

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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1-8-81



VOL. III

THE EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARY

NO. 1

A little while ago I ran across the following passage by James Diller Freeman which expresses my own wonderment about our local heritage and environment in Orleans County.

If where you are

Were a faraway place,

Would you not be looking with astonishment

At things you pass by every day--

This sky, that tree, those flowers, these people!

Waiting for the extraordinary,

Do not miss the extraordinary ordinary,

The beauty of the familiar,

The wonder of the nearby now at hand.

You are a dweller in a world of wonders--

And are you not the most wonderful of them all?

Think about it! Are we not living in an extraordinary county? The natural and cultural riches of the past we take for granted everyday abound around us. Think of the wealth of imagination, perseverance and energy put forth by the first settlers not to mention that of the variety of immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds who each in their own way have added to the voluminous past which is ours.

The host of wonders in our midst would surely include the Erie Canal and its leading role in the development of the western frontier; Oak Orchard Creek and electric power nearby; Medina Sandstone and its miraculous architectural employment; Oak Orchard Harbor and a bountiful fishing ground enjoyed for generations; Cobblestone buildings unique in our part of the world along with superb examples of other various styles; social, Fraternal and Religious institutions adding sustenance to life, and then there is the muckland to the south with its onions, the lakeshore and its fruit belt to the north. In the west, set aside for nature to rule, is the Iroquois Wild Life Refuge and to the east we see such simplistic and serene scenery as Clarendon Falls. All have been touched by human hand and moulded by human imagination and intellect of the past. All are nearby and some could so easily be destroyed through our own lack of appreciation. Until we really recognize the extraordinary ordinary we may continue to destroy some of these great historic assets. Our greatest achievement will be to understand the nearby now at hand and make the most of it without destroying it for future generations.

So like the girl before the mirror in this turn-of-the-Century artistic naturally lighted photograph by A.J. Richards of Medina, take a look at yourself and where you are.....isn't wonderful your conclusion?