

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



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1-5 SECOND EMPIRE (1860-1880)

Recently the final survey of thirty-five buildings on and around the historic Orleans County Court House Square in Albion was completed with historical and architectural information. This was done for the National Trust for Historic Preservation which means that in the near future this entire district will be included on the National Register of Historic Places. This East State Street residence pictured above, now owned by Joe and Judee Martillotta is one of the thirty-five buildings included. It was built in 1879 for John H. White by the patriarch of Victorian builders in Albion -- William V.M. Barlow.

For many years this was known as the Sprague Home, later becoming the Merrill Funeral Home.

It is in the Second Empire Style which derives its name from design elements developed during the second Empire of Napoleon III of France. For this home Barlow designed and built an exquisite Mansard roof topped with a cast iron cresting with other prominent features including a balcony over the vestibule and a hexagonal tower above supported by Corinthian columns. This brick home with Medina Sandstone trim and slate shingles is unmistakably, with such characteristics, the best example of the Second Empire Style to be found in Orleans County. Upon studying this residence, one is left thinking that John White must have been an easy person for which to work and that W.V.M. Barlow had an unlimited amount of imagination.

During the month of March this column will feature other noteworthy homes in different styles to convey the variety of historic architecture found in Orleans County.