

Historic markers reveal Orleans' past

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There are close to 80 historic markers in Orleans County that have been erected over the past 95 years. Many are the typical, what we call state markers, painted blue and yellow. These usually have about five lines of abbreviated historical information about the site they are located on.

On Route 104 in the Town of Gaines, there is a more extensive historical marker. It is in the state parking area in front of Lake Ridge Apple Storage. It was put up in 1961 by the State Education Department and contains the following information.

Historic New York the Lake Plain

"The Neutral nation of Indians, an Iroquoian group affiliated with the Eries, were early inhabitants of this area. About 1650 they were conquered by the Senecas of the Five Nations Confederacy. French explorers and traders crossed this area and English expeditions along the lake shore entered the small streams but extensive swamps deterred settlement.

After the revolution a few settlers came from Canada but development awaited the formation of speculative



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land companies. The Pulteney purchase and that of the Holland Land Company divided the land area into tracts for settlement. Inhabitants fled the area for a time after the fall of Fort Niagara in the War of 1812. Then came the building of highways, some of which ran along old Indian trails. The Ridge Road opened in 1809 and became a principal East-West route. Completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 spurred the building of towns along its route and the growth of commerce. Here early settlers built unique Cobblestone houses, many of which are still standing.

Geography and climate have favored fruit culture and made packing and canning a principal industry."

Along Ridge Road there are several large boulders with bronze plaques erected by the DAR during the 1930s. None of these markers can possibly be read at 50 mph. However, with the current gas prices, one need not have to leave the county for a history adventure. So take time, now that the warmer weather is here, to carefully pull off to the side of the road and read about this on site local history when you spy one of these markers.