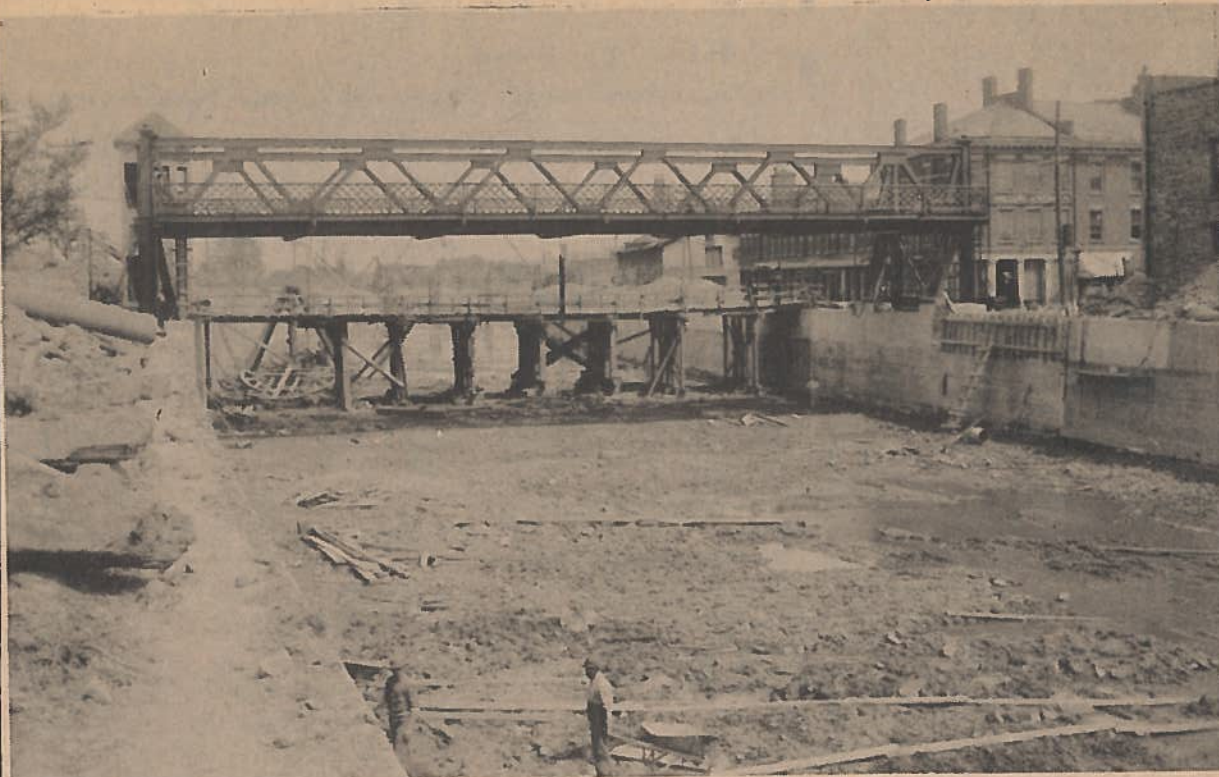


# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin  
County  
Historian  
12-13-84



VI

No. 50

## MAIN STREET BRIDGE — ALBION —

With detour signs already in place and the expected closing of the Albion Main Street bridge after the first of the year, I thought it appropriate to look back at this site. The first photo looking east shows the installation of the present bridge during May of 1913. This scene also shows a temporary wooden bridge used as a walkway across the canal. The canal as we know it today was last widened and enlarged during the years 1911-12-13 and 14. Hence all the canal bridges which have not otherwise been replaced are seventy years old. The \$1,225,000 project of rejuvenating the present Main Street lift bridge will not significantly alter the appearance of the existing structure. The bridge tender's tower however, will be removed and replaced with a smaller building housing the controls to operate the bridge.

The other photo included here, also looking

east, was taken in 1908. It shows the old swing bridge which was removed during the time the canal was enlarged. By an Act of the State Legislature in 1870 an appropriation of \$7,000 was made to build and install this bridge which took the place of an earlier one. It was around twenty feet wide and mounted on a turntable which was set on a sort of island in the middle of the canal. At the west end of the island was a small building as you see in the photo. This served as the bridge tender's quarters where he remained on duty. At the sound of a horn from an approaching bath the bridge tender would insert a bar into a capstan and pivot the bridge around so boats could pass through. You will note the sloping guard tails around and over the bridge tender's shanty. These were to take care of the towline on horse and mule drawn boats so it would not become entangled on the shanty or bridge. The large building which shows to the left was known as Babbitt's Hotel. It was razed in 1913 to make the canal wider and provide space for the present bridge tender's tower.

