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# Meet Varnum D. Ludington

BY C.W. LATTIN  
Orleans County historian

Varnum Ludington was born in the Town of Murray June 10, 1857.

He was one of 10 children born to Howard and Sally Ann Corbin Ludington.

Howard, a native of Dutchess County, N.Y., came to Murray in 1854, and settled near Holley engaging in farming.

Varnum took all of his education in the public schools and married Grace Love, also of the Town of Murray, when he was 16. Until age 21, he worked as a laborer on a farm by the month for a living, giving his father the benefit of his wages. He earned a reputation for industry, energy and intelligence. By the 1890s, he owned three farms in the vicinity of Holley, which attested to his talent, studious labors and success.

In 1896, Mr. Ludington was elected overseer of the poor in Orleans County with a large majority of the votes. This prominent position meant that he was in charge of the County Farm and Home or County House.

Here those who could not care for themselves because they were poor, aged, sick or in some other way disabled could reside as a ward of the county. Those who could work on the



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County Farm helped produce fruits, vegetables and meat to supply the needs of those infirmed at the County House.

This large operation at the time took someone with administrative ability to oversee. The Ludingtons in essence had to live on the premises for his job. This position later became known as commissioner of welfare and eventually became an appointed position rather than elected.

Mr. Ludington was very involved in the Republican party politics and was several times elected overseer of the poor, serving until 1906. He was

active in his community and served in the Holley Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

In 1898, a local newspaper reported that "Mr. Ludington is the embodiment of energy and self-reliance, and may well be termed a self-made man. His community appreciates the fact that he deserves great credit for what he has accomplished and gives him unstinted admiration, respect and honor."

Varnum Ludington died in August 1926 and was laid to rest in Hillside Cemetery at Holley.