

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## THE HEYDAY OF TOMATOES

Remember that fragrant smell of catsup and other tomato products being processed in our communities during the 1950's? The photo shown here was taken in the early 50's when the tomato industry was in its heyday. It shows the yard in front of Hunt-Wesson Foods Inc. on the corner of East Avenue and Platt Street in Albion. Here we see innumerable farm trucks with tomatoes standing in line waiting to be unloaded.

The Hunt-Wesson plant in Albion, formerly Birdseye Division of General Foods and still earlier T.S. Snider Corporation, closed in the Spring of 1970. The plant actually dated back to the early nineteen hundreds when it was the Bert Olney Canning Company which also operated a facility on Olney Street in Medina. Other canning factories which once operated in Orleans County included the Duffy-Mott factory in Holley which closed in 1971 and the H. V. Heinz Company in Medina which closed in 1963. Along with those plant closings were the Morton Canning Company, the Wallace Dale Canning Factory in Barre Center and the Birdseye Plant in Medina.

With tomato processors closing or leaving Orleans County, the raising of 15 million tomato plants by Piazza, Albanese and other greenhouses in the area was halted. Ten million other tomato plants were shipped in annually from the South. Likewise, seasonal labor in this industry also declined including employment for farm hands and factory workers. At Hunt-Wesson alone, some 400 to 450 seasonal workers and 50 permanent employees found themselves out of work. For close to 75 years the tomato processing industry was a mainstay for county farmers who then had to revamp their form of agriculture.

## ABOUT THE TITANIC

With the recent headlines about the discovery of the Titanic several people have inquired about who was on it from Orleans County. Indeed, there was a man on the Titanic from Holley, N.Y. His name was William J. Douton, a dentist. He was returning from a trip to England and had expected to reach home on the Olympic but was delayed and ended up taking the Titanic instead. He was traveling with Miss Lillian Bentham a former resident of Holley who at the time was living in Rochester. Both were booked as second class passengers. Miss Bentham was rescued but Dr. Douton went down on the doomed vessel. His name appears on the final listing of those who lost their lives on that ill-fated night of April 14, 1912.