more than kindling. Forty-two out of the seventy-eight souls aboard perished, including Captain Dustan.

The tragedy of *Atlantic* has faded from New York’s memory over time, but it was originally front-page news here and overseas. Back then, maritime commerce was an important part of everyday New York life, not something that New Yorkers only read about in history books as they do now. Freight wasn’t hidden from view in truck-sized shipping containers stacked in a Newark parking lot. Until the Brooklyn Bridge opened in 1883 the only way to get to Manhattan was to take a boat (or cross a few bridges over the Harlem River). While you were doing that you would see ships disgorging immigrants at Battery Park and pass shipyards launching the latest high-tech steamships. Sailing ships still had their prows draped over South Street, and the Erie Canal barges that carried the products of the North American heartland were loading their cargoes into freighters going to all ports of the world. Ferries scurried from Brooklyn, Staten Island, and New Jersey. People knew the

schedules of packets and liners, so if a ship was overdue there was widespread concern, particularly since some of the people on board invariably were from local communities.

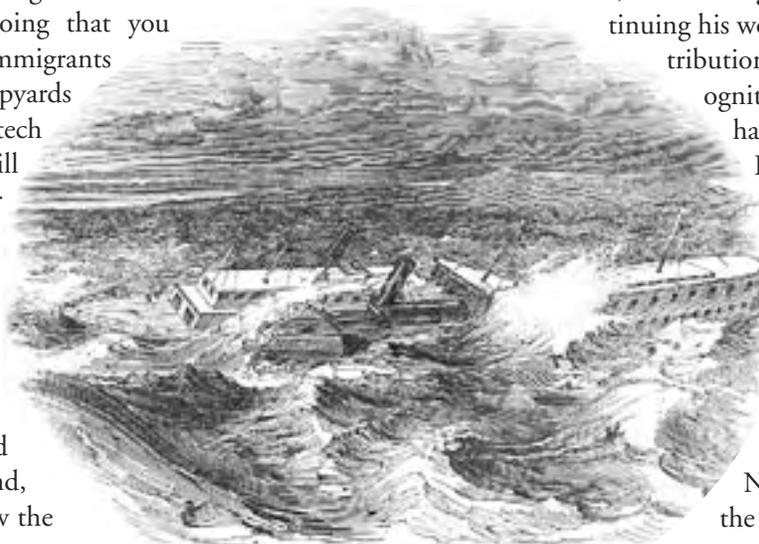
The smells and sounds of maritime commerce are now disappearing from New York. Where great battleships were once fitted out is now land coveted by condo builders. The Fulton Fish Market is moving to the Bronx. The only ships on Manhattan shores are museum relics and the occasional cruise liner. The big vessels have been replaced by a few harbor tour boats, commuter ferries, and privately owned megayachts. Repair facilities for these boats are disappearing. The great piers have been converted to impound lots, golf driving ranges, and heliports. Office workers commuting by subway to their skyscrapers rarely consider or care that this was once a great seaport.

George Bass has devoted his life to teaching the world not to forget the importance that seafaring had on world history. It was not always easy. When he was a University of Pennsylvania graduate student, few people thought it was possible to conduct a proper archaeological excavation underwater. In 1960 he went to Cape Gelidonya, Turkey, and showed them how to do it. This Bronze Age shipwreck became the first ancient wreck ever excavated in its entirety on the seabed. For the next dozen years, George Bass developed many of the standard techniques of shipwreck excavation, first as a student and later on the faculty, before he left the University of Pennsylvania to found the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA). It later affiliated with Texas A&M University, where Dr. Bass is now a Distinguished Professor Emeritus.

George Bass and his colleagues have shown the wealth of information that can be gleaned from ancient shipwrecks, in effect “time capsules” of what everyday life was like in the years that they sank. They have tried to show treasure hunters, looters, and antiquities collectors that knowledge is more valuable than a few trinkets collected in a haphazard manner for personal profit. His research has shown how commodities trading has united ancient civilizations all over the Mediterranean and adjacent seas. He has trained countless

students, now diving archaeologists who are continuing his work all over the world. His contributions have not gone without recognition.

Among other awards, he has received the Archaeological Institute of America’s Gold Medal for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement and the Lowell Thomas Award from the Explorers Club. He is also a recipient of the La Gorce Gold Medal and one of the fifteen Centennial Awards from the National Geographic Society; the J.C. Harrington Medal from





**Steamer *Atlantic's* Bell on Side of Seamen's Church Institute, NYC  
Courtesy of John R. Eastlund**

The Society for Historical Archaeology; and the NOGI Award from The Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences. In 2002, President George W. Bush presented him with the National Medal of Science.

