

COLDEST WEATHER

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Bethinking of Olde Orleans

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 which slid south from Alaska.

Both Rochester and Buffalo recorded minus 22 degrees while Arcade, N.Y. reported 50 below. This cold spell lasted for over three days. Temperatures had dropped rapidly beginning Thursday night to the all-time low on Friday the 9th.

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 sixty 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 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 disclosed that thousands of fruit trees have been killed or split open by the intense cold spell. Peach buds suffered the worst and it is estimated that the peach crop will be from thirty to fifty 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 afterwards as their worst fears from the beginning was confirmed when spring came.

The photo shown here, taken in the 1930's by Fred Holt, shows snow removal at the time.

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

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