

Bethinking of Old Orleans

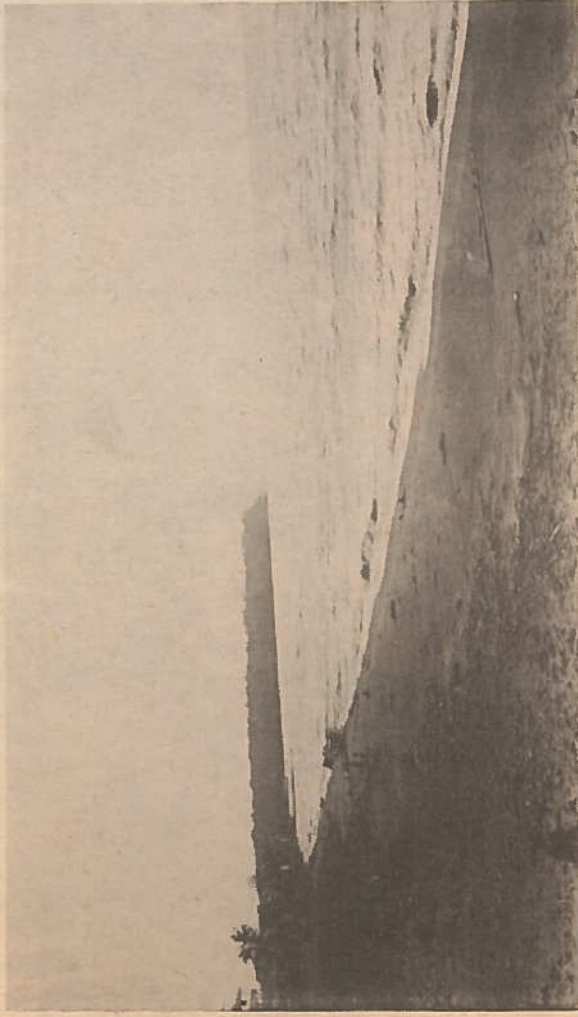
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THE SEAWAY TRAIL



Perhaps you've noticed those little green signs with footsteps stating Seaway Trail. What is it? It is a scenic byway which stretches from Roosevelt town in St. Lawrence County to Ripley in Chautauqua County. Through Orleans County it follows the Lake Ontario Parkway and Route 18. The Seaway Trail is an ideal recreation and tourism usage of the shoreline region of New York State including the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, the Niagara River and Lake Erie. It provides public access to 38 State parks, 13 wildlife management areas, 37 fishing access sites and 21 public beaches. From Journey New York State's Seaway Trail, which is a

tours magazine for 1991 and 1992, the following article entitled "Celebrating our Historic Waterfront" by Marie Parsons, comes to us.

"Traces of several centuries lie across the land, city and waterscapes along the Seaway Trail. The earliest influences are Indian, with native Iroquois names woven into New York's inland shores like rawhide lacings holding the far past in place. Decorating villages, streets, counties and buildings are the names of French explorers, missionaries and fur traders; British diplomats and soldiers; bitter Tories and blustering frontiersmen; Ameri-

make up the rocky arm holding Lake Erie back and help create the beauty and power of Niagara Falls. All of the rocks here are at least 280 million years old; there are no younger ones in the immediate shoreline area.

"Four major ice invasions have scraped the intervening layers of geological information away to the south, leaving piles of rubble from house-sized boulders to gravel drift banks that run for miles across the landscape. All the varieties of soils formed since were carved from the rocks by wind, water, heat and cold, broken down by plant life, and more recently, affected by man's own use of the land and its natural resources.

"The urbanscapes of the Seaway Trail cities tend to blur the view of the greater land forms. Rural areas meanwhile, enchant us with the ever-changing lay of the land and its uses.

"High bluffs along Lake Erie overlook the roaring escape of its water over the Niagara Cuesta where it is still carving out the young Niagara River. Rich, level lands skirting the south shores of Lake Ontario are cut with north-flowing streams and pleasant bays. The Oswego River carries forth the central waters of New York State through a gap in the lakeshore hills.

"From Oswego the shoreline of Ontario bends northward. Along the eastern shore, beyond the strong-currented Mexico Bay and fish-full Salmon River, rare and fragile sand dunes stretch northward to the rocky bays off Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties. And the ancient outcrops of the Thousand Islands are washed by the outflow of the Great Lakes on its way to the salty Atlantic Ocean.

"So lie the land and waters we invite you to explore great cities and rural hamlets, areas rich with ethnic influences, resorts and industrial complexes, cobblestone houses and frontier forts along the Seaway Trail."

can naval and army heroes; sturdy Dutch businessmen, stubborn Yankee farmers, intrepid bureaucrats, inventors, woman's rights activists, philosophers and founders of religions.

"These guideposts of the past along the Seaway Trail, from its western end at Lake Erie to the Atlantic reaches of the St. Lawrence River, seem, at times, as complex as the hempen lines once bound into the Great Cable carried by American militia from Oswego to Sackets Harbor following the Battle of Big Sandy during the War of 1812. Like that rugged cable, separated by shipbuilders at Sackets into individual rigging lines for the Superior, the various components of the Seaway Trail's historic waterfront give each community a unique and lasting character.

"To those whose history here spans only a few centuries, and even to the native Americans whose folk memories reach back much farther, the Great Lakes and New York State's inland shores seem to have existed forever. However, as geology goes, they are relative newcomers, formed a mere 12,000 years or so ago. The Trail region's topography took shape as the latest of great ice ages wound down and the land rebounded from the burden of mile-high glaciers.

"Repeated ice ages actually erased much of the geological history between the laying of the earliest rocks and the melting of the glaciers. The Laurentian rock or Canadian Shield is a part of the very foundation of the earth's crust. The Thousand Islands at the entrance of the St. Lawrence River are rare remnants of this come to the surface.

"Salt seas also came and sent, evaporating to leave vast salt deposits which would play an important economic role in central and western New York State's history. Silurian dolomites of the next-to-oldest, outer rings of that formation series