

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XI

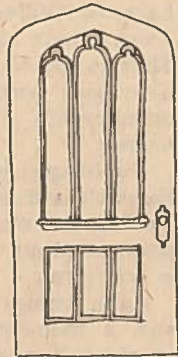
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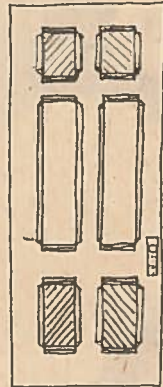
HISTORY IN DOORS

With trash pickup in many towns throughout the county we see a lot of debris out at the curb during each season. I've been particularly struck this year at the number of old doors which have been discarded. If these items could only audibly speak I doubt, how much they could tell us. But then, silently lying there waiting for the trash collection, they say a lot. I didn't see all the styles laying out at the trash pickup represented here, but I saw a lot. How sad! I got to thinking that these old doors all have their own personalities as the divisions of panels certainly suggests architectural style.

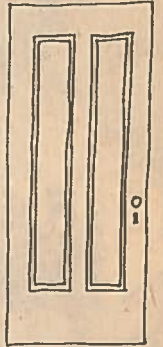
Quickly I've drawn freehand some doors which can be readily seen in several public buildings around Albion. The shape and placement of panels tell a lot about the building it was made for and when it was made. The Federal door represented here is from the Cobblestone Church in Childs built in 1834. The Federal style was used locally during the 1820s and 1830s. The Greek Revival door depicted is really quite simple, only two vertical panels. Doors like this were made in the late 1830s, 1840s and early 1850s locally. Examples like this may be seen at the Swan Library, Orleans Chapter DAR and the Merrill-Rinnell Funeral Home, all of which were built in the 1840s. The Italianate door is more apt to be seen as an exterior door with glass in the upper portion. Doors of this nature date to the 1850s, 60s, 70s and early 80s. Such doors appear on the front of the Ward House and the J.G. Peters Harness Shop at the Cobblestone Museum Complex. The Eastlake door is from the Orleans County Clerk's Office built in 1882-83. Characteristics of this style include chamfered edges on the edges of the panels and narrow diagonal boards in the panels. The Eastlake style was particularly popular locally during the 1880s and early 90s. The Gothic Revival door is from the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church built in 1894. Many variations of this style may be particularly found in churches locally between the 1850s to the 1920s. Finally, we see the Art Deco door which as represented here, can be seen at the Albion Middle School built in 1932. Leaded glass fills the upper section. Painted designs and shapes are typical in Art Deco architecture which was popular during the



GOthic REVIVAL



EASTLAKE



GREEK REVIVAL



FEDERAL



ITALIANATE



ART DECO

1920s, 30s, and 40s.

The examples I've shown are just a few basic styles. Many variations of course, occur during the same periods or in the same style. Doors for example, which have three narrow vertical panels at the bottom and three narrow vertical panels at the top are apt to be Italianate. Knowing and understanding door paneling, can easily give clues to when a building was erected or when alterations may have occurred many years ago. If the doors don't all match up in an old house that's a pretty good clue that changes were made. The style of door at least gives a hint of its insertion or the age of the house.

Indeed, to toss out an old door is like tossing out our heritage. Progress and remodeling are fine, but I'm just afraid that our present day contributions to the future are going to be pretty hollow.