

Bethinking of Old Orleans

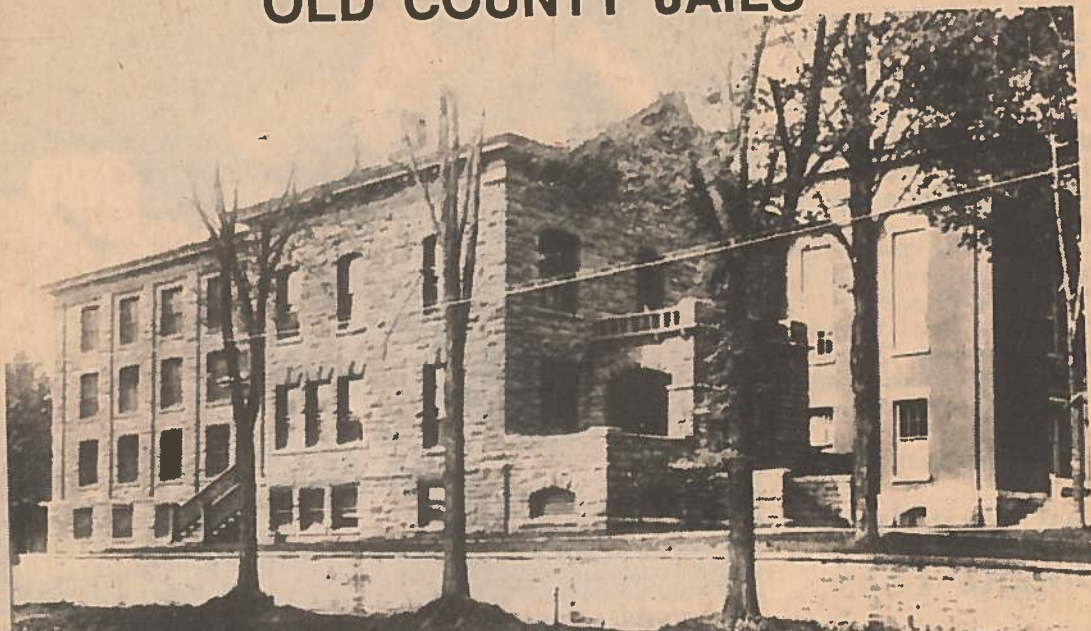
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OLD COUNTY JAILS



The old Jail and Sherrifs Residence, Albion.

Many residents will remember the Old Orleans County Jail and sheriff's residence which stood east of the Court House. It was a massive Medina Sandstone structure which was torn down in May 1971 for our present county jail. The upper photo here, taken from Platt St., shows how it looked with the Court House next to it.

Recently, Ellen Blake loaned me an old family photo album with many pictures dated 1898-99. In it, much to my surprise, is the only photo I have ever seen of the jail which stood next to the Court House prior to 1903, a jail probably no one can remember. Here in the lower photo we see the Court House and the jail which the county built in 1838 for a cost of \$4,000.00. It was constructed of limestone quarried locally. I would tend to believe the wooden wing was a later addition to that jail. Note the stone retaining wall in both pictures. The lower end of this still remains today.

The first Orleans County Jail was located in the basement of the original Court House built in 1827. Within a very short time a log jail was built on the site of its next three successors. The jail which was built in 1838 had as we can well determine, a sheriff's residence in the front, facing State Street and cells in the rear. By 1902 the State Commissioner of Prisons pronounced it unsanitary and not in compliance with the law. It was demolished and replaced with the one in the upper view which cost \$54,891 and opened for inmates in 1904. By 1968 the State Commissioner of Corrections called this jail inadequate, outdated and unsanitary. Therefore, by 1971 it was replaced. Stone from this jail of 1903 was used around the base of the present jail.

Many thanks to Ellen Blake for sharing this important piece of local history and to Dr. Orr for the photo copy.