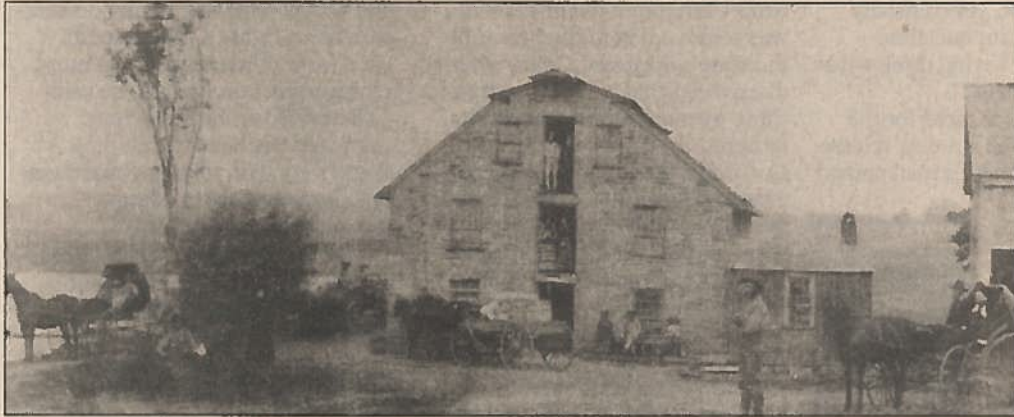


BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BALCOM'S MILLS

BY C.W. LATTIN

Our photo, taken in October 1879, shows what was known as Balcom's Mills in the town of Murray. This was located about a mile north of the Erie Canal on the east side of Fancher Road (Route 387).

To the far left we can see the mill pond created by a dam in the west branch of Sandy Creek. This provided the water power necessary to run the grist and flour mill seen here.

This stone mill was erected in 1834 by Hiel Brockway and Abner Balcom. In 1837, a saw mill was built at the north end of the pond. Hence, the little hamlet just south of Balcom's

Mills was called Brockville because of Hiel Brockway.

To drive through on Route 387 today you would have absolutely no idea that the mills ever existed here. The picture, however, suggests this was a place of activity back in 1879 as we see two carriages and two wagons plus several people posing for the picture.

In the carriage to the left are Mina Young, Laura Salisbury and Cora Young. The man seated is Dan Young and the woman standing nearby is Lill Willcott. The two men in the wagon next to the mill are Than and Arthur Rhodes. The two standing in the third-floor doorway are Mr. Morton and Mrs. W. Salisbury. Below them

in the second floor doorway is an unidentified person and Maria Murray. Seated next to the mill we find Jay Mansfield, an unknown family member, Salisbury and someone from the Root family. Frank Young stands out front in the picture with Mr. and Mrs. A. Balcom in their carriage to the far right.

It is interesting that photographers back in the late 19th century would spread people out through the entire picture rather than grouping them together. This is surely a classic example with people in various positions including use of the mill doorways for posing as well.