

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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BIRDSEYE VIEW



The Village of Albion N.Y. looking west from the Court House dome.

Again we are indebted to Ellen Blake for sharing another rare view of a local scene. The picture here, and original caption from an old family photo album dates to around 1898. Whoever took this shot did it from the Court House dome looking out from one of the double arched windows. The camera lens was pointed in a northwesterly direction. In the lower right-hand foreground we can see the intersection of Main and State Streets. The large square dark-colored house was the former residence of Roswell Burrows. This is now the Swan Library but when the photo was taken it had not yet been transformed visually into what we recognize as the library today. Incidentally, that work was done in 1899 and the library opened on St. Patrick's Day 1900. At that time the old Burrows residence was updated in the then more popular style of Colonial Revival. Here we still see it as Greek Revival.

Across West State Street we see two residences which are no longer there. Both of these were purchased by the government and demolished in 1937 to make way for the U.S. Post Office. The large house on the corner had last belonged to Dr. Alfred W. Jackson, a physician. He was the father of Dr. John A. Jackson, a local dentist who will be well remembered. The house was actually

built for Alexis Ward who was Albion's first mayor in 1828. It stood immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. Next to it stood the Post Colonial or Federal Style home of Dr. Charles Burrows, another local physician. The house with its white-painted clapboards and green shutters looks more like something in a New England Village Square.

In the background we can see innumerable houses, many of which seem to be painted white with green shutters. Toward the center in the background we notice a large building which was the Albion High School located on East Academy Street. Its main body is three stories capped with a cupola. This old brick school was demolished in 1906 when a new grey Medina Sandstone High School was erected on the same site, which in later years became the Grammar School.

Whoever took the picture just missed the Presbyterian Church spire to the right and what is now the Cornell Cooperative Extension Service Office building to the left. Although this picture was taken almost one hundred years ago, we none the less get a sense of the majesty of the Court House when we see this vista. And because of the higher elevation, we certainly have a different perspective on familiar surroundings from a birdseye view.