

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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JAIL LIMITS

This Medina Sandstone artifact with the inscription 'Jail Limits' is in the possession of the Orleans County Department of History. Here now is the interesting story behind it.

Under Chapter 482 of the Laws of New York State in 1875 we find this brief paragraph #18. "To establish, on the recommendation of the County Court and alter from time to time, as such court shall recommend, the liberties of the county jails for the purposes defined by statute."

On December 4, 1876 the Orleans County Board of Supervisors recommended the establishment of the liberties of the jail. The said liberties were to contain not more than 500 acres and were to commence 40 chains east of the east side of Main Street in the Village of Albion on the line between the Town of Albion and the Town of Gaines, thence west along said town line 80 chains, thence south, parallel with Main Street to the south side of Bailey Street (West Avenue) in said village, thence east along the south side of Bailey Street 80 chains, thence north parallel with said west line to the place of beginning.

The above was adopted as a resolution and Charles S. Allen was authorized to survey the same, and establish at each corner thereof a permanent monument of stone marked "JAIL LIMITS" and report his survey to the board.

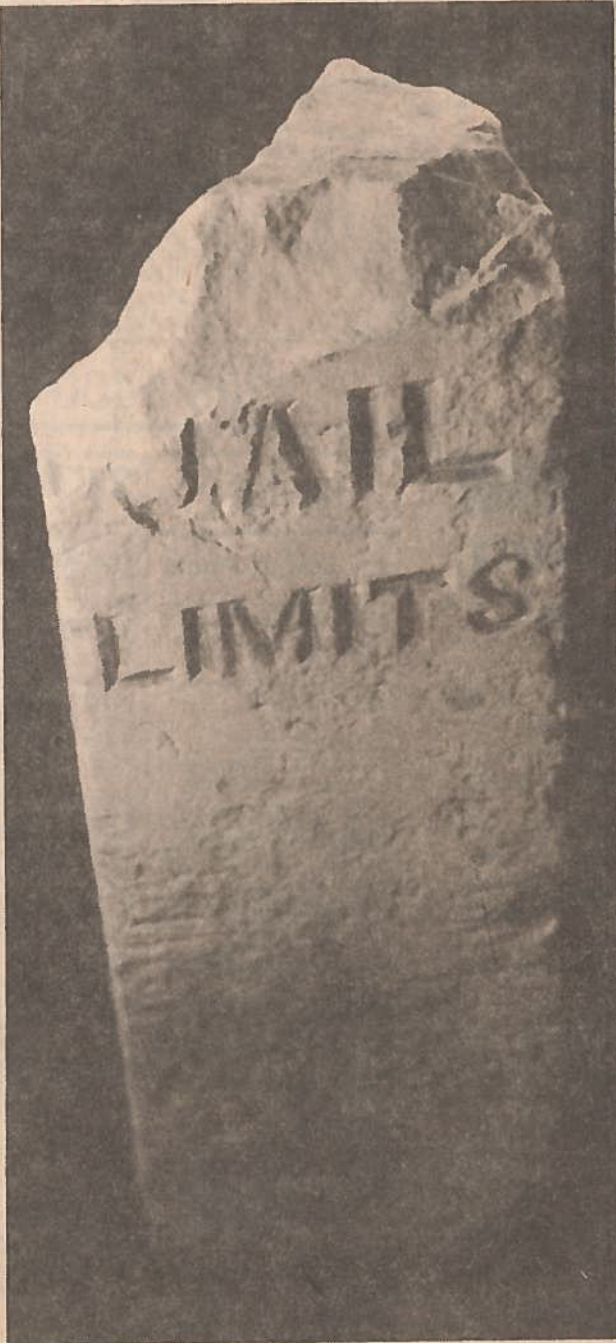
Ten days later on December 14, 1876 Mr. Allen gave his report which indicated: the survey had been made and stone markers had been erected at the designated corners with stones 4½ feet in length, and tops cut about 18 inches in length about 6 inches square, and marked in cut letters "JAIL LIMITS." The posts were set in the ground 3 feet. The jail limits contained 483 acres of land and were completed on December 7, 1876.

The cost of this project was as follows: 4 stones each \$2.50; man to carry chain, etc. \$2.50; surveying charges \$10.00; Total \$22.50.

The jail limit markers were provided for trusties confined within such limits. In other words, minor offenders who were considered trustworthy were given some latitude on actual jail confinement.

In 1966 a bulldozer uprooted the northeast post of the jail limits while grading some property. The late Benjamin Weilhamer, recognizing the historical significance of the marker, proceeded to save it and gave it to the Orleans County Department of History. In the late 1960's the department of history office was moved into the former McNall Funeral Home for a short time and then back to the Court House. During these moves the jail limit stone was misplaced.

When the McNall building was razed in the early



1970's, Paul Patten found the jail limit stone and recognized its historic value and saved it. About two years ago he mentioned to me he had such an artifact. Upon comparing notes and pictures it is indeed the missing stone. Knowing this, Mr. Patten turned over the jail limits marker to me as county historian.