

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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MC CARTHY'S BRIDGE

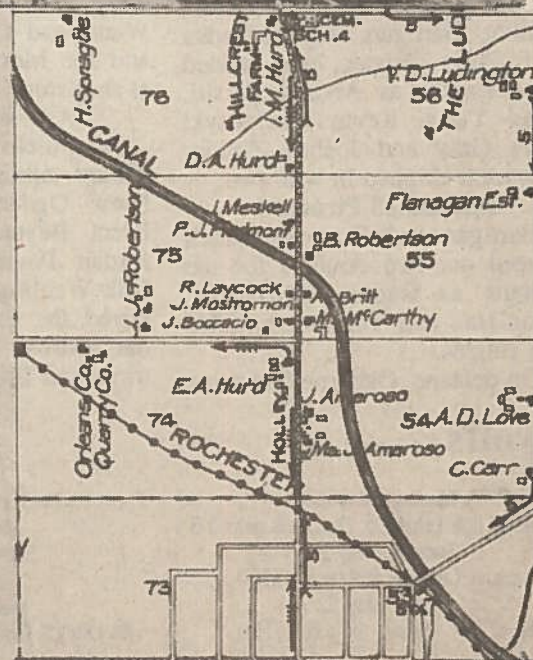


Our photo this week is labeled "North Approach, McCarthy's Bridge May 15, 1914". Taken in the Town of Murray, the photographer pointed his lens southward up the newly formed ramp to a brand new canal bridge. We know this road today as Rt. 237 but when this picture was taken it was obviously a narrow dirt road. Note here the guard gates on the canal which are just north of Holley near the Holley Central School campus.

For sure, there have been some changes over the years. An early automobile with an open top is heading down the approach. The guard rails are made of wooden posts and board rails painted white. The reason this picture was taken at the time was to visually document the recently completed canal expansion. It was to show that contractors had completed their work according to the specifications. But more than that, the camera took in other things. Telephone poles appear up the approach while telegraph poles are seen along the canal.

Note the house to the far right in the picture. It is no longer there. Notice too that it was made of cobblestone. It looks to be a practically three story home. The ground floor appears to be made of quarry stone while the upper two floors appear to be made of field stone. We can plainly see rough hewn quoins of quarry stone at the corners. The house must have been located very close to the tow path on the north side of the canal. I can only assume that the front entrance faced the canal on the towpath as, it sits so high above ground level on the north and east sides.

What happened to it? Was it razed as part of the last canal expansion during the teens or did it meet its demise at a later date? Either Marsha DeFilippis, Murray-Holley Historian or I would be interested to know exactly what happened to it. Orleans County at one time had nearly one hundred and twenty-five cobblestone structures. We've lost over the years close to twenty-five, leaving us around 100 cobblestone buildings today in the county.



The map insert is from the 1913 Orleans County Atlas. It shows the canal angling across Rt. 237 at the bridge. The cobblestone house appears to be owned here by "P.J. Piedmont." The house and barns across the road are labeled "B. Robertson". These buildings all show to the left of the canal bridge approach in the picture. Note also on the map "M. McCarthy", the family for whom the bridge in the photo took its name. The 1915 Directory indicates that it was Margaret McCarthy living there at the time.

Several years ago this bridge was removed and a new wider canal bridge was built in its place with more expansive approaches for safer driving.

Notice: Tour Mt. Albion Cemetery Sun. May 31 2:00 P.M. with Bill Lattin and Neil Johnson.