

A WOMEN'S WORK - *In commemoration of Mother's Day, here is an article that appeared in the Islander in 1867. Much of it holds true today.*

"Somebody says 'Did you ever think of the amount of thought requisite to plan three meals a day for 365 days in succession? To prepare enough and not too much, and for those living at a distance from the village, to remember that the stock of flour, sugar, tea, etc., is replenished in due time. Do you ever think of the multitude of her cares and duties?'

She must rise early to prepare breakfast or oversee it. Perhaps there are children to wash, dress and feed, or to get ready for school with their dinners. There is baking, sweeping, dusting, making beds, lunch for the men, maybe dinner and supper to be made ready at the proper time. The washing, starching, folding and ironing of the clothes, the care of milk including the making of butter and cheese, and the inevitable washing of dishes.

In autumn, there is the additional work of picking, preserving and canning of fruit, drying apples, boiling cider, making apple sauce, with the still more unpleasant task which falls to her lot in butchering time. Then there is haying, harvesting, sheep-sheering, etc., when more help is needed, bringing an increase of her labors. Twice a year comes house-cleaning. By the way, of all the foes a housekeeper has to contend with, dirt is the greatest. She may gain a complete victory and think to repose upon her laurels after semi-annual engagements, but it is only temporary. The enemy soon returns and even daily skirmishing does not keep it at bay.

There is the mending too. Sewing machines are great blessings, but they can't set in a patch or darn the stocking. I do not mention these things by way of complaining of woman's lot in general, or asking for her any rights which she does not possess.

I don't know as there is any remedy in the present state of the world. It seems to be one of the evils of life which must be borne as we bear other ills. But what I do ask is a due appreciation of the important part that woman acts, and a concession that her labors, mental and physical, are as great, all things considered, as those of the other sex. Women are not so childish that a little sympathy now and then, or acknowledgement of their efforts and sacrifices, make them imagine their case worse than it is. I tell you, men and husbands, 'it doeth good like a medicine,' and many a poor, crushed, broken-down wife and mother is dying for want of it."



This is Lydia (Titus) Selfe, wife of James Selfe, at the Selfe house on Long Point (on the Hamilton property). Lydia Bechtel was named after Lydia Selfe, her aunt.

From the book, *Kelleys Island 1866-1871, the Lodge, Suffrage & Baseball*, by Leslie Korenko