

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## Early Salt and Sulfur Springs

The "Pioneer History of Orleans County" gives us some information on salt works once located here.

"Works were put up by the Holland Company for the manufacture of salt, at the salt springs north of Medina, as early as 1805, and opened for use by the settlers ... Before the canal was made, and to accommodate the people and benefit themselves, the Holland Company opened a road from the Salt Works, in a south-easterly direction to intersect the Oak Orchard road, about two miles south of Albion. This was known as the 'Salt Works Road' and was discontinued many years ago."

Another road leading south from the works went to the "Old Buffalo" Road. We continue to use and know this road today as the "Salt Works Road."

"Little salt was made until the works passed into possession of Isaac Bennett, in 1818. He bored about 150 feet and obtained brine which he boiled into salt, having at one time as many as 70 kettles in use, furnishing a large portion of all the salt used in this portion of the country. At the time of opening the canal, these salt works were superseded by Onondaga salt, and discontinued."

From the other end of the county we find Salt Springs at Holley which was known as "Salt Port" by early boatmen before the name Holley was adopted. Again from the 1871 "Pioneer History" we find:

Salt was found in the ravine on the bank of the creek south of the canal. A brine spring was located near where the railroad crosses the creek. In its natural state this was known as a "deer lick." When the state of Connecticut sold the land on which this spring was found, in the deed given they reserved all mines, minerals and salt springs. The state afterwards agreed with Mr. John Reed that he should open the spring and test the water and share half the avails with the state. Mr. Reed dug out the spring, set two kettles near the creek in the ravine and commenced boiling the water for salt. When the water was pumped from the well it



appeared limpid and clear, after boiling it became red colored, and if then boiled down to salt it remained red colored salt. To remedy this he boiled the water, then drew it off in vats to settle, the coloring matter fell to the bottom, the clear brine was then returned to the kettles, and made white salt.

Reed commenced boiling in 1814. After a time, 16 kettles were set here to make salt and used until navigation was opened in the canal, when Onondaga salt could be furnished here so cheap these works were abandoned. Indeed, they never afforded a profit to those working them.

The wood for the fires was cut on the west side of the

creek mainly, and drawn upon the top of the bank, of proper length to put under the kettles, and thrown down the bank through a spout made of timber. A load of wood was sold at the works for a bushel of salt, or one dollar. Although the brine so obtained was comparatively weak, they made hundreds of bushels of salt, which was sold to settlers in this vicinity, and carried away in bags.

Some years after the canal was dug, Erastus Cone bored for stronger brine to a depth of nearly 100 feet, near the old spring, but the result did not warrant his making salt there and none has been made since."