# Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the **Interlaken Historical Society** 

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www.InterlakenHistory.org



Villa Vizcaya www.floridamemory.com

#### No Fall Program

School is back in session in one form or another, the harvest work goes on, and the leaves are turning their fall colors. All those items should tell us that the Fall program for the Historical Society is just around the corner; not so this year.

Due to continuing concerns for everyone's safety our October program has been cancelled.

Thank you Pamela Raes, for putting us on your calendar and then being postponed again.

Watch for the January newsletter when hopefully we can announce renewed regularly scheduled programs.

In the meantime, have you written anything about 2020? The Historical Society will be collecting stories, short and not so short, to preserve for others to read someday.

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#### A Tale of Three Mansions

By Barbara B Stewart

I have loved to travel for a long time. It all started with a 21-day tour of Europe in 1965. There were 13 of us, my Girl Scout troop and two leaders. We started in eighth grade baby sitting, doing odd jobs and more to raise money for the trip. I was a Junior in High School and celebrated my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in Brussels Belgium. The flight cost \$99, a lot in 1965. It was also the first air flight for most of us!!!

As the years went by, my interest in travel took me to many wonderful places in the states and over seas. My interests concentrated on gardens, old homes, mansions and historic sites. These interests blended well. Road Scholar offers a wide range of such trips. I, with my friends and husband have enjoyed these adventures a great deal.

Over the course of this and the next two newsletters, I will share three locations with you, two in Florida and one in NYS. Yes, there is a connecting thread or two, but you will have to stay tuned until the third newsletter!! So, sit back and enjoy the trip back through time, starting with Biscayne Bay Miami Florida.

Continued on page 3

## **President's Report**

Greetings from the Interlaken Historical Society.

It's been a hot, dry summer for most of us. The rain clouds seemed to split north and south around Interlaken. Lawns are brown from lack of rain and the village is on a water conservation advisory. We have had over 20 days of 90° plus.

The Community Life Museum was closed; the Farmers' Museum was open by appointment only but there were no appointments made. The Museum has a good display of early Phone Service as well as World War II memorabilia and other items for view in the windows. Also, Marty and Mary Jean have a display in Hubbard's front window entitled "Food Preservation and Home Canning, 1870-1950." It's well worth the stop – it brought back memories of great aunts' kitchens. Another attraction in town is the mural painted on the side of the Fitness Center. It is beautiful and shows the countryside and produce that our gardens can grow.

With the Covid 19 Virus still floating around, our family has enjoyed local drives to two Erie Canal sites. The first to Montezuma Village and a hike along the canal bed to the aqueducts that carried the canal and tow path across the Seneca River. The second was a visit to Port Byron to see the canal walls along the thruway, along with a visit to Center Inn and Blacksmith Shop. It's amazing how people in the 1800s laid out, graded and built the canal with some pretty big stone blocks. We still have on the agenda to visit Boldt Castle in the Thousand Islands. Go and enjoy our local history!

My wife, Grace, has been pleased and busy keeping her bird feeders going. We wonder if the feeders are busy because of the dry weather and not much growing wild in blossoms and seeds for them to eat. The Hummingbirds and Orioles have emptied 6 feeders in 2 days, and the Orioles have gone through over 16 (32 oz.) jars of Grape Jelly!

As we have moved forward in the Society, we received Title to the Betzler Property, and we have started talks with the architect. Next comes the building design and the necessary funds to complete a larger museum with community space and proper storage. Please keep this in mind as the year end approaches. We are a 501c3 organization and donations we receive maybe deductible on your taxes. More to come.....

Thanks to our members and others who help keep Interlaken Historical Society going.

Sincerely,

John Hunt, President

#### **Recent Donations**

Mark Stiles, Interlaken: Carved chip wood box top with Interlaken as part of the design.

Sandy and John Huhn, Interlaken: West Ave Dairy bottle caps, corn sheller and field

scale. In the summer of 1935 Charles Beardsley purchased the dairy from C. C. Derry.

