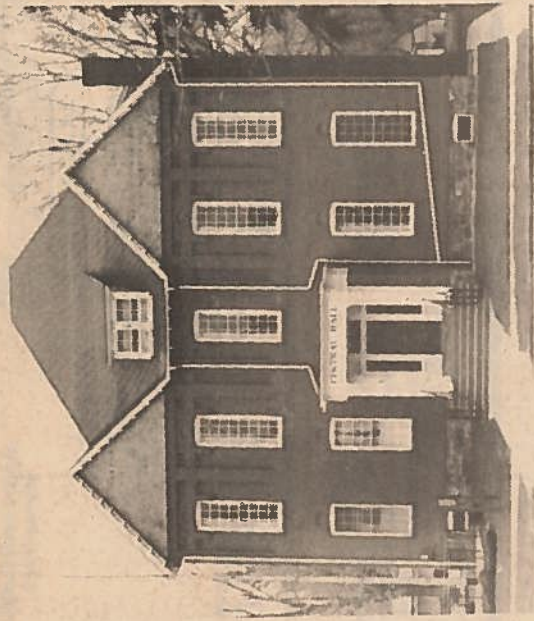


Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W. Lattin • County Historian



Ten Year Report

The purpose of this report is to give you some idea of what I do and some of the highlights of the History Department over the past 10 years.

The former Orleans County Board of Supervisors with Stanley Kubatek as chairman, officially appointed me as Orleans County historian to become effective on Jan. 1, 1979. I succeeded Arden McAllister of Medina, who decided to retire after holding the post for around three years. It's hard for me to believe that a whole decade has now slipped by. My salary for this part-time position in 1979 was \$2,000 with non-personal expenses set at \$1,125, making a total budget for my first year at \$3,465. This past year of 1988 my salary was set at \$4,150 with non-personal expenses at \$2,150, making my total adopted budget \$6,300.

When I was first hired the committee which interviewed me asked that I should be visible by writing a column and make myself available as a public speaker on history. Since I began this job, I have now prepared a total of 520 weekly columns under the heading "Bethinking of Old Orleans." These stories appear in the Albion Advertiser, Journal-Register and Lake County Pennyseaver.

My first office, which was shared with the commissioner of jurors, was located in the basement of the County Court House. In 1983 the Orleans Department of History was moved to the basement of Central Hall (pictured) at 34 East Park St. in Albion where a more commodious office space had been built.

Aside from writing a weekly column, I have had many other opportunities to be a part of other publications. In 1980 for example, I compiled a booklet entitled "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread" which is a history of farming in Orleans County. In 1984, through my department, I wrote a book called "Architecture Destroyed in Orleans County." In 1986 a poster of exceptional extrances in the county was put together for Architectural Heritage Year in New York State. In 1984 I had the privilege of writing the preface for a booklet entitled "Historic Gained" and in 1985 I was equally honored to write a foreward for "Images of Clerendon Past."

In December of 1983 a pamphlet was compiled on the history of the county clerk's building for its centennial. A similar pamphlet was designed the following year for Central Hall.

Aside from these highlights in publishing, I have also been responsible for getting historic markers placed, including the historic marker at the first cross roads in the county (Rts. 104 & 279), first masonic lodge of Royal Arch Masons (Gaines), the wording on the bronze table at the tower in Mt. Albion, the wording on the county nursing home tablet for its 25th anniversary, the Proctor Brook marker at Childs and one about Geprge Pullman which will be erected this coming spring.

In 1980, as historian, I was given tapes of organ music from the estate of Bernard Lynch. These were compiled into a 78 RPM record which was cut and entitled "Music from a Candy Box" by Bernard Lynch which the Orleans County Council on the Arts then promoted.

Another facet of my position has been to conduct tours of the Historic Court House District which I was involved in getting on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Hundreds of groups and several thousand students and adults alike, have been escorted by me through the several buildings and churches when requested. In 1986, through my planning and management, a very successful tour of churches was held on an October Sunday afternoon.

Speaking has been a leading part of the job from the beginning 10 years ago. I can't begin to name

the number of groups before whom I have appeared. They frequently include students at the respective schools, usually fourth grades, sometimes high schools as well. Clubs, civic groups and churches have also called on me to give programs relating to local history. Topics or programs for example, which I have worked up into slide presentations include: a general county history using old photos; architectural styles in the county; cemetery art and symbolism in the county; the Cobblestone Museum; history of the Medina sandstone industry; the story of the George Willson murder; and the story of Albert Warner, embezzler. This past November a photographic survey of the all important stained glass windows in the county's churches was taken. This slide program is also available to special interest groups.

Some speaking engagements which stand out in my mind over the years were: doing the dedication speech for the Lily Pond at Mt. Albion in 1983; the Memorial Day address in Albion for 1981 and '83; addressing the 50th anniversary of the DAR House on Constitution Day on 1979; the dedication of the Liberty Pole in 1982 at the Cobblestone Museum; and speaking from the pulpits of Eagle Harbor and Knowlesville Churches this past summer on early church history in the area; and also speaking from the pulpit of the Pullman Church last January on Charles A. Danolds, founder.

As county historian, I am expected to attend workshops and meetings (inservice training) as time permits. In 1982-83 I served as president of the New York State County Historian Association. Presently, as historian, I serve on the Preservation Network Board of the Landmark Society of Western New York. Occasionally I call together meetings of our local municipal historians in the county for business.

Aside from all of the obvious things mentioned above, I am requested to seek information for individuals who send requests. Occasionally I am asked to help students in writing term papers or college thesis. All the above has taken time in research and study. The past ten years, you might say, has been on-the-job training. I feel I am better qualified because of all this than I was ten years ago. Being historian also means collecting material which is housed in the archival collection of documents, books, papers, clippings, old photos, etc. in the office of the Orleans County Department of History. Because of all this, I have learned a lot about our past. It's been an interesting job, one which I have enjoyed performing, not only for my "clients" but also for the County Legislature and ultimately the people of Orleans County. I thank you all for giving me this privilege.