

IN PURSUIT OF POWER

BY CW LATTIN
Orleans County historian

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One man's desire for electric power benefits an entire community, and that man was Albert L. Swett, an Orleans County native born in 1850 on the Swett Road in the Town of Ridgeway.

His higher education was attained at the Medina Academy. He first worked at the Bignall Manufacturing Company and in 1873 began a foundry of his own in partnership with W.H. Samson.

In 1889 he became the sole owner and the firm was then known as the A.L. Swett Iron Works. In 1898 he sold out to the Central Foundry but re-established a new foundry of his own. Also in 1898 he formed the A.L. Swett Electric Light and Power Company.

It was through his efforts that two electric reservoirs were created. The first was Glenwood Lake north of Medina which was constructed between 1902 and 1905. Our photo shows Glenwood Lake under construction during this project.

The second project of even greater magnitude was what has become known as Lake Alice. This reservoir for electric generation was



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Bethinking of Olde Orleans

commenced in 1917 and finished in 1920.

Prior to this A.L. Swett had purchased over 50 parcels along Oak Orchard River with the reservoir in mind. This huge man made

pond was called Lake Alice in memory of Swett's daughter Alice who died in 1884 at the early age of 11 years. Swett also had a granddaughter by the same name.

At the time of his death in 1924 he had become Medina's richest man and was the most potent single factor in developing industrial resources. It was through his insight and ability that electricity was first produced in Medina

for lighting and manufacturing purposes on a large scale.

He was a man who was undaunted in seeking his goals seemingly overcoming many obstacles, especially in the Waterport project.

Without question, A.L. Swett was a man way ahead of his time, who left an indelible mark on Orleans County because of his vision and quest to provide electricity.