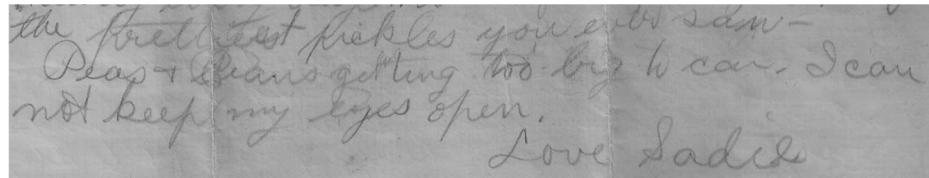


Between the Lakes
A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 47 No. 2 October 2021
Www.interlakenhistoricalsociety.org

The end of Sadie's 1913 letter.



Name That Ghost
Monday, October 25, 7pm
8396 Main Street,

Please join the Historical Society on Monday, October 25th as we explore Ghosts at the Cemetery. Not the physical or metaphysical type ghosts but those unknowns you often find when looking for people or answers to unanswered questions about the people.

Diane Bassette Nelson will be taking a look at sources both within the cemetery that will help you name your ghosts, and those available locally and online.

She has been researching local families and their histories for over 50 years, including many of her own ghosts, trying to put them to rest within their appropriate cemeteries.

This will be our first in-person program since the Pandemic began. For those who are on Facebook, we will be doing a live stream of the program. Plans are in place to tape the program and put it on our YouTube channel. Check both the Facebook page and website for details.

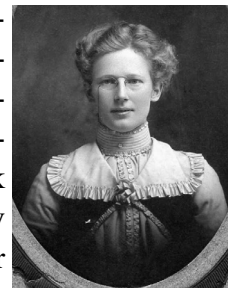
The program is free and all are invited to attend. There is a chair lift for ease of getting to the rooms.

"I Can Not Keep My Eyes Open":
Caring for a Farm and Family in Varick,
1913

Jennifer Merkle

In July 1941, families living in Varick, New York received the devastating news that the United States Government would be taking possession of their land, their farms and homes, to make way for the Seneca Army Depot. Families spent frantic days that July packing and moving their possessions, farm equipment, and crops. Their lives would never be the same. In a series of articles, Jennifer Merkle uses family letters and journals to learn about life in Varick before that momentous summer eighty years ago.

Sally Ann "Sadie" VanVleet was born in Lodi, New York in 1876. She became a teacher at the age of 16 and taught in various one room schoolhouses in Seneca County including schools in Romulus, where she met her future husband, Varick farmer Roy VanRiper. Roy and Sadie's farm on Secor Road would be included in



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President's Report

It's been an interesting summer for most of us – lots of tasks to be taken care of.

Covid 19 has reemerged with the usual debate about what is safe to do, mask or no mask, vaccine or no vaccine. Thus, the board has had to make some hard decisions. We agreed that the biannual Plow and Fair Days would be too much to chance regarding public gatherings. Even the Square Dance which we thought might possibly take its place was cancelled in the end.

We are progressing with plans for a bigger museum. If you would like to send us your thoughts in terms of features you would like to see included, please do so. Maybe you have visited other historical facilities or museums that have characteristics you would like to see in our museum; please share your suggestions.

We feel we need to look ahead ten to fifteen years with a design to handle our programs and displays. Where do we want to be with a multi-purpose building that will have proper storage for our photos, clothing, and glass plate negatives? What would we add or delete as we look to the future?

Our next public meeting will be in person at the Masonic Lodge, with live streaming via our Facebook page. We also plan to record it and put it out on our YouTube channel. Please check our website and Facebook page for details.

Thanks, and have a great Fall as we prep for Winter. *John Hunt, Presiden*

New Life Members

Bobbie Wells and Larry Downey, Interlaken

Barton VanRiper, Ashton, MD

Kathleen Yarsky, Orien, OH

Carolyn Brown Young died earlier this year. She was the granddaughter of Arch Chadwick and had given us many items relating to the Chadwick family. Our sympathies are extended to her family.

