

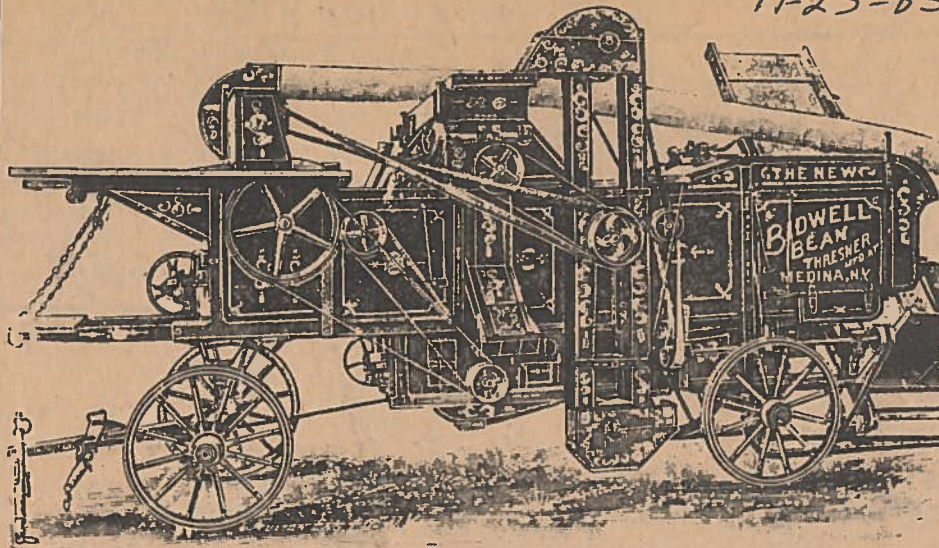
Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin

County

Historian

11-25-83



Vol. V

No. 47

BIDWELL'S BEAN THRESHER

Orleans County having always been the agricultural community which it is, it stands to reason that agricultural implements would necessarily arise out of this community. After all, "Necessity is the mother of invention". Such was the case of Bidwell's Bean Thresher. The inventor of the apparatus pictured here was Charles H. Bidwell who was born in Albion, N.Y. in September 1848. He received his education at the Albion Academy and later graduated from the Brockport Normal School. He was one of the first people to introduce steam threshing and over a period of ten years, while pursuing this, perfected his bean thresher.

In 1883 he began in a very small way, the manufacturing of bean threshers in Albion. His business increased and in 1889 he moved his manufacturing business to Medina where he was able to acquire a larger space. It was while he was in Medina, that his business really grew in importance. In fact, the name Bidwell became synonymous with bean threshers. It was a name thought of favorably in all the bean growing States and Canada because these machines were recognized as being the very best. In fact, eighty-five years ago this business claimed to have times as many Bidwell threshers in actual use as any other make.

Charles Bidwell had an inventive mind and continued yearly to make improvements to his bean threshers. In 1899 he perfected a self-feeder for his machine which continued to prove that his product was more than ordinary in its purpose. Around this same time he also invented a Bean Harvester which helped expand on the name Bidwell. By 1900, with the growing importance of his business and inadequate industrial manufacturing space in Medina, this concern moved into a new building erected for the business at Batavia, N.Y. The bean thresher in the engraving here was manufactured in Medina. It clearly states on the side of the machine "The New Bidwell Bean Thresher Mfd. at Medina, N.Y." The name Bidwell lasted for years as being synonymous with beans.