

# Old Canal Times

BY C.W. LATTIN

Both of our pictures of the same building were taken on Nov. 19, 1913. This house-store was located in the Town of Murray directly adjacent to the towpath on the northeast corner of the Brockville canal bridge.

The upper picture was taken from the north approach of the bridge on Fancher Road.

The lower picture was taken from the towpath which shows in the lower left of this view. Here we see the south side of the store or rear wing, a porch, which was located at the towpath's edge, has been removed. That had covered the doors into the store, which catered to the canal trade. In the main part of the house to the left of the store wing, is another entrance.

This gives me the impression the house also may have served as a hotel or tavern, again catering to the canalers. Surely there were seven or eight rooms on the second floor.

It is almost like the building had two fronts, one facing the canal, the other the road. But it was the canal side, which welcomed the business, as the storefront was hardly visible



from the road.

To build a structure this size, with a focus on the canal, certainly tells us about the economy of the times.

Judging from this building's Greek revival styling, I would estimate it was erected by the late 1830's or 1840.

There was no doubt more boats passed the store front on a daily basis than carriages passing the road front.

It is also interesting that the outhouse or privy is conveniently located just off the towpath in the lower right hand corner of the picture.

In 1913, when these photos were taken, the house, which appears to have been abandoned, was slated for demolition. This was when the canal was about to be enlarged. With the close proximity of the store to the towpath, it had to go. Perhaps the demolition already had started.

At that time this property was owned by the Orleans County Quarry Company where Medina Sandstone was being quarried. Early maps indicate a store being located here owned by L. Smith.

Today there is absolutely no indication this house ever existed on the property.