COURT CLOCK

On Wednesday, December 19 it was my priviledge to say a few words at the swearing in ceremony for Hon. James P. Punch as County Judge. My remarks reflected the history of the Court House and how the judicial system fits into our democracy which is made up of many diverse people and principles. Also, at that time, an antique clock was transferred from the Orleans County Department of History inventory to the Orleans County Buildings and Grounds inventory to be located in the Court House. A certificate of transferal was presented to the Court Clerk, Joanne Whitney.

Here then, is the brief story behind this time piece: The Clock pictured at right, was purchased November 28, 1883 by the Orleans County Board of Supervisors for the Court Room. It is an eight-day clock in a solid black walnut case. It not only tells time of day, but also denotes the days of the week, days of the month as well as the month. It does not have a striking mechanism as that would have been disruptive during court sessions. The clock was patented February 15, 1876 and was manufactured by the Seth Thomas Clock Company of Thomaston, Conn. It was sold to the county by "F.W. Butler, Jeweler" whose name and business is stenciled on the dial. Butler owned and operated a jewelery store in Albion for many years.

The clock hung in the Court Room until 1927. At that period of time it was decided to restore the Court Room to its original splendor. The old clock which had to be hand-wound was replaced with a more modern one, and eventually ended up in a basement storeroom of the Court House where it was found by my father when he became county historian in 1958. The Board of Supervisors granted him permission to have it restored to working order and it has hung in the county historian's office ever since.

It only seems proper that the clock be again restored to working order and be placed in the surroundings for which it was originally procured.