All this is now ancient history to George Bass. Although he stopped diving when he turned seventy a couple of years ago, in the summer of 2004 he decided to make one last dive as part of a quest involving his own past, a genealogy project that's more of a hobby or a busman's holiday than it is archaeology. His great-great-grandfather, the Rev. Dr. William Jessup Armstrong died when the Ladies' Saloon, in which he was leading a prayer meeting, collapsed as the *Atlantic* struck Fishers Island. When his body was recovered, it showed a severe blow to his head. None of the ten women on board survived, presumably because they were all in the collapsing saloon.

According to the Norwich, Connecticut, *Courier* of December 5, 1846, "the funeral of the late Dr. Armstrong, was attended on Sabbath last by one of the largest assemblies ever witnessed in New York on any similar occasion." He had concluded his business in Boston a day early in order to rush home to New York to have Thanksgiving dinner with his wife and five children,

*Atlantic's* bell hung from the wreckage tolling for its victims until it was retrieved and given to the Floating Church of the Holy Comforter in New York City. The Floating Church later became the Seaman's Church Institute, a spiritual haven for any seamen who pass through New York. Although the Institute has moved several times, the bell has followed and is now hanging several stories above the street around the corner from South Street Seaport.

The ship's engine was salvaged shortly after the disaster and sent to California where it was mounted in a Pacific steamer named *Brother Jonathan*, which, ironically, sank in July 1865. A chest containing trade goods of axe handles, meat grinders,

pulleys, scythes, locks and keys was recovered from the recent salvage of *Brother Jonathan*.

Dr. Bass did not really expect to see much during his dive. *Atlantic* was wrecked in only fifteen to twenty feet of water, so a century and a half of waves have scattered and churned things up and exposed anything left to the corrosive effects of seawater and the visibility off the island is poor. Nevertheless on 10 August 2004, George Bass sailed from New London to Fishers Island on the chartered dive boat *Atlantis* captained by Gary Chellis. With him and his son Gordon was Tom Jackson, a *Wooden Boat* editor. On his return to College Station, I asked Dr. Bass, "Did you see anything?"

"Nah. But I wouldn't have missed it for the world." For a man who had spent over forty years in the serious study of shipwrecks, he was at last just having fun.

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*The author, John R. Eastlund, resident of Bryan, Texas, has traveled the world as a marine geologist on a variety of oceanography projects. He is currently pursuing his MA in anthropology at Texas A&M with a focus on nautical archaeology.*

*Dr. Bass will speak on Fishers Island on Aug. 13th. See back page for details.*



**George Bass and His Son Gordon Diving Off Fishers Island, 2004  
Courtesy of George F. Bass**

# NATURE NOTES

by Penni Sharp

## The American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)

The American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) is a breeding bird on Fishers Island although it is seldom seen due to its reclusive habits. The bird belongs in the family *Scolopacidae*, which encompasses the shorebirds. It is probably the only member of the family that spends its time in brushy fields and woodlands rather than along the coastal beaches and rocky shores.

The woodcock is distinguished by its long tapering bill which reaches some 65 mm (approximately 2.5 inches) in length. The bird is well-camouflaged in the woods as the plumage on its upper parts is a mix of browns, grays and blacks, blending well with fallen leaves. Three black bands cross its crown descending toward the back. The underparts are a more uniform cinnamon-brown in color. The woodcock has large eyes which are set fairly far back on its head. Overall, it has a rather plump body with a short dark tail and stocky legs. Although the newly hatched chicks have short bills at first, by the time they are a few days old, they resemble small fuzzy versions of their parents. These chicks are precocial and develop rapidly in comparison to many other birds. By the age of two weeks, they are capable of short flights and by a little over three weeks are nearly full-grown and able to fly.

If you have ever stumbled upon the woodcock during its courtship rituals, you have been treated to a spectacular display. The display takes place in a clearing or patch of field often near a stream or wetland. As described by Bent\* the male woodcock walks about “producing at intervals of a few seconds two very different notes – a loud rasping, emphatic *zeeip* and a soft guttural note like the croak of a frog. Suddenly he rises, and flies off at a rising angle, circling higher and higher, in increasing spirals until he looks like a mere speck in the sky, mounting to a height of 200 or 300 feet; during the upward flight he whistles continuously, twittering musical notes like *twitter, itter, itter, itter*, repeated without a break. Then comes his true love song – a loud, musical three-syllable note uttered three times with only a slight interval between the outbursts as the bird flutters downward, circling, zigzagging down to the ground.” This amazing performance is repeated many times over. The ritual takes place at dusk shortly after

sunset and may continue well into the night, particularly on bright moonlit nights.

