

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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WHERE ARE WE?



Looking at this old photo one may wonder where are we or where is this? Actually it is a highly trafficked intersection in Orleans County. The picture here was taken in 1908 at the four corners in Medina. That's right! You are looking south up Main Street with a clear view of all the business blocks on the East side of Main Street, beginning at the corner of East Center Street. The very corner building has been razed several years ago and the site is now the park on the corner with a gazebo. But you ask, what about the track and ties? This photo was taken when the Buffalo, Lockport and Rochester Trolley tracks were being laid. The B.L. & R. as it was commonly referred to, operated an electric rail service through the county from 1908 to 1931. You may also wonder why they didn't just go straight through the intersection from East Center instead of turning the corner with the tracks. Well now, here is the rest of the story.

In Medina at the time there were a number of

nabobs and biggity people who lived on West Center Street in what they considered a palatial setting. A setting which they did not want disturbed by the rumbling of trolley cars past their fine homes at all hours of the day or night. Consequently, with the right political pull and a petition, the proposed route of the B.L. & R. was changed from West Center Street to Main Street and Commercial Street where it ran parallel to the Canal until it reached the Salt Works Road. With tongue in cheek, it was naturally OK for the trolley to rumble by middle class homes on the other side of town. This change in route however, was more expensive to construct because it was not direct and of course, with a sharp right angle turn at the four corners it slowed down the travel time.

I think this story goes to show that all in all, society doesn't really change much over the course of history.