

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

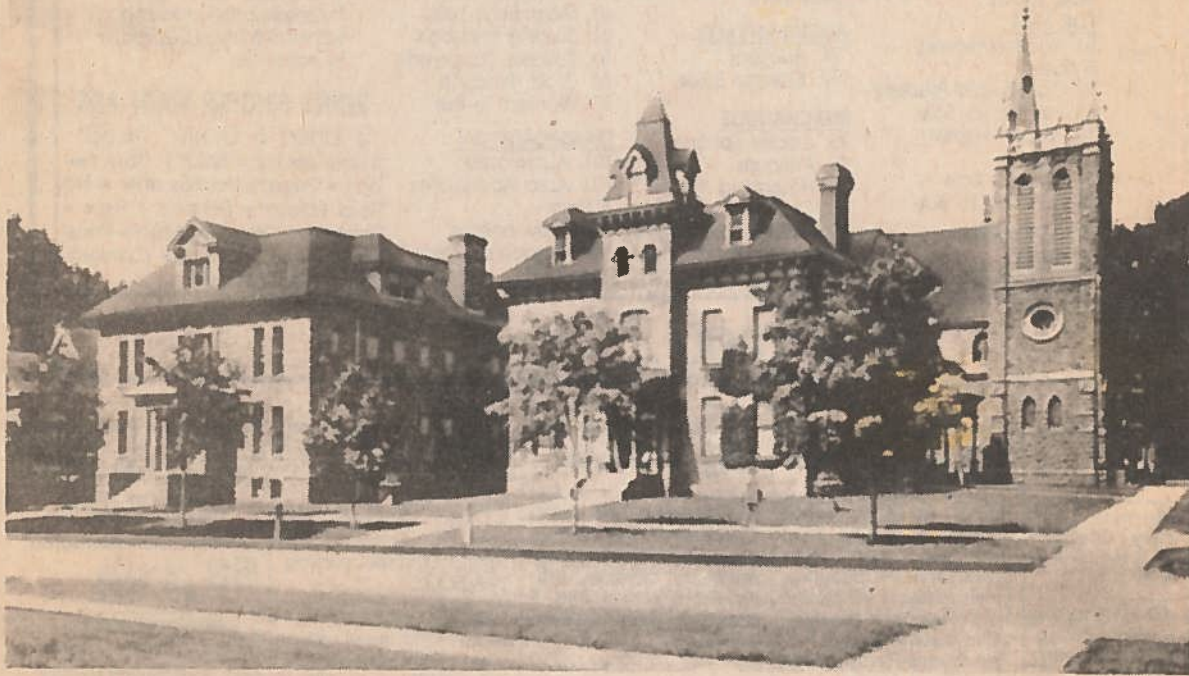
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## ST. JOSEPH'S CENTER



Our photo here, circa 1915, depicts a view of church square in Albion. To the far left we see the former St. Joseph's School while in the center is St. Joseph's Church Rectory. To the far right we see the tower of St. Joseph's Church. The trees are bigger now and the top of the tower on the rectory is no longer there. It was removed along with the dormer windows in the early 1950's. Other than that, the buildings appear pretty much as they did in 1915.

I particularly want to direct your attention to the school however. Hundreds of us drive by it every day. The sign over the front door states: St. Joseph's Parish Center. For many people that's all they know of the building other than it is a large impressive brown Medina Sandstone structure. Two Doric sandstone columns of exceptional merit flank the front entrance. It's been around twenty years since this edifice was used for a parochial school. It was during the tenure of Monsignor Herlihy that St. Joseph's Church reluctantly gave up their school. The financial burden, a decrease in enrollment and a shortage of nuns (Sisters of Mercy) forced the closing.

Today this building serves as a religious education center for the youth of the parish, meetings and receptions. One of the former class rooms has been renovated into a chapel where weekday masses are

conducted during the cold winter months rather than heat up the church. During Father Wetter's tenure the building was brought up to fire code, making it a viable part of St. Joseph's Church physical plant.

It was during the pastorate of Monsignor Francis Sullivan that the school was built in 1905. The previous parochial school had been located off Main Street north of the canal where the first Catholic Church in Albion was located. In 1904 Monsignor Sullivan negotiated with the Burrows Family to buy the property next to the Rectory. This lot had a very large house situated on it which was the former home of Judge Arad Thomas. Naturally, the house was in the way of a new school building, so it was therefore moved off that lot and relocated intact on a vacant lot at the corner of East Park and Temperance Streets. In later years this house was the home of Miss Jessie DiGulio and remains at 138 E. Park St.

Once the school was completed, it was dedicated on Dec. 14, 1905. The structure was built to accommodate 200 pupils, grades 1-8. There were four spacious class rooms on the first floor with a hall, stage and kitchen on the second floor. In succeeding years the basement level was finished off. The hall was occasionally used for community events. I recall older people, in my youth, simply referring to the building as the Lyceum.