

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## Alexis Ward

One of Albion's outstanding citizens from early times was Alexis Ward. In fact, he was the first mayor of Albion when the village became incorporated in 1828. In his own time he was certainly revered by his peers for his community involvement and its betterment. The house pictured here is one he had built for himself in 1841. It was demolished in 1937 so the site might be used by the U.S. Post Office at Main and W. State Streets.

The following biographical sketch appears in Pioneer History of Orleans County by Arad Thomas published in 1871:

"Alexis Ward was born in the town of Addison, Vermont, May 18, 1802. His parents removed to Cayuga County, New York, when he was quite a lad. He studied law with Judge Wilson of Auburn, and was admitted to the bar in 1823. In 1824 he removed to Albion, where he was soon appointed a Justice of the Peace.

"On the retirement of Judge Foot, who was the first Judge of Orleans County, Mr. Ward was appointed First Judge in his place Feb. 10, 1830, an office held by re-appointment until January 27, 1840.

"In 1834-5 he was mainly instrumental in procuring the charter incorporating the Bank of Orleans, which was the first bank incorporated in Orleans County, and in 1836 was elected its President and held that office until his death.

"He was one of the movers in founding the Hippias Union Seminary and the Albion Academy, and was always liberal in sustaining our public schools.

"It was mainly owing to his exertions that the Rochester, Lockport and Niagara Falls Railroad

was built, and if it has proved a benefit the thanks for its construction are chiefly due to Judge Ward.

"The suspension Bridge across Niagara River made a part of his original plan in connection with this railroad, and his arguments and exertions were mainly effectual in inducing American capitalists to take stock in this Bridge.

"He projected the plank roads from the Ridge through Albion to Barre Center and took a large pecuniary interest in them.

"He, with Roswell and Freeman Clarke, built the large stone flouring mill in Albion. He also built several dwelling houses.

"He was a large hearted, public spirited man, always ready to do anything he thought might benefit Albion.

"In all his business relations he was just, honorable and upright, every man received his due; his purse was always open to the calls of charity. A man of untiring energy and perseverance — to start a project was with him a certainty of its completion.

"In his intercourse with those about him he was kind, affable and generous. His reserve might be constructed by those who did know him well, as haughtiness, but few men were freer from this than he.

"As a Christian, he was an exemplary member of the Presbyterian Church of Albion, with which he connected himself in 1831. He always gave greater pecuniary contributions to sustain that church and its ministers than any other man. He did much by his prayers, counsel, charities and example to sustain the cause of religion generally.

"In November, 1854, he was elected Member of Assembly for Orleans County, but his death prevented his taking his seat in the Legislature.

"He married Miss Laura Goodrich of Auburn in 1826. He died November 28, 1854."