

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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METHODIST MARKER ERECTED



As county historian I am pleased to announce the placement of a new historic marker in the Historic Court House District in Albion. This has been paid for jointly by the First United Methodist Church and the Orleans County Department of History. After collaborating with the Rev. Gregory VanDussen, Pastor and Mrs. Elizabeth Vick, Church Historian, we arrived at the wording for the marker which states:

FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
FIRST CIRCUIT RIDER: 1816
SOCIETY INCORPORATED: 1830
SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGUN: 1835
LOT DONATED: 1831 - PRESENT
EDIFICE: 1860 - REBUILT: 1914

"The Best Of All Is, God is With Us!" John Wesley
Our photo shows the front entrance of the Methodist Church on East State Street and the location of the marker to the right. Such markers are succinct as there is no room for details. Therefore, I'll refer to Helen Allen's History of Orleans County Churches which is as follows:

"The First Methodist Church of Albion traces back to a little gathering of pioneers, in 1816, who came to hear the first Methodist preacher in the area which later became Albion. In that year the Genesee Methodist Episcopal Conference set up Ridgeway Circuit and appointed Daniel Shepardson as the first preacher to ride the circuit. County historians record that he came to this vicinity to preach. A group of about twenty is said to have started meeting regularly in 1818 at Brown's schoolhouse which stood at the place later known as Rudd's Corners. In September 1818, nineteen year old Zechariah Paddock of Herkimer County was appointed to the Circuit.

"This Methodist class had moved its meeting place to the village schoolhouse located on the west side of Main Street near the present railroad crossing by 1826. Circuit Preacher, John Copeland was conducting the services at that time. Attendance increased and Gideon Hard, a young lawyer who had recently settled in the village, secured the use of the Court House as a meeting place three years later.

"Eleven of the group then decided they were ready to organize as a Methodist Episcopal Church.

These charter members of the church were James Noble, Keziah Noble, Abigail Townsby, Elize Townsby, Philip Brown, Polly Brown, Smith Lawrence, Jonathan Hitchcock, Polly Hitchcock and Martha Stevens. This was in 1830.

"Soon afterward, revival services were held which resulted in a hundred conversions and the Ridgeway Circuit held quarterly meetings with the new church in the Court House. Encouraged by their increased membership and the inspiration of the Conference fellowship, the members decided to build their own meeting house. As a first step, they voted to adopt the name, First Methodist Episcopal Church of Albion, New York, and elected trustees in order to legally hold property. The five trustees registered at the county clerk's office on Dec. 6, 1830, were: James Noble, Philip Nichols, Gideon Hard, Jonathan Hitchcock and Daniel Brown..

"Early in 1831 the members raised money by subscription for building their church adifice. At this point, Nehemiah Ingersol, owner of large tracts of land in the area, gave the Society a building lot on the N.E. corner of State and Platt Streets. Mr. Ingersol was not a Methodist but was a public-spirited citizen interested in the development of the village. Work was begun in 1831 and the building completed and dedicated the following year. "The Methodist Church grew rapidly as did the other Albion churches of that period. In less than three decades the membership increased from 11 to about 300."

In 1860 the original meeting house was replaced with the present brick church which was dedicated in 1861. In 1914 \$30,000 was spent on alterations and additions which gives the church its present architectural appearance. At that time the interior of the auditorium was changed from facing north to facing east in an amphitheater style arrangement. This change included the addition of a wing for the pipe organ and choir. The choir had previously been located in a loft behind the congregation.

On Thursday evening, July 27, at 7:30 p.m. I will be speaking in the Pavilion at Lakeside Park on "Keeping The Faith" an historical account of the development of churches in Orleans County during the 19th Century. The public is invited to this free program.