Congratulations to Doris Jennings on winning the quilt. Thank you to all those who purchased tickets, and especially to Barb Stewart for making and donating the quilt.

Recent Donations



Walt Steesy, 1984 postcard from Post Master Ralph Viegelmann upon becoming the 25th post master, and two mortar and pestles from the Wickes Pharmacy building.

Gary Herrela two Wheeler National Bank bank books.

Community Bank NA framed photographs from the Interlaken Bank building.

Carolyn Young Family: photos, framed prints, framed paper doll dresses made from tissue paper,

Memorabilia from Interlaken Chapter #335 and South Seneca Chapter #200 Order of the Eastern Star. Chartered in 1904 the members voted to close the Chapter in September 2021 and donated a number of items as well as a financial gift to the Historical Society.

Danielle Pate of 107 Pineview Circle, Tullahoma, TN Letters and envelopes from the 1860s through 1925.

Included was a letter written in June 1864 by Becca Wilkin of Starkey, Yates County, NY to her cousin William B. Carle of Covert, Seneca County, NY.

Rebecca A. Wilkin age 19 was living with her parents and two brothers in 1860. Her father William R. Wilkin age 53, mother, Elizabeth also 53, brother David J. age 21, and brother Martin aged 17. (Rebecca is 23 and Martin is 21 when the letter is written.)

Her views on the war as expressed in the letter are most interesting. She notes that her brother Martin has volunteered "for Uncle Sam." Research shows that he joined the 179th NY Infantry. His entry in the NYS Adjutant's report notes, "WILKIN, MARTIN—Age 21 years. Enlisted, March 28, 1864, at Benton, to serve three years; mustered in as private, Co. F, May 25, 1864; mustered out with company, June 8, 1865, near Alexandria, Va." (179th NYVI) Benton is also located in Yates County.

One of the first questions needing to be answered was the cousin connection. The answer was found in the 1865 Town

Clerk's Register of Soldiers and Sailors. Yates County has these online and can be found through www.familysearch.org or other online genealogy programs. Included in the information recorded by the town clerks was the parent's names, and when known the maiden name of the soldier's mother. Martin is noted as the son of William R and Elizabeth Carle Wilkin. Question 1 answered, presumably Rebecca's mother and William's father are siblings, but I have not found confirmation of that.

Question two is what became of the principals involved, Rebecca and Martin Wilkin, and William B. Carle. Rebecca married Lewis Post Osgood in 1866 and by 1870 was living in Lodi, Seneca County. Prior to 1910 the family had moved to Covert and Rebecca died there on 11 September 1912. She and Lewis are buried at Grove Cemetery, Trumansburg, Tompkins County, NY.

Martin married Arvilla Searls. They moved to Elgin, Kane County, Illinois between the 1880 and 1900 census. Arvilla died 27 July 1904. Martin VanBuren Wilkin died 4 April 1911, and is buried at the Bluff City Cemetery, Elgin, Cook County, IL. [Note: Elgin, IL straddles the Kane/Cook County line.]

William B. Carle was born in February 1842. He married Ella Swarthout of Torrey, Yates County in October 1878 and they would live in the town of Covert, Seneca

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land that the US government would take possession of in 1941 to make way for the Seneca Army Depot.

But, before the Depot, Sadie's letters paint a picture of farm life in Varick in the early 20th century. Sadie and Roy married on March 24, 1904, and by 1913 had three children under the age of seven. In a letter to her sister Liz-zie VanVleet Osgood, Sadie describes caring for her sick children, three-year old Barton and five-year old Grace.



Thurs. 10 P.M.

Dear Sister, Barton is better but cannot stand up yet as he is so weak, but Grace has it now and she is very sick. She was taken night before last. I thot [sic] I was doing all I could with what I was doing for the boy, but now I am doing for both. Barton's bowles have let up a little but now it is the other end that bothers. Oh, so hungry, and I must not feed him only every 2 hrs and then only such and such things, and you know it takes a lot of time to fix 'em. Then they must have only boiled water, which tastes so flat unless poured from one vessel to another from ten to twenty times to aerate again and

then cooled in the well water so it is not sickish.

