

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By the mid-1830's Fayetteville found itself in the enviable position of having a good supply of raw material and cheap transportation. The Erie Canal had been completed for 10 years or so, and a feeder canal linked Fayetteville to the main canal running west to Buffalo and east to Albany. The only element of industrial prosperity Fayetteville lacked at this time was power.

In 1836 a group of Fayetteville businessmen and landowners formed an alliance called the Fayetteville Hydraulic Company. Some of the members included David Collin (credited with being the leader), Albert Neely, John Watson, Harvey Edwards, John McVicar, Jacob Depuy and John Yelverton. Although not listed with the group, William Redfield is credited with originating the idea of taking water from Limestone Creek at a point higher than the village, running it through a trench into the center of the village, and letting it down in hydraulically usable steps, returning it to the creek.

Although the project began with enthusiasm, it wasn't until the mid-1840's that any real action took place. It was then that a man from Cazenovia, General Johnathan D. Ledyard, became involved. He was a wealthy and influential landowner, and with his financial backing and prestige the land acquisitions were completed for the right-of-way and the construction began.

The ground breaking ceremony took place on July 4, 1845. It is reported that the Rev. Richard Cleveland (father of our 22nd president) gave the oration at the event.

Work was done by means of horse-drawn clam scoops and plenty of hard manual labor. Most of the workers came from the immediate area according to census and accounting records of the time.

By the end of 1849 the project was complete and water power was available to Fayetteville. Lots were drawn for the factory locations and sawmills, flour mills, papermills and other industries were begun.

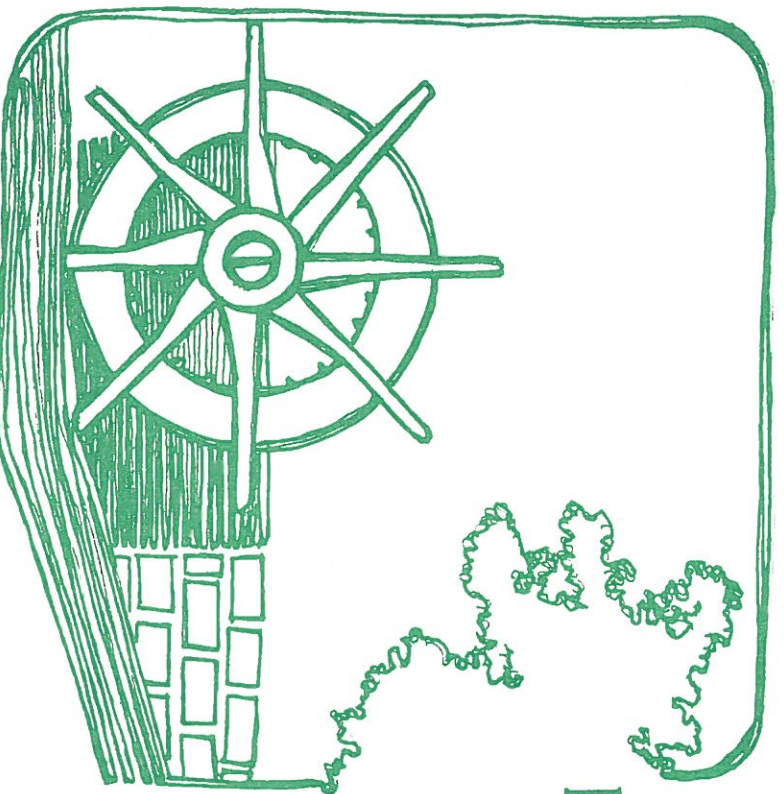
In addition to the hydraulic canal, the Fayetteville Hydraulic Company also constructed Bishop Brook waterway which also ran through the village and delivered water power to the various industries. Bishop Brook was dammed up near the present Dawley Farm site and channeled to a holding area near the southwest corner of what is now Huntleigh Park. The water ran underground in a wooden flume from there to John Street where it was directed between Clinton and Genesee Streets and ultimately to Limestone Creek.

As rail transportation, steam power and finally electrical power became available, the dyke fell into disuse. Now there is only one industry that uses the water, McIntyre Bros. Paper Company. They use the water not for power, but as an intrinsic element in the paper making process itself.

Today the canal is overgrown and neglected. In the past an architect and others saw the potential for the dyke to be a real village asset in the form of a walkway park. This potential still exists and to preserve it as a permanent park for the village would be a fitting end to this monument to man's ingenuity.

