

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## STREET SCENE



Our historic photo this week is compliments of Mr. George Callard of Carlton. At first glance, we notice a fine team of horses hitched to a nice buggy driven by a man wearing a derby hat. However, once we look a little more closely we notice a Shepherd Dog with a white spot on his chest seated next to the man. If nothing more, this scene indicates that people took their pets for rides years ago. Not much has changed.

But the real historical value of the photo is not in the foreground but rather the background. You see, this picture was taken from Main Street, Albion prior to 1874. The photographer stood on the west side of the unpaved street and pointed the camera in a south easterly direction. From the left we first see a large white building which was the Exchange Hotel operated at the time by Charles C. Downs. This building was torn down over fifty years ago to make way for a gasoline station. The site is presently a municipal parking lot and location of the community clock and thermometer. The next building in the center at the time, was the gun shop of Louis Basinait who operated as a gunsmith in Albion from 1853 to 1880. This building was also torn down around fifty years ago when Ray Severns built a restaurant on the site which is now the Harvest Basket. The next building was a house owned by W.G. Close when this photo was taken. The main portion is still there with a couple of additions including an attached building which now houses a gift shop and a yellow brick front which is a beauty salon.

To the very far right we don't see much in the picture which is how we can determine the date. The

Presbyterian Church isn't there because it had not been built when this photo was taken. The church was completed in 1874. The faint suggestion of a chimney in this area is, I think, from the Phipps Union Seminary which was located where the County Clerk's Office now stands. And by the way, if you look very closely you can see a very small portion of the lower part of the Court House dome tucked in between the roof line of the Exchange Hotel and the top of the roof on the Basinait building next door. Indeed, historic photos tell us a lot if we know what we're looking for and looking at.

### History to Have

By means of a commercial, there are several local history items on sale for the Christmas season at the Swan Library. From the Cobblestone Museum, there are two booklets including Luminaries In the Firmament - A guide to Stained Glass Windows in Orleans County by C.W. Lattin plus Details of Cobblestone Masonry Construction in North America 1825-1860 by Robert W. Frasch and Delia Robinson. Also fifteen old time views of things around Albion in postcard form. Mugs too, are available with pictures on them including the Cobblestone Church, the Ward House, Cobblestone School and a recent commemorative mug of National Historic Landmark Status. The Swan Library also has for sale an 1880 map (birdseye view of Albion) plus a booklet entitled Books and Money by Dr. Neil Johnson. There are also other items including this year's Christmas ornament put out by the Albion Chamber of Commerce, picturing the Swan Library.