Continued on page11



#### Three Mansions cont from page 1

Villa Vizcaya was the vision of International Harvester Vice president James Deering. (1859-1925) This magnificent home and gardens are now an accredited museum and National Historic Landmark. All this belonging to the citizens of Miami-Dade County.

In the case of all three mansions, they now belong to the people. I, for one, feel the gifts of these beautiful and historic homes and gardens are a tribute and legacy to these once strong and powerful families. Now all can enjoy and take a step back in to the past.

During this period of time, late 1800s and early 1900s, people were fascinated with Europe and Asia. The house furnishings, artwork and gardens and water features, reflect this. Much of the beautiful artwork, today irreplaceable, probably were not costly at the time of purchase. The truly amazing thing is that all this beauty survived in the bowels of ships that had no climate control. The crating must have been very well done.

Vizcaya's name may have been influenced by a northern Spanish province know as Vizcaya or Biskaia. An early explorer might have suggested the name as well.

Vizcaya was the winter home of Mr. James Deering and his family between 1914-1922.

Let's start at the beginning. It was 1913 and Mr. Deering was at his father's house in Coconut Grove Fla. With him were designer Paul Chalfin (1874-1959) and architect F. Burrall Hoffman Jr. (1882-1980). The plans were to include a house, formal gardens and a village. Far more elaborate then Deering had imagined, nothing like this existed in Florida at this time. This was a complex undertaking. It seemed very daunting, settings for displays, rare and fragile art works, indoor and outdoor displays and finding plant materials that would survive and thrive. I would think these young men saw the opportunity to make a name for themselves. Here was a fairly well known, successful businessman, if they could make this work, they would earn a place for themselves with the high rollers of the time. They had to make this work.

Let's take a moment to learn a bit more about these young men. The chief designer, Paul Chalfin, grew up in Midtown Manhattan. His family was prosperous. He attended Harvard for 2 years, then New York's Art Student League to pursue his interest in painting. This followed by three at Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Although very well trained as a classical painter, he was mostly unemployed. He found work redecorating some rooms in Deering's Chicago home. This led to the collaboration with Deering to create Vizcaya.

F. Burrall Hoffman Jr. also got his start in NYC. He also studied at Harvard and the

Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Both Hoffman and Chalfin were to meet in 1910 to give a lecture at the Colony Club. In 1912 Chalfin again approached Hoffman to see if he would be interested in designing a house in Florida for "an art collector."

All was not well in paradise and the two went their separate ways. Chalfin insisted on controlling the entire design/Phineas Pait, who did the planning for Coral Gables, oversaw the completion of the village.

Diego Suarez (1888-1974) studied architecture at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence Italy. His interest was in reviving formal Italian Renaissance gardens. In June 1914 a friend asked him to show two Americans guests, James Deering and Paul Chalfin, the best in formal gardens in the region. A few months later found Suarez stranded in the US due to the start of WW1. By chance he ran into Chalfin who offered him work designing Deering's gardens. Florida proved a difficult venue to design for. After many disagreements with Chalfin, Suarez left the project in 1917. Chalfin took credit for the work for many years. Suarez continued his work on many other levels.

Let's go back to James Deering for a bit. His life began in South Paris, Maine. Financed by funds from an inherited wool mill, he invested in land in the Western US. He also financed the development of agricultural machinery. In 1873 the family

moved to Illinois assuming control of a farm equipment manufacturer renaming it the Deering Harvester Company. Harvest productivity was greatly increased. Investments continued to grow, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Deering had become one of Americas wealthiest men. In 1902 banker John Pierpont Morgan brokered a deal that merged the Deering Harvester Company with McCormick Reaper Co. to form International Harvester. As Deering's health weakened, around 1910, plans were started for a Miami home.

I have visited Villa Vizcaya twice. If you find yourself in the area, it's well worth the visit. To view photos of the mansion and the amazing interior, I suggest going online if possible. An area to key in on is the view of the ballroom floor as seen from the balcony of the second floor. The floor is done in black and white squares. We will touch on this in future articles. The next article will be about Cad'Zan, located in Sarasota Florida. Stay tuned!!

