
Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



VOL I

NO. 47

PASSNEGERS, STEAM AND SPEED

It was on November 26, 1957 that the last passenger rail service and train rolled through Orleans County from Rochester to Niagara Falls. On that day at 8:50 P.M. the conclusion came to a colorful history which began 104 years before. It was an official act of burial, ordered by the Public Service Commission. For many years the New York Central sent a single coach each way to maintain its franchise. In 1909, a seven-coach passenger train stopped in Albion every hour on the hour from 5 A.M. to midnight. The depots in Holley, Fancher, Albion, Eagle Harbor, Knowlesville and Medina were often teeming with people seeking the trains east and west. From a diary of the 1880's it is mentioned on several occasions that a local family went to Rochester and back in a single day for shopping and business reasons. No doubt they spent 45 to 60 minutes in transit which we haven't been able to thus far improve upon 100 years later.

William Jennings Bryan, running for President in 1896, hopped aboard the train one morning in Rochester and campaigned all along the route at every stop. Actually, the first trains on the N.Y.C. appeared in Orleans County in the 1850's with the first coal-burning locomotive in September of 1859. However, wood-burners lasted long after the Civil War. On September 10, 1861 the New York Central signed a contract with a supplier for fifty cords of wood a day for ten years. The picture above was taken of one of the last steam locomotives on the N.Y.C. at the West Academy Street crossing in Albion during the late 1940's.