

Jay Becker Retires After 40 Years as Canadice Highway Head

On Jan. 1, 1958, an era came to an end in the town of Canadice when Jay E. Becker retired after 40 years of service as superintendent of the town highways. Mr.



JAY E. BECKER

Becker was first nominated and elected in 1917. Even then he was no stranger to the office as he had replaced F. H. Huff in 1915.

During the 40 years of service, Mr. Becker has seen many changes in the operations of the town highway department. In 1917 he drew a total salary of \$733.40. Also in 1917 the town

erected two new bridges, one on Canadice Lake Rd, and one on Middle Rd., the two at a cost of \$541.

The roads were all dirt highways and the primary roads were rut-scraped and kept in as good condition as the weather would permit. Now many of the roads are blacktop and motorized snow-plows, salt trucks and sanders operate to keep the highway open throughout the year.

Mr. Becker's tenure covered the period of two World Wars, the gay twenties, the depression, the big freeze of 1933-34 when the thermometer never rose to zero for a week, the snow of 1944-45 when western New York was covered by one of its heaviest snow-falls, and the coming of the automobile age.

Mr. Becker has served under seven supervisors: Wilbur Winch, Carl Gibbs, George Affolter, George Peabody, Harwell Hayward, Roy Swan and John Hopkins. His term of service as highway superintendent is believed to be one of the longest in Western New York, if not in the entire state. It is an uncontested record in Ontario County.

Excerpts from a tribute paid to Mr. Becker by Supervisor John Hopkins of Canadice read:

"Few realize that the devoted labor of one man has created the safe roads in Canadice. Each road has been laid with care; the shoulders are wide, the crowns are good, the ditches well made. A large volume of traffic moves over them, especially on the weekends, and yet the visibility is good, the surface firm, the curves gentle. If they are taken for granted, we miss an important truth; a good road is more than a strip of asphalt or a stretch of gravel; it is the result of hard labor, skill and long experience in the art of making highways. A good road is a pleasure to see, just like a good building, a good book, or a good life well spent.

"For 40 years the town of Canadice has been fortunate in having a road superintendent who thought first, last and always of its roads. In the heat of summer and in the cold of winter, through cloudbursts, blizzards and hurricanes, one man has constantly carried the responsibility of keeping the roads open and in good repair. . . ."

Mr. Becker has been succeeded by his son, Raymond Becker.