Credit should be noted and given to "Visions of Vizcaya" Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, 2006

Pages 5 through 9 continue the World War II "Letters from Camp." This issue features letters from the Pacific theatre.

WWII Letters From the Pacific Theatre Clifford E. Lincoln, Clayton Brown, Art Egan Page 66 April 13, 1945 Philippine Islands. Dear Fred:

Every ear in good old Interlaken should be burning today. This morning who should drop in but Clayton Brown. We have been having a real reunion. We went over and got Art Egan out of bed and had a regular old home week. I met up with Clayton about a week ago and Art's tent is only a stone's throw from mine.

I was rather back on the news, but Clayton was farther back for he left home before I did. It has been two and a half years since he left and I have been away nearly that long.

I received five Reviews the other day. They were from Nov. 10 to Dec. 22, 1944. It was still all new news to us. Of course our folks send us clippings and keep us pretty well posted.

Clayton and I decided we wouldn't swap one inch of Butcher Hill for the whole Philippine Island group.

We all hope that next year finds us back home enjoying the many things we have been discussing.

So, in closing, we will say hello to good old Seneca County, and thanks loads for the paper.

Clifford E. Lincoln, Clayton Brown, Art Egan.



Art Egan, photo provided by his daughter, Jane.

**Vernon** E. **Brewer** Page 72 June 1, 1945 Somewhere in Central Pacific. Dear Fred:

Have time for only a few lines at present but want to give you my change of address and say hello to all you friends and neighbors at home. By the way, how is everyone in the best little town in the states feeling today? Regards to you all.

There is not much that I can tell you at present, for it would only be censored out. All I can say is that everything is OK with me and I'm in the best of health. The boys out here are doing a splendid job and I'm very proud to be doing what I can, not only for my country and you people at home, but also for myself and future happiness. Can't let anything happen to my hometown, you know, for some day I hope to make it my home again. I've seen all of the "mighty blue Pacific," as they term it that I'll ever want or care to see. Me for some good, solid American earth under my feet when this is over. They can have their sea and air, I'll take good, old terra firma any day.

The work I'm doing now is very interesting and keeps you on your toes, to say the least. It is practically my training at Oceanside, Calif., put into actual operation, that of working in communications aboard ship. I stand radio telephone watches and record any and all messages that our ship is concerned with, whether directly or indirectly.

It is a beautiful sight to stand on the hanger deck and watch our planes land and take off against the glow of a setting sun. Gives you quite a thrill when you first see it and also makes you vastly proud to be part of this organization

Naturally, some of the things we see are not nice sights by any means, nor is this life a bed of roses, but one can expect that in a time of turmoil such as we are going through. The last Interlaken Review I received was dated 9 March, 1945, but I still have it with me and was surely glad and happy to receive it. Sometime soon I should be getting a big stack of them. You can't

imagine how a little thing like a letter will cheer and brighten your whole day. If any of your readers care to write, I'll be glad to answer each and every letter. Sincerely, Vernon E. Brewer

Charles Henc, Pg 88 Sept 28, 1945 Tokyo, Japan

Dear Fred and Interlaken Friends

There is nothing I'd like better than to write each and every one of you a nice long letter describing the sights now before my eyes in Tokyo Bay, but since time doesn't permit, I've drafted a mimeographed letter in order that all of you might share with me the joyous feeling of peace o this great day.

The "Tokyo Express," consisting of what appears to be the entire U. S. Navy, arrived here a lot sooner than any of us would have considered possible a few months ago, but that's one change in the time-table I'm sure none of us will ever kick about. All is going exactly according to plan; there hasn't been an uprising or display of resistance anywhere. In fact, with a little change of scenery you might think you were anchored somewhere in San Francisco Bay instead of 4,500 miles away in the orient, and believe me, we're all hoping that the above mentioned change of scenery will soon occur.

When peace negotiations first appeared in the offing, we were in the Philippines training the Army in amphibious warfare operations for what was then thought to be the final step before the invasion of Japan. However, the rapid turn of events, of which the atomic bomb's part cannot be over-stressed, finds us here without a shot being fired, much to the relief of all hands. We have all witnessed the horrors of war at Iwo Jimo and Okinawa and are all thankful that an unnecessary loss of life has been averted by this sudden peace.

