

The scene 130 years ago

BY C.W. LATTIN

This photograph taken around 1875 shows the tenant house, barns and main residence of Lewis M. Loss. The photographer who took this picture stood on the railroad tracks just east of the crossing where the present State School Road intersects with Route 31.

He pointed his lens directly north thus showing what is now State School Road to the left. Back then it was a mere dirt land and known as Denio Road.

This road went northward to the guard gates on the Erie Canal and intersected with the Albion-Eagle Harbor Road.

In the early 1930's this road was appropriated by the State Department of Corrections when the Albion State School was expanded westward. First known as the Western House of Refuge, established in 1892, it was on the land behind the Loss residence in the distant far right of our picture.

When expansion occurred in the 1930's, the barns and tenant houses to the left were all torn down. This site is now used for the gatehouse and administration building to the Albion Correctional Facility. The former Loss residence was transformed into a home for the superintendent of the prison.

Notice in our picture all the fencing in the photo. The one in the foreground is on railroad property and the type of fence along the road is a good example of a crooked rail fence.

Split rails of locust logs were used in this manner as a self-supporting type of fence. Livestock while grazing would of course keep the corners cleaned out.

On the west side of Denio Road, fence posts are awaiting the boards, which appear to be lying on the ground.

The pasture lot in this picture is now a parking lot for the hundreds of employees who work for the correctional

facility. The rail fence like the split rails made by "Honest Abe" now long gone have been replaced with chain link fencing. Our picture is surely indicative of a more simple way of life.