Woodcocks spend the winter well to the south of us, but are one of the earliest birds to return. During mild winters, they are often seen as early as late January and February. They feed nearly exclusively on earthworms and have been known to consume more than their own weight in a 24 hour period. The woodcock is able to move the tip of its bill independently and thus can probe the soil and grasp earthworms and insects.

One of the reasons that woodcock are seldom seen is that they are crepuscular, meaning that they are active primarily at dawn and dusk. During daylight they tend to remain still and fly only when disturbed. As it rises in flight, the woodcock usually emits a distinctive whistling sound.

Over the years woodcock numbers have fluctuated widely. A late freeze can decimate populations if food resources become frozen in the ground. Severe weather in their wintering grounds, over-harvesting, habitat loss, and pesticide use (particularly DDT which is fortunately no longer used in the USA) are all factors that have negatively affected the numbers for this species. Fortunately, many of the Museum Land Trust properties contain excellent habitat for the woodcock, thus it is likely that this species will continue to be a breeding bird on the island.



\* Bent, A. C. 1962. *Life Histories of North American Shore Birds*  
Part 1. Dover Publications, Inc. New York

Woodcock in Courtship Flight. Courtesy of Rosemarie Schwab, artist

# LAND TRUST REPORT

by Bob Miller

Louise Noble Bogert left a wonderful legacy to Fishers Island upon her death on November 22, 2005. She devised 8.23 acres (FIDCO Lot 41.6) of undeveloped land contiguous to one of the Island's largest and most significant sanctuary areas to the Land Trust, to be held in perpetuity as a wildlife sanctuary and forever protected from development. She also left instructions to maintain the "clay pit" property adjoining her home and the Isabella Beach parking lot in its natural state by way of a conservation easement. Mrs. Bogert's contribution "bridges" areas donated by L.F. Boker Doyle in 1982/1983, by FIDCO in 2003, and by the McCall Family in 2004, creating a continuous sanctuary area that extends almost from West Harbor to Block Island Sound (see map).

In addition to Mrs. Bogert's donation, a critical 1.7 acre parcel – one of two remaining parcels to the north of the main road overlooking Middle Farms that could potentially have been developed – was preserved through the generosity of Arthur and Roelfien Kuijpers, with cooperation and support from FIDCO and the Fishers Island Club. In addition to making a substantial financial contribution to the Museum to enable it to purchase the parcel (FIDCO Lot 31-5), Arthur and Roelfien imposed a conservation easement which precludes construction of an additional residence on a 2.75 acre parcel adjoining their house (FIDCO Lot 17-4B). Also, Arthur and Roelfien acquired a 2.23 acre parcel from FIDCO immediately to the north of the main road (FIDCO Lot 17-4A), opposite the Chocomount Trail sanctuary, which was transferred outright to the Land Trust, thereby increasing the contiguous area of the Chocomount Trail sanctuary and eliminating what could have been a highly visible construction site.

