

Gaines Basin bridge

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Our photo shown here was taken on April 28, 1914 of the north ramp and approach to the Gaines Basin Road bridge. This bridge has been closed since last July for reconstruction, and it is anticipated that it will be closed until next fall.

New concrete piers are being set into place on both ends of the bridge, as well as new concrete approaches. These are actually bridges from the earth ramp to the iron bridge itself. It was obvious from the tow path that these needed replacing because of crumbling concrete.

The canal was last widened and deepened in this area during the years 1911 to 1913. Now that these landmark bridges are almost 100 years old, major overhauls are necessary.

My father remembered when this bridge was installed in his neighborhood. He said that when the bridge arrived for installation, it was 18 inches too short. It was, however, accepted and placed upon the piers that were already set in place. That would be 9 inches off the mark at each end.

From my observation of the old piers and how the bridge was placed, it is perhaps possible that there was a miscalculation on someone's part. I guess we'll never know.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Bethinking of Olde Orleans

Gaines Basin today is a "ghost town." But back when the canal opened in 1825, this spot was the closest distance to Gaines from the canal. Consequently, there was a grain warehouse, blacksmith shop and a couple of residences on the towpath along with a handful of other houses in the community. The only building left from the early canal days at Gaines Basin is the district school, built of Cobblestone in 1832.

Our photo here shows a house to the left of the ramp and in the distance behind trees is another. The first was the Lewis family

residence, while the other was the Stockton family residence. Both burned in the 1930s. To the right of the ramp is the Parker residence, later owned by the Dilodovico family.

In 1914, the road was dirt and the guard rails were white-painted wood. The original floor of the bridge was a thick plank that clattered when driven over. The planks were replaced in the 1950s with a steel grid flooring, which is now also being upgraded.