John T. Houlihan, 1977

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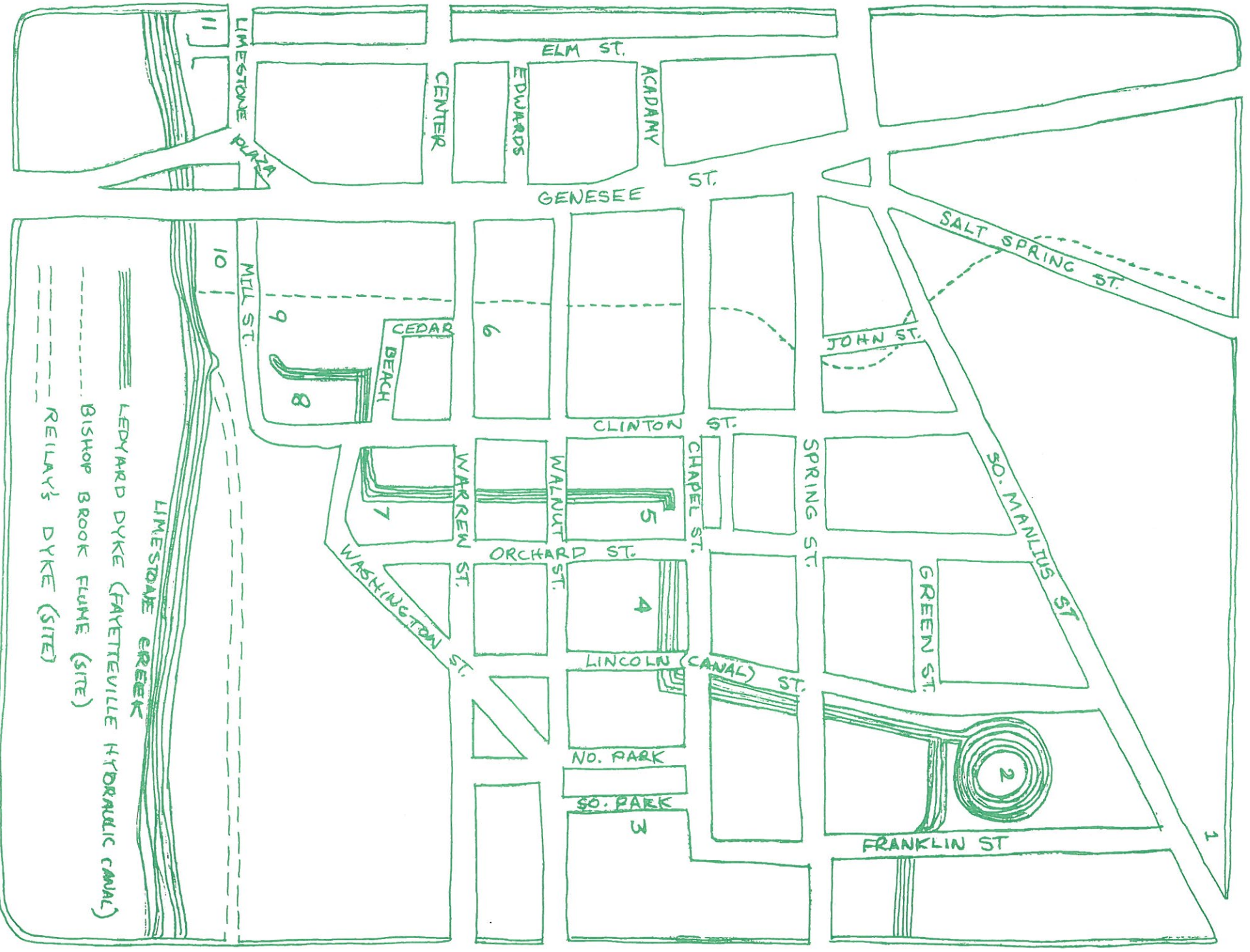
A Walking Tour of FAYETTEVILLE, N.Y.

(Tour 3)

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1. 711 South Manlius (tour 9/17/77)
2. Wellwood Pond (holding area for hydraulic canal)
3. 106 South Park (tour 9/17/77)
4. Stickley Furniture (tour 9/17/77)
5. Site of E. Collin Lumber Mill (Marillac Apt.)
6. 201 Warren (tour 9/17/77)
7. Site of Hatch Flour and Pearlring Mill
8. Site of Mammoth Papermill (McInyre's--tour 9/17/77)
9. Burhan and Blanchard Sash and Blind Company
10. Beard and Harris Foundries (Dr. Stack)
11. Erie Canal Feeder