

4-18-79

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



You Can Be There

On Saturday afternoon, April 21 at 4:00 P.M. in the children's room of the Swan Library a plaque in recognition of one of Orleans County's most beloved citizens will be unveiled. Presented to the people of Albion, N.Y. for their Sesquicentennial 1828 - 1978 by Macy's Department Store in N.Y.C. it is in honor of "Santa Claus", Charles W. Howard. For many years he was the Santa who rode on the Macy float in Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

In 1937 he established just west of Albion on Route 31, the Santa Claus School which brought men for training and Santa costumes from all over the world. Later as the business expanded, it became known as Christmas Park with Charles and Ruth Howard capturing the essence of Christmas year around on their sixty-acre farm, until it closed in 1967. The old barns were turned into fantasies of Christmas delights including Santa's stable and sleigh, workshop, castle, miniature village, real live reindeer and of course, toys galore.

The above photograph taken of Charles Howard as Santa Claus by the late Wm. Monacelli over twenty years ago shows him visiting a small boy, perhaps at Arnold Gregory Hospital. (If anyone recognizes him, this department would like to know his name). This picture expresses the true to life character of Charles Howard who died May Day 1966. There was probably no more kind, extraordinary, imaginative, gentle, humble or humanistic person who ever lived in our vicinity and set for us in Orleans County an example of humanism that has been hard to equal.

The plaque which was accepted by Mayor Donna Rodden in N.Y.C. during the 1978 Thanksgiving Day parade ends with the following statement:

FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE
ADVANCEMENT OF THE ETERNAL
SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS AS THE
MAGICAL DREAMS OF CHILDHOOD.