

COLD WEATHER

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The coldest weather recorded locally occurred on Feb. 9, 1934, when the thermometer plummeted to minus 23 degrees.

The whole northeastern United States was affected by a cold air mass that slid south from Alaska. Both Rochester and Buffalo recorded minus 22 degrees, while Arcade reported 50 below.

This cold spell lasted for three days.

Temperatures had dropped rapidly, beginning on Thursday night, to the all-time low on Feb. 9.

On Feb. 18, 1979, temperatures again plunged to minus 19 degrees, which suggests that February is our coldest month.

The *Orleans American* reported on Feb. 14, 1934, that about 60 water meters in the Village of Albion were put out of commission and that a number of households had one or more frozen pipes.

The biggest concern for the cold snap came from local farmers, who feared the arctic blast had ruined orchards.

On Feb. 16 the *Albion Advertiser* reported that E.R. Wagner, Farm Bureau agent for Orleans



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County, indicated that buds on pear and peach trees were damaged the most, which would result in poor yield for the coming fall.

In March 1934, the *Albion Midlander* reported the following: "There may be a short crop of apples, peaches and cherries in this section of New York State when picking time arrives. Examination of orchards by Farm Bureau and Cornell University investigators discloses that thousands of fruit trees have been killed or split open by the intense cold spell. Peach buds have suffered the worst, and it is estimated that the peach crop will be from 30 to 50 percent of normal this fall."

Indeed, many area apple

orchards were ruined, along with other species. And area farmers talked about this disaster for years afterward, as their worst fears from the beginning were confirmed when spring came.

It was also on Feb. 9, 1934, that Lake Ontario froze over for the first time in recorded history. Several local people dared go out on the ice a mile or so, a hazardous adventure, to say the least.

The photo that accompanies this article was taken on Jan. 18, 1911, near Albion, when construction work on enlarging the canal took place throughout the winter.