

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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DR. BENJAMIN HOWES 1858 - 1946



The Albion Midlander reported the following in 1934: "We know of no man, old or young, who gets

any more "kick" out of life than Dr. Benjamin Howes, prominent Orleans County Veterinary." Just mention his name to someone who knew him and see if it doesn't bring on a smile or rekindle a reminiscence.

He was born in West Gaines where he taught school for around two years before attending the Toronto University Veterinary College for three years. In 1884 he married Clara VanCamp (1862-1934) and they had two sons, Whitney and Murray. After a few years of veterinary practice in Orleans County he went to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a livestock inspector. After twenty years he returned to Orleans County and re-established his practice at Carlton Station where he completed 55 years as a veterinarian. He was an ardent baseball fan, cross country motorist, antique collector and horseman supreme. Once as a motorist going through Ohio he drove through a stop sign; immediately pulled over by two policemen he gave them a 'sob story' saying with real tears, "If I ever get back to the farm I'll never leave it again." One of the officers said to the other, "Let the old guy go." Needless to say "Doc" laughed about that for years. As an antique collector he had one of the most fabulous collections of primitive farm relics ever amassed in western New York. It was unfortunately all sold at public auction following his death. As a horseman belonging to the Orleans County Boots and Saddle Club no parade was ever complete without "Doc" and his splendid horse Sandy.

Here in an artistic photo by the late Fred Holt, "Doc" and Sandy are pictured, fifty-five years ago on August 18, 1937 during a parade for the opening and dedication of the Route 18 bridge over Oak Orchard River. Sandy reared up, collapsed and died on the spot.

This unforeseen calamity is probably the most remembered event of the day by those who attended the bridge opening festivities.