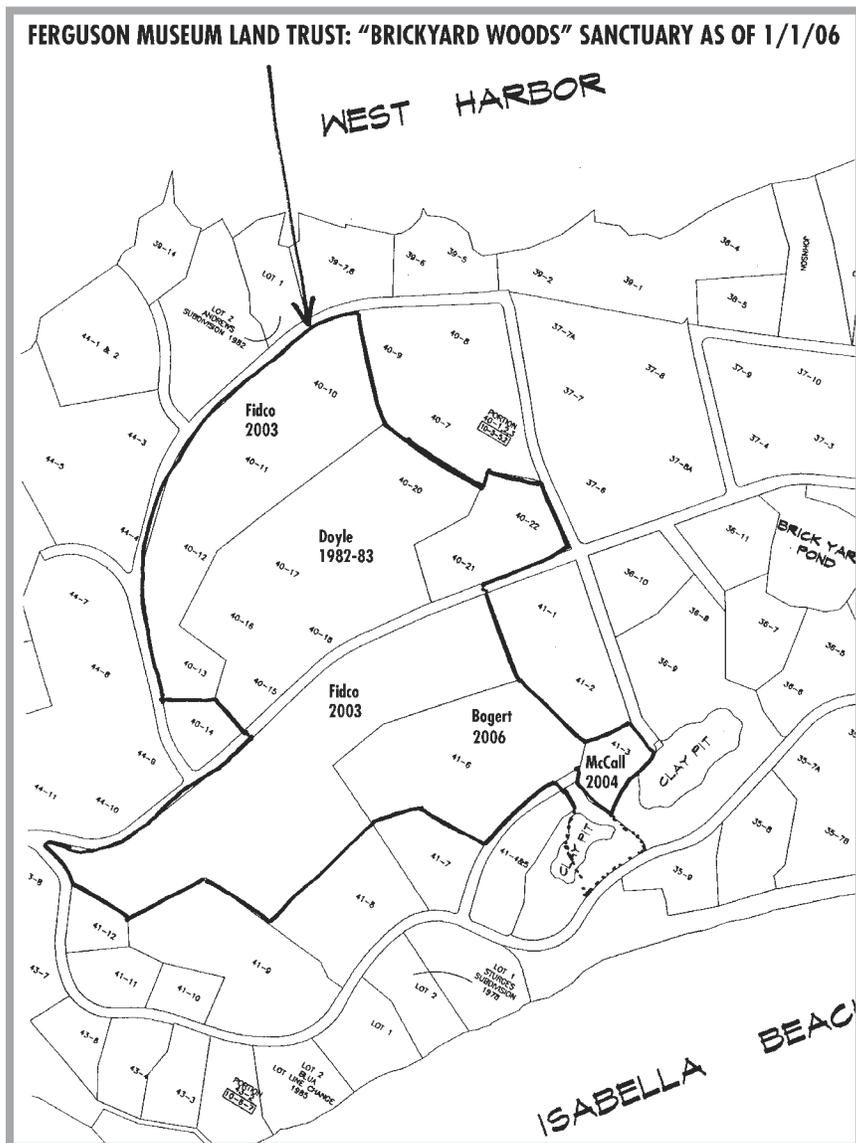
In addition, the Burr Family contributed conservation easements over two lots near their home on Clay Point (FIDCO Lots 29-8 and 29-9, with areas of 2.24 and 2.36 acres, respectively), permanently protecting those lots from development.

The Land Trust has also been very active on the West End of the Island. In 2005, Albert Gordon contributed one acre of shaded lawn immediately across the main road from the Catholic church to the Land Trust. This area will be maintained in its current state to provide a peaceful place to walk, play or rest. Representatives of the Land Trust have also worked with representatives of the Town and FIDCO to seek to protect two lots in the area of the Ferry Dock from potential development. Including the Gordon parcel, the Land Trust now has stewardship of approximately 20

acres of property in the West End.

In total, the Land Trust acquired ownership of or stewardship over 20.57 acres in 2005, and protected seven potential building lots from development. In keeping with its policy of supporting donations by individual land owners in their conservation efforts, FIDCO agreed to donate to the Land Trust the last remaining potential building lot to the north of the main road overlooking Middle Farms – FIDCO Lot 31.4, with an area of approximately of 1.7 acres. While much remains to be done to restrain the potential development on the Island in a manner that will preserve its character, 2005 was a good year. 2006 shows promise of several additional transfers, including a significant waterfront parcel on Clay Point.

Those interested in land conservation on the Island may wish to view the large color aerial photograph on display at the Museum, on which properties now preserved via the Land Trust are marked. Total acreage protected from development under Land Trust auspices, either directly or through conservation easements, now exceeds 310 acres.





*The Board of Trustees would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all who gave as "Friends of the Museum" or to the Challenge Match during the period from October 2004 to December 2005. We are grateful to each and every one of you for your support.*

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Mr. & Mrs. Samuel M. Yonce.  
*Please excuse any omissions.*

## Recent Additions to the Museum's Collection

*The following is a list of donors and some of the diverse items they gave during 2005 and the early months of 2006.*