According to the CDC, leading causes of death in the early 20th century included pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, and enteritis with diarrhea and children under 5 accounted for 40 percent of all deaths from these infections. How terrified and exhausted Sadie must have been as she nursed her children and attempted to keep the house clean. In a time before electricity and running water, when doing laundry meant scrubbing with a washboard and wringing clothes dry, keeping a house was a daunting task under the best of circumstances, let alone when the children were so sick.

We do not wake Barton up nights for medicine now (for 3 nights) but Grace has to take medicine every half hour and part of the time it is 2 kinds together. I am using the bedpan with Grace except I have to keep a diaper on her to catch the accidents. Then I am giving them both starch water injections, to Grace now as a healing agent and to stop pain of which she has a terrible lot, and to

Barton the after effect from taking castor oil. I am sitting up with



October 2021 4

her tonight for the earlier part and Roy will later. And I doubt if when this reaches Cortland that I should be out of bed for some time. Have been having cramps in my legs and back and hips for 2 days now. Just had to change warm flannel on Gs bowels. Had that to do too. Now we do not want Frances brot [sic] here, so Mamma and Myra are going to try to get her off the train at Interlaken as you bring her thru [sic]. They say they will. Dr. says B, is doing finely now but has had a thought pull that I would not have believed that I could have gone thru [sic] with and stood what I have in the last 2 weeks.

There were no sick days on the farm in 1913 so when neighbors were in need, they pitched in. Sadie expresses her gratitude and frustration with relying on the help of others.

I don't know what I should have done if Mrs. Morley had not been here. She helps with everything and it makes me wrathly and disgusted the way Clara shirks things onto her. Clara left last Fri night for no good reason and never came back until Tues. night. Roy had to leave his work a part of the time and come in and help me then.

To be continued in the
January 2022 issue.

A family run farm had to provide sustenance for the family and, ideally, provide additional income from the sale of surplus. Sadie needed to keep up with preserving the summer crops, so that they would have stores for the winter.

There are so many things in the garden that need looking after too. I pick cucumbers nearly every day now. I fixed tonight, 95 of the prettiest pickles you ever saw. Peas and beans getting too big to can. I cannot keep my eyes open.

Love, Sadie

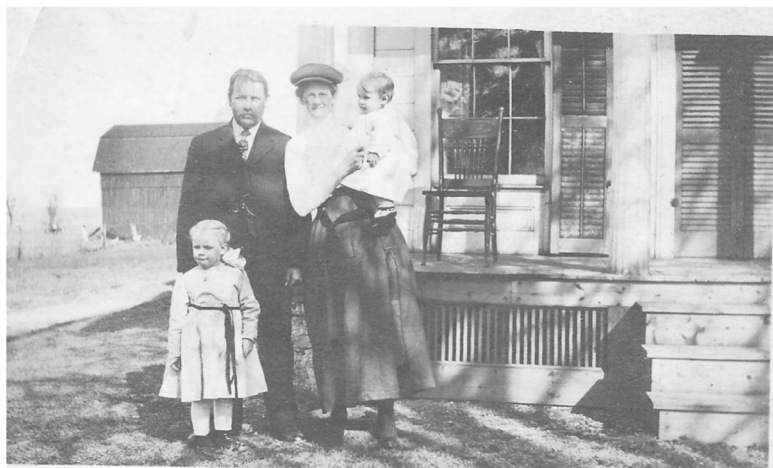
Photos from the Author's collection

Page 1, Sadie while she was teaching school

Page 4 the three children

Sadie and Roy at the farmhouse

Page 5 Sadie, Roy, Frances and Grace



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County until their deaths. William died on 3 February 1923; Ella died 19 July 1929. They are buried at Grove Cemetery in Trumansburg.

Note: the author did not use paragraphs; in order to make it easier to read they have been inserted.

Starkey, June 5, [18]64

Dear Cousin Willie

How are you all prospering at this time? I believe today find us all as well as usual. Mother continued very feeble, all the month of March. But since then she has been gaining and is now very smart for her and she has expected to see Uncle William over before this time. But we shall continue to look for him until he comes and hope that will not be far distant.

