

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## HOLLEY PRESBYTERIANS CELEBRATE 175



the new church was completed and dedicated. Our vintage photo here circa 1885 shows the interior of the old church which was removed in 1907. The focal point or center of interest is the Steer and Turner tracker-action pipe organ, which incidently, is still in use today in the present church.

This very fine instrument was supposedly found in a Utica Church by Luther D. Hurd and cost Holley Presbyterians \$1400 in 1878. It was, as legend goes, shipped up to Holley on the old Erie Canal. An alcove was built on to the east end of the old church as an organ chamber. We note such an alcove in this photo. It was originally energized by a hand-pumped bellows. The man pumping the bellows was seated behind the organ case in the alcove and when the organist wanted air he/she would signal by pushing on a rod to thump the inner frame of the organ to alert the attendant. During the years 1907-08 when the present church was being built, the organ was dismantled and stored in the name of Mrs. Janette Hurd on East Albion Street at a cost of \$20.50. Mrs. Hurd was paid \$1.00 for helping to pack and store it.

During the earlier years of this century, Elder Fred Bates did many of the minor organ repairs which has been continued by Elder Laverne Dieter with all major upkeep being done by the Hickey Organ Co. of Webster, N.Y. In 1990 a set of chimes were given by David Cordy who was serving as organist at the time. These chimes came from the organ being removed from the Masonic Temple auditorium in Rochester. In 1991 major renovation work was done on the organ including rebuilding the bellows. The original hand pump replaced by electrification, is still stored in the organ chamber. Money for the project came from an organ fund which had been established and from donations and memorials over a number of years.

We note in the picture, the absence of a pulpit and innumerable flowers. It's my feeling this picture was taken for some special event, hence the floral display. This may have been done for a Children's Day service in which case the pulpit might have been in the way if groups of children were positioned on the platform for recitations or singing.

In celebration of the 175 years that Holley Presbyterians have served the community, an Open House Reunion is planned for Saturday, June 11 from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. You will be welcomed by greeters and guides, who will escort you through the church, telling you about its history. There will be a display of memorabilia and refreshments will be served by the Deacons.

On January 5, 1819 a group of people met in a schoolhouse at Sandy Creek to organize a church. The Rev. John F. Bliss, Representing the Connecticut Missionary Society, conducted the meeting and the Congregational Church came into existence. The first to be organized in the Town of Murray.

In July of 1820, five members were dismissed to join a church being organized in Farwell's Mills, now known as Clarendon. In August of 1821 this church voted to join the Rochester Presbytery.

A great Revival took place in Holley in the Spring of 1831. It was held on the premises of 31 S. Main St., the former residence of Edson and Clara Beebe, and as a result of the Revival, 74 new members were added. In those early days church meetings were held in homes, school-houses and barns.

In July of 1831, by act of the Presbytery of Rochester, The Presbyterian Church of Clarendon was united with the church of Sandy Creek, thereafter known as the First Presbyterian Church of Murray. This led to the decision to build a church, and on January 4, 1832, the first service was held. That church edifice underwent many changes, improvements, and alterations until 1907 when it was decided to build the present brick church on the same site. The old original meeting house was torn down and by Oct. 4, 1908