

Bethinking of Old Orleans

Vol. XXIV

By C.W. Lattin, Orleans County historian

No. 24

Bates Road bridge and guard gates

6-14-02

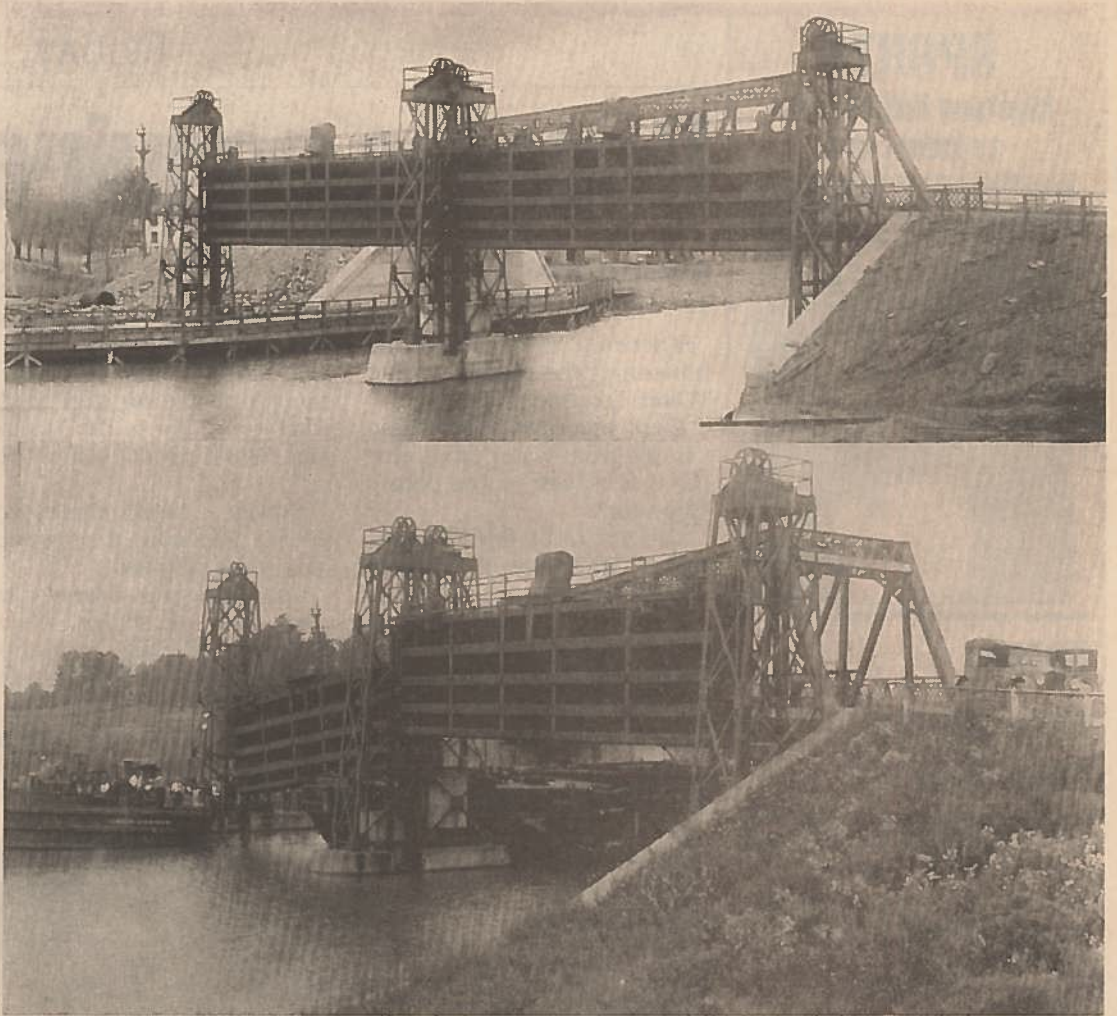
The upper photo, which was taken on Nov. 6, 1914, shows the completion of the construction work at the Bates Road bridge and guard gates.

Notice here the temporary mule bridge along the top path on the north side of the Erie Canal under the guard gate. It was during the last period of enlargement of the canal (1908-1918) that mule power was replaced by steam-powered tugs. In this transitional time, provision had to be made to accommodate mules. Once the Barge Canal was entirely completed, the mule bridges were removed. Obviously, the mule bridge would have rendered the north guard gate useless here.

It was also during this time that the canal's name was changed to the Barge Canal, which has since been changed back to Erie.

Our other photo was taken from about the same location east of Medina on Aug. 19, 1925, showing a barge which has rammed into the middle tower of the guard gate. Unlike the recent disaster on the Arkansas River, no one was killed here.

But it is plain however that a barge out of control can cause extensive damage. The north guard gate appears to have been knocked out of its track on the north tower. The base



of the center tower has been partly crumpled and slightly shifted out of line, causing the gate to come down on the

barge.

It would appear that several officials and engineers are on the scene here inspecting the

damage caused by the barge.

A boat seems to be docked along the canal bank which carries tools and equipment.