Willie you have doubtless heard of Martin's volunteering for uncle Sam. He thought he needed that would go willingly and he would not be drafted.

May God bless his noble and loyal heart and I certainly believe the Soldiers have the presence of the Lord more than we do at times for a number that have went from this vicinity have been converted, and perhaps if they had staid at home would never have known the feeling of saving grace.

Cousin there is nothing in this world that could be said or shown to convince me this is not God's war that the handman might be loosed from the curse and cruelty of slavery, and that we should have a Government free from that cursed sin – slavery.

God be praised if when this war closes,

that our national sin may be wiped out and remembered no more against us.

I have enjoyed myself as well as could be since I saw you. But to be honest about it, some tears have been shed.

Dear Cousin this war makes a great many heartaches and causes many tears to flow. But I would rather all my Brothers to go in the army than not to have a free and independent Government. But there is not a Sister in this world that loves her Brothers more than I do mine, and I love them now more than ever for their love of their county, and sacrificing their lives upon the alter of liberty if not for their own personal good and liberation but those that are equally as good in the sight of God for their souls will be as white in heaven as yours or mine.

Willie, David sent me a nice present of a photograph album and I should like when looking in, and at the friends to see your face how familiar it would look indeed. But I shall be very patient only speaking about it occasionally.

How is Hattie and Aunt Mary this summer. I hope they are well, where is cousin Thomas now I have not heard from him since seeing yourself. I suppose Jared is married and keeping house in that little red house, much pray for him and comfort.

Now please write soon for I want to hear from you so bad, tell me all the news and give my best respects and love to Uncle and Aunt and all my friends and relatives and lots for yourself – and do come over as soon as convenient make it so please.

Remember your cousin in the Army if you entirely forget me. Oh how I miss Martin he was so kind to me – I must close good afternoon Cousin Willie Carle.

[around edge of the sheet] How is Aunt feel this summer, does she think of coming over? We should be happy to see her.

War news was favorable and encouraging, the Lord lends a helping hand to Grant and I hope he will continue to aid by his kind providence and may God bless all our important Generals and above all the common Soldiers is the prayer of your affectionate Cousin Becca A. Wilkin.



Are you considering a donation to the Historical Society Building Fund? We've made it easier for you, Scan the code and it will take you directly to our website where you can use paypal.

While you are there, you can also renew your membership, give a gift membership or order books.

Dues are due, still only \$10 per year! Please check the date on your mailing label. Dues for 2021-2022 are now due. If your label has a date prior to 2021 please consider bringing your membership up to date.

Library News

Summer Reading at the Library is officially a wrap! Congratulations to all our participants and prize winners. This year saw more programs and participants than ever before - with family movie nights, artisan led adult programming, teen gaming, tons of children's programs including take-and-make art activities, and a special program where we followed Turtleby, our giant sea turtle, on her adventures around the Atlantic Ocean. We had 13 prize winners in our annual Eager Reader program, and we've begun the process of planning for next year. If there is a program or subject you would particularly enjoy please let us know!

Our annual book sale took place September 18, 2021 and was a huge success. A heartfelt thanks to everyone who came out to enjoy the 2021 Book Sale Trail, which saw all five Seneca County libraries participating in a book sale on this day. While we weren't able to hold a book sale last year due to COVID-19, this year was a smashing success. The library is once again accepting donations of mildew and damage free books and DVDs. As always, no textbooks or magazines.

As we head into fall the library will have a lot of programming offerings. Our annual Halloween party will be taking place on the front lawn of the library from 5 to 8pm on October 31, with activities and treats for all ages. Children, teens and adults can look forward to a full calendar of events, all of which will be up on our website at www.interlakenpubliclibrary.org. Some programs require registration, and it's updated frequently, so be sure to check back regularly.

Chelsea Hastings, Library Director,
607-532-4341

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

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Looking for the book order form...please see the website.
www.interlakenhistory.org
www.interlakenhistoricalsociety.org

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Funding for the Society Newsletter provided by the
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