

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## WHAT'S IN A ROAD NAME?

Orleans County has its share of some unusual road names. Certainly, roads take their names for various reasons. I believe the most common road names in this county are taken from family names and natural features. Other roads take on names of products, services or nearby places. In some cases the reason for a name has long been forgotten.

Perhaps one of the more unusual road names in the county is Johnny Cake Lane in the Town of Barre. This remains somewhat of a mystery, although there seems to be a couple of different explanations. One is that children attending Barre Dist. #14 School frequently took Johnny Cake in their lunch pails to school. The other legendary explanation is that at one time there was an advertising sign at one end of the road which promoted Johnny Cake Chewing Tobacco. It's interesting however, that the 1913 Atlas labels the road as High Street which indicates that Johnny Cake was a later development.

A more obvious reason for a road name in Barre is Lime Kiln Road. In the last century there were several operative lime kilns on this road producing quick lime. This product was used in mortar, fertilizers, whitewash, for cleaning purposes in out-houses and for purifying manufactured gas.

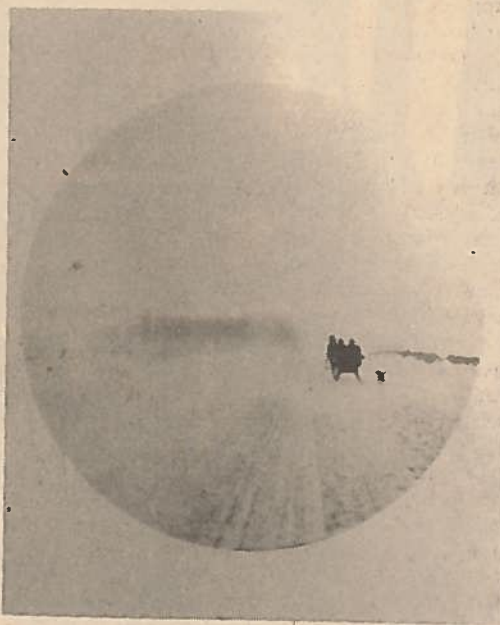
The Town of Carlton has several road names on the map which can peek your interest. For example, the Stillwater Road which takes its name from the fact that there was still water at this geographic point in Oak Orchard River. The 1860 Niagara-Orleans County map even indicates a place as Head of Still Water, which was northeast of Waterport at the intersection of Stillwater Road, McCutchen Road and Oak Orchard River Road. In early times lake vessels could ply Oak Orchard River up to this point.

Now let's look at two very simple road names in Carlton - Bass and Hard. Both of these names can be totally misinterpreted. Bass Rd., although its southern end terminates at Oak Orchard River, it has nothing to do with the fish called Bass. Rather, this road takes its name from the Bass Family. The 1852 and 1860 maps and 1969 Directory show an Elijah Bass living on that road. It was his daughter Elizabeth Bass who married John Cunneen, one time N.Y.S. Attorney General. The 1913 Atlas shows it as Bass Rd. Likewise, the Hard Road does not take its name from the condition of the road's surface, but from the Hard Family who lived in Kuckville where the road terminates at Rt. 18. Indeed, for many years this was a dirt road, often impassible during the winter with a more improved or harder surface in recent times.

Carlton also has a road which perpetuates a mis-spelled name. There is no i in Archbalb. Almost everyone wants to include an i in this name when saying and spelling it, making it Archibald. The road takes its name from Mr. Archbald, a long time resident. The 1913 Atlas shows this road as a continuation of the Oak Orchard River Rd. After Rt. 18 was built in the 1930's it made sense to alter the northern end of that road's name. Someone once spelled it incorrectly and it's been Archibald on maps and in phone directories ever since.

In Kendall we find Woodchuck Alley which we can assume was simply named for the proliferation of those critters in that area. The Norway Road also in Kendall, is one of the few things that remains to give any indication of the first Norwegian settlement in the United States.

The Town of Yates has in it the Blood Road



which really has nothing to do with blood. Like Hard and Bass it comes from an early family name in the area. Yates and Ridgeway share an interesting name in Angling Road. If you've ever looked at a map, you'll see that it angles all the way. It's kind of like ZigZag Road in Gaines which actually zig zags in an easterly direction out of the Village of Albion. Then there was Paradise Road which doesn't exist anymore, having been officially abandoned by the Town of Gaines in the 1950's. It was a deadend road off Rt. 104 between Gaines Basin Rd. and the Eagle Harbor-Waterport Rd. According to legend, it was named by an early pioneer who settled in a beautiful spot about one mile north of 104 which he felt was paradise. There were once two cobblestone houses at the end of this road which time has reduced to stone heaps.

The Town of Clarendon has an unusual one in New Guinea Road which according to Images of Clarendon Past by Alan J. Isselhard, takes its name from the fact that in early times a Mrs. Bolton had a Guinea hen follow her to their new property in the south western part of Clarendon.

The Town of Albion has at least three roads named for things that no longer exist on them. County House Road which had the original county infirmary (Nursing Home) which was called the County House. Another is Presbyterian Road shared with Ridgeway which originally had a Presbyterian Church on it in Knowlesville. The third is Long Bridge Road which doesn't even have a bridge. However, many, many years ago this road crossed over the Erie Canal with a long bridge.

Finally, Shelby has a couple of interesting road names. One is certainly the Podunk Road which is shared with Barre and Genesee County. The Random House Dictionary notes "Podunk as any small and insignificant or inaccessible town". One has to admit that the Podunk Road is somewhat located in an out-of-the-way place. In a generic sense, perhaps Podunk was applied to this road near the swamp land. In Shelby Center there is a road which is called Baby Lane. According to one legend this road takes its name from the fact that a family who lived on it many years ago, kept having babies as the mother was always pregnant.

PHOTO Our snapshot, taken from a local 1890's photo album, shows perchance a road in Carlton. In view is a horse-drawn sleigh with two people and a dog following along.