

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## GLENWOOD LAKE

Through the Village of Medina flows a stream known as Oak Orchard Creek. It moves gently northward from its source in the swampland to the south until it finally reaches Lake Ontario. Along its course many mills and factories were erected during the 19th century and early part of this century.

Perhaps none saw more potential to the stream than Albert L. Swett (1850-1924). And surely no one ever took more ambitious steps to utilize it than Mr. Swett. In 1898 he formed the A. L. Swett Electric Light and Power Co. However, he had started to formulate plans for Hydro Electric Power for Medina in the mid-1880's. For almost twenty years he bought parcels of land along the course of Oak Orchard Creek north of Medina, believing that some day he would need it for power purposes. Eventually he owned all the land from the Medina Falls northward for some distance. Although Niagara Falls is perhaps the greatest example of electrical development from water power, it is not necessary however, to have a Niagara.

In 1902 the A. L. Swett Co. undertook the building of a huge reservoir for electric generation which was named Glenwood Lake. A dam crossing the main channel of Oak Orchard Creek was erected, 600 feet long, 300 feet wide at the base, 30 feet wide on top, and 60 feet high. It was built with a concrete core through the center six feet thick at the base and two feet thick at the top. This extends some ten feet below the main dam. To make this, over 6,000 yards of concrete were mix-

ed and 200,000 cubic yards of earth were moved. The total length of the dam, including the spillway and dike is 2200 feet.

The construction of the dam at the spillway was built of cut Medina Sandstone and concrete having a spill of 100 feet wide and a thirty foot drop. A steel bridge 104 feet long with a twelve foot roadway, crossed the spillway, which connected a private driveway from Gravel Road on the west to Erin Road on the east. Glenwood Lake has an area of one hundred and fifty acres, being about one and one quarter miles long and one-half mile wide with its greatest depth being fifty-two feet. The 1903 photo accompanying this story shows the project under construction. A sandstone powerhouse originally housed two twenty-four-inch turbine water wheels directly connected to one 800 horse power generator and two nine-inch water wheels connected to two exciters.

A substation on Glenwood Avenue contained a 300 horsepower motor generator set. The powerhouse was planned for the future so that it could also contain three more 800 horse units as demands increased. Hence it was constructed with extra sluice gates and wheel pits. This powerhouse was known as Station No. 2 and was connected to an earlier power house, Station No. 1 located at Medina Falls, a distance of about one mile south.

This entire project was completed by January 1905, Glenwood Lake having been tested with



water slightly above the high water mark to ensure its durability. The Medina Tribune noted on January 5, 1905 the following: "From this lake, in addition to the power to be developed, which is the primary object of the plant, large quantities of ice can be gathered for shipment, and a fine summer resort can be established."

Well, we no longer need to harvest ice and the summer resort never developed, but over the past

88 years Glenwood Lake has been enjoyed by boaters and fishermen alike. It also lends a spectacular view from the back of Boxwood Cemetery and continues to be a source of power.

In 1917 A. L. Swett undertook a similar project farther down stream and reused the same water for more electric generation. That reservoir at Waterport he named Lake Alice after his granddaughter, Alice Swett.