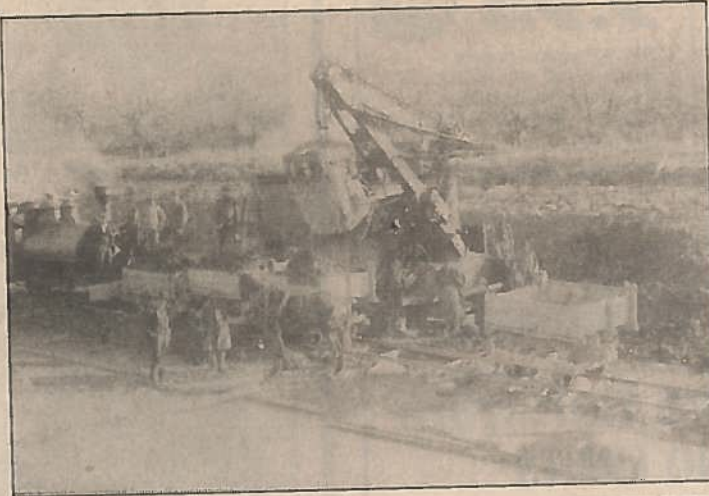


Construction on the canal bank

BY C.W. LATTIN

This picture taken around 1913 shows construction work taking place on what was then called the Barge Canal. The picture features a steam engine, steam shovel, dump cars and a reliable horse to pull dump cars.

Although mechanized equipment was being used, a strong work force of manual labor was also needed at the time. Surely this was a period of great transition as we see horse power, man power and steam power in this vintage shot.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In the 1913 yearbook for Albion High School, called *Chevron*, we find an interesting first-hand account of work on the canal taking place at that time. Entitled "From the Canal Bank," by Ruth F. Readett, it is as follows:

"We are all interested in the work on the Erie Canal and when one has a few minutes to spare he will find it extremely entertaining to watch the busy scene on the bank and down in the canal. At different points along the canal, groups of men are working, and each separate company is performing almost the same kind of work in the various sections. As one goes along the canal bank nearby home, he first sees two men drawing earth down into the bed of the canal by means of a horse and scoop. The canal is quite uneven at that place and they are leveling its bed. Just a little farther down are a dozen or so men smoothing the gravel and dirt to make a straight, level surface. On the opposite side of the canal is another man with a flat pick making the canal bank smooth for paving. When finished, this paved wing leads up to the cemented aqueduct just beyond. The canal at this point runs over a creek and the aqueduct is made so that the canal will not wash through to

the stream. The sides of the aqueduct are solid walls of cement and the bed of the canal is covered first with tarred paper, then with a layer of tar, and lastly, with a floor of cement.

"On the south bank of the canal opposite the aqueduct, is an old grist mill which will have to be torn down to give the canal the desired width. Already there has been a road made through the mill for the dump cars to pass over. Two of these cars are drawn by a single horse. The track extends from the steam-shovel on the east side of the mill. This steam-shovel scoops out the dirt to make the bank wider and throws it into the cars. Then the dirt is carried back to where the first two groups of men whom we saw are grading.

"Back again on the east side of the aqueduct in front of the mill, is a low dam which holds back the water for about two miles down the canal. A little farther down, in front of the crane, is a man who is pumping water from below the dam up to the derrick through an underground pipe. And far away down the bank is another group of men, but we cannot see what

they are doing because they are too far off.

"The voices of the workmen, the noise of the steam-shovel, the low roar of the cars, and the clang of the picks and shovels on the stone, send up pleasant sounds to the watcher. And when the time comes to leave, he cannot help feeling that his time has been spent pleasantly and profitably." — Ruth F. Readett, '14.