

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## MEET EVELYN ALLEN HISTORIAN, TOWN OF RIDGEWAY

Here, Evelyn Allen, Historian for the Town of Ridgeway poses next to a stone marker which has been placed near the flag pole in front of the Town Hall on West Avenue in Medina. The stone which was recently inscribed by Leo LaCroix reads: "Town of Ridgeway Founded 1812". Many people refer to this marker as Mrs. Allen's "Pet Rock" which she doesn't mind at all. In fact, it was her idea to save this stone from sinking into the ground. It and three others just like it were originally part of the first culvert east of Medina and were removed many years ago when the canal was widened. One of these is located in Medina's State Street Park while the other two are in a yard on South Culvert Road. This stone was also located on Culvert Road at Route 31 where a cobblestone house stands. In 1979 when Dr. Thomas

Lunetti who owned the house, learned that Mrs. Allen wished to save the stone for historical purposes, he gave it to the Town of Ridgeway. Mrs. Allen's first task upon receiving it was to have it sandblasted, since it had been painted white. It now stands on flagstone donated by Michael Sadlo as a reminder of bygone days and seen when one enters the Town Hall.

Evelyn Allen's official involvement with the Town of Ridgeway began back in 1974 when she was appointed Deputy Town Clerk which position she held for three years. In 1975 she was appointed Town Historian by the Ridgeway Town Supervisor. The job carries no salary, but a budget. For six years she has been Deputy Assessor for Ridgeway and assists Edward Cotriss the Town Assessor. She is also the Code Enforcement Officer's clerk. These jobs keep her very busy in one office or the other in the new Town Hall. Since she has been historian, files have been started on churches and organizations, both past and present, as well as picture files containing a wide range of the town's visual history. Mrs. Allen states that she is looking for pictures of buildings and businesses which no longer exist, such as dry houses, cooper shops, schools and so on. She is also seeking any kind of paper memorabilia of the town and is especially interested in locating written records of former business and abandoned cemeteries. She's lacking information in particular on Ridgeway Corners and North Ridgeway. With donations to her department she maintains a showcase with changing exhibits in the Town Hall. She also accepts for the town building donations or loans of contemporary paintings with historical themes. As historian she answers many questions from out of the state on genealogy which gives her a chance to exchange information and thereby add to her files. She says "I wish I could collect more items for future generations so they might enjoy the history of this area".

Although Mrs. Allen was born in Colchester, Vermont she considers Medina and the Town of Ridgeway home. She moved to Medina as a Junior in High School. In 1948 she married the late LaVern Allen and they had three sons, LaVern who died at the age of fourteen, Michael and Mark. With three sons she became interested in Scouting and was a Den Leader for 17 years. In 1973 she received the Orleans Distinguished Service Award and in 1975 the Silver Beaver Award from the Lewiston Trail Council, Scouting's highest award. She has also been active in the United Methodist Church of Medina and was a Sunday School teacher for a number of years. She serves as bookkeeper for the Joint Recreation Commission which takes in Shelby, Ridgeway and Medina. For two years she was Region Eight Secretary of Municipal Historians which includes seven Western New York counties. She is also a member of the New York State Association of Municipal Historians. Mrs. Allen is a member of the Western N.Y. Post Card Club, Buffalo Post Card Club and Medina Historical Society.