
Bethinking of Old Orleans

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THE LAKE AND LEISURE

With the ground breaking at Oak Orchard Harbor this past weekend for more recreational development and the official ribbon cutting ceremony at Lakeside Park, opening new picnic grounds, it brought to mind that the lake and leisure have been inseparable for decades. Since Orleans County residents have had leisure time, they've headed to Lake Ontario to recapture a closer proximity to nature. The host of related activities over the years seems endless: Boating, sailing, bathing, beachcombing, fishing, picnicing, cottage living and yes, even dancing and dining at one of the several 19th Century lake-front hotels including the Grove House at Oak Orchard-on-the-Lake and later, the Oak Orchard Inn, the Orleans and Rodger Hotels at Point Breeze and the Lakeside Hotel at Lakeside. This also brings to mind that people today enjoy the same types of sports and leisure time activities as their great-great-grandparents. (There's nothing new).

The first appropriation for development at Oak Orchard, by an act of Congress, was for \$5,000 in 1836. From then until 1902, at which time appropriations ceased, \$207,500.00 was spent by the U.S. Government on the harbor, affording piers, a lighthouse and thus instating a thriving fishing ground along with great commercial activity. After a period of decline we have seen in the past few years an upswing along the lakeshore, including less pollution, better fishing, more public access, and continued restoration at Oak Orchard Harbor, again by the U.S. Government.

The photo above shows the once popular Oak Orchard Inn around 1900 which was located at Oak Orchard Harbor on the west side.