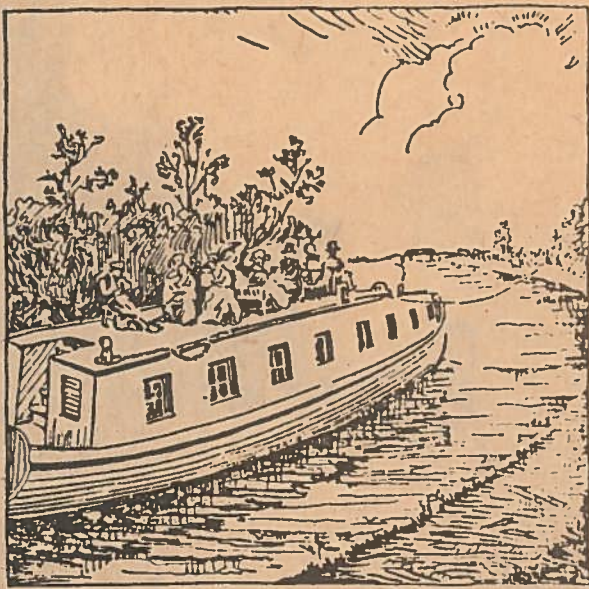


Bethinking of Old Orleans

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Observances From the Mid 19th Century

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Two towing companies (the Red and the Blue) hauled many boats on the canal for 25 cents a mile, each company having a barn in Albion for the exchange and stabling of towing teams.

Venison and bear meat were sold in the local markets every winter. Oysters were sold in wooden kegs and flat tin cans while lobsters could be purchased for 35¢. In fact, several oyster houses were in business in the county and you could sit on high stools in them and eat oysters on the half shell with pepper sauce. Horatio Murray's old hotel at the lake was a popular Sunday resort because of his fine fish dinners, white fish fresh from the lake.

Town pumps were located in convenient places for the benefit of residents without wells in Albion. The village also maintained a pound (a walled enclosure) on Clarendon Street into which the pound master drove cattle, hogs, geese, ducks, etc. which he found roaming the streets and for whose release a fee was necessary.

Gas companies employed lamp-lighters to light and extinguish the gas street lamps in the villages. They made their daily trips with a short ladder and a pocket full of matches.

A company in Albion worked a peat bed off a farm in Barre, the peat being sold to household consumers for burning in cook stoves.

During political campaigns it was common practice to string the streets with Japanese lanterns and spend money on lots of fireworks. During 1870's political marching clubs used torches with blow pipes attached which enabled them to shoot a flame high in the air.

Tobacco became a staple farm crop along the Ridge Road during the 1860's and 70's and revenue agents used to snoop around and try to catch farmers selling it without paying the government tax. In fact, women as well as men, used to smoke clay pipes.

Lumber used hereabouts, came from local farm woodlots and was sawed and dressed in Orleans County saw mills. Some of these mills sawed and shaved their own shingles. Cut wood for burning in the stove sold for forty cents per cord.

Young men who dressed in the height of fashion wore skin-tight pantaloons with straps under their boots to keep them stretched out. Women sometimes wore quilted woolen petticoats with a rattan hoop in the hem to give them a fashionable size.