



Bethinking of Old Orleans

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By C. W. Lattin, Orleans County Historian

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Medina Driving Park

The 1879 "Illustrated Historical Album of Orleans County New York" has the following brief article:

"The Medina Driving Park association was organized in 1871. The first officers were M. Harmon, president; N. T. Healy, secretary; S. Tucker, treasurer. The grounds, located about a mile west of the village, were laid out in 1871. The annual meetings are held in June. The following are the present officers of the association: President, James Bancroft; secretary, Jacob Gorton; treasurer, W. B. Reynolds."

In the 1875 "Niagara Orleans County Atlas," the Shelby map indicated "Medina Driving Park." This was located on the

west side of Salt Works Road immediately adjacent to and north of the railroad.

I find in the county archives the picture which accompanies this article. I judge from its quality it was taken in the 1890s. Someone wrote the following information on its back side: "Old race track in Medina just north of Rail Road on Salt Works Rd."

My written documentation ends here. However, our photo gives us some visual information. This looks to be a candid shot showing the railroad crossing looking in a northwesterly direction. Why these men in their derby hats are walking along the tracks is anybody's guess. I am assuming the board fence surrounds the Driving Park,

which is behind it. Towards the center of the picture there is a building in back of the fence, which looks like a grand stand.

Evidently the Driving Park had a race track where men who owned trotters could exercise them. A grand stand would suggest that a racetrack provided entertainment.

Later maps do not show any indication of the Driving Park. The 1913 Atlas actually shows B. L. and R. trolley tracks running directly north of and parallel to the NY Central tracks in what would have been Driving Park. I assume by this period of time the grand stand and racetrack were long gone.