

BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DOOR YARD

BY C.W. LATTIN

This dark photo image is from a tin-type taken in the 1870s. It is a family picture showing the house my great-grandparents lived in on Gaines Basin Road prior to 1885.

Looking carefully, one can see eight people posing throughout his picture. My great-grandfather, Bartlett M. Lattin, is in the center holding the reins of the horse. My great-grandmother, Phoebe Anderson Lattin, shows up in the distance in the middle of the house. To the far right, standing in a cart, are two daughters Ella and Lovina. The other people I can not identify.

My great-grandfather was a self-taught veterinarian so obviously because of his interest in the animals, they were featured in the picture. Along with the horse to the far left is a team of oxen yoked together.

Perhaps it was this team of oxen that is in a story handed down in our family.

It seems that my great-grandfather would hitch up the oxen to a cart so the children could drive themselves to school which was District No. 2 of Gaines at the old Cobblestone Schoolhouse just north of the Erie Canal on Gaines Basin Road. This was a half-mile

south of the residence seen in our tin type.

Once at the schoolhouse, the children would turn the team of oxen around and head them in the direction of home. The oxen would return un-driven knowing where to go whereby my great-grandfather would retrieve them when they entered the door yard.

However, it didn't work the other way around. The children had to walk home from school, but at least they got a ride one way.