

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

4-7-93

No. 10

Vol. XV

HOME ENTERTAINMENT
AND MORE



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About a month ago I went to the house sale of the late Dr. Kenneth Clark in Medina which was run under the auspices of Lorraine Oakley and Company. There I purchased four glass plate negatives which are all portraits of the same people. Thanks to Dr. James Orr, he has made photo prints of which this is one. One of the negatives has written on it "Geo. Whitney." My 1938 Medina Directory has this listing: "Whitney, Geo. W. photo studio, 433 Main Middleport RD 1". Other than this tiny bit of information, I know nothing about Mr. Whitney or the photo except what appears in the picture.

A local collector of old radios tells me this is a Radiola which was manufactured by RCA probably around 1928.

We note the twisted cloth-covered electric cord going down through a hole in the floor rather than being plugged into a receptical. The speaker which is a separate unit and sits on top of the radio is of Art Deco design and proportions. Note the angular and pointed shapes which define that style during the late 1920's and 30's. The three girls which I feel are sisters appear to be listening to what must have been a newly acquired radio for their home.

Notice the wind-up phonograph standing "kitty corner" to the right. It is probably about ten years older than the radio. Obviously, the radio, being new at the time, was what the photographer and/or the parents of these girls wanted to record. Other accouterments here include an asparagus fern on a plant stand, wall calendar, wicker rocking chair, lace curtains and floral patterned area rug. I feel this is a local picture. Perhaps someone will recognize it.

Three weeks ago I ran in this column (Vol. XV No. 7) a picture by Fred Holt of an ice boat I knew nothing about. People who responded with information were from Medina, Albion, Carlton, Holley and Attica. Thanks go to Bill Covell, Dorothy Callard, Wilfred Batt, Bob Fox, Ruth Wigley, John Lusk, Robert Kirby, Rogert Simpson and Walter Johnson for providing information. First, they didn't all agree on who was in the picture but the greater consensus of identification was that these were two of the Heisler brothers from Albion about 1933-34, either George or Leo in the cockpit and Arnie in the rear. However, Dorothy Callard is sure it's Bill Howard and her brother Henry Smith who was from Brockville. What I learned from the people who called was that there were a number of these ice boats used for winter time sport around 60 years ago. Bill Covell remembers the Heisler brothers ... "and they were always putting an engine in something." In fact, George, Arthur and Leo Heisler are listed in the 1921 Orleans County Directory as having a garage on Orchard Street in Albion. But they weren't the only ones, as Bill Howard built one or two of these ice boats also. I'm told they could go 80 to 100 miles per hour. Walter Johnson says the Heislars used a Henderson motorcycle engine. Ruth Wigley remembers riding in one of these boats with Homer Heisler on the Waterport pond. She says doing figure eights and doughnuts was "lots of fun." Several people also remember some serious accidents with ice boats too. This form of activity seems to have disappeared by the time of WW II.

The County Historian's Office hours are Mon. 9-12, 1-4, Thur. evening 7:30-9:30 and Friday 9-10.