

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian



## THETA HAKES BROWN 1882-1964

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"The books filled with the facts of Nature are our sacred scriptures, and the force that is in every atom and in every star – in everything that lives and grows – is the only possible God."

—R.G. Ingersoll

Theta Hakes Brown was a lifelong resident of the Town of Murray being born there in 1882. In 1901 she graduated from Brockport Normal which is now the State University College at Brockport. In 1902 she married Walter L. Brown and they had one daughter, Mrs. Florence Swain. The Browns were widely known for operating a tree nursery on Fancher Road in the Town of Murray. Many shrubs remain today on the Orleans County landscape which are testimony to her green thumb.

Aside from running their nursery and farm, both Walter and Theta Brown were immensely interested in local history. Both contributed valuable research and writing in this field. Together they published a genealogy of the Hakes-Brown and Allied Families.

Theta became a member of the Orleans Chapter DAR in 1927 and thereafter held several offices including Registrar. She was also a member of the Daughters of American Colonists and Society of Mayflower Descendants. With her keen interest in genealogy, she took on the overwhelming task in the 1930's of recording the legible names, dates and other information on all grave stones in rural Orleans County cemeteries. Together with her husband Walter, she traveled all the back roads and traversed the many abandoned cemeteries to seek this information for the DAR. The job took them several years to complete and remains today a wonderful reference source for those looking up their ancestry. With acid rain in our time, much of what she was able to copy fifty years ago, is now totally illegible on many older marble tomb stones.

Theta Brown was also the first Orleans County Historian and served in that capacity from Feb. 3, 1938 to Aug. 2, 1944. She is certainly remembered by all who knew her as a forthright individualist.

"The truth is, progress and reaction are but words to mystify the millions. They mean nothing, they are nothing, they are phrases and not facts. In the structure, the decay, and the development of the various families of man, the vicissitudes of history find their main solution— all is race."

—Disraeli