



Bethinking of Old Orleans

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Canal Work

This photo taken on April 3, 1914, shows a view of the canal in Medina looking easterly from Prospect Street. Diagonally through the picture we see the construction of wooden forms for the south vertical wall. To the left through the canal bottom is track for hopper cars pulled by a small steam engine for hauling earth and stone.

The upper right hand portion of this photo, although not of the canal, is also of interest. This property, located at the corner of Prospect and Commercial Streets from the backside, was owned by Seth G. Rowley and Son at the time. The 1903 Orleans County Directory lists: "Rowley & Eddy (S. G. Rowley and G. W. Eddy) lumber, lath, shingles, sash, doors, blinds, fence, posts, brick, plaster, 222 Commercial St. also yards at Middleport and Alabama." The 1911 Orleans County Directory also lists: "Rowley S. G. & Sons, plaster, cement, and lumber."

Just look at the number of fence posts stacked up in the yard. Here we also see timber and boards in the distance. All the buildings which show here are a part of this former lumberyard complex. Of course, it was

only natural that such businesses as lumberyards would be located along the canal for easy shipment of products to such places as Medina. The Colburn Lumber Yard in Albion was also located on the canal. Note the outhouse near the stack of fence posts.

The Erie Canal was vitally important to the early economy and building up of this area. In revitalizing its usage for tourism, effort is being put forth to point up this outstanding feature of New York state.

In July 2000, the Orleans County Department of History erected one of those typical historical markers 900 feet west of the Gaines Basin Road bridge to indicate a feature unique to Orleans County. The marker simply stated: "Northernmost Point on the Erie Canal — Town of Gaines Orleans County N.Y." It is now discouraging to report that this marker has been missing for over a month. To have one made costs \$525. Mostly, I'd simply like to have it returned to the rightful location. Please contact the Orleans County Department of History if you have any information about what happened to it.