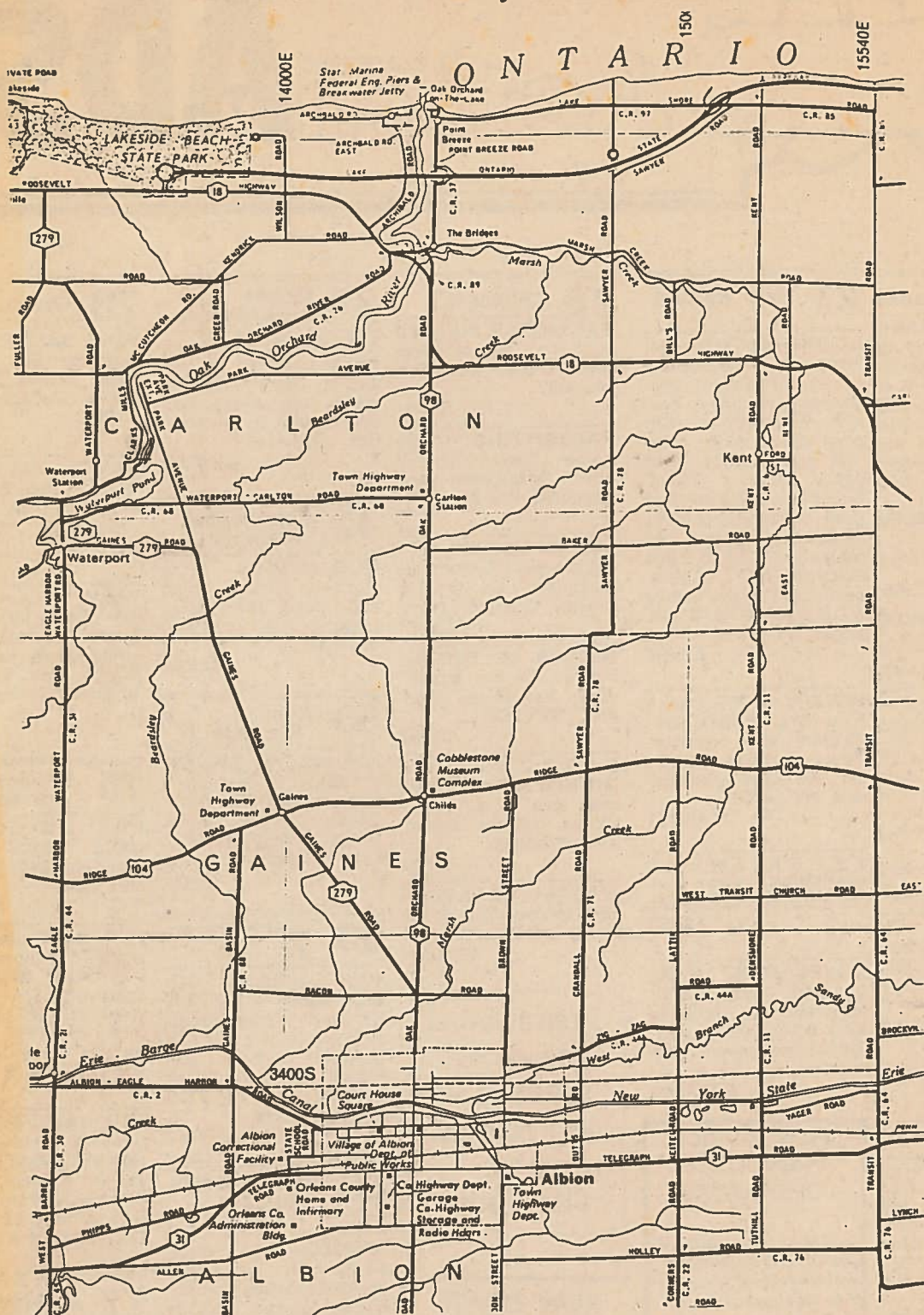


# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian



## Vol. X 9-1-88 No. 35 Proctor Brook Or The Value Of Research

Early record books contain information which can be bizarre, vital, phenomenal, enlightening and certainly nothing short of interesting if you are a history fan. Such is a recent case in point. Back in February Carlton Town Historian Lysbeth Hoffman was doing some research and photocopying of the earliest minutes for the township when she made an interesting discovery.

In the records of the first districting of roads from 1828, there was a repeated reference to a Proctor Brook. The stream was obviously located in the eastern portion of the town but was baffling because no stream is labeled as such on any county map. By further research and other references, this stream could be plotted. It was found to branch off Marsh Creek; cross Route 18 between the residences of Deputy Historian Jones and Manley Whipple and further south cross Ricci Meadows at Route 98. Afterward it meanders south through the Town of Gaines, crosses Ridge Road at Childs and flows through the Cobblestone Museum Complex in the parcel along Route 98. From there it goes southwest where it crosses Route 279 and then West Bacon Road up to the canal near Gaines Par 3 Golf Course. Proctor Brook! Proctor Brook?

The references to Proctor Brook however, are not entirely found in Carlton records. The Canal Country Abstract Company working out of the Orleans County Clerk's Office can also verify the name of this stream as Proctor Brook on a deed dating from 1862. How could the name of a brook be lost? Well, that's just part of the mystery in his-

tory sometimes. It was a long time ago and as they say, "there's been a lot of water under the bridge since." For years people around Childs called this stream simply "the creek" for lack of a name. Interestingly, it had a name all along. But why Proctor? There was no one on any of the early deeds in Carlton by the name of Proctor. But by tracing the stream up through the Town of Gaines to Childs we find many references to a certain John Proctor (1787-1868) on many deeds and maps. Indeed, he was a large land holder, a prominent pioneer, farmer and a leader in the establishment of the Universalist Church (Cobblestone at Childs). We might describe such a person today as an entrepreneur. The stream passes through John Proctor's farm so it is easy to see how the stream got its name back in early times.

As part of Heritage Year in New York State, the name Proctor Brook will be resurrected in a public ceremony on Sunday, September 11 at 4 p.m. in front of Farmers Hall at the Cobblestone Museum Complex on Route 98 in Childs, N.Y. This is on land once owned by John Proctor. Through the combined efforts of the Carlton Historian, the Gaines Historian and County Historian, this ceremony will be presented as part of the annual Old Timers Fair at the Cobblestone Museum that same day. George Callard has been commissioned to make two signs which will say "Historic Proctor Brook." The one which will be located in the front lawn of Farmers Hall and will be unveiled in the ceremony on September 11 at which time county dignitaries will be present. The other sign will be located in the Town of Carlton near Ricci Meadows on Route 98.

This column will, in a couple of weeks, carry a follow up story on John Proctor and his importance to early development in Gaines.