

Bethinking of Old Orleans

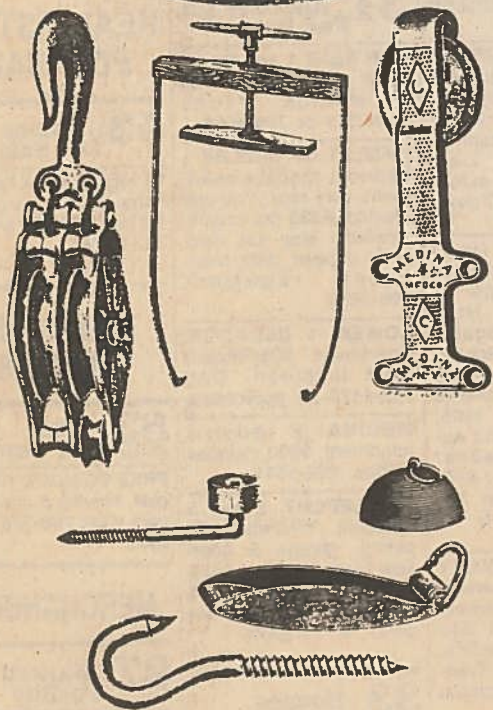
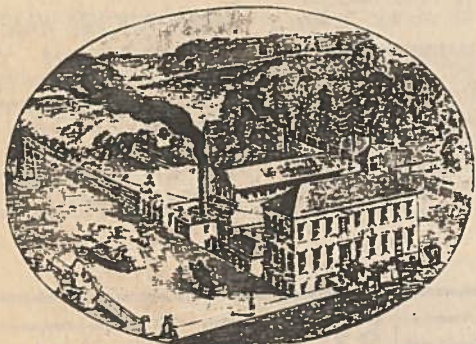
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THE MEDINA MANUFACTURING CO.



Albert L. Swett who was first engaged as a shipping clerk with the Bignall Manufacturing Co. started his own factory business in 1873. In 1880 he formed a partnership with William H. Samson and built at that time a foundry on the east side of Glenwood Avenue (then called Rock Street). This was known as the Medina Manufacturing Co. but was commonly referred to as Samson & Swett. The oval cut which accompanies this story is taken from their 1887 catalogue. It shows the large complex of buildings and yard surrounding this foundry.

We note in this picture electrical wires sus-

ended from a tower at far left to the front building. It seems the power for this operation was obtained from a turbine water wheel installed below a dam on Oak Orchard Creek east of the plant. This was the start of what later developed into the A.L. Swett Electric Light and Power Co.

At that time the raw materials such as foundry sand and pig iron were shipped in by boat on the Erie Canal. The Medina Manufacturing Co. produced barrel headers, Blacksmith's drills, barn door hangers and pulls, hooks, hitching weights, chain pumps, mauls, tire benders, wagon shoes, tackle blocks and soil pipe to mention just a few items. The illustrations also taken from the 1887 catalogue show some of the items afore mentioned.

As to prices, here are some examples: the double sheave tackle block sold for \$1.80. The barn door hanger which is shown with a four-inch roller was 90¢ a pair. The barrel header or screw press was advertised for \$25.00 per dozen.

In 1890 Mr. Samson withdrew from the company and it then became known as the A.L. Swett Iron Works. In 1898 Mr. Swett sold his foundry interests on the east side of Glenwood Avenue to the Central Foundry Co. of N.Y. City. He then proceeded to construct a new foundry and machine shop building across the street under the name A.L. Swett Iron Works.

This continued in business until 1961 when it was purchased by the Ontario Corp. which operated it until 1965.

The first foundry operation in Medina was established in 1840 by Simeon Bathgate and Sons. Other foundries which were later established in Medina include: the Bignall Manufacturing Co. which was begun in 1850, the firm of Ives and Son which made iron products and papier-maché, the Medina Foundry organized by Michael J. Slack and Orin Butts in 1900 and the Medina Iron and Brass Co. established by Carl Breed and Frank Ernst, Sr.

Indeed, Medina once had a number of flourishing foundry businesses during the 19th century. Albion also had the Hiram Curtis Foundry which made agricultural equipment and a foundry operated by Norman Badell which made stoves. Not to mention Waterport Agricultural Works which produced plows written up in this column a couple of weeks ago.