Maxine Arnold: FI Club brochures, 1920s & '30s; correspondence regarding FI Club, Mononotto Inn, and Mansion House Hotel, 1920s-1941; FI ferry schedules 1930 & '34.  
Barry Bannister: FI High School graduation programs & regents certificates, 1949.  
Jan & Peter Burr: By Laws FI Civic Association c.1950.  
Mrs. Robert A. Campbell: photos of Mansion House Cottages & beach activity c.1910.  
Harry & Susie Ferguson: collection of books, booklets, directories & newspaper clippings relating to FI.  
Jeff Edwards: 4 Ducks Unlimited ashtrays.  
Henry Fisher: Mansion House & Ft. Wright cutlery.  
Julie F. Hulsander: FI pennant c.1960.  
Leila Hadley Luce: collection of books on nautical, natural history and gardening themes; correspondence regarding A.A. McDonnell house, East End, late 1920s & '30s, and correspondence regarding purchase of Bull's Eye from Herreshoff Manufacturing Co., early 1930s.  
Helene Van Oosten: FI magazines, books, & brochures; opera scrapbook w. Alma Gluck performance.  
Sarah & Steve Malinowski: crate label "Wild Geese," FI Farms, c.1890s; Motor Boat Magazine, 1958, with article by David C. Burnham on care of yacht Savage.  
Tim & Sharon Patterson: misc. FI matchbooks; Howard Best WW I gas mask; photo of FI Coast Guard crew c.1920, Ducks Unlimited ashtray.  
Mrs. W.C. Ridgway, Jr.: blueprints for Walton Ferguson house; HHC newsletters (1951-1997).  
Sandy Riegel: misc. sailing and power yacht photos, 1930s; ext. views of Gluck-Zimbalist residence, 1928.  
John Rousmaniere: Clipping & research files for his FIYC history.  
Kandi Sanger: FI postcards; misc. 19th century correspondence; ticket to the "World According to Garp" premier on FI.  
Ron Schongar: photo of J. Gada landing craft.  
Ashley Smith: snapshots of Hurricane Carol, 1954.  
Mrs. H.W. Williamson: FI Sportsmen's Club pin.  
Museum Acquisition Fund purchases include: Steamer Cygnet Time Card, 1877; American Field magazine, 1884, with article on first dog trial on FI.; original 1818 newspaper with article on sea serpent that washed up on FI..  
*Please excuse any omissions.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Henry L. Ferguson Museum is the collection, preservation and exhibition of items of Pre-History, History and Natural History of Fishers Island and, through its Land Trust, the preservation in perpetuity of undeveloped property in its natural state. It is organized for the education and enjoyment of the Island's community and visitors and for the protection of habitat for the Island's flora and fauna.

## Museum Speakers Summer 2006

**Henry C. Ferguson Ph.D.;** Astronomer, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore MD; Project leader for "Hubble Deep Field" and frequent lecturer for NASA, will give a talk and presentation on "Measuring Cosmic Evolution." *Saturday, July 8, 4 p.m. at Union Chapel*

**George F. Bass, Ph.D.;** Professor Emeritus, Texas A & M, author, and a pioneer in the field of nautical archaeology, will give a talk and presentation entitled: "History Under the Sea" that will explore some of his most important underwater excavations. *Sunday, August 13, 4 p.m. at Union Chapel*

**Walter Woodward, Ph.D.;** Connecticut State Historian, will speak about Fishers Island's founder, John Winthrop, Jr., including his initial plan to make Fishers Island a place of learning and alchemical research. *Sunday, August 20, 4 p.m. at Union Chapel*

**Pierce Rafferty,** Museum Director, will give an (often humorous) talk entitled: "Public Relations: 250 Years of Outside Views of Fishers Island." *Sunday, August 27, 4 p.m. at Union Chapel*

**Smith C. Vaughan Lecture** on natural history subject. Speaker and date will be posted as soon as confirmed.

## Two Museum Excursions Planned

By popular demand, another trip to the tern research station on Great Gull Island run by Helen Hays will be scheduled in July. Time, date and cost will be publicized as soon as known.

## The Henry L. Ferguson Museum

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## Salvaging Bird Specimens

Each year new specimens are added to the collection. Last years additions included: American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*); Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*); Black throated Blue Warbler (*Denroica caerulescens*); Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*); American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*). Bird at right is a Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) from the collection.

Should you locate a dead bird that is in a condition suitable for mounting, please contact Pierce Rafferty at the Museum.



Similarly, we are planning a follow up to last year's popular Lighthouse Cruise. The vessel, route, and date are still under discussion. Details will be posted.

## Nature Days 2006

The Fishers Island Conservancy's "Nature Days" will be held in July this year. The dates are July 16-20. There will be speakers and events on a variety of topics with the central theme being the preservation of the marine environment.

## Nature Walks

During the summer, Nature Walks will start at the Museum at 2 p.m. on Thursdays.

## Museum Hours

**Easter to June 30.** Friday and Saturday: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday: 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**July 1 to Labor Day.** Tuesday through Friday: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Closed Mondays.

**Fall and Winter Hours:** To be posted. **For special appointments:** Please call Museum Director Pierce Rafferty at the Museum (631) 788-7239.

