

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XVI

5-18-94

No. 19

ALBION CORRECTIONAL FACILITY NOTES 100 YEARS



On Thursday, May 19 the Albion Correctional Facility will officially note a centennial of service to New York State. Over 300 invitations to the ceremony have been issued. Beginning at 1:00 P.M., small groups will be given guided tours of the facility ending at the chapel. At 3:00 P.M. Assemblyman Nesbitt, Senator Daly and a Representative from Congressman LaFalce's office will speak along with others including Neil Johnson, Village of Albion Historian. The color guard at the Correctional Facility will also present a flag and plaque to Supt. A. Andrews. The plaque, which will be placed near the chapel, will indicate it is the oldest building remaining, of the original structures built there in the 1890s.

The Albion Correctional Facility was first established as the Western House of Refuge by an act of the New York State Legislature in April 1890. In the fall of 1890, 97 acres were purchased west of Albion for a prison complex.

By November 1891 the Board of Managers awarded a contract for construction. The first phase of construction was completed in the late fall of 1893 with operation commencing in Decem-

ber 1893. However, the first inmate was not received there until January 3, 1894.

The first complex of buildings included a three-story prison, laundry, hospital, school, four cottages, boiler house, chapel and an administration building.

In the 1930s an extensive building program was undertaken and thereafter many of the original structures were razed. In 1991 an annex was also added that now brings the prison population up to over 1300 inmates.

Our two photos here show interiors of the first prison complex. They were both taken December 3, 1915. The upper shot shows Mrs. Doty, who was a steward in an office of the administration building. We note here, sectional oak filing cabinets, ledgers, calendars and paper work.

The other photo shows inmates in the school building under the training of an instructor in "domestic science." Note the huge wooden ice box in the left corner and the hot water tank to the far right in this pseudo kitchen. An emphasis was placed on domestic skills so that inmates were thoroughly trained in cooking, cleaning and sewing.