

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



Vol 1.

No. 48

A CHRISTMAS PARTY

Shown here is Honor Cottage around 1915 decorated for a Christmas Party with tinsel garland, crepe paper streamers and bells. What then was Honor Cottage? This rare 'inside' photo was taken at the Albion Correction Facility when it was known as the Western House of Refuge for Women. The 'Refuge' as it was commonly referred to, consisted at that time of the Refuge building proper [i.e. a jail], a hospital, steam laundry, store house, boiler house, administrative building and four cottages. Honor Cottage was where perhaps up to twenty girl inmates of trustworthiness and limited time remaining in their sentences resides with a matron or two. High school equivalency was taught along with domestic work and crafts.

The Refuge was originally located on around twenty acres of land just west of the old Albion Fair Grounds and east of Denio Road. In the early 1830's Denio Road was closed off and the campus greatly enlarged with

modern buildings.

Actually it was wholly due to Hon. E. Kirke Hart, through his personal labors and influence that the House of Refuge was located in Albion. He became the first president of its Board of Managers in 1890 and served until his death. The first inmate was received January 3, 1894 and by the end of that year there were thirtyfive inmates in residency. The original complex however, was built to accommodate 150 women.

On careful examination of the photo one can see the importance placed on domestic work through the general neat and tidy appearance of well set tables and neatly arranged furniture and sewing machine. 'Tis also interesting that for decades crepe paper streamers have been a favorite for festive occasions. In case you'd like to indulge in this type of atmosphere of sixty-five years ago for an hour or two, stop by the Cobblestone School at Childs on Sunday, Dec. 8 between 2:30 and 5 o'clock for a Christmas party complete with an old fashioned Christmas play and Santa Claus.