Now that the war is over and the peace terms have been established, I'm looking

forward with great anticipation to the day when I'll be sporting my "zoot suit" once again, so until then, I say, so-long from T-O-K-Y-O. Best wishes to you all. Charles Henc, Lt. USN

**John Neal Knight,** Pg 30 Dec 3, 1943 Norfolk Navy Yard, Dear Fred:

want to take this opportunity to thank you for sending the Review. I appreciate it even more now that I am stationed farther away from home.

We are kept pretty well occupied here with drill, calisthenics, rifle instruction and tours of the Navy Yards and the various Naval operations bases in the vicinity. There are about 3,000 V-12 college seniors here awaiting assignment to the midshipmen's schools. I expect to leave here Dec. 20 for the Midshipmen's School at Columbia University.

Best regards to you and your family and everyone in Interlaken. Thanks again for the Review. Sincerely John Knight

age 68 April 27, 1945 Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Calif. Dear Fred:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and those responsible for sending the Review. I really have enjoyed it the past two years and look forward to receiving it as much as ever. I also want to inform you of my change of address as far as fleet post offices are concerned.

I seem to be kept pretty busy most of the time since I stand four hours on and eight off deck watch in addition to being responsible for the ship's machinery as engineering officer. Anyway, keeping busy makes the time pass more rapidly. Best regards to everyone at home. Sincerely, John Knight.

Page 98 December 21, 1945 Personal mention John Knight, son of Arthur Knight, has received his commission as lieutenant, junior grade, in the Navy. Lt. Knight, who has been on active duty in the Pacific for several months, is now serving on LSM 424, which is engaged in carrying supplies from Okinawa to China.



Painting by John Knight of LSM 431.

> Landing Ship Medium

Page 106 June 14, 1946 Lt. (jg) John Knight, son of Arthur Knight, received his release from the U. S. Navy on Tuesday, at New York, after three years in service, one year spent in the Southwest Pacific.

**Henry W Noponen.** Page 77 July 13, 1945 Philippine Islands. Dear Fred and Folks Back Home:

I think it is about time I wrote again. Have been busy but haven't forgotten you.

Clifford Lincoln and I sure enjoy the paper; good old Interlaken Review. Art Egan is here with us to, also a few other fellows who lived near Interlaken. It is good to be with old friends again.

I'm still in the Philippines and perhaps may some day see China, which is quite a place. Weather conditions here are bad. The heat is awful, the sun very bright and the air full of dust. With sweat rolling off your back it takes no time at all to get dirty; sure makes a person lazy too. Swimming in the ocean is swell though and we have good showers. The Bn. has stage shows and movies and the Special Service and the Filipinos put on fine programs. We all enjoy them. Near us is a Red Cross Canteen, where the fellows are served donuts, coffee and coke. The Red Cross has done wonders in many ways and is always willing to lend a helping

hand. Give all you can to this worthy cause, and by giving help some poor soldier. It will make your heart feel good that you have done your part in this awful war.

Now that Germany is defeated, a tough job still lies ahead. Japan is willing to fight until the end; they will die fighting. They have one certain belief and the only thing that will cure it will be to blow it out of them. But, if we all stay on the job well get it over soon. Then we can all live in peace again. Peace is wonderful, hot hard to get, while there are men who want to rule the world. Free people will never give up until the peace is won.

There are quite a few old churches around here. It is a good place to be on Sunday. I have got letters from Rev. Cole, and it seems to me that Interlaken has gotten a fine minister, one we may all be proud of.

Well Fred, the newspaper has been coming here OK. Some times it is held up, but no matter how old it is, it is still news to me. We look forward to receiving it.

Good luck and regards to Interlaken. Sincerely, Henry W. Noponen

Page 101 Jan 25, 1946 Pfc. Henry Noponen has received his discharge from the US Army. Mrs. Henry Noponen and family are at the farm southwest of the village, preparing to move to 33 Orchard St. Worcester, Mass, where they will make their home.

