

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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TWO BRIDGES COVERD BRIDGE



The photo here was perhaps taken around 1900, of the covered bridge which was once located at The Bridges. One of only two covered bridges built in Orleans County, it spanned Oak Orchard River in the Town of Carlton. It was erected in 1848 with a Mr. Dalphon Simpson acting as the engineer in charge of the construction. It was built to last, strong and sturdy, it served the community for over sixty years. It was replaced in 1910 with an iron bridge which has since been removed.

Thirty - five years or so after it was built, a Spring thaw suddenly came after a severe winter. At the time, some of the music - loving men of the community had formed a Glee Club. One rainy March evening they met at Rev. Foster Brown's to practice. The weather had turned warm that day and the ice and snow was melting steadily. The men enjoyed singing and paid little attention to the increasing downpour of rain until coming out of the house near midnight, they heard crashing and grinding sounds at the bridge. They hurried down the hill to find the bridge quivering from impact of tons of ice which had broken up and were pushing upward under the swift current. The east end of the bridge had already been lifted from its piles and moved several feet to the north. Quickly the

men cut poles and attacked the ice, trying to pry loose some of the blocks and diverting them downstream. They worked most of the night under hazardous conditions and by the morning had freed the ice jam.

A meeting of the Town Board was called the next day to decide what the next step would be. The members were about to condemn the bridge when Mr. John Simpson, younger brother to Dalphon Simpson, suggested the bridge be saved. He was given 48 hours to seek an alternate. He immediately contacted Mr. Dates, a barn mover from Yates, to appraise the situation. After his inspection, Mr. Dates determined the bridge could be salvaged and that he could raise it to avoid repetition of the accident. His work was carried out and the old covered bridge continued to be used for another thirty years.

When our photo was taken, it appears that some construction work was under way at the man in the foreground is holding a shovel and there appears to be some rubble nearby. This view is looking east through the bridge toward the old hotel. The building to the left is now Narby's Store.