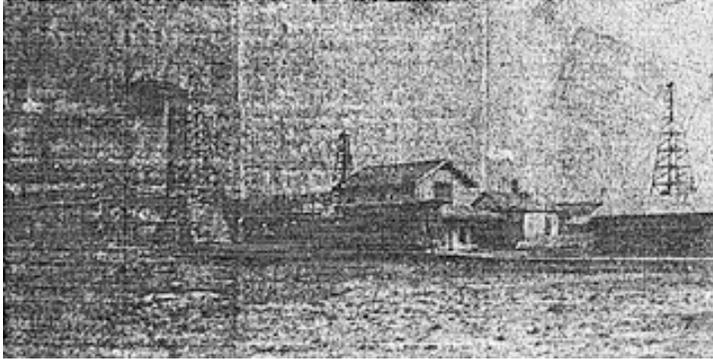


Lakeville Salt Works Of 1885 Did Not Last Long

by Vincent B. Wayland - The Lima Recorder

August 27, 1959



Lakeville Salt Works in 1885

Its Career was only Two Years Long

Widely Recognized for its High-Quality Product

Did you know that there was once a Lakeville Salt Works?

There was, but the history was brief. The company was organized in 1883 and the plant was destroyed by fire in 1885. However, during its brief span of existence it became widely known for the high-quality salt that it

produced and marketed.

The plant stood in the area along the Erie Railroad tracks between Stone Hill Road and the present location of the Conesus Lake Sportsman's Club. As can be determined from the pictures printed here it was quite an extensive establishment, consisting of several wells, steam powered pumping equipment, evaporation ponds, a drying room and bagging shop.

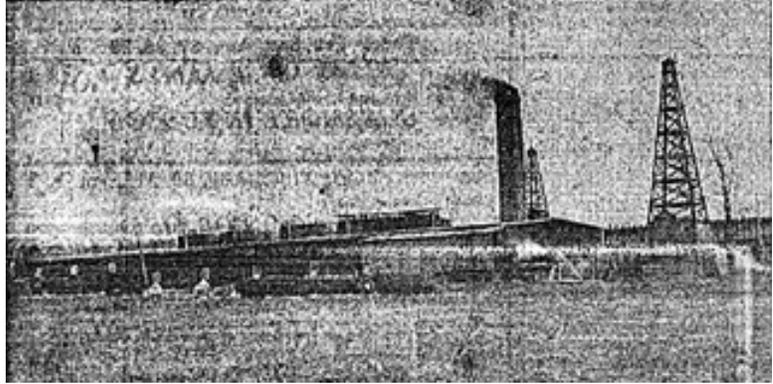
Contrary to some beliefs, the present fish spawning ponds at the Sportsman's Club are not the old evaporation ponds. The salt was pumped from the wells on the property into the evaporation ponds. Whether the salt came from the wells in the form of natural brine, or whether water was first pumped into the wells to dissolve the salt, is a matter on which there seems to be no accurate information. However, it is known that the company advertised the quality of its product as being the result of the use of pure sparkling Conesus Lake water.

The salt works was born out of the necessity for the little one-and-six-tenth-mile Conesus Lake Railroad to find freight revenue to make up the deficits that accumulated from the lack of traffic during the winter months. The moving spirits in the formation of the company were the same men who had financed the building of the railroad in 1882. These men were L. P. West, F. M. Acker, Col. J. A. McPherson, Jerry Bolles, L. E. Post, J. C. Davenport, W. H. Griffith, H. J. Rowland, George Northrup, Thomas Armstrong and Matthew Armstrong. They were also founders of the Conesus Lake Ice Co. (later sold to the Silver Lake Ice Co. and eventually to the Rochester Ice Co.). Here again, the diversity of their interests were due to the precarious financial condition of the railroad.

The story is told that the insurance premium on the salt works expired a day or two before the destructive fire occurred. The financial condition of the company led to a delay in renewing the policy. When the fire broke out, Matthew Armstrong drove his buckboard and team to Livonia and approached the insurance agent, who had his office on the site of the present Livonia fire house, concerning the renewal of the policy. The agent happened to notice the team was considerably lathered from the hard drive over Densmore Hill and stepped out of the office. The clouds of smoke to the west told the reason for the haste.

It was partially because of this lapse in the insurance that the plant was never rebuilt and partially because in 1886 the New York, Lake Erie and Western, subsidiary of the Erie, took over the operation and financial structure of the Conesus Lake Railroad, relieving the promoters of the necessity of seeking means to make the railroad a paying proposition.

Mr. West was the grandfather of Donald West and Mrs. John Thomason, F. M. Acker was the father of Carroll Acker, and Mr. Northrup was the grandfather of George Northrup. It was Mr. Northrup who first approached Jay Gould and Jim Fiske, who were the financial powers in the Erie Railroad, concerning the possibility of building a branch from True's Switch, now Lakeville Junction, to Conesus Lake.



The Lima Recorder

Vincent B. Wayland

The information for this account comes from the recollections of Carroll Acker, William Carnes and Harvey Seeley.

An account of the building of the Conesus Lake Park Road comes from the file of Mrs. John Thomason.

Use of all photos and/or text in this article have been approved and granted use courtesy of
www.HemlockandCanadiceLakes.com and www.ConesusLakeNY.org

Click on or copy and paste the link below to go to the page that was referenced.
http://www.conesuslakenv.org/cl_news_article_1959_lakeville_salt_works.htm