Page 104 April 5, 1946 Henry Noponen, who recently returned from service in the Pacific, is now attending the Worcester Trade School at Worcester,

Mass, taking up tool making.



**Earl Richar** Page 48 Sept 22, 1944 Saipan. Dear Fred:

Am forwarding my new address and sure wish I had one of your papers right now. I'm out here on the Island of Saipan, and we don't have much current reading material, so every little bit comes in very handy. I haven't had a paper in 2 ½ months now since I left the states. Guess they must be piled up somewhere along the line, but am looking forward to getting them any day. As Ever, Earl Richar

#### Page 53 Nov 24, 1944

Cpl. Earl Richar Tells About Perilous Flight

With one engine shot out and another damaged, a gas-flooded, fume charged 7th AAF Liberator bomber returned on a perilous flight from the Japanese shipping area at Haha Jima, 650 miles from Tokyo.

The plane was the "K-Lucy," and its left waist gunner was Cpl. Earl Richar, formerly of Interlaken. The plane reached the target area on schedule and the crew was attempting to spot targets in the harbor when 20-millimeter antiaircraft fire hit.

"One engine was knocked out and about 20 fist-size holes were torn in the right wing," Cpl. Richar said. "High octane gas spilled from the broken lines and was carried into the bomb bay by the slip-stream. The gasoline was a foot deep at one time.

"We jettisoned the bombs and shut the bomb bay doors but the fuel continued to seep in. The fumes made three of the men lose consciousness. I managed to remain awake by donning my gas mask. "We threw overboard all loose equipment and guns to lighten the load and the pilot managed to fly us back safely."

On a previous mission, Cpl. Richar and the other crew members saved themselves by parachuting from a Liberator which developed engine trouble. They were rescued at sea by a United States Navy vessel.

"There were a couple of times on the Haha Jima strike when we felt that we would be compelled to parachute again," Cpl. Richar explained. "But, luckily, we had enough fuel in spite of the leakage, and the gas fumes didn't get touched off. It could have been much worse."

Cpl. Richar, 22, has flown six combat missions with the 7th AAF. His wife, Evelyn, and son Alfred, age one, live in Trumansburg. He attended Interlaken Central School, and before entering military service in January, 1943, he was employed by the G. F. Johnson Motor Freight Co.

#### James Wyckoff Pg 77 Friday July 13, 1945

Over some 1,500 miles of the Pacific Ocean the crew of a B-29 Superfortress flew to bomb Japan. But, the crew made most of the return trip under the Pacific in two U.S. submarines.

That's one of the modern, but almost routine sagas of how the army and navy collaborate to rescue airmen who don't make it back to base on those 3,000-mile missions over Japan.

One of the crewmen in this particular B-29, "The Skyscraper," was Sgt. James Wyckoff, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer J. Wyckoff of Interlaken.

Following is a summary of the rescue as told by Lt. William Orr of Roswell, NM, pilot of the B-29, in a letter to his parents, a copy of

which was sent to relatives of other members of the crew.

Half-way back to its Mariana island base after bombing Osaka on a June 1 daylight strike at Japan, the flak-riddled B-29 began to break up, piece by piece.

Two motors had conked out and the fuselage had been cut nearly in two by one of the propellers that whirled loose from its burning engine.

The pilot ordered his crew to bail out, because the big bomber was so badly damaged that an attempt to land it on the rough sea might have meant death or injuries for all the crew.

So the men hit the silk, while the pilot held the bomber in a tight turn to keep the crew together. They all descended safely, except one airman who couldn't swim and was so frightened that he never opened his chute.

Recovering from the shock of landing in the cold Pacific, Sgt. Wyckoff and the others, including the pilot who jumped at 900 feet, inflated their individual lifeboats and paddled together for company in their misery.

Within four hours they experienced the thrill of knowing they were being sought by combined efforts of the army and navy. Later, a B-17 and two navy flying boats spotted them, and, unable to land in the rough sea, dropped a large lifeboat, into which all eventually scrambled.

Then a few more hours wait, and presto, a U.S. submarine surfaced nearby and took the airmen aboard. The sub had other business to attend to, so for five days the airmen were "guests" of the prowling underseas raider.

Finally, a rendezvous was made with another sub, which was inbound from a Pacific

prowl, and at midnight in the middle of the China sea, the B-29 crew was transferred. Seven more days and they were back at their base.

Page 91 Nov 9, 1945

S-Sgt. James Wyckoff Returns to This Country

Staff Sergeant James W. Wyckoff of Interlaken, a B-29 gunner with 22 missions over the Japanese mainland, returned to the United States last Saturday after spending a tour of eight months with the 20th Air Force's 314th Bombardment Wing on Guam.

Sgt. Wyckoff landed at Mather Field, Calif, in a Superfortress with 19 other high-point veterans who are being returned to the states for rotation, reassignment and discharge. The B-29 was one of the 105 aircraft of Colonel Carl R. Sterne's 314th Wing which will bring home some 20,000 officers and enlisted men. Lowpoint men of the wing will remain on Guam to police the Pacific.

A veteran of 347 combat flying hours, Sgt Wyckoff has been awarded the Purple Heart, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters and the Asiatic Pacific theater ribbon with one battle star. He has accumulated 53 points in the army's readjustment point system.

James Wyckoff, www.Find-A-Grave



#### **Library News**

During the 1918 pandemic the Interlaken Public Library was closed for 15 months. No books were added to the collection. No patrons were allowed indoors. Fear of contagion by circulating books kept the library operations to the bare minimum, with no available librarian or services to the public.

Today, our library is open to the public, including the genealogy collection for research by appointment. Beginning September 15, 2020, the library expanded its services from curbside pickup to open door service.

Modifications have been made to the library space. A protective barrier has been installed at the circulation desk. Patrons must 'check in' upon their arrival. As with every other business in the county, patrons must wear a mask for the duration of their visit. Items returned from circulation are quarantined for a 4-day period to reduce the risk of contagion.

We have adapted to the new 'normal' and are happy to welcome our patrons once again.

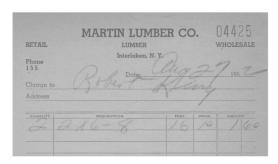
As important as the modifications to the space, library staff and volunteers have adapted our services to meet public needs. Chomebook laptops are available to check out in place of our usual desktop computers, e-books and e-audiobooks are available online 24/7, and programming has gone virtual.

Upcoming events include art, health, entertainment, garden and home improvement programs. Details can be found on our website at <a href="https://www.interlakenpubliclibrary.org">www.interlakenpubliclibrary.org</a>.

#### Recent Donations continued from page 3

Karen King, Trumansburg: Sales receipt from Martin Lumber Co, Interlaken; Central NY Railroad map; Vintage Display cabinets for our new museum.

Martin Lumber Co was located on Lake View Street south of the creek.



Rick Lake, Hilton, NY: John Knight's WWII officer's Navy uniform. John was Rick's uncle of Townsendville. See the Letters from Camp for more on Lt. Knight's service.

Mathew Haviland, Lodi: 1872 Letter of Agreement to operate a ferry from Kidders to Kings Ferry between Peter Fish and H. C. Tracy with Elias J. Stillwell and an 1885 Letter to James Quick from S. D. Leverich regarding the ice harvest and checks he needs to pay.

Sally Hubbard, Interlaken: 1953 receipts and contracts between Halsey Canning Co and Chancey Gregg

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	GIFT SHOP ORDER FORM
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Please Mail Order Form or DUES to: INTERLAKEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PO Box 270, Interlaken NY 14847

DUES are due beginning July 1, Still only \$10 a year!

October 2020 11

Interlaken Historical Society PO Box 270 Interlaken, NY 14847-0270

www.InterlakenHistory.org

For more information on the Historical Society events contact President, John Hunt, 607-592-3224

**NOTE:** the email address for the historical society has changed: **interlakenhistoricalsociety@gmail.com** 

**Dues are due:** please check the date on your mailing label. Dues for 2019-2020 are now due. If your label has a date prior to 2019 please consider bringing your membership up to date. If you feel there this an error in the date shown, please contact the society.

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