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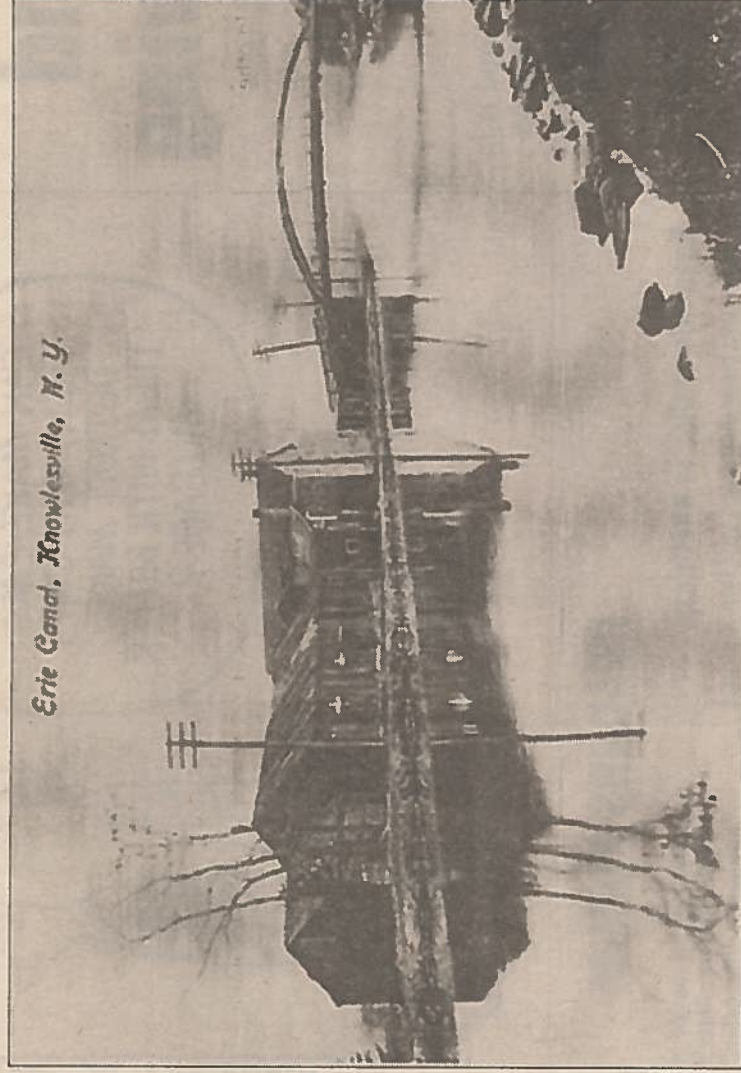
# ERIE CANAL KNOWLESVILLE

BY C. W. LATTIN

This picture, taken from a postcard dating back 100 years, shows the old Erie Canal at Knowlesville. The photographer of this scene stood on the south bank and pointed his camera in a northeasterly direction.

Therefore, we see several buildings which were once located on the north bank or tow path of the canal. In the distance is the old steel arch bridge which crossed over the canal on Knowlesville Road (Main Street). By 1913, this old bridge was replaced with the present lift bridge. The older bridge was typical of all the bridges with the earth ramps or approaches.

With improvements to the canal over 90 years ago, 17 lift bridges were installed on the canal system like the one in Knowlesville. We happen to have seven of these lift bridges in Orleans County. When the canal was last made wider and deeper, the banks were raised for depth. Consequently, buildings which stood on the banks had to be removed to accommodate the wider canal. In this



*Erie Canal, Knowlesville, N. Y.*

shop, steam saw mill, plaster mill, tannery and warehouses. All these businesses were either on the canal banks or in close proximity to the canal which was the main artery of transportation. There were also three churches in Knowlesville and a school.

With the completion of the Barge Canal System in 1918, the character of the old Erie and its early 19th century architecture had been greatly destroyed with modern improvements. The little places like Knowlesville were ignored, once mules and horses were replaced with steam power. The focus had already changed to the railroads in the second half of the 19th century leaving the charm of a once-vibrant canal era to abandonment.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

picture, we see several utilitarian buildings which would have been warehouses. The two-story building in the distance was a stone structure

and appears on the 1860 map as the W. W. Fuller Saloon. Obviously, its front faced the towpath, with Fuller catering to the canal traffic, which would

have been heavy at the time. Prior to the mid-19th century, Knowlesville had two blacksmith shops, several stores, post office, cabinet shop, cooper