

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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FLAVOR OF THE FAIR



It is only timely this week to direct the theme of this column to the Orleans County Fair. Perhaps the following excerpt from the Lockport Union paper in 1873 by Albion correspondent MAR, gives a flavor of what the Fair was like over 100 years ago. The following article makes mention of Floral Hall which is pictured herein during fair time in 1899. It is the large building to the right with the cupola. It also mentions the Curtis Company, owned and operated by Hiram Curtis, which was a foundry on North Main Street in Albion that produced agricultural implements. And now from the Lockport Union:

"The Orleans County Fair, held on Friday and Saturday of last week, was a grand success, and we doubt if its superior as an agricultural fair can be shown in this State. We had two beautiful days for the purpose, thus demonstrating the untruth of the adage that Fair Day is a certain precursor of unpleasant weather."

"The display of horses, cattle, swine, sheep, poultry, etc., to which the first day was devoted, was unusually large and fine, embracing the different varieties of stock in great abundance. This exhibition of animals is probably the most interesting to farmers, ...one object we were perfectly able to mark for its huge proportions, was a steer belonging to Mr. Batchelor of Barre Center, the weight of which was three thousand pounds. It is unnecessary to say that there were not many of this weight exhibited."

"A gentleman on the grounds the first day said that our Vegetable Hall exhibition exceeded that at the State Fair. How well they succeeded is known by every visitor to the grounds. Floral Hall was also well packed with articles. Two or three Rochester

Firms had samples of their respective goods also on show. In the way of curiosities an old fashioned wooden plow, and a shot gun, said to belong to Bender, the Kansas murder, were good."

"There was a lively competition in agricultural implements, articles from the Oakfield, Illion, Rennington, Brockport, Albion, and other works being on exhibition, but it was generally conceded that the Curtis Company excelled in both make and assortment of articles. A novelty in the labor-saving line was a corn-husker, which it was claimed would husk fifty bushels of corn per hour. A steam thresher was also on the grounds in full operation."

"James Vick's display of flowers was excellent, as was also some of those from our own greenhouses. In passing we must not omit to mention the patent car coupling, the invention of Mr. Miller, of Albion, which is a long needed article, in our estimation, as it does away with the great risk always attendant to the coupling of cars...."

"One point which in our judgement, is not well financially for the society, is the refusal of the officers to have any good, fast trotting or running races on the last day. It is thought to be immoral by the officers, and consequently dispensed with...."

"Our report is necessarily short, but the addresses of Major H.G. Eastman and Prof. A.A. Hopkins were received so well by the audience that we must mention them. They spoke in the highest terms of our county, and praised our Fair heartily, declaring it to be the finest agricultural exhibition they ever saw. The pith of Major Eastman's address was 'speciality,' while that of Prof. Hopkins was 'organization.' The Albion Band, furnished the music, as it seems no other county band dare compete with them for the prize." MAR