

Bethinking of Old Orleans

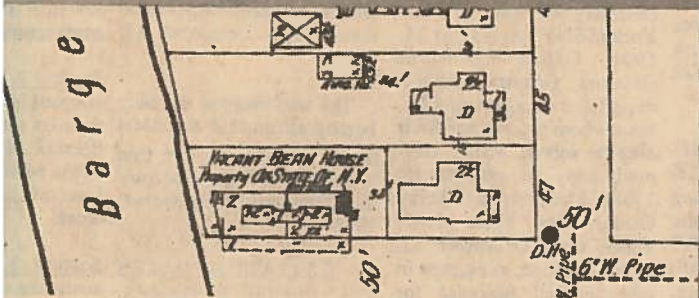
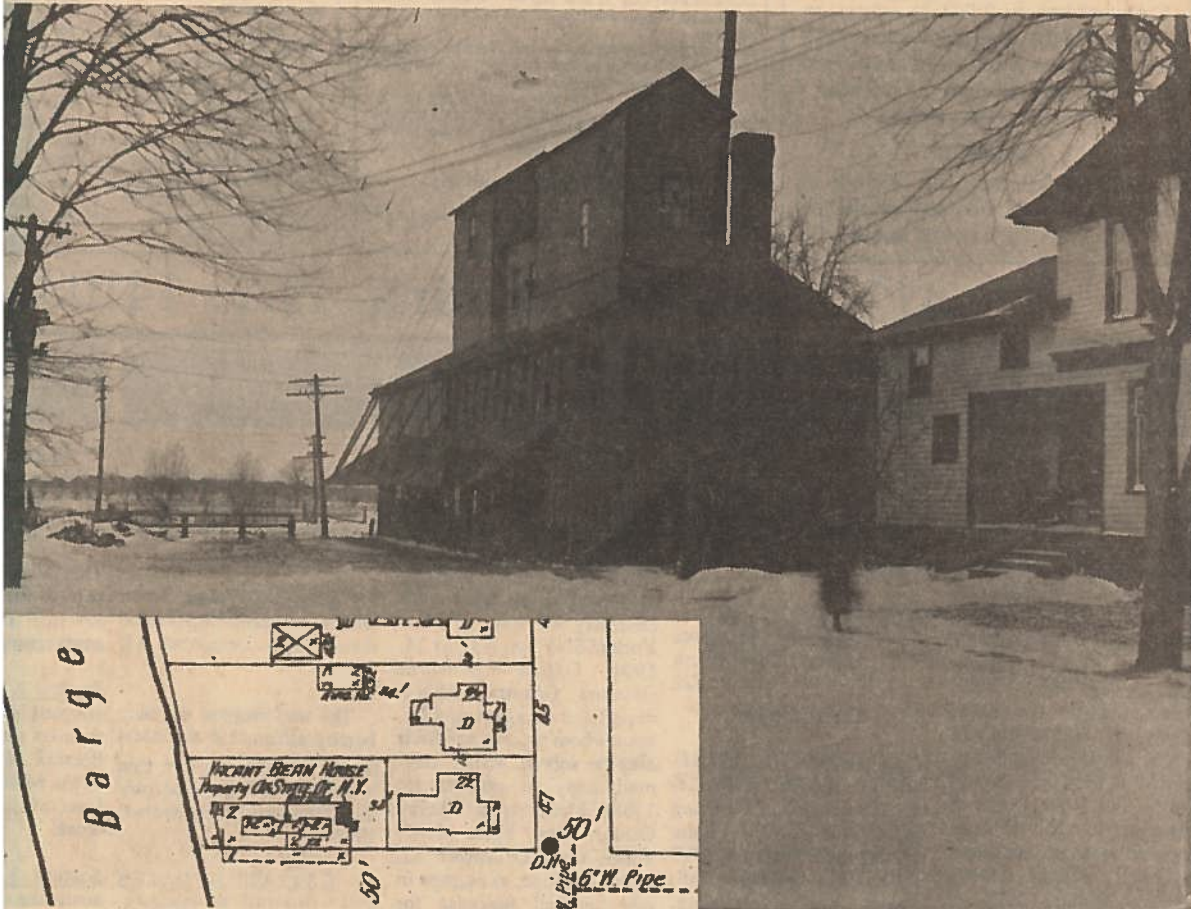
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TILDEN'S BEAN AND GRAIN WAREHOUSE



From a little clipping dated April 9, 1924 found in an old scrap book, we glean the following information:

Razing Old Warehouse

"The bean warehouse at the foot of West Academy Street on the canal, built and occupied for many years by M.W. Tilden, is being demolished for the timber and lumber it contains. When the barge canal was built the State took this warehouse, as it did many other properties, on the assumption that the land would be needed for widening the canal. But it was not needed and the property was killed for business uses once the State acquired it. Thousands of such useless purchases were made by the state along the canal, and several millions of public money were sunk in such way.

"The Tilden warehouse was a busy place for years and great quantities of beans were fitted for shipment there."

The 1905 Souvenir Book of Albion indicates that 50 to 100 women were employed for picking beans and that their wages ran from \$6,000 to \$9,000 per year. That's not per person but collectively. Let me clarify something here about picking beans. The women did not go out into the fields and pick beans, as they were harvested and crushed mechanically. Picking in this case, refers to the fact that the women sat at probably conveyor belts loaded with beans of various sorts and sizes. What they did, was to pick out the culls,

imperfect beans or debris that the threshing machine could not discern. The imperfect beans were known as "poor beans" and were often used as food for swine which farmers cooked up for them. The good beans were sold for human consumption and seed.

The 1903 Orleans County Directory indicates that Martin W. Tilden owned farms in Ridgeway and Gaines and dealt in produce and farm seeds. The 1911 Directory indicates some of the same along with also being a real estate dealer. Tilden's specialty was all kinds of grain, clover, timothy and garden seeds. Martin and Fannie Tilden resided on West Bank Street in Albion in a house at the north east corner of W. Academy and W. Bank Streets. The rear portion of the house shows in our photo of the Bean Warehouse. The picture was taken on Jan. 9, 1911 around the time the warehouse was appropriated by the State for the Barge Canal improvement. In this photo the building is referred to as an elevator. To the left in the photo we note a wooden barricade at the end of W. Academy to prohibit traffic from going into the canal.

The 1917 Underwriters Map (inset) which is also seen here, shows the elevator as a vacant Bean House. The Tilden residence is next to it.

At one time there was a number of bean houses scattered around Orleans County. Tilden's was located at the canal